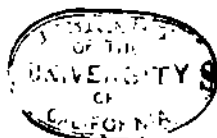


THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS,
FROM
CHAUCER TO COWPER.

VOL. I.

THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS,
FROM CHAUCER TO COWPER;



INCLUDING THE
SERIES EDITED,

WITH

PREFACES, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,
BY DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON:

AND

THE MOST APPROVED TRANSLATIONS.

THE

ADDITIONAL LIVES

BY ALEXANDER CHALMERS, F. S. A.

IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CHAUCER.

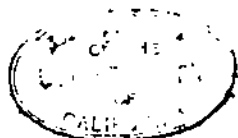
LONDON:

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1810.

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PREFACE.

THE Preface to a collection like the present, necessarily involves an attempt to apologize for its defects, and from this some degree of egotism is inseparable. Candour, however, will not fail to make liberal allowance for the many difficulties which surround an undertaking of this magnitude: and it is hoped that the excuses which are offered, if not satisfactory, will at least be received as marks of respect. The labour of some years in forming this collection has been exerted with an anxious desire that it may prove worthy of public favour, but at the conclusion of the task, I cannot flatter myself that I have succeeded in forming the best plan, or in executing the plan which I formed.

The fate of the few collections which have been made of this kind readily pointed out that the objections of critics would be directed, either against redundancy, or defect, and it is as likely that I shall be blamed for admitting too many, as for admitting too few, into a work professing to be a **BODY OF THE STANDARD ENGLISH POETS**. It cannot, however, be unknown to those who have paid any attention to the subject, that the question of too much or too little in these collections, does not depend on the previous consideration of the merit of the poet, so frequently as on the relative rank which he seems destined to hold among his brethren. Some may be admissible in a series, who would make but an indifferent figure by themselves, and it is not improbable that by perpetuating editions in this manner, the fame that has sunk in one revolution of taste may be revived in another.

There are perhaps but two rules by which a collector of English poetry can be guided. He is either to give a series of the **BEST** poets, or of the most **POPULAR**, but simple as these rules may appear, they are not without difficulties, for whichever we choose

to rely upon, the other will be found to interfere. In the first instance, the question will be perpetually recurring "who are the best poets?" and as this will unavoidably involve all the disputed points in poetical criticism, and all the partialities of individual taste, an editor must pause before he venture on a decision from which the appeals will be numerous and obstinately contested.

On the other hand, he will not find much more security in popularity, which is a criterion of uncertain duration, sometimes depending on circumstances very remote from taste or judgment, and, unless in some few happy instances, a mere fashion. An bookseller can tell an editor that popularity will frequently elude his grasp, if he waits for the decision of time; that authors popular within the memory of some of the present generation are no longer read, and that others who seemed on the brink of oblivion, if not sunk in its abyss, have by some accountable or unaccountable revival, become the standing favourites of the day. It has often been objected to Dr. Johnson's Collection, that it includes authors who have few admirers, and it is an objection which perhaps gains strength by time, but it ought always to be remembered, that the collection was not formed by that illustrious scholar, but by his employers, who thought themselves, what they unquestionably were, the best judges of vendible poetry, and who included very few, if any, works in their series for which there was not, at the time it was formed, a considerable degree of demand.

Aware of the difficulties of adding to that collection without reviving the usual objections, what is now presented to the public could never have been formed, had I imposed on myself the test either of abstract merit, or of popular reception. When applied to, therefore, by the proprietors, and left at liberty, generally to form a collection of the more ancient poets to precede Dr. Johnson's series, and of the more recent authors to follow it, I perceived that it would be proper to be guided by a mixed rule admitting the additions from these two classes. Although the question of popularity seemed necessary and decisive in selection from the vast mass of poetical writers since the publication of Dr. Johnson's volumes, yet in making up a catalogue of the old poets, it was requisite to advert to the only uses which suc-

catalogue can at all be supposed to answer. Popularity is here so much out of the question, that however venerable some of the names are which occur in this part of the work, it will probably be impossible by any powers of praise or criticism to give them that degree of favour with the public which they once enjoyed.

For these reasons, in selecting from this class, it was the Editor's object to give such a series as might tend, not only to revive genuine and undeservedly neglected poetry, but to illustrate the progress and history of the art from the age of Chaucer to that of Cowley. What has been done so excellently by Mr. Ellis, in SPECIMENS, it was the intention to execute more amply by ENTIRE WORKS, copied from the best editions, and as nearly as possible in a chronological succession: and a plan of this kind, to him who does not attempt to execute it, will appear to have every advantage, and not many difficulties.

On trial, however, it was soon discovered that some limits must be set to such a collection; that it would be in vain to attempt to revive authors whom no person would read, and to fill thousands of pages with discarded prolixities, merely because they characterized the dulness of the age in which they were tolerated. It was also discovered, that the plan of giving entire works would be objectionable in another point of view, and that the licentious language of some of our most eminent poets, whether their own or that of their age, must necessarily be omitted. In this dilemma, therefore, a SELECTION has been attempted, with less severity of rule than in the case of the modern poets, and it is presented to the public with the diffidence in which it was made, and with the deference due to superior judgment.

Besides the difficulties which presented themselves from the circumstances just noticed, another embarrassment, of late origin indeed, but almost invincible, was occasioned by the extreme rarity and high price of many of the works which it would have been desirable to reprint. To professed collectors of ancient English poetry it would be superfluous to enter upon any explanation of the causes of this high price, and to others it may be

This has been departed from in a few instances, owing to the difficulty of procuring the copies at the time they were wanted, but the deviations, it is hoped, will be found

sufficient to intimate, that within the last twenty years, a taste for collecting the writings of our old poets has diffused itself so widely as to put them wholly out of the reach of moderate fortunes, as well as to induce those into whose hands they have fallen, to guard them with the most scrupulous anxiety. Even where, as in the present instance, the spirit of the proprietors would not have suffered the high price to keep back what was necessary, it was sometimes found that private sales and barter among the tribe of collectors had almost entirely removed the articles in question from the public market.

But notwithstanding these impediments, I hope I have succeeded in procuring such a number of the rarer authors as is, in a great measure, if not quite, sufficient to preserve somewhat more than an outline of the principal revolutions of our poetical taste and style, and probably more than sufficient to gratify the curiosity of those who do not wish to pursue the study of poetical antiquities in all its branches. By those who have that taste, and who are not only readers, but students of poetry, (a class which seems to be increasing) more ample gratification must be derived from the libraries of the collectors, and from the labours of the Wartons, the Ritsons, the Ellis's, the Parks, the Hazlewoods, and the Brydges'. Nor can I quit this part of my subject without acknowledging the obligations I owe to the writings of these eminent antiquaries and critics, as well as to the personal kindness of some of them, which it was my intention to have acknowledged more particularly had I not been afraid of implicating them in what may be found objectionable. Yet something must be added, which cannot involve this consequence. To Thomas Hill, Esq. I consider myself as highly indebted. This gentleman's very valuable collection of English poetry is open to the inspection and use of every literary inquirer, and his rarest volumes were lent to me with a ready confidence and kindness that demand my sincerest thanks. I have likewise to acknowledge the liberal offers of Sir Egerton Brydges, Richard Heber, Esq. and Mr. Park. The public will hear with gladness, and may with confidence, that Mr. Park is now engaged on a new edition, and continuation, of Warton's History of Poetry; and from his well known taste, and superior accuracy, there can be

no doubt that he will render this work all that the utmost hopes of its original author could have reached. In the biographical part of this collection, I owe much to the contributions and hints of my intelligent and steady friends, Mr. Nichols and Mr. Payne, but I am restrained by an obvious delicacy from expatiating on their kindness.

In forming this collection, it yet remains to be mentioned that Dr. Johnson's Lives are retained, with some additional notes, originally given in the edition of his works, printed in 1806. Few words, however, are necessary in making this intimation. Dr. Johnson's Lives, after all the objections that have been offered, must ever be the foundation of English poetical biography. To substitute any thing in their room would be an attempt, by the ablest, hazardous, and by inferior pens, ridiculous.

With respect to the NEW LIVES, a part of this work for which I am particularly responsible, they are the result of more anxious and painful research than may appear to those who do not examine my authorities. In rectifying preceding accounts, many of which I found erroneous and inconsistent, either from carelessness or partiality, and in procuring original information, in which I hope it will appear that I have not been altogether unsuccessful, it was my object to ascertain those truths, in whatever they might end, which display the real character. And I am sorry it should be necessary to add, that I have not thought it incumbent to represent every man whose works are here admitted as a prodigy of genius or virtue. This practice, it is true, has been lately adopted in collections of biography, as well as in single lives; but I am yet to learn what advantages can be reaped, and what solid interest can be promoted by a practice which violates the principles of truth, destroys public confidence, and defeats every valuable purpose of biography. The imaginary beauties of the biographer are, at least, as absurd as those of the portrait-painter, while they have less excuse, and are attended with far more pernicious consequences. After the lapse of a few years it becomes a matter of inferior importance how a man looked, but it is always important to know how he thought and how he acted. Nor if the practice alluded to proceeds from real feeling, or only an affectation of sympathy and veneration, is it less ob-

jectionable. It is a gross error in judgment that any man, who deserves to be commemorated, can be the worse for a disclosure of his failings, unless, indeed, he has no virtues to counterbalance them, and even in that rare case, the portrait, if faithfully given, is not without its uses. It would be happy if a closer correspondence could be found between an author and his writings, if genius were always dignified by virtue, and wisdom always recommended by urbanity; but we look in vain for objects of uniform panegyric, and the fair display of the striking contrarieties we find in the human character must ever be preferable to those unnatural sketches in which there is no discrimination, but all is purity and perfection, or in which the most degrading vices are either suppressed by fraud, or vindicated by sophistry. Of all human beings, the sons of imagination require to be led most carefully to correct notions of virtue and happiness, and to be reconciled to a world in which their splendid dreams cannot be realized, and which makes no allowance for irregular desires and extravagant passions.

The criticisms advanced in these lives are as sparing as appeared consistent with the general plan, and are the opinions of one who is aware that reputation is not in his gift. As, however, they are the result of a judgment derived from no partial school, I have only to hope they will not be found destitute of candour, or improperly interfering with the general and acknowledged principles of taste.

A. C.

London, Nov. 1809.

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VOL. III.

SPENSER.

P. 6. line 33, for it read *them*.

VOL. V.

ALEXANDER, EARL OF STIRLING.

P. 292. Since writing this life, I have discovered the following information respecting the family and title of the earl of Stirling. The person who assumed that title, and fought on the side of America, in the war 1774-82; and who died in 1783, was no relation of our poet. The title of earl of Stirling has been extinct since 1641, when the poet died. His corpse was deposited in a leaden coffin, in the family aisle, in the church of Stirling, above ground, and remained entire till within these thirty years. Being much involved in debt at his death, and his descendants very poor, they never thought of making good their title to that dignity, till a very considerable time thereafter; but the mansion-house or church, which stood upon the banks of the river Devon, near Stirling, in which the records of the family descent were deposited, being swept away by a rapid current of the river after an uncommon fall of rain, rendered it impossible for the nearest akin to the family to make good his claim to the title. Several branches of this family still live¹ at a village called Mainstry, on the above river, about three miles from Stirling, the oldest of which is the fourth in descent from the earl, and is a reputable farmer, and known by all the old people about that part of the country to be the real and nearest descendant of the earl of Stirling.

¹ From a letter inserted in the London Chronicle, Oct. 1776, and signed GERALDSON. Benton says, I knew not upon what authority, that the title was not extinct until 1739.

VOL. XIV.

CHURCHILL.

P. 267, line 3 from the bottom, dele the comma after "Churchill's next" &c.

FALCONER.

P. 384, line 7, for *always* read *often*.

BOYSE.

P. 516, line 5 from the bottom, for *project* read *prospect*.

P. 523. Some time before his death he wrote a very pleasant letter to the Rev. James Hervey, author of the *Meditations*, &c. who appears to have endeavoured to impress him with a sense of his situation. See Smollett's *British Magazine*, vol. v. p. 655.

VOL. XV.

WILLIAM THOMSON.

P. 4. According to Mr. Isaac Reed's MS. obituary, now in my possession, he died in 1765.

LLOYD.

P. 74. His name appeared, in 1761, to a translation of Voltaire's works, with that of Smollett, and in 1763, to a translation of Marmonel's *Tales* with that of C. Denis.

COOPER.

P. 503, for Thurgaton, read Thurgartop, *vis*.

VOL. XVI.

SMART.

P. 10. Poor Smart's custom of praying in the streets was very common. My friend, Mr. Nichol

informs me, that he has seen him repeating the Lord's Prayer on his knees at the door of Islington church.

P. 13. Mrs. Smart, his widow, died at Reading, March 16, 1809.

LOVIBOND.

P. 283. Mrs. Lovibond died at Frognaal, near Hampstead, Aug. 7, 1770.

ARMSTRONG.

P. 517, line 18, for *between place*, read *place between*.
 ——— line 19, for *serwing*, read *served*.

VOL. XVIII.

T. WARTON.

P. 77, lines 5 and 6, for *Aristotle*, read *Aristo-*

The "Guide to the Companion," ascribed to Mr. Warton, I have been since informed on good authority, was the production of Mr. Huddesford.

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THE
WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

1



THE

LIFE OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

BY MR. CHALMERS.

THE life of Jeffery, or Geoffrey Chaucer, is involved in much obscurity. The age which succeeded him was not favourable to those researches which could have gratified curiosity by displaying his private history; and if his transactions, as a public character, were more accurately known, they could throw no light on his merit as a poet and a scholar, with which alone we are now concerned. A formal life of Chaucer, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed, must now be a very meagre narration, if composed only of facts; and, we may add, a very useless detail, if stuffed with the comments and conjectures by which some of his biographers have endeavoured to supply the want of them. The editor of the Biographia Britannica has collected a very considerable body of evidence on the subject; but a great part of it is of a very suspicious kind, and the whole hangs together so loosely, even when rectified by Mr. Tyrwhitt's more judicious remarks, that too much caution cannot be observed in any attempt to separate matters of fact from those of conjecture.

Of his birth and family nothing has been decided. It has been contended on the one hand, that he was of noble origin; on the other, that he descended from persons in trade. Even the meaning of his name in French, *chaucier*, a *shoemaker*, has been brought in evidence of a low origin, while the mention of the name Chaucer, in several records, from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Edward I. has been thought sufficient to prove the contrary. Leland says he was *nobili loco natus*; but Speght, one of his early biographers, informs us that, "in the opinion of some heralds, he descended not of any great house, which they gather by his arms;" and Mr. Tyrwhitt is inclined to believe the heralds rather than Leland. Speght, however, goes further, and makes his father a vintner, who died in 1348, and left his property to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, where he was buried. This is confirmed by Stowe, who says, "Richard Chaucer, vintner, gave to that church his tenement and tavern, with the appurtenance, in the Royal-streete the corner of Kerion-lane, and was there buried, 1348." But neither Stowe nor Speght afford any proof that this Richard Chaucer was the father of our poet.

With respect to the place of his birth, we cannot produce better authority than his own. In his Testament of Love, he calls himself a Londoner, and speaks of the city of London as the place of his "kindly engendrure." In spite of this evidence, however, Leland, who is more than usually incorrect in his account of Chaucer, reports him to have been born in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. The time of his birth is, by general consent, fixed in the second year of Edward III, 1328, and the foundation of this decision seems to have originally been an inscription on his tomb, signifying that he died in 1400 at the age of seventy-two. Collier fixes his death in 1440; but he is so generally accurate, that this may be supposed an error of the press. Phillips is more unpardonable; for, contrary to all evidence, he instances the reigns of Henry IV, V, and VI, as those in which Chaucer flourished.

His biographers have provided him with education both at Oxford and Cambridge, a circumstance which we know occurred in the history of other scholars of that period, and is not therefore improbable. But in his Court of Love, which was composed when he was about eighteen, he speaks of himself under the name of Philogenet of Cambridge, clerk. Mr. Tyrwhitt, while he does not think this a decisive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge, is willing to admit it as a strong argument that he was not educated at Oxford. Wood, in his Annals (Vol. I. Book I, 484) gives a report, or rather tradition, that "when Wickliff was guardian or warden of Canterbury college, he had to his pupil the famous poet called Jeffrey Chaucer (father of Thomas Chaucer of Ewelme in Oxfordshire, Esq.) who, following the steps of his master, reflected much upon the corruptions of the clergy." This is something like evidence, if it could be depended on: at least it is preferable to the conjecture of Leland, who supposes Chaucer to have been educated at Oxford merely because he had before supposed that he was born either in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. Those who contend for Cambridge, as the place of his education, fix upon Solere's hall, which he has described in his story of the Miller of Trompyngton, but *Solere's hall* is merely a corruption of *Soler hall*, i. e. a hall with an open gallery, or *solere window*¹. The advocates for Oxford are inclined to place him in Merton college, because his contemporaries Strode and Occleve were of that college. It is equally a matter of conjecture that he was first educated at Cambridge, and afterwards at Oxford.

Wherever he studied, we have sufficient proofs of his capacity and proficiency. He appears to have acquired a very great proportion of the learning of his age, and became a master of its philosophy, poetry, and such languages as formed the intercourse between men of learning. Leland says he was "*acutus dialecticus, dulcis rhctor, lepidus poeta, gravis philosophus, ingeniosus mathematicus, denique sanctus theologus.*" It is equally probable that he courted the Muses in those early days, in which he is said to have been encouraged by Gower, although there are some grounds for supposing that his acquaintance with Gower was of a later date.

After leaving the university, we are told that he travelled through France and the Netherlands; but the commencement and conclusion of these travels are not specified. On his return, he is said to have entered himself of the Middle Temple, with a view to study the municipal law; but even this fact depends chiefly on a record, without a date, which Speght informs us, a Mr. Buckley had seen, where Geoffrey Chaucer was fined

¹ Mr. Warton thinks that Solere-Hall was Aula Solarii, the hall with the upper story, at that time a sufficient circumstance to distinguish and demarcate one of the academical hospitals. Hist. of Poetry vol. i, p. 492, note a. C.

"two shillings for beating a Franciscan frier in Fleet Street." Leland speaks of his frequenting the law colleges after his travels in France, and perhaps before. Mr. Tyrwhitt doubts these travels in France, and has indeed satisfactorily proved that Leland's account of Chaucer is full of inconsistencies. Leland is certainly inconsistent as to dates; but from the evidence Chaucer gave in a case of chivalry*, we have full proof of one journey in France, although the precise period cannot be fixed.

Whatever time these supposed employments might have occupied, we discover, at length, with tolerable certainty, that Chaucer betook himself to the life of a courtier, and probably with all the accomplishments suited to his advancement in the court of a monarch, who was magnificent in his establishment, and munificent in his patronage of learning and gallantry. At what period of life he obtained a situation here is uncertain. The writer of the life prefixed to Urry's edition supposes he was not more than thirty, because his first employment was in quality of the king's page; but the first authentic memorial, respecting Chaucer at court, is the patent in Rymer, 41 Edward III. by which that king grants him an annuity of twenty marks², by the title of *Valetus pater*, "our yeoman," and this occurred when Chaucer was in his thirty-ninth year. Several mistakes have arisen respecting these grants, from his biographers not understanding the meaning of the titles given to our poet. Speght mentions a grant from king Edward four years later than the above, in which Chaucer is styled *valetus hospitii*, which he translates *groome of the pallasce*; sinking our author, Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, as much too low, as his biographer in Urry's edition had raised him too high, by translating the same words *gentleman of the king's privy chamber*. Valet or yeoman was, according to the same acute scholar, the intermediate rank between *squire* and *groome*.

It would be of more consequence to be able to determine what particular merits were rewarded by this royal bounty. Mr. Tyrwhitt can find no proof, and no ground for supposing that it was bestowed on Chaucer for his poetical talents, although it is almost certain that he had distinguished himself, as a poet, before this time. The *Assemblies of Beves*, the *Complaint of the Blacke Knight*, and the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, were all composed before 1367, the era which we are now considering. What strengthens Mr. Tyrwhitt's opinion of the king's indifference to Chaucer's poetry, is his appointing him, a few years after, to the office of comptroller of the custom of wool, with an injunction that "the said Geoffrey write with his own hand his rolls touching the said office in his own proper person, and not by his substitute." The inference, however, which Mr. Tyrwhitt draws from this fact, viz. "that his majesty was either totally insensible of our author's poetical talents, or at least had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exercise of them," savours rather too much of the conjectural spirit which he professes to avoid. He allows that, notwithstanding what he calls "the possessing quality, with which these custom-house accounts might be expected to operate on Chaucer's genius," he probably wrote his *House of Fame* while he was in that office. Still less candid to the memory of Edward, will these inferences appear, if we apply modern notions of patronage to the subject; for in what manner could the king

¹ This prefixed to Urry's Edit. sig. d. C.

² About two hundred pounds of our money. C.

³ Mr. Ellis observes that this office, "by whatever name we translate it, might be held even by persons of the highest rank, because the only science then in request among the nobility was that of style, the knowledge of which was acquired, together with the habits of chivalry, by passing in graduation through the several menial offices about the court." Ellis's Specimens, vol. I. p. 202.

more honourably encourage the genius of a poet, than by a civil employment which rendered him easy in his circumstances, and free from the suspicious obligations of a pension or sinecure?

Chaucer's biographers have given some particulars of his life before the office just mentioned was conferred upon him. He is said to have been in constant attendance on his majesty, and when the court was at Woodstock, resided at a square stone house near the park gate, which long retained the name of Chaucer's house; and many of the rural descriptions in his works have been traced to Woodstock park, the favourite scene of his walks and studies. But besides his immediate office near the royal person, he very early attached himself to the service of the celebrated John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and from this connection his public life is to be dated.

The author of the life prefixed to Urry's edition observes that the duke's "ambition requiring all the assistance of learned men, to give it a plausible appearance, induced him to do Chaucer many good offices, in order to engage him in his interest." But although the assistance of learned men to an ambitious statesman is very well understood in modern times, it is somewhat difficult to conceive what advantage could be derived from such assistance before the invention of printing. It is more probable that the duke had a relish for the talents and taste of Chaucer, and became his patron upon the most liberal grounds, although Chaucer might afterwards repay his favours by exposing the conduct of the clergy, who were particularly obnoxious to the duke by their monopoly of power.

One effect of this connection was the marriage of our poet, by which he became eventually related to his illustrious patron. John of Gaunt's duchess, Blanche, entertained in her service one Catharine Rouet, daughter of sir Payne or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and Guion king at arms for that country. This lady was afterwards married to sir Hugh Swinford, a knight of Lincoln, who died soon after his marriage, and on his decease his lady returned to the duke's family, and was appointed governess of his children. While in this capacity she yielded to the duke's solicitations, and became his mistress. She had a sister, Philippa, who is stated to have been a great favourite with the duke and duchess, and by them, as a mark of their high esteem, recommended to Chaucer for a wife. He accordingly married her about the year 1360, when he was in his thirty-second year, and this step appears to have increased his interest with his patron, who took every opportunity to promote him at court. Besides the instances already given, we are told that he was made shield-bearer to the king, a title at that time of great honour, the shield-bearer being always next the king's person, and generally, upon signal victories, rewarded with military honours. But here again his biographers have mistaken the meaning of the courtly titles of those days. In the 46 Edward III, 1372, the king appointed him envoy, with two others, to Genoa, by the title of *scutifer mester*, "our squier." *Scutifer* and *armiger*, according to Mr. Tyrwhitt, are synonymous terms with the French *escuyer*; but Chaucer's biographers, thinking the title of *squier* too vulgar, changed it to shield-bearer, as if Chaucer had the special office of carrying the king's shield. With respect to the nature of this embassy to Genoa, biography and history are alike silent, and from that silence, the editor of the Canterbury tales is inclined to doubt whether it ever took place, or whether he had that opportunity of visiting Petrarch, an event which his biographers refer to the same period.

But although history is silent as to the object of Chaucer's embassy, his biographers have endeavoured to supply the defect, by conjecturing that it might be for the purpose

of king ships for the king's navy. They find that in those days, though we frequently made great naval armaments, we had but very few ships of our own, and were therefore obliged to hire them from the free states either of Germany or Italy. Having thus discovered an object for Chaucer's embassy, they represent it as being so successful, that the king bestowed new marks of favour upon him; and it is certain, whatever might be the cause, that at the distance of two years, namely in the forty-eighth year of that reign, 1374, he had a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily; and in the same year a grant, which has already been mentioned, during pleasure, of the offices of comptroller of the custom of wools, and comptroller of the *parvus customus vinorum, &c.* in the port of London. This office, we are told, he filled with great integrity, as well as advantage, his conduct not being in the least tainted with any of those connivings or frauds which had become frequent in the customs, and were detected towards the latter end of Edward's reign.

About a year after this, the king granted to him the wardship of sir Edmund Staplepe's heir, for which he received £104, and in the next year some forfeited wool to the value of £71. 4s. 6d.³. These, and his other pecuniary advantages, are said to have raised his income to a thousand pounds, *per annum*, a prodigious sum at that time, but quite incredible. Whatever his income was, however, he informs us in the Testament of Love, it enabled him to live with dignity and hospitality. In the last year of king Edward III, 1377, he was sent to France, with sir Guichard Dangle, and Richard Stan, le Surry, to treat of a marriage between the prince of Wales, Richard, and a daughter of the French king. Such is Froissart's account; but the English historians Hollingshed and Barnes inform us, that the principal object of his mission was to complain of some infringement of the truce concluded with the French, and that although they were not very successful in their remonstrance, it produced some overtures towards the said marriage, and this ended in a new treaty.

Whichever of these accounts is the true one, it appears that this was the last political employment which Chaucer filled, although he did not cease to take an interest in the measures of his patron, the duke of Lancaster. On the accession of Richard II. in 1377, his annuity of twenty marks was confirmed, and another annuity of twenty marks granted to him in lieu of the daily pitcher of wine. He was also confirmed in his office of comptroller.

When Richard II. succeeded his grandfather, he was but eleven years of age, and his uncle the duke of Lancaster was consequently entrusted with the chief share in the administration of public affairs. One of his first measures was to solemnize the young king's coronation with great pomp, previously to which a court of claims was established to settle the demands of those who pretended to have a right to assist at the ceremony. Among these Chaucer claimed, in right of his ward, who was possessed of the manor of Billington in Kent; and this was held of the crown, by the service of presenting to the king three maple cups on the day of his coronation; but this claim was contested, and it had not, is remote enough from the kind of information which it would be desirable to obtain respecting Chaucer. All we know certainly of this period is, that the duke of Lancaster still preserved his friendship for our poet, and probably was the means of the friendship just noticed having been renewed on the accession of the young king. Soon after this, however, Chaucer's biographers concur in the fact that he experienced

³ The marks have been calculated to amount to £3500. of our money. See Ellis, vol. i. p. 904.

a very anxious reverse in his affairs, which in the second year of Richard II. were in such disorder, that he was obliged to have recourse to the king's protection in order to screen him from the importunities of his creditors. But as to the cause of this embarrassment, we find no agreement among those who have attempted a narrative of his life. Some think his distresses were temporary, and some that they were artificial. Among the latter, the writer of his life in the *Biographia Britannica*, hazards a supposition which is at least ingenious. He is of opinion that Chaucer about this time found out a rich match for his son Thomas, namely Meud, the second daughter of sir John Bargherbe, and in order to obtain this match he was obliged to bring his son somewhat upon a level with her, by settling all his landed estates upon him: and that this duty might occasion those demands which put him under the necessity of obtaining the king's protection. The conclusion of the matter, according to this conjecture, must be, that Chaucer entailed his estates upon his son, and found means to put off his creditors, a measure not very honourable. But we are still in the dark as to the nature of those debts, or the existence of his landed property, and it is even doubtful whether this Thomas Chaucer was his son⁶. We know certainly of no son but Lewis, who was born in 1381, twenty-one years after his marriage, if the date of his marriage, before given, be correct.

It appears from the historians of Richard II. that the duke of Lancaster, about the third or fourth year of that monarch's reign, began to decline in political influence, if not in popularity, owing to the encouragement he had given to the celebrated reformer Wickliffe, whom he supported against the clergy, to whose power in state affairs he had long looked with a jealous eye. Chaucer's works show evidently that he concurred with the duke in his opinion of the clergy, and have procured him to be ranked among the few who paved the way for the reformation. Yet when the insurrection of Wat Tyler was imputed to the principles of the Wicklevites, the duke, it is said, withdrew his countenance from them, and disclaimed their tenets. Chaucer is likewise reported to have altered his sentiments; but the fact, in neither case, is satisfactorily confirmed. The duke of Lancaster condemned the doctrines of those followers of Wickliffe only, who had excited public disturbances; and Chaucer was so far from abandoning his former notions⁷, that, in 1384, he exerted his utmost interest in favour of John Comberton, commonly called John of Northampton, when about to be re-chosen mayor of London. Comberton was a reformer on Wickliffe's principles, and so obnoxious on that account to the clergy, that they stirred up a commotion on his re-election, which the

⁶ "After reading, in the circumstantial accounts of Chaucer's biography, that he was married in 1360 to Philippa Rouet, by whom he had issue Thomas Chaucer and other children, we are surprised to learn that it is doubtful whether Thomas Chaucer was his son; that the earliest known evidence of his marriage is a record of 1381, in which he receives a half-year's payment of an annuity of ten marks, granted by Edward III. to his wife as one of the maids of honour (*domicellas*) lately in the service of queen Philippa; that the name of Philippa Rouet does not occur in the list of these maids of honour, but that Chaucer's wife may possibly have been Philippa Pykard; that, notwithstanding this his said wife was certainly sister to Catharine Rouet, who married a sir John Swynford, and was the favourite mistress, and ultimately the wife, of the duke of Lancaster; and that Chaucer himself mentions no son but Lewis, whom he states to have been born in 1381, a date which seems to agree with the record above mentioned, and to place the date of his marriage in 1360." Ellis's Specimens, vol. i. p. 206.

⁷ His biographers say he died a member of the church of Rome. Fox claims him as a reformer Acts and Monuments, vol. ii. p. 42, edit. 1684. Dr. Warton (*Essay on Pope*) observes that Chaucer, as well as Dante, asserted that the church of Rome was Antichrist, a notion Bossuet has taken much pains to refute. C.

king was obliged to quell by force. The consequence was, that some lives were lost, Canterbury was imprisoned, and strict search was made after Chaucer, who contrived to escape first to Hainault, then to France, and finally to Zealand. The date of his flight has not been ascertained; but it was no doubt upon this occasion that he lost his place in the customs.

While in Zealand, he maintained some of his countrymen, who had fled thither upon the same account, by sharing the money he brought with him, an act of liberality which soon exhausted his stock. In the meantime, the partisans of his cause, whom he left at home, contrived to make their peace, not only without endeavouring to procure a pardon for him, but without siding him in his exile, where he became greatly distressed for want of pecuniary supplies. Such ingratitude, we may suppose, gave him more uneasiness than the consequences of it; but it did not lessen his courage, as he soon ventured to return to England. On this he was discovered, and committed to the Tower, where, after being treated with great rigour, he was promised his pardon if he would disclose all he knew, and put it in the power of government to restore the peace of the city. His former resolution appears now to have forsaken him, or, perhaps, indignation at the ungrateful conduct of his associates induced him to think disclosure a matter of indifference. It is certain that he complied with the terms offered; but we are not told what was the amount of his confession, or what the consequences of it were to others, or who they were whom he informed against. We know only that he obtained his liberty, and that an oppressive share of blame and obloquy followed. To alleviate his regret for this treatment, and partly to vindicate his conduct, he now wrote the *Treatise of Love*; and although this piece, from want of dates, and obscurity of style, is not sufficient to form a very satisfactory biographical document, it at least furnishes the preceding account of his exile and return.

The decline of the duke of Lancaster's interest contributed not a little to aggravate the distresses of our author, and determined him to take leave of the court and its intrigues, and retire in pursuit of that happiness which his years and habits of reflection demanded. With this view, it was necessary to dispose of those pensions which had been bestowed upon him in the former reign, and which, notwithstanding his espousing Edward's cause, not very acceptable to the sovereign, had been continued to him in the present reign. Accordingly, in May 1386, he obtained his majesty's license to surrender his two grants of twenty marks each, in favour of one John Scalby. After this he retired to his favourite Woodstock, and, according to Speght, employed a part of his time in revising and correcting his writings, and enjoying the calm pleasures of rural contemplation. It is thought that the composition of his *Canterbury Tales* was begun about this time, 1389, when he was in the sixty-first year of his age, and when, contrary to the usual progress of mind, his powers seem to have been in their fullest vigour*.

It was not long after this period that the duke of Lancaster resumed his influence at court; but whether Chaucer was enabled to profit by this reverse, or whether he had seen so much of political revolutions to induce him to quit his retreat, his biographers are doubtful. It appears, however, probable that the duke of Lancaster had it still as much in his will as in his power to befriend him, and it might be owing to his grace's influence

* Chaucer's fame rests chiefly on his *Canterbury Tales*, and Dryden's on his *Fables*, both written towards the decline of life. Dryden was seventy, and Chaucer before he finished what we have of his works, was probably not much less. C.

that, in 1389, we find him clerk of the works at Westminster, and in the following year at Windsor and other palaces; but Mr. Tyrwhitt doubts whether these offices were sufficient to indemnify him for the loss of his place in the customs. In the Testament of Love, he complains of "being beraste out of dignitie of office, in which he made a gatheringe of worldly godes;" and in another place he speaks of himself as "once glorious in worldly welefulnesse, and having such godes in weltbe as maken men riche." All this implies a very considerable reverse of fortune, although Speght's tradition of his having been possessed of "lands and revenues to the yearly value almost of a thousand pounds," remains utterly incredible.

But the king's favour did not end with the offices just mentioned. In the 17th year of his reign, 1394, he granted to Chaucer a new annuity of twenty pounds; in 1398, his protection for two years; and, in 1399, a pipe of wine annually. From the succeeding sovereign Henry IV. he obtained, in the year last mentioned, a confirmation of his two grants of £20 and of the pipe of wine, and at the same time an additional grant of an annuity of forty marks. Notwithstanding this dependent state of his affairs, some of his biographers represent him as possessed of Dunnington castle in Berkshire, which he must have purchased at the time he received the above annuity of twenty pounds, for up to that date (1394) it was in the possession of sir Richard Abberbury. Mr. Tyrwhitt remarks that the tradition which Evelyn notices in his *Sylva* of an oak in Dunnington park called *Chaucer's oak*, may be sufficiently accounted for, without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the castle was undoubtedly in the hands of Thomas Chaucer for many years.

During his retirement in 1391, he wrote his learned treatise on the Astrolobe, for the use of his son Lewis, who was then ten years old, and this is the only circumstance respecting his family which we have on his own, or any authority that deserves credit. Leland, Bale, and Wood, place this son under the tuition of his father's friend Nicholas Strode (whom, however, they call Ralph) of Merton college Oxford; but if Wood could trace Strode no further than the year 1370, it is impossible he could have been the tutor of Chaucer's son in 1391.

The accounts we have of Chaucer's latter days are extremely inconsistent. His biographers bring him from Woodstock to Dunnington castle, and from that to London, to solicit a continuation of his annuities, in which he found such difficulties as probably hastened his end. Wood, in his *Annals*, informs us that although he did not repent at the last of his reflections on the clergy, "yet of that he wrote of love and baudery it grieved him much on his death-bed: for one that lived shortly after his time, maketh report, that when he saw death approaching, he did often cry out, 'Woe is me, woe is me, that I cannot recall and annull those things which I have written of the base and filthy love of men towards women: but alas they are now continued from man to man, and I cannot do what I desire.'" To this may be added, that the affecting lines "*Gode Counsaile of Chaucer*," are said to have been made by him when on his death-bed, and in great anguish.

It seems generally agreed that he died Oct. 25, 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the great south cross-aisle. The monument to his memory was erected above a century and a half after his decease by Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford, a poet and a warm admirer of our author. It stands at the north end of a magnificent

* *Th. Gascoigne in 2 parte Dictionar. Theolog. p. 377. MS. "Fait idem Chawcerus pater Thomas Chawseri Armigeri qui Thomas sepult. in Nuhelm juxta Oxoniam.*

roza, formed by four obtuse foliaged arches, and is a plain altar, with three quatrefoils, and the same number of shields. The inscription, and figures on the back, are almost obliterated¹⁰.

Although Chaucer has been generally hailed as the founder of English poetry and literature, the extent of the obligations which English poetry and literature owe to him has not been decidedly ascertained. The improvement he introduced in language and versification has been called in question, not only by modern but by ancient critics. The chief faults attributed to him, are the mixture of French in all his works, and his ignorance of the laws of versification.

A formal discussion of these points is not intended in the present sketch; but some notice of them becomes necessary, and the student of Chaucer need not be told that very little of this kind can be attempted without following the track of the judicious Tyrwhitt.

With respect to the mixture of French words and phrases in Chaucer's writings, it must be observed that the French language was prevalent in this country several centuries before his time. Even previously to the Conquest, the Normans had made it a fashion to speak French in the English court, and from thence it would naturally be adopted by the people; but after the Conquest this became the case in a much greater proportion¹¹. It was a matter of policy in the conqueror to introduce his own language, and it would soon become a matter of interest in the people to acquire it. We uniformly find that where new settlers appear, even without the superiority of conquerors, the aborigines find it necessary to learn their language. The history of king William's conquest and policy, shows that his language must soon extend over a kingdom which he had parcelled out among his chiefs as the reward of their valour and attachment. One step which he took was above all others have contributed to naturalize the French language. He supplied all vacancies in the ecclesiastical establishment with Norman clergy; and if, with all this influence, the French language did not universally prevail, it must at least have interfered in a very considerable degree with the use of the native tongue. At schools, French and Latin were taught together in the reign of Edward III. and it was usual to make the scholars construe their Latin lessons into French, a practice which must have greatly retarded the progress of the native tongue towards refinement. Some check, indeed, appears to have been given to this in the reign of the same sovereign; but the proceedings in parliament, and the statutes, continued to be promulgated in French for a far longer period.

These circumstances have been advanced to prove that Chaucer ought not to be blamed for introducing words and phrases, with which his countrymen were familiar long before his time, and which they probably considered as elegancies. If Chaucer was taught at school, as other youths were, it is plain that he must have learned French while he was learning his mother-tongue, and was taught to give a preference to the former by making it the vehicle of translation.

The language, therefore, in use in Chaucer's days, among the upper classes, and by all that would be thought learned, was a Norman-Saxon dialect, introduced by the influx and influence of a court of foreigners, and spread wherever that influence extended. Journeys to France were also common, for the purposes of improvement in such accomplishments as were then fashionable; and this kind of intercourse, which is always in

¹⁰ Malcolm's Londinium, vol. i. p. 149. C.

¹¹ But see Mr. Ellis's chap. ii. of the Introduction to his Specimens, vol. i. p. 38. C.

favour of the country visited, would perhaps tend to introduce a still greater proportion of French phraseology. But still the foundation was laid at home, in the prevailing modes of education.

With respect to the progress of this mixture, and the effects of the accessions which in the course of nearly three centuries the English language received from Normandy, the reader is referred to Mr. Tyrwhitt's very elaborate essay on the language and versification of Chaucer, prefixed to his edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. It appears, upon the whole, that "the language of our ancestors was complete in all its parts, and had served them for the purposes of discourse, and even of composition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours." They had therefore "no call from necessity, and consequently no sufficient inducement, to alter its original and radical constitutions, or even its customary forms." And accordingly, notwithstanding the prevalence of the French from the causes already assigned, it is proved by Mr. Tyrwhitt, that "in all the essential parts of speech, the characteristic features of the Saxon idiom were always preserved: and the crowds of French words, which from time to time were imported, were themselves made subject, either immediately, or by degrees, to the laws of that same idiom."

As to what English poetry owes to Chaucer, Dr. Johnson has pronounced him "the first of our versifiers who wrote poetically;" and Mr. Warton has proved, "that in elevation and elegance, in harmony and perspicuity of versification, he surpasses his predecessors in an infinite proportion: that his genius was universal, and adapted to themes of unbounded variety; that his merit was not less in painting familiar manners with humour and propriety, than in moving the passions, and in representing the beautiful or the grand objects of nature with grace and sublimity. In a word, that he appeared with all the lustre and dignity of a true poet, in an age which compelled him to struggle with a barbarous language, and a national want of taste: and when to write verses at all, was regarded as a singular qualification."

The Saxons had a species of writing which they called poetry, but it did not consist of regular verses, nor was it embellished by rhyme. The Normans it is generally thought were the first who introduced rhyme or metre, copied from the Latin rhythmical verses, a bastard species, which belongs to the declining period of the Latin language. To reduce the history of versification from the earliest periods is impossible, for want of specimens. Two very trifling ones only are extant before the time of Henry II. namely, a few lines in the Saxon Chronicle upon the death of William the Conqueror, and a short canticle, which, according to Matthew Paris, the blessed Virginia was pleased to dictate to Godric, an hermit near Durham. In the time of Henry II. Layamon, a priest, translated chiefly from the French of Wace, a fabulous history of the Britons, entitled *Le Brut*, which Wace himself, about the year 1155, had translated from the Latin of Geffry of Monmouth. In this there are a number of short verses, of unequal lengths, but exhibiting something like rhyme. But so common was it to write, whatever was written, in French or Latin, that another century must be passed over before we come to another specimen of English poetry, if we except the *Ormulum*¹¹, and a moral piece upon old age¹², &c. noticed by Mr. Tyrwhitt, and which he conjectures to have been written earlier than the reign of Henry II.

¹¹ *Hist. of Poetry*, vol. i. p. 457.

¹² A paraphrase on the Gospel histories, written by one Orme or Ormia. C.

¹³ A specimen of this is given in Dr. Johnson's Introduction to his Dictionary. C.

Between the latter end of the reign of Henry III. and the time of Chaucer, the names of many English rhymers have been recovered, and many more anonymous writers, or rather translators, of romances flourished about this period; but they neither invented nor imported any improvements in the art of versification. Their labours, however, are not to be undervalued. Mr. Warton has very justly remarked, that "the revival of learning in most countries appears to have first owed its rise to translation. At rude periods the modes of original thinking are unknown, and the arts of original composition have not yet been studied. The writers, therefore, of such periods are chiefly and very usefully, employed in imparting the ideas of other languages into their own." But as many of these poetical romances were to be accompanied by music, they were less calculated for reading than recitation.

These authors, whatever their merit, were the only English poets, if the name may be used, when Chaucer appeared; and the only circumstances under which he found the poetry of his native tongue, were, that rhyme was established very generally; that the metres in use were principally the long Iambic, consisting of not more than fifteen, nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken by a caesura at the eighth syllable; the Alexandrine metre consisting of not more than thirteen syllables, nor less than twelve, with a caesura at the sixth: the octosyllabic metre; and the stanza of six verses, of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in complete octosyllabic metre; and the third and last catlectic, i. e. wanting a syllable or even two.

Such were the precedents which a new poet might be expected to follow. But Chaucer composed nothing in the first or second of these four metres. In the fourth he wrote only the *Rime of Sir Thopas*, which being intended to ridicule the vulgar romances, seems to have been purposely written in their favourite metre. In the third, or octosyllabic metre*, he wrote several of his compositions, particularly an imperfect translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, the *House of Fame*, the *Debate of the Duchesse Blanche*, and the *Dreme*, all which are so superior to the versification of his contemporaries and predecessors, as to establish his pre-eminence, and prove that the reformer of English poetry had at length appeared.

But the most considerable part of his works entitle him to the honour of an inventor. They are written in the heroic metre, and there is no evidence of any English poet having used it before him. He is not indeed to be considered as the inventor in the most exact sense, as the heroic metre had been cultivated by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace; but he was the first to introduce it into his native language, in which it has been employed by every poet of eminence to the present day.

The age of Chaucer had little of what we now understand by refinement. The public shows and amusements were splendid and sumptuous, they had all somewhat of a dramatic air: at their tournaments and carousals, the principal personages acted parts, with some connection of story, borrowed from the events, and conducted according to the events and manners of chivalry. But the national manners and habits were barbarous, where the restraint of religion repressed public licentiousness; and, with respect to the spectacles in which the higher orders indulged, were such as would not now be tolerated, perhaps, even at a fair. What influence they had on public decency, it is difficult to ascertain. In Chaucer's time there was indeed no public, because there was

* So called by Mr. Tyrwhitt, (whose opinions are chiefly followed on this subject) from what he supposes to have been its original form, in which although it often consists of nine and sometimes of ten syllables, the eighth is always the last accented syllable. C.

little or nothing of that communication of sentiment and feeling which we owe to the invention of printing.

In such an age it is the highest praise of Chaucer, that he stood alone, the first poet who improved the art by melody, fancy, and sentiment, and the first writer, whether we consider the quantity, quality, or variety of his productions. It is supposed that many of his writings are lost. What remain, however, and have been authenticated with tolerable certainty, must have formed the occupation of a considerable part of his life, and been the result of copious reading and reflection. Even his translations are mixed with so great a portion of original matter, as, it may be presumed, required time and study, and those happy hours of inspiration which are not always within command. The principal obstruction to the pleasure we should otherwise derive from Chaucer's works, is that profusion of allegory which pervades them, particularly the *Romaunt of the Rose*, the *Court of Love*, *Flower and Leaf*, and the *House of Fame*. Pope, in the first edition of his *Temple of Fame*, prefixed a note in defence of allegorical poetry, the propriety of which cannot be questioned, but which is qualified with an exception which applies directly to Chaucer. "The incidents by which allegory is conveyed, should never be spun too long, or too much clogged with trivial circumstances, or little particularities." But this is exactly the case with Chaucer, whose allegories are spun beyond all bounds, and clogged with many trivial and unappropriate circumstances.

For upwards of seventy years after the death of Chaucer, his works remained in manuscript. Mr. Tyrwhitt enumerates twenty-six manuscripts which he had an opportunity of consulting in the various public and private libraries of London, Oxford, Cambridge, &c. but of all these he is inclined to give credit to only five. Caxton, the first English printer, selected Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, as one of the earliest productions of his press, but happened to copy a very incorrect manuscript. This first edition is supposed by Mr. Ames to have been printed in 1475 or 1476. There are only two complete copies extant, one in his Majesty's library, and another in that of Merton college, both without preface or advertisement. About six years after, Caxton printed a second edition, and in his preface apologised for the errors of the former. No perfect copy of this edition is known. Ames mentions an edition "collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde, 1495, folio," but the existence of this is doubtful. Pynson printed two editions, the first, it is conjectured, in 1491, and the second in 1526, which was the first in which a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to the *Canterbury Tales*. Ames notices editions in 1520 and 1522, but had not seen them, nor are they now known.

In 1532, an edition was printed by Thomas Godfrey, and edited by Mr. Thynne, which Mr. Tyrwhitt informs us was considered, notwithstanding its many imperfections, as the standard edition, and was copied, not only by the booksellers, in their several editions of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght in 1597 and 1602. Speght's edition was reprinted in 1687, and in 1721 appeared Mr. Urry's, who, while he professed to compare a great many manuscripts, took such liberties with his author's text as to render this by far the worst edition ever published.

There is an interieaved copy of Urry's edition in the British Museum, presented by Mr. William Thomas, a brother of Dr. J. Thomas¹⁴ who furnished the preface, and the

¹⁴ Rector of Presteigne in Radnorshire. A large paper copy of this edition, with the same M.S. notes as that in the Museum, and a presentation copy from Dr. Thomas, was lately purchased by the present writer. C.

Glossary, and upon whom the charge of publishing devolved after Mr. Urry's death. This copy has many manuscript notes, and corrections. From one of them we learn that the life of Chaucer was very incorrectly drawn up by Mr. Dart, and corrected and enlarged by Mr. William Thomas; and from another, that bishop Atterbury prompted Urry to this undertaking, but "did by no means judge rightly of Mr. Urry's talents in this case, who though in many respects a most worthy person, was not qualified for a work of this nature." Dr. Thomas undertook to publish it, at the request of bishop Smalridge. In the Harleian collection is a copy of an agreement between William Brame, executor to Urry, the dean and chapter of Christ Church, and Bernard Lintot the bookseller. By this it appears that it was Urry's intention to apply part of the profits towards building Peckwater Quadrangle. Lintot was to print a thousand copies on small paper at £1. 10s. and two hundred and fifty on large paper at £2. 10s. It does not appear that this speculation succeeded. Yet the edition, from its having been printed in the Roman letter, the copiousness of the glossary, and the ornaments, &c. continued to be the only one consulted, until the publication of the *Canterbury Tales* by Mr. Tyrwhitt in 1775. This very acute critic was the first who endeavoured to restore a pure text by the collation of MSS. a labour of vast extent, but which must be undertaken even to greater extent, before the other works of Chaucer can be published in a manner worthy of their author. In the present edition, in which a more regular arrangement has been attempted, Mr. Tyrwhitt's text has been followed for the *Canterbury Tales*; and for the remainder of his works, the black letter editions, which, with all their faults, are more to be depended on than Urry's.

Mr. Warton laments that Chaucer has been so frequently considered as an old, rather than a good poet, and recommends the study of his works. Mr. Tyrwhitt, since this advice was given, has undoubtedly introduced Chaucer to a nearer intimacy with the learned public, but it is not probable that he can ever be restored to popularity. His language will still remain an unsurmountable obstacle with that numerous class of readers to whom poets must look for universal reputation. Poetry is the art of pleasing; but pleasure, as generally understood, admits of very little that deserves the name of study.

POEMS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

v. 1—62.

WHANNE that April with his shoures sote
The droughts of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veine in swiche licour,
Of which vertue engendred is the flour;
Whan Zepirus eke with his sote brethe
Inspired hath in every holt and bethie
The tender croppes, and the younge Sonne
With in the Ram his halfe cours yroune,
And made foules maken melodie,
That slepen alle night with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Then loken folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmevres for to seken strange strondes,
To see halwes couth in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Canterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martyr for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Beside, that, in that season on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Bedy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devoute corage,
At night was come into that hostlerie
Wedded and twenty in a compaignie
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawship, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Canterbury wolden ride.
The chambres and the stables weren wide,

And wel we weren used atte beste.
And shortly, whan the Sonne was gone to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everich ou,
That I was of hir felawship anon,
And made forward erly for to rise,
To take our way ther as I you devise.
But natheles, while I have time and space,
Or that I forther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reason,
To tellen you alle the condition
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degre;
And eke in what arraie that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I firste beginne.

A KNOWT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he firste began
To riden out, he loved chevalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And thereto hadde he ridden, no man ferre,
As wel in Cristendom as in Hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful often time he hadde the bord begonne
Aboven alle nations in Pruce.
In Lettowe hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No cristen man so ofte of his degre.
In Gernade at the seige eke hadde he be
Of Algesir, and ridden in Belmarie.
At Lyes was he, and at Satalie,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete see
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he ben sifene,
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene

In lutes thries, and ay slain his fo.

This ilke worthy knight hadde ben also
Somtime with the lord of Palatie,
Agep another hethen in Turkie:
And evermore he hadde a sovaine pris.
And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vilauie he sayde
In alle his lif, unto no manere wight.
He was a veray parfit gentil knight.

But for to tellen you of his arais,
His hors was good, but he ne was not gais.
Of fustian he wored a gipon,
Alle besmotred with his habergeon,
For he was late ycome fro his viage,
And wrote for to don his pilgrimage

With him ther was his sone a young Seint,
A lover, and a lusty bacheler,
With lockes orull as they were laide in presse.
Of twenty yere of age he was I gesse.
Of his stature he was of even lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and grete of strengthe.
And he hadde be somtime in cherechie,
In Flaundra, in Artois, and in Picardie,
And borne him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his ladies grace.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Alle ful of freshe floures, white and red.
Singing he was, or doyting alle the day,
He was as freshe, as is the mooneth of May.
Short was his goune, with sleeves long and wide.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride.
He coude songs make, and wel endite,
Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie and write.
So hote he loved, that by night-tale
He sleep no more than doth the nightingale.
Cürtois he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table.

A Yeman hadde he, and servantes no mo
At that time, for him luste to ride so;
And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene,
A sheve of peacock arwes bright and keene
Under his belt he bare ful thirtilly.
Wel coude he dressen his takel yemanly;
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe;
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.

A not-had hadde he, with a broune visage,
Of wood-craft coude he wel alle the usage.
Upon his arme he bare a gais hancer,
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other side a gais daggere,
Harnaised wel, and sharpe as point of spere:
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bare, the baudrik was of grene.
A forster was he sothely as I gesse.

Ther was also a boune, a Parovysan,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;
Hire gretest othe nas but by seint Eloy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service devine
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Franche she spake ful fayre and fetialy,
After the scole of Stratford site bowe,
For Franche of Paris was to hire unknowe.
At mete was she wel ytaughte withaille;
She lette no morsel from hire lippe falle;

Ne wette hire fingers in hire saunce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
Thatto no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
In curtesie was sette ful moche hire lest.
Hire over lippe wiped she so oisne,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grese, when she dronken hadde hire draught.
Ful sene after hire mete she raught.
And sikerly she was of grete disport,
And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
And peined hire to contrefeten chere
Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,
And to ben holden digna of reverence.

But for to spoken of hire consciance,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a monn
Caughte in a trappo, if it were ded or bledde.
Of smale boundes hadde she, that she fedde
With roasted flesh, and milk, and wasted brode.
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert:
And all was consciance and tendre herte.
Ful sene hire wimple ypinched was;
Hire nose tretis; hire eyes grey as glas;
Hire mouth ful smale, and therto soft and red;
But sikerly she hadde a fayre forehed.
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe;
For hardily she was not undergrowe.

Ful fetise was hire cloke, as I was wares
Of smale corall aboute hire arm she bare
A pair of bedes, gauded all with grene;
And therto heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which was first ywritten a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another woman also with hire hadde she,
That was hire chapelaine, and razours thre.

A Monk there was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider, that loved veperie;
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable:
And when he rode, men mighte his bridel here,
Gingeling in a whistling wind as clere,
And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle,
Ther as this lord was keeper of the celle.

The rule of seint Maure and of seint Bomeit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streeit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith, that hunters ben not holy men;
Ne that a monk, when he is rekkeles,
Is like to a fish that is waterles;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloistre.
This ilke text held he not wroth an oistre.
And I say his opinion was good.
What shulde he studie, and make himselfen
wood,

Upon a book in cloistre alway to pore,
Or swinken with his bondes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? how shal the world be served?
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therefore he was a prickasoure a right:
Greiboundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight:
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

I saw his sleeves purified at the hood
With gris, and that the spert of the lond.
And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,
He hadde of gold ywroughte curious pinas;

A love-knotte in the greter end ther was
His hed was bailed, and shoue as any glas,
And eke his face, as it hadde ben anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good pite.
His eyen stepe, and rolling in his hed,
That stemed as a forneys of a led.
His botes souple, his hors in gret estat,
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat.
He was not pale as a fornyed gost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as brouse as is a bery.

A FANX there was, a wanton and a mery,
A knytour, a ful solempne man.
In all the ordres foure is non that can
So moche of daliance and fayre langage.
He hadde ymade ful many a mariage
Of younge wimmen, at his owen cost.
Until his order he was a noble post.
Ful wel beloved, and familiar was he
With frankleins over all in his contree,
And eke with worthy wimmen of the toun :
For he had power of confession,
As saide himselfe, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful swetely berde he confession,
And pleasant was his absolution.
He was an esy man to give penance,
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitance :
For unto a poure ordre for to give
Is signe that a man is wel yshrive.
For if he gave, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentant.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may not wepe although him sore smerte.
Therefore in stede of weping and praieres,
Men moche give silver to the poure freres.

His tippet was ay farned ful of knives,
And pincet, for to given fayre wives.
And certainly he had a mery note.
Wel coude he singe and playen on a rote.
Of yddinges he bare utterly the pris.
His schekle was white as is the flour de lis,
Thereto he strong was as a champignon,
And knew wel the tavernes in every toune,
And every hosteler and gay tapstere,
Better than a lazer or a beggere,
For unto swiche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nought, as by his faculte,
To haven with sike lezars acquaintance.
If it is not honest, it may not avance,
As for to delen with no swiche povraillie,
But all with riche, and sellers of vitaille.
And over all, ther as profit shuld arise,
Dertis he was, and lowly of servise.
Der n'is no man no wher so vertuous.
He was the beste begger in all his hours :
And gave a certaine ferme for the grant,
For of his bretheren came in his haunt.
For though a widewe hadde but a shod,
So pleasant was his *in principio*!
So wold he have a ferthing or he went.
His purchas was wel better than his rent.
And rage he coude as it hadde ben a whelp,
On wedayes, ther coude he moche help.
For ther was he nat like a cloisterere,
With thredbare cope, as is a poure scolere,
But he was like a minister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semicope,
That round was as a belle out of the presse.
Somewhat he laped for his wastounesse,

To make his English swete upon his tonge ;
And in his harping, when that he hadde soonge,
His eyen twinkled in his hed aright,
As don the starres in a frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MERCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and highe on hors he sat,
And on his hed a Flaundrish bever hat.
His botes clapsed fayre and fetisly.
His reasons spake he ful solempnely,
Sounding alway the encesse of his winning.
He wold the see were kept for any thing
Betwixen Middleburgh and Orewell.
Wel coude he in echenges sheldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit besette ;
There wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So stedefastly didde he his governance,
With his bargeines, and with his chevisaunce,
Forsothe he was a worthy man withalle,
Bet soth to seyn, I n'ot how men him calle,

A CLERK ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logike hadde long ygg.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I understake ;
But loked holwe, and therto soberly.
Ful thredbare was his overest cortepy,
For he hadde geten him yet to benefice,
Ne was nought worldly to have an office.
For him was lever han at his beddes hed
A twenty bokes, clothed in black or red,
Of Aristotle, and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fidel, or sautrie.
But all be that he was a philosopfre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes bente,
On bokes and on lerning he it spente,
And beaily gan for the soules preie
Of hem, that yave him wherwith to scolaie,
Of studie toke he moche cure and hede.
Not a word spake he more than was neede ;
And that was said in forme and reverence,
And short and quike, and ful of high sentences,
Booning in moral vertue was his speche,
And gladly wold he lerne, and gladly teche.

A SERVAUNT OF THE LAWE wite and wise,
That often hadde yben at the parvis,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discrete he was, and of gret reverence :
He semed swiche, his wordes were so wise,
Justice he was ful often in amise,
By patent, and by pleine commissioun ;
For his science, and for his high renown,
Of fees and robes had he many on.
So grette a pourchasour was nowher non.
All was fee simple to him in effect,
His pourchasing might not ben in suspect,
No wher so bery a man as he ther n'as,
And yet he semed besier than he was.
In termes hadde he cas and domes alle,
That fro the time of king Will. weren falle,
Thereto he coude endite, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his writing.
And every statute coude he plaine by rote.
He rode but homely in a medlion cote,
Girt with a seinet of silk, with barres azure,
Of his array tell I no lenger tale.

A FRANKELIN was in this compaignie;
 White was his berd, as is the dayesie.
 Of his complexion he was sanguin.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in win.
 To liven in delit was ever his wone,
 For he was Epicures owen soone,
 That held opinion, that plain delit
 Was veraily felicite parfite.
 An housholder, and that a grete was he;
 Seint Julian he was in his contree.
 His brede, his ale, was alway after on;
 A better covyned man was no wher noon.
 Withouten bake mete never was his hous,
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentuous,
 It newed in his hous of mete and drinke,
 Of alle deintees that men coude thinke,
 After the soodry seasons of the yere,
 So changed he his mete and his soupere.
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewes,
 And many a brewe, and many a luce in stewe.
 Wo was his cok, but if his sauce were
 Poinant and sharpe, and ready all his gere.
 His table dormant in his halle alway
 Stode redy covered alle the longe day.
 At sessions ther was he lord and sire.
 Ful often time he was knight of the shire.
 An anelace and a gipciere all of silk,
 Heng at his girdel, white as morwe milk.
 A shereve hadde he ben, and a countour.
 Was no wher swiche a worthy vavasour.

AN HABERDASHE, and a CARPENTER,
 A WASSER, a DRYER, and a TAPICER,
 Were alle yclothed in o liverre,
 Of a solempne and grete fraternite.
 Ful freshe and newe hir gere ypiked was.
 Hir knives were ychaped not with bras,
 But all with silver wrought ful clepe and wel,
 Hir girdels and hir pouches every del.
 Wel semed eche of hem a fayre burgeis,
 To sitten in a gild halle, on the dein.
 Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
 Was shapeliich for to ben an alderman.
 For catel hadden they ynough and rent,
 And eke hir wives wolde it wel assent:
 And elles certainly they were to blame.
 It is ful fayre to ben ycleped madame,
 And for to gon to vigiles alle before,
 And have a mantel reallich ybore.

A COKE they hadden with hem for the nones,
 To boile the chikenes and the marie bones,
 And poudre marchant, tart and galingle.
 Wel coude he knowe a draught of London ale.
 He coude roste, and sethe, and broile, and frye,
 Maken mortrewes, and wel bake a pie.
 But gret harm was it, as it thoughte me,
 That on his shinne a mormal hadde be.
 For blanc manger that made he with the best.

A SMITHAN was ther, woned fer by west:
 For ought I wote, he was of Dertemouth.
 He rode upon a rouncee, as he couthe,
 All in a goune of falding to the knee.
 A dagger hanging by a las hadde hee
 About his nekke under his arm adoun.
 The hote somner hadde made his hewe al broun.
 And certainly he was a good felaw.
 Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw

From Burdeux ward, while that the chapman
 slope.

Of aice conscience toke he no kepe.
 If that he faght, and hadde the higher hand,
 By water he sent hem home to every land.
 But of his craft to reckon wel his tides,
 His streemes and his strandes him besides,
 His herberwe, his mone, and his lodemange,
 Ther was non swiche, from Hell unto Cartage.
 Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:
 With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake.
 He knew wel alle the havens, as they were,
 Fro Gothland, to the Cape de Guisiers,
 And every creek in Bretagne and in Spaine:
 His barge ycleped was the Magdelaine.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK,
 In all this world ne was ther non him like
 To speke of phisike, and of surgerie:
 For he was grounded in astronomie.
 He kept his patient a ful gret del
 In houres by his magike naturel.
 Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
 Of his images for his patient.

He knew the cause of every maladie,
 Were it of cold, or hote, or moist, or drie,
 And wher engendred, and of what humour,
 He was a very parfite practisour.
 The cause yknowe, and of his arm the rote,
 Anon he gave to the sike man his bote.
 Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
 To send him dragges, and his lettuaries,
 For eche of hem made other for to winne:
 Hir frendship n'as not newe to beginne.
 Wel knew he the old Esculapius,
 And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus;
 Old Hippocrates, Hali, and Gallien;
 Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen;
 Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin;
 Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin.
 Of his diete mesurable was he,
 For it was of no great superfluitee,
 But of gret nourishing, and digestible.
 His studie was but litel on the Bible.
 In sanguin and in perse he clad was alle
 Lined with taffata, and with sendalle.
 And yet he was but esy of dispence:
 He kepte that he wan in the pestilence.
 For gold in phisike is a cordiall.
 Therefore he loved gold in speciall.

A good WIF was ther of beside BATAI,
 But she was sorn del defe, and that was scathe.
 Of cloth making she hadde swiche an haunt,
 She passed hem of Ipres, and of Gaunt.
 In all the parish wif ne was there non,
 That to the offring before hire shulde gon,
 And if ther did, certain so wroth was she,
 That she was out of alle charitee.
 Hire coverchiefs weren ful fine of ground;
 I dorste swere, they weyeden a pound;
 That on the Sunday were upon hire hede.
 Hire hosen weren of fine scarlet rede,
 Ful streite weyeden, and aboon ful moist and newe.
 Bold was hire face, and fayre and rede of hewe.
 She was a worthy woman all hire live,
 Housbondes at the chirche dore had she b
 five.

Withouten other compaignie in youthe.
 But therof nedeth not to speke us mouth.

And thries hadde she ben at Jerusalem.
 She hadde passed many a strange strete.
 At Rome she hadde ben, and at Boloine,
 In Galice at Seint James, and at Coloine.
 She coude moche of wandring by the way.
 Gat-tothed was she, sothly for to say.
 Upon an ambler easly she sat,
 Yrismplod wel, and on hire bede an hat,
 As brode as is a bokeler, or a targe.
 A fote-mantel about hire hippes large,
 And on hire fete a pair of spores sharpe.
 In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe
 Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,
 For of that arte she coude the olde dance.

A good man ther was of religioun,
 That was a poure Pricessor of a town:
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
 His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
 Simple he was, and wooder diligent,
 And in adversite ful patient:
 And swiche he was yprevod often sithes.
 But loth were him to curren for his tithes,
 That rather wolde he yeven out of doute,
 Than his poure parishens aboute,
 Of his offering, and eke of his substance.
 He coude in litel thing have suffraunce.
 Wite was his parish, and houses for scooder,
 But he ne left nought for no rain ne theoder,
 In sikenes and in mischief to viiold
 The ferret in his parish, moche and lite,
 Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf.
 His noble consaunte to his shepe he yaf,
 That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
 Out of the gospel he the wordes caught,
 And his figure he added yet therto,
 As if gold ruste, what shuld iren do?
 As if a preest be foule, on whom we trust,
 His reader is a lewed man to rust:
 And same it is, if that a preest take kepe,
 As a shitten shepheard, and cliche shepe,
 Of ought a preest ensauple for to yeve,
 By his clowene, how his shepe shuilde live.
 He sette not his benefice to hire,
 And lette his shepe accumbred in the mire,
 And ran unto London, unto Seint Poules,
 To take him a chanterie for soules,
 Or with a brotherhode to be withold:
 He dwelt at home, and kepte wel his fold,
 That the wolf ne made it not miscarie.
 He was a shepheard, and no mercenarie,
 And though he holy were, and vertuous,
 He was to sinful men not dispitious,
 For of his speche dangerous ne digne,
 And in his teaching discrete and benigne.
 He driven folk to Heven, with fairenesse,
 By good ensauple, was his business:
 And it were any persone obstinat,
 That so he were of highe, or low estat,
 He wolde he snibben sharply for the noes.
 He never preest I trowe that no wher noon is,
 That after no pompe ne reverence,
 Cranked him no spiced conscience,
 In Cristes love, and his apostles twelve,
 He thought, but first he folwed it himselfe.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
 That hadde yild of doog ful many a sother.

A trowe swinke, and a good was he,
 Living in poes, and parfitte charitee.
 God loved he beste with alle his herte
 At alle times, were it gain or smerte,
 And than his neigheboor right as himselve.
 He wolde thrash, and therto dika, and delve,
 For Cristes sake, for every poure wight,
 Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.
 His tithes paid he ful fayre and wel.
 Both of his propre swinke, and his catal.
 In a tabard he rode upon a mere.
 Ther was also a reve, and a millere,
 A scowpounr, and a pardouner elen,
 A manciple, and myself, ther n'ere no mo.

The MILLER was a stout carl for the noes,
 Ful bigge he was of braun, and eke of bones;
 That proved wel, for over all ther he came,
 At wrastling he wold bere away the ram.
 He was short shuldred, brode, a thikke gnatte,
 Ther n'as no dore, that he n'olde beve of barre,
 Or breke it at a renning with his hede.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,
 And therto brode, as though it were a spade.
 Upon the egg right of his nose he hade
 A wert, and theron stode a tuft of heres,
 Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres.
 His nose-thirles blacke were and wide.
 A swerd and bokeler bare he by his side.
 His mouth as wide was as a fornice.
 He was a jaugler, and a goliardis,
 And that was most of sinne, and harlotries.
 Wel coude he stelen corbe, and tullen thries.
 And yet he had a thomb of gold parde.
 A white cote and a blew hode wered he.
 A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soone,
 A therewithal he brought us out of tooun.

A gentil Manciple was there of a temple,
 Of which schatours mighten take ensauple
 For to ben wise in bying of vitaille.
 For whether that he paid, or toke by taile,
 Aigats he waited so in his achate,
 That he was ay before in good estate.
 Now is not that of God a ful fayre grace,
 That swiche a lewed mannes wit shal pace
 The wisdom of an hepe of lered men?

Of maisters had he mo than thries ten,
 That were of lawe expert and curious:
 Of which ther was a dosen in that hous,
 Worthy to ben stewardes of rent and lood
 Of any lord that is in Englelood,
 To maken him live by his propre good,
 In honour detteles, but if he were wood,
 Or live as scarily, as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen all a shire
 In any cas that mighte fallen or happe;
 And yet this manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The REVE was a siendre colerike man,
 His berd was shawe as neigh as ever he can.
 His here was by his eres round yshorne.
 His top was docked like a preest before.
 Ful longe were his legges, and ful lewe,
 Ylike a staf, ther was no calf yewe.
 Wel coude he kepe a garner and a binne:
 There was non auditour coude on him winne.
 Wel wite he by the drought, and by the rain,
 The yielding of his seed, and of his grain.

What with his wisdom and his chevalrie,
He conquered all the regne of Femieie,
That whilom was ycleped Scythia;
And wedded the freche queene Ipolita,
And brought hire home with him to his contree
With moche glorie and grete solempnitee,
And eke hire yonge suster Emelie.
And thus with victorie and with melodie
Let I this worthy duk to Athenes ride,
And all his host, in armes him beside.

And certes, if it p'ere to long to here,
I wolde have told you fully the manere,
How wommen was the regne of Femieie,
By Theseus, and by his chevalrie;
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Betwix Athenes and the Amazones;
And how assaged was Ipolita
The faire hardy queene of Scythia;
And of the feste, that was at hire wadding,
And of the temple at hire home coming.
But all this thing I mooste us now forbere.
I have, God wot, a large feld to ere;
And weke ben the oxen in my plow.
The remenant of my tale is long ynow.
I wil not letten eke non of this route.
Let every felaw telle his tale aboute,
And let se now who shal the souper winne.
Ther as I left, I wil agen beginne.

This duk, of whom I made mentiou,
When he was comen almost to the toune,
In all his wele and in his mooste pride,
He was ware, as he cast his eye aside,
Wher that ther kneled in the highte way
A compaignie of ladies, twey and twey,
Eche after other, clad in clothes blake:
But swiche a crie and swiche a wo they make,
That in this world n'is creature living,
That ever herd swiche another waimenting.
And of this crie ne wolde they never stenten,
Till they the reines of his bridel benten.

"What folk be ye that at min home comen
Perturben so my feste with crying?"
Quod Theseus; "have ye so grete envie
Of min honour, that thus oomplaine and crie?
Or who hath you misboden, or offended?
Do telle me, if that it may be amended;
And why ye be thus clothed all in blake?"

The oldest lady of hem all than spake,
When she had swooned, with a dedly chere,
That it was reuthe for to seen and here.
She sayde; "Lord, to whom Fortune hath yeven
Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
Nought groweth us your glorie and your honour;
But we beseke you of mercie and socour.
Have mercie ou our woe and our distresse.
Some drope of pitie thurgh thy gentillesse,
Upon us wretched wimmen let now falle.
For certes, lord, ther n'is non of us alle,
That she n' hath ben a duchesse or a queene;
Now be we captives, as it is wel sene:
Thanked be Fortune, and hire false whele,
That non estat ensureth to be wele,
And certes, lord, to abiden your presence
Here in this temple of the goddessse Clemence
We han ben waiting all this fourteenight:
Now helpe us, lord, sin it lieth in thy might.

"I wretched wight, that wepe and waille thus,
Was whilom wif to king Capaneus,
That starfe at Thebes, cursed be that day:
And alle we that ben in this awy,

And maken all this lamentation,
We kouten alle our husbandes at that toune,
While that the seige thersabouten lay.
And yet now the olde Creon, wala we!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquitee,
He for despit, and for his tyrannie,
To don the ded bodies a vilanie,
Of all our lordes, which that ben yalawe,
Hath all the bodies on an hepe ydrawe,
And will not suffren hem by non assent
Neither to ben yberied, ne ybrant,
But maketh boundes ete hem in despite."

And with that word, withouten more respite
They fallen groff, and crien pitously;
"Have on us wretched wimmen som merrcy,
And let our sorwe sinken in this herte."

This gentil duk don from his courser sterte
Which herte pitous whan he herd hem speke,
Him thoughte that his herte wolde all to-brake,
Whan he saw hem so pitous and so mate,
That whilom weren of so gret estate.
And in his armes he hem all up hefte,
And hem comforted in ful good entente,
And swore his oth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde don so ferforthly his might
Upon the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
That all the peple of Grece shulde speke,
How Creon was of Theseus yswered,
As be that hath his deth ful wel deserved.

And right anon withouten more abode
His banner he displaide, and forth he rode
To Thebes ward, and all his host beside:
No nere Athenes n' olde he go ne ride,
Ne take his see fully half a day,
But onward on his way that night he lay:
And sent anon Ipolite the queene,
And Emelie hire yonge suster shene
Unto the toune of Athenes for to dwell:
And-forth he rit; ther n' is no more to tell.

The red statue of Mars with spere and targe
So shiueeth in his white banner large,
That all the feldes glitteren up and down:
And by his banner borne is his penon
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete
The Minotaur which that he slew in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chevalrie the flour,
Till that he came to Thebes, and alight
Fayre in a feld, ther as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plaine bataille, and put his folk to flight:
And by assault he wan the citee after,
And rent adoun bothe wall, and sparre, and rafter;
And to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of hir housbondes that were slain,
To don the obsequies, as was tho the gac.

But it were all to long for to devise
The grete clamour, and the waimenting,
Whiche that the ladies made at the burning
Of the bodies, and the grete honour,
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladies, whan they from him wente:
But shortly for to telle is min entente.

Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slaine, and wommen Thebes thus,
Skill in the feld he toke all night his reste,
And did with all the countree as him leste.

To ransake in the tas of bodies dede,
 Hem for to stripe of harnes and of wede,
 The pillours dide hir busynesse and cure,
 After the bataille and discomfiture.
 And so befell, that in the tas they found,
 Thurgh gyt with many a grevous bloody wound,
 Two yonge knightes liggynge by and by,
 Bothe in on armes, wrought ful richely:
 Of whichen two, Arcite lighte that on,
 And he that other lighte Palamon.
 Not fully quik, ne fully dede they were,
 But by hir cote-armure, and by hir gere,
 The heraudes knew hem wel in special,
 As tho that weren of the blod real
 Of Thebes, and of eustren two yborne.
 Out of the tas the pillours hau been torne,
 And has been caried soft into the tants
 Of Thebes, and he ful soon hem sente
 To Athens, for to dwellen in prison
 Perpetuel, he w'olde no ransoun.
 And whan this worthy duk had thus ydon,
 He toke his host, and home he rit anon,
 With haure crowned as a conquerour;
 And ther he liveth in joye and in honour
 Turne of his lif; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And in a tour, in arguish and in wo,
 Dwelen this Palamon and Arcite.
 For evermo, ther may no gold hem quite.
 Thus passeth yere by yere, and day by day,
 Til it falle ones in a morwe of May
 That Emelie, that fayrer was to sene
 Than in the lile upon his stalke grene,
 And fresher than the May with floures newe,
 (For with the rose colour strof hire howe;
 I n'ot which was the finer of hem two)
 Er it was day, as she was wont to do,
 She was arisen, and all redy dight;
 For May wol have no slogardie a-night.
 The moon priketh every gentil herte,
 And maketh him out of his slepe to sterbe,
 And sayth, "Arise, and do this observance."
 This waketh Emelie han remembrance
 To don honour to May, and for to rise.
 Yelched was she freshe for to devise.
 Hire yelve here was broided in a tresse,
 Behind hire back, a yerde long I gesse.
 And in the gardin at the Somme uprist
 She walketh up and down wher as hire list,
 She gathereth floures, partie white and red,
 To make a sotel geround for hire hed,
 And as an angel hevenlich she song.
 The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
 Which of the castel was the chef dongeon,
 (Wher as these knightes weren in prison,
 Of which I tolde you, and tellen shal)
 Was even joiant to the gardin wall,
 Ther as this Emelie had hire playing.
 Bright was the Somme, and clere that mornynge,
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
 As was his wone, by love of his gayler
 Was risen, and romed in a chambre on high,
 In which he all the noble citee sight,
 And che the gardin, ful of branches grene,
 Ther as this freshe Emelie the shene
 Was in hire walk, and roused up and down.
 This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon
 Geth in his chambre rowynge to and fro,
 And to himselfe complaining of his wo:
 That he was borne, ful oft he sayd, alas!
 And so befell, by aventure or cas,

That thurgh a window thynke of many a barre
 Of yere gret, and square as any sparre,
 He cast his eyen upon Emelia,
 And therwithal he blest and cried, A!
 As though he stonger were unto the berte.
 And with that cris Arcite anon up sterbe,
 And saide, "Cosin min, what eyeth thou,
 That art so pale and dedly for to see?
 Why crydest thou? who haty thes don offence?
 For goddes love, take all in patience
 Our prison, for it may non other be.
 Fortune hath yeven us this adwerite.
 Som wikke aspect or disposition
 Of Saturne, by som constellation,
 Hath yeven us this, although we had it roorn,
 So stoo the heven whan that we were born,
 We moete endure: this is the short and plain."
 This Palamon answerde, and sayde again;
 "Cosin, foreoth of this opinion
 Thou hast a vaine imagination.
 This prison caused me not for to cris.
 But I was lust right now thurghout min ey
 Into min berte, that wol my hane be.
 The fayrnesse of a lady that I se
 Yond in the gardin rowynge to and fro,
 Is cause of all my crying and my wo.
 I n'ot wh'er she be woman or goddesse.
 But Venus is it, sothly, as I gesse."
 And therwithal on knees adoun he fell,
 And sayde: "Venus, if it be your will
 You in this gardin thus to transfigure,
 Reform me sorweful wretched creature,
 Out of this prison helpe that we may scape.
 And if so be our destinee be shape
 By eterne word to dieen in prison,
 Of our liguage have som compassion,
 That is so low ybrought by tyrannie."
 And with that word Arcite gan espie
 Wher as this lady romed to and fro,
 And with that sight hire beautee hurt him so,
 That if that Palamon were wounded sore,
 Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.
 And with a sigh he sayde pitously:
 "The freshe beautee sloth me sodeynly
 Of hire that rometh in the yonder place.
 And bat I have hire mercie and hire grace,
 That I may seen hire at the leste way,
 I n'am but ded; ther n'is no more to say."
 This Palamon, whan he thes wordes herd,
 Dispitously he lokod, and answerd:
 "Whether sayest thou this in earnest or in play?"
 "Nay," quod Arcite, "in earnest by my fay.
 God helpe me so, me lust full yvel play."
 This Palamon gau knit his browes twey.
 "It were," quod he, "to thes no gret honour
 For to be false, ne for to be traytour
 To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
 Ysworne ful depe, and eche of us to other,
 That never for to dieen in the peine,
 Til that the deth departen shal us tweine.
 Neyther of us is love to hindre other,
 Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
 But that thou shuldest trewely forther me
 In every cas, as I shuld forther thee.
 This was thin oth, and min also certain;
 I wot it wel, thou darst it not withain.
 Thus art thou of my conseil out of doute.
 And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute
 To love my lady, whom I lov and serve,
 And ever shal, til that min berte sterre.

"Now certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so.
I loved hire firste, and tolde thee my wo
As to my conseil, and my brother sworne
To forther me, as I have told before.
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lie in thy might,
Or elles art thou false, I dare wel seyn."

This Arcite full proudly spake again.
"Thou shalt," quod he, "be rather false than I.
And thou art false, I tell thee utterly.
For per amour I loved hire first or thou.
What wolt thou sayn? thou wistest nat right now
Whether she were a woman or a goddess.
This is affection of hoinesse,
And min is love, as to a creature:
For which I tolde thee min aventure
As to my cousin, and my brother sworne."

"I pose, that thou lovedest hire before:
Wost thou not wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That who shall give a lover any lawe?
Love is a greter lawe by my pan.
Then may be yeven of any crithly man:
And therefore possitf laws, and scribe decrees
Is broken all day for love in eche degree.
A man moste needs love managre his hed:
He may not been it, though he shuld be ded,
All he she maid, or widewe, or elles wif."

"And eke it is not likely all thy lif
To stonden in hire grace, no more shal I:
For wel thou wost thyselven veraily,
That thou and I am dammed to prison
Perpetuel, us gaineth no raunson."

"We strive, as did the boundes for the bone,
They fought all day, and yet hir part was none.
Ther came a kyte, while that they were so wrothe,
And bare away the bone betwix hem bothe.
And therfore at the kinges court, my brother,
Eke man for himself, ther is non other.
Love, if thee lust; for I love, and ay shal:
And sothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prison mosten we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure."

Gret was the strif, and long betwix hem twey,
If that I hadde leiser for to sey:
But to th' effect. It happed on a day,
(To tell it you as shortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perithous,
That felaw was to this duk Theseus
Sin thilke day that they were children lite,
Was come to Athenes, his felaw to visite,
And for to play, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man so:
And he loved him as tendrely again.
So wel they loved, as olde bokes sain,
That when that on was ded, sothly to telle,
His felaw wente and sought him down in Helle:
But of that storie list me not to write.

Duk Perithous loved wel Arcite,
And had him knowe at Thebes yere by yere:
And finally, at request and priere
Of Perithous, withouten any raunson
Duk Theseus him let out of prison,
Frelly to goon, wher that him list over all,
In swiche a gise, as I you tellen shal.

This was the forward, plainly for to eadite,
Betwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were yfound
Ever in his lif, by day or night, o stound
In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,

That with a sword he shulde lese his bed;
Ther was non other remedie no rede.
But taketh his leve, and homeward he him spedde;
Let him beware, his nekke lieth to wedde.

How gret a sorwe suffereth now Arcite?
The deth he feleth thurgh his herte smite;
He wepeth, waileth, crieth pitously;
To sleen himself he waiteth privily.
He said; "Alas the day that I was borne!
Now is my prison worse than before:
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle
Not only in purgatorie, but in Helle.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous.
For elles had I dwelt with Theseus
Yfetered in his prison evermore.
Than had I ben in blisse, and not in wo.
Gonly the sight of hire, whom that I serve,
Though that I never hire grace may deserve,
Wold have sufficed right ynough for me."

"O dere cousin Palamon," quod he,
"This is the victorie of this aventure.
Ful blisful in prison maigest thou endure:
In prison? certes nay, but in paradise.
Wel heth Fortune yurned thee the die,
That hast the sight of hire, and I th' absence.
For possible is, sin thou hast hire presence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by som cas, sin Fortune is changeable,
Thou maigest to thy desir sometime atteine.
But I that am exiled, and barrene
Of alle grace, and in so gret despair,
That ther n'is erthe, water, fire, ne aire,
Ne creature, that of hem maketh in,
That may me hele, or don comfort in this,
Wel ought I sterve in wanhope and distresse.
Farewel my lif, my lust, and my gladnesse."

"Alas, why plainen men so in comoun
Of purveyance of God, or of Fortune,
That yeveth hem ful oft in masey a gise
Wel better than they can hemself devise?
Som man desireth for to have richesse,
That cause is of his murdre or gret siknesse.
And som man wold out of his prison fayne,
That in his house is of his meinie slain.
Infinite harmes ben in this manere.
We wote not what thing that we prisen here.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.
A drunken man wot wel he hath an hous,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,
And to a drunken man the way is sider,
And certes in this world so faren we."

"We soken fast after felicite,
But we go wrong ful often trowely,
Thus we may sayen alle, and namely I,
That wende, and had a gret opinion,
That if I might escapen fro prison
Than had I ben in joye and parfitte hele,
Ther now I am exiled for my wele.
Sin that I may not seen you, Emelie,
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no remedie."

Upon that other side Palamon,
When that he wist Arcite was agon,
Swiche sorwe he maketh, that the grette loud
Resounded of his yelling and clamour.
The pure fetters on his shinnes grets
Were of his bitter salte teres wet.
"Alas!" quod he, "Arcite, cousin min,
Of all our strif, God wot, the frute is thin,
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yerst lital charge."

Thou maist, with thou hast wisdom and manehede,
Assemble all the folk of our kinrede,
And make a verre so sharpe on this countree,
That by son avasture, or soon trettee,
Thou maist have hire to lady and to wif,
For whous that I must needs lese my lif.
For as by way of possibilitee.

With thou art at thy large of prison free,
And art a lord, gret in this avantage,
More than is min, that sterve here in a cage.
For I may wepe and waille, while that I live,
With all the wo that prison may me yeve,
And eke with peine that love me yeveth also,
That donbleth all my tourment and my wo."

Therwith the fire of jalousie up sterte
Within his breast, and bent him by the herte
So woody, that he like was to behoid
The box-tree, or the ashen ded and cold.

Thus said he; "O cruel goddess, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And writen in the table of atthament

Your parliament and your eterne grant,
What is mankind more unto you yhold
Than is the shepe, that rounketh in the fold?

For slain is man, right as another beast,
And dwelleth eke in prison, and arrest,
And hath siknesse, and gret adversaite,
And obstinens gilteles, parde.

"What governance is in this prescience,
That gilteles turmenteth innocens?

And yet encreseth this all my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observance

For Goddes sake to listen of his will,
For as a best may all his lust fulfill.

And when a best is ded, he hath no peine;
But man after his deth mote wepe and pleine,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
Whithen doute it maye stonden so.

"The answer of this lete I to divines,
And wel I wote, that in this world gret pine is,
That I see a serpent or a thefe,

That many a trewe man hath do mescheffe,
And at his large, and wher him lust may turne.

But I mote ben in prison thurgh Saturne,
And eke thurgh Juno, jalous and eke wood,

And hath wel meye destrued all the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste wallen wide.

And Venus sleeth me on that other side
Of jalousie, and fere of him Arcite."

Now wol I stent of Palamon a lite,
And leten him in his prison still dwelle,

And of Arcite forth I wol you talke.
The summer passeth, and the nightes long

Passen double wise the peines strong
Of the lover, and of the prisoner.

That which hath the wofuller mistere,
I shortly for to say, this Palamon

Is shortly for to say, this Palamon
Is shortly for to say, this Palamon

Is shortly for to say, this Palamon
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When that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful oft a day he sweit and said Alas,
For sen his lady shal be never mo.
And shortly to concluden all his wo,
So mochel sorwe hadde never creature,
That is or shal be, while the world may dure.
His slepe, his mete, his drinke is him bycraft,
That leue he wex, and drie as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and griauly his mone.
His hewe false, and pale as ashen cold,
And solitary he was, and ever alone.
And wailing all the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Than wold he wepe, he mighte not be ston.
So feble were his spirittes, and so low,
And changed so, that no man coude know
His speche ne his vois, though men it herd.
And in his gere, for all the world he ferd
Nought only like the lovers maladie
Of Erecos, but rather ylike manie,
Engendred of humours melancolike.
Before his hed in his cello fantastike.
And shortly turned was all up so down
Both habit and eke disposition
Of him, this woful lover dan Arcite.
What shuld I all day of his wo endite?

What he endured had a yere or two
This cruel torment, and this peine and wo,
At Thebes, in his countree, as I said,
Upon a night in slepe as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercury
Before him stood, and bad him to be mery.
His slepy yerde in hond he bare upright;
An hat he wered upon his hores bright.
Armsied was this god (as he toke kepe)
As he was when that Argus toke his stepe;
And said him thus: "To Athens shalt thou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende."

And with that word Arcite awoke and stert.

"Now trowely how sore that ever me smert,"

Quod he, "to Athens right now wol I fare.

Ne for no drede of deth shal I not spare

To se my lady, that I love and serve;

In hire presence I rekke not to sterve."

And with that word he caught a gret mirroure,

And saw that changed was all his colour,

And saw his visage all in another kind.

And right anon it ran him in his mind,

That with his face was so disfigured

Of meladie the which he had endured,

He mighte wel, if that he bare him lowe,

Live in Athens evermore unknowe,

And sen his lady wel nigh day by day.

And right anon he changed his aray,

And clad him as a poure labourer.

And all alone, save only a squier,

That knew his privitee and all his cas,

Which was disguised pourely as he was,

To Athens is he gon the nexte way.

And to the court he went upon a day,

And at the gate he proffered his service,

To drugge and draw, what so men wold devise.

And shortly of this matere for to sayn,

He fell in office with a chamberlain,

The which that dwelling was with Emelie.

For he was wise, and coude some capie

Of every servant, which that served hire.

Wel coude he hewen wood, and water bere,

For he was yonge and mighty for the nonne,

And therto he was strong and big of bones

To doo that any wight can him devise.

A yere or two he was in this service,
Page of the chambre of Emelie the bright;
And Philostrate he sayde that he might
But half so wel beloved a man as he,
Ne was ther never in court of his degre.
He was so gentil of condicion,
That thurghout all the court was his renown.
They sayden that it were a charite
That Theseus wold enhaunsen his degre,
And putten him in worshipful service,
Ther as he might his vertues exercise.
And thus within a while his name is spronge
Both of his dedes, and of his good tounge,
That Theseus hath taken him so ner
That of his chambre he made him a squier,
And gave him gold to mainteine his degre;
And eke men brought him out of his contr
Fro yere to yere ful prively his rent.
But honestly and sleightly he it spent,
That no man woudded how that he it hadde.
And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde,
And bare him so in pees and eke in werre,
Ther n'as no man that Theseus hath derre.
And in this blisse let I now Arcite,
And speke I wol of Palamon a lite.

In dertennesse and horrible and strong prison
This seven yere hath sitten Palamon,
Forpined, what for love and for distresse.
Who feleth double sorwe and hevynesse
But Palamon? that love distraineth so,
That woodd out of his wit he goth for wo,
And eke thereto he is a prisoner
Perpetuell, not only for a yere.

Who coude rise in English proprely
His martirdom? forsooth it am not I,
Therefore I puse as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh yere in May
The thridde night, (as olde bokes sayn,
That all this storie telleth more plain)
Were it by aventure or destinee,
(As, when a thing is shapen, it shal be.)
That soon after the midnight Palamon,
By helping of a frend, brake his prison,
And fleeth the cite faste as ho may go,
For he had yeven drinke his gayler so
Of a clarre, made of a certain wine,
With narcotikes and opie of Thebes fine,
That all the night though that men wold him shake,
The gailer slept, he mighte not awake.
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.

The night was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes cost he moste himselven hide.
And to a grove faste ther beside
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamon.
For shortly this was his opinion,
That in that grove he wold him hide all day,
And in the night than wold he take his way
To Thebes ward, his frendes for to preie
On Theseus to helpen him werreie.
And shortly, eyther he wold lese his lif,
Or winnen Emelie unto his wif.
This is the effect, and his entente plain.

Now wol I turnen to Arcite agein,
That litel wist how neighe was his care,
Til that Fortune had brought him in the snare.
The besy larke, the messenger of day,
Saloweth in hire song the morwe gray;
And fryr Phebus riseth up so bright,
That all the orient laugheth of the sight

And with his strames drieth in the groves
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves,
And Arcite, that is in the court real
With Theseus the squier principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the mory day.
For to don his obscrance to May,
Remembering on the point of his desire,
He on his coursour, starting as the fere,
Is ridden to the felde him to pley,
Out of the court, were it a mile or twy.
And to the grove of which that I you told,
By aventure his way he gan to hold,
To maken him a gerlond of the groves,
Were it of woodlind or of hawthorn leves,
And loud he song agen the some theme.

"O Maye, with all thy floures and thy grece,
Right welcome be thou, faire freshe May,
I hope that I some grene here gotten may."
And from his coursour, with a lusty herte
Into the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he roumed up and down,
Ther as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him se,
For sore asered of his deeth was he.
Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite.
Gud wot he wold have trowed it ful lite.
But soth is said, gon sithen are many yeres,
That feid hath eyen, and the wood hath eres.
It is ful faire a man to bere him even,
For al day meten men at unnet steven.
Ful litel wote Arcite of his felaw,
That was so neigh to herken of his saw,
For in the bush he sitteth now ful still.

Whan that Arcite had roumed all his fill,
And songen all the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fell soodely,
As doo these lovers in hir quite geres,
Now in the crop, and now down in the breves,
Now up, now down, as boket in a well.
Right as the Friday, sothly for to tell,
Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast,
Right so can gery Venus overcast
The hertes of hire folk, right as hire day
Is gerfull, right so changeth she aray.
Selde is the Friday all the weke ylike.

Whan Arcite hadde younge, he gan to eike,
And set him down withouten any more:
"Alas!" quod he, "the day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, though thy crueltee
Wilt thou werreien Thebes the citee?
Alas! ybrought is to confusoun
The blood real of Cadme and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man,
That Thebes built, or firste the town began,
And of the citee firste was crowned king.
Of his lineage am I, and his offspring
By very line, as of the stok real:
And now I am so cautif and so thral,
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squier poorely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
For I dare not beknowe min owen name,
But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, not worth a mikte.
Alas! thou fell Mars, alas! thou Juno,
Thus hath your ire our lineage all fordo,
Save only me, and wretched Palamon,
That Theseus martireth in prison.
And over all this, to siken me utterly,
Love hath his fryr dart so bewynnyngly

Yoked thurgh my trowe careful hert,
 That slayen was my deeth erst than my shert.
 Ye steen me with your eyen, Emelie;
 Ye ben the cause wherfore that I die.
 Of all the remenant of min other care
 Me set I not the mountance of a tere,
 So that I coude don ought to your plesance."
 And with that word he fell down in a trance
 A luge time; and afterward up sterte
 This Palamon, that thought throughout his herte
 He felt a colde sword sodenly glide:
 He ire he spoke, no lenger wolde he hide.
 And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
 As he were wood, with face ded and pale,
 He sterte him up out of the bushes thikke,
 And sayde: "False Arcite, false traitour wicke,
 How art thou hent, that lovest my lady so,
 For whom that I have all this peine and wo,
 And set my blood, and to my conseil sworn,
 As I ful oft have told thee herebefore,
 And hast bejaped here duk Theseus,
 And falsly changed hast thy name thus;
 I wol be ded, or elles thou shalt die.
 Thou shalt not love my lady Emelie,
 But I wol love hire only and no mo.
 For I am Palamon thy mortal fe.
 And though that I no wepen have in this place,
 But out of prison am astert by grace,
 I shode ought, that eyther thou shalt die,
 Or thou ne shalt not loveen Emelie.
 Whiche which thou wolt, for thou shalt not asterte."
 This Arcite tho, with ful dispitoun herte,
 Whan he him knew, and had his tale herd,
 As for a leon, pulled out a sword,
 And sayde thus; "By God that sitteth above,
 I shode that thou art sike, and wood for love,
 And dre that thou no wepen hast in this place,
 Thou shuldest never out of this grove pace,
 And thou ne shuldest dien of min hood.
 For I dese the suretee and the bond,
 And that thou saist that I have made to thee.
 What? veray fool, thinke wel that love is free,
 And I wol love hire maugre all thy might.
 But for thou art a worthy gentil knight,
 I wil vint to darraine hire by bataille,
 And here my trowth, to-morwe I will not faille,
 Whiche ever writing of any other wight,
 But here I wol be founden as a knight,
 And bringen harnes right ynough for thee;
 And chase the beste, and leve the werste for me.
 And mete and drinke this night wol I bring
 Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding.
 And if so be that thou my lady win,
 I shal be in this wode, ther I am in,
 And thou shalt wel have thy lady as for me."
 This Palamon answered, "I grant it thee."
 And thus they ben departed til a-morwe,
 Whan eche of hem hath laid his faith to borwe.
 O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
 Thou that wolt no felaw have with thee!
 And with such sayde, that love ne lordship
 And out, his thankes, have no felawship.
 And thus that Arcite and Palamon,
 Whiche is ridden anon unto the toun,
 Whan the morwe, or it were day light,
 And twey twe harnes hath he dight,
 And comen and mete to darraine
 In bataille in the feid betwix hem tweine.
 And on his hors, alone as he was borne,
 And cometh all this harnes him before;

And in the grove, at time and place yette,
 This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.
 Tho changen gan the colour of hir face.
 Right as the hunter in the regne of Traoe
 That stondeth at a gappe with a spere,
 Whan hunted is the lion or the bere,
 And hereth him come rushing in the groves,
 And breking bothe the boughes and the leves,
 And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy,
 Withouten faille, he must be ded or I;
 For eyther I mote slen him at the gappe;
 Or he mote slen me, if that me mishappe:
 So ferdan they, in changing of hir hewe,
 As fer as cyther of hem other knewe.
 Ther n'as no good day, ne no salving.
 But streit withouten wordes reberving,
 Everich of hem halpe to armen other,
 As frendly, as he were his owen brother.
 And after that, with sharpe speres strong
 They foineden eche at other wonder long.
 Thou mightest wene, that this Palamon
 In his fighting were as a wood leon,
 And as a cruel tigre was Arcite:
 As wilde bores gan they togeder amite,
 That frothen white as fume for ire wood.
 Up to the ancle foughte they in hir blood.*
 And in this wise I let hem fighting dwelle,
 And forth I wol of Theseus you telle.

The Destinee, ministre general,
 That executeth in the world over al
 The purveiance, that God hath sen before;
 So strong it is, that though the world had sworne
 The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,
 Yet sometime it shall fallen on a day
 That falleth not este in a thousand yere.
 For certainly our appetites here,
 Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
 All is this ruled by the sight above.
 This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
 That for to huntun is so desirous,
 And namely at the grete hart in May,
 That in his bod ther daweth him no day,
 That he n'is clad, and redy for to ride
 With hunte and horne, and boundes him beside.
 For in his hunting hath he swiche delite,
 That it is all his joye and appetite
 To ben himself the grete hartes bane,
 For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

Clere was the day, as I have told or this,
 And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
 With his Ipolita, the fayre queene,
 And Emelie, yclothed all in grene,
 On hunting ben they ridden really.
 And to the grove, that stood ther faste by,
 In which ther was an hart as men him told,
 Duk Theseus the streite way hath hold.
 And to the launde he rideth him ful right,
 Ther was the hart ywont to have his fight,
 And over a brooke, and so forth on his way.
 This duke wol have a cours at him or twey
 With boundes, swiche as him lust to commaunde.
 And when this duk was comen to the launde,
 Under the woone he loked, and anon
 He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
 That foughten breme; as it were bolles two.
 The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
 So hidously, that with the leste stroke
 It semed that it wolde felle an oke.
 But what they weren, nothing he ne wote.
 This duke his courser with his spores smote,

And at a stert he was betwix hem two,
And pulled out a sword and cried, "Ho!
No more, up peine of leing of your hed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be ded.
That smiteth any stroke, that I may see.
But telteth me what mistere men ye beu,
That ben so hardy for to fighten here
Withouten any juge, other offioere,
As though it were in listes really."

This Palamon answered hastily,
And saide: "Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wretches ben we, two catives,
That ben accombred of our owen lives,
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
No yeve us neyther mercie ne refuge.
And sle me first, for seinte charitee.
But sle my felaw eke as wel as me.
Or sle him first; for, though thou know it lite,
This is thy mortal fe, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his hed,
For which he hath deserved to be ded.
For this is he that came unto thy gate
And sayde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yere,
And thou hast makid him thy chief squiere,
And this is he, that loveth Emelie."

"For sith the day is come that I shal die
I make plainly my confession,
That I am thilke woful Palamon,
That hath thy prison broken wilfully.
I am thy mortal fe, and it am I
That loveth so hot Emelie the bright,
That I wold dien present in hire sight.
Therefore I axe deth and my jewis.
But sle my felaw in the same wise,
For both we have deserved to be slain."

This worthy duk answerd anon again,
And sayd, "This is a short conclusion.
Your owen mouth, by your confession
Hath dammed you, and I wol it recorde.
It nedeth not to peine you with the corde.
Ye shal be ded by mighty Mars the rede."

The queene anon for veray womanhede
Can for to wepe, and so did Emelie,
And all the ladies in the compaignie.
Gret pite was it, as it thought hem alle,
That ever swiche a chance shulde befallie.
For gentil men they were of gret estat,
And nothing but for love was this debat.
And sawe hir bloddy woundes wide and sore;
And alle criden bothe leese and more,
"Have mercie, Lord, upon us wimmen alle."
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wold have kist his feet ther as he stood,
Till at the last, unalaked was his mood;
(For pitee remeth soone in gentil herte)
And though he first for ire quoke and sterte,
He hath considered shordly in a clause
The trespass of hem both, and eke the cause:
And although that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reason he hem both excused;
As thus; he thoughte wel that every man
Wol helpe himself in love if that he can,
And eke deliver himself out of prison.
And eke his herte had compassion
Of wimmen, for they wepten ever in on:
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
And soft unto himself he sayed: "Fie
Upon a lord that wol have no mercie,

But be a leon both in word and dede,
To hem that ben in repentance and drede,
As wel as to a proud dispitous man.
That wol mainteinen that he first began.
That lord hath lital of discretion,
That in swiche cas can no division:
But weigheth pride and humblesse after on."
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agou,
He gan to loken up with eyes light,
And spake these same wordes all on hight.

"The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how grete a lord is he?
Again his might ther guinen non obstacles,
He may be cleped a God for his miracles.
For he can maken at his owen gise
Of everich herte, as that him list devise.
Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quietly weren out of my prison,
And might have lived in Thebes really,
And weten I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deth lich in my might also,
And yet hath love, maugre hir eyen two,
Ybrought hem hither bothe for to die.
Now loketh, is not this an heigh folie?
Who maye ben a fool, but if he love?
Behold for Goddes sake that sitteth above,
Se how they blede! be they not wel araied?

Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, hem paid
Hir wages, and hir fees for hir service.
And yet they weneu for to be ful wise,
That serven love, for ought that may befallie.
And yet is this the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they have this jolite,
Con here: therefore as mochel thank us me.
She wot no more of alle this hote fare,
By God, than wot a cuckow or an here.
But all mote ben assaid hote or cold;
A man mote ben a fool other yonge or old;
I wot it by myself ful yore agou:
For in my time a servant was I on.
And therefore sith I know of love's peine,
And wot how sore it can a man destreine,
As he that oft hath ben caught in his las,
I you foryeve all holly this trespass,
At request of the queene that kneleth here,
And eke of Emelie, my suster dere.
And ye shal bothe anon unto me swere,
That never mo ye shal my contree dere,
Ne maken werre upon me night ne day,
But ben my frendes in alle that ye may.
I you foryeve this trespass every del."
And they him swere his axing fayr and wel,
And him of lordship and of mercie praid,
And he hem granted grace, and thus he said:

"To speke of real linage and richesse,
Though that she were a queene or a princesse,
Eche of you bothe is worthy douteles
To wedden whan time is, but natheles
I speke as for my suster Emelie,
For whom ye have this straf and jaloumie,
Ye wot yourself, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten evermo:
But on of you, al be him loth or lefe,
He mot gon pipen in an ivy lefe:
This is to say, she may not have you bothe,
Al be ye never so jalous, ne so wrotche.
And forthy I you put in this degree,
That eche of you shall have his destinee,
As him is shape, and herkeoth in what wise;
Lo here your ende of that I shal devise."

My will is this for plat conclusion
 Without any replication,
 I that you sheff, take it for the beste,
 but swiche of you shal goo wher him leste
 wey withouten rousoun or dangers;
 and this day fifty wolkes, ferre ne nere,
 herich of you shal bring an hundred knightes,
 lused for listes up at alle rightes
 the rody to darrein hire by bataille.
 and this belete I you withouten faille
 for my trowth, and as I am a knight,
 but whether of you bothe hath that might,
 his is to sayn, that whether he or thou
 lay with his hundred, as I spake of now,
 to his contrary, or out of listes drive,
 his shall I yeven Emelic to wive,
 to whom that fortune yeveth so fayr a grace.
 "The listes shall I maken in this place,
 and God so wisy on my soule rewe,
 as I shal even jage ben, and trewe.
 he shal now other ende with me maken
 but as of you as shall be ded or taken.
 and if you thinketh this is wel ysaid,
 with your swin, and holdeth you apaid.
 his is your ende, and your conclusion."
 Who loketh lightly now but Palamon?
 He springeth up for joye but Arcite?
 He cood it tell, or who cood it credite,
 the joye that is makid in this place
 than Theseus hath don so fayre a grace?
 he don on knees went every manere wight,
 and thanked him with all his hertes might,
 and namely these Theseus often sith.
 And then with good hope and with herte blith
 he toke his leve, and homeward gan they ride
 to Thebes, with his olde walkes wide.
 I three men wolde dome it negligence,
 I foryete to telles the dispence
 Theseus, that got so beusy
 makid up the listes ready,
 but swiche a noble theatre as it was,
 and wel sayn, in all this world ther n'as
 to drewn a mile was aboute,
 build of stone, and ditched all withoute.
 and was the shape, in manere of a compas
 of degrees, the height of sixty pas,
 in whan a man was set on o degree
 thatted set his felaw for to see.
 and ther stood a gate of marbel white,
 and ther right swiche another in th' opposite
 and shortly to concluden, swiche a p'ace
 was never in erthe, in so litel a space,
 in the load ther n'as no craftes man,
 but geometrie, or arismetrike can,
 butroure, ne herver of images,
 and Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
 but theres for to maken and devise.
 and for to don his rite and sacrifice,
 and turned hath upon the gate above,
 the worship of Venus goddess of love,
 to make an utter and an oratorie;
 and toward in the minde and in memorie
 wher he makid hath right swiche another,
 to come largely of gold a fother.
 and toward, in a touret on the wall,
 to make white and red corall
 to make rike for to see,
 the worship of Diane of chastitee,
 and Theseus don wrought in noble wise.
 and yet had I foryetten to devise

The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
 The shape, the countenance of the figure
 That weren in these oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus maist thou see
 Wrought on the wall, ful pitous to behold,
 The broken sleepes, and the sikkes colde,
 The sacred trees, and the waikeninges,
 The fry strokes of the desiringes,
 That Loves servants in this lif endure;
 The othen, that hir covnants assuren-
 Pleasance and hope, desire, foolhardinesse,
 Beautie and youthe, baudrie and richesse,
 Charmes and force, lesinges and flaterie,
 Dispenca, besmesse, and jalounie,
 That wered of yelwe golde a gerlond,
 And hadde a cuckow sitting on hire hood,
 Festes, instruments, and caroles and dances,
 Lust and array, and all the circumstances
 Of love, which that I reken and reken shall,
 By ordre weren peinted on the wall,
 And no than I can make of mention.
 For sothly all the mount of Citeron,
 Ther Venus hath hire principal dwelling,
 Was shewed on the wall in partreying,
 With all the gardin, and the Justinesse,
 Nought was foryetten the porter idlenessse,
 Ne Narcissus the fyvre of yore agoon,
 Ne yet the folie of King Salomon,
 Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules,
 Th' enchantment of Modos and Circes,
 Ne of Turnus the hardy flers corage,
 The riche Cressus caulf in servage.
 Thus may ye seen, that wisdom ne richesse,
 Resete ne sleight, strengthe ne hardinesse,
 Ne sway with Venus bolden champertie,
 For as hire liste the world may she gie.
 Lo, all these folk so caught were in hire las
 Til they for wo ful oold said Alas.
 Sufflooth here entamples on or two,
 And yet I coude reken a thousand mo.

The statue of Venus glorious for to see
 Was naked steying in the large see.
 And fro the navel down all covered was
 With waves grene, and bright as any glas.
 A citole in hire right hand hadde she,
 And on hire hed, ful seemely for to see,
 A rose gerlond fressh, and wel smelling,
 Above hire hed hire doves flocking.
 Before hire stood hire sone Cupido,
 Upon his shoulders winges had he two,
 And blind he was, as it is often sone;
 A bow he bare and arwes bright and kene.

Why shalde I not as wel eke tell you all
 The portreiture, that was upon the wall
 Within the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
 All peinted was the wall in length and brede
 Like to the estres of the grisly place,
 That highte the gret temple of Mars in Trace,
 In thilke colde and froty region,
 Ther as Mars hath his soverain mansion.

First on the wall was pointed a forest,
 In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best,
 With knotty knarry barren trees old
 Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to behold;
 In which ther ran a rounde and a sough,
 As though a storme shuld bresten every bough:
 And downward from an hill under a beate,
 Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotent,
 Wrought all of burnid steele, of which th' outree
 Was longe and streite, and gastly for to see.

And therout came a rage and swiche a wise,
That it made alle the gates for to rise.
The northern light in at the dore shone,
For window on the wall ne was ther none,
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dore was all of athamant eterne,
Yelencched overthwart and endelong
With yren tough, and for to make it strong,
Every piler the temple to sustene
Was tonne-gret, of yren bright and shene.

Ther saw I first the derke imagining
Of felonie, and alle the compassing:
The cruel ire, red as any glede,
The pikepurse, and eke the pale drede;
The smiler with the knif under the cloke,
The shepen-brenning with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mording in the bedde,
The open werre, with woundes all bebledde;
Couteke with bloody knif, and sharp manace:
All full of chyrking was that sory place.
The sleer of himself yet saw I there,
His herte-blood bath bathed all his here:
The naile ydriven in the shode on hight,
The colde deth, with mouth gaping upright,
Amiddes of the temple sate mischance,
With discomfort and sory countenance.
Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage.
Armed complaint, outhees, and fiens outrage;
The carraigne in the bush, with throte ycorven,
A thousand slain, and not of qualme ystorven;
The tirad, with the prey by force yraft;
The toum destroyed, ther was nothing left.
Yet saw I hrent the shippes hoppersera,
The hunte ystrangled with the wilde beres:
The sow fretting the child right in the cradel;
The coke yscalled, for all his long ladel.
Nought was foryete by th' infortune of Marte
The carter overridden with his carte;
Under the wheel ful low he lay adoun.

Ther were also of Martes division,
Th' armerer, and the bowyer, and the smith,
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
And all above depeinted in a tour
Saw I conquest, sitting in gret honour.
With thilke sharpe sward over his hed
Yhanging by a subtil twined thred.
Depeinted was the slaughter of Julius,
Of gret Nero, and of Antonius:
All be that thilke time they were unborne,
Yet was hir deth depeinted therbefore,
By manacing of Mars, right by figure,
So was it shewed in that purtreiture
As is depeinted in the cerceles above,
Who shal be slaine or elles ded for love.
Sufficeth on ensample in stories olde,
I may not reken hem alle, though I wolde.

The statue of Mars upon a carte stood
Armed, and lokod grim as he were wood,
And over his hed ther shinen two figures
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures,
That on Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was araid thus:
A wolf ther stood before him at his fete
With eyen red, and of a man he ete:
With subtil pensil painted was this storie,
In redouting of Mars and of his glorie.

Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To tellen you of the descriptioun,
Depeinted by the wallis up and down,

Of hunting and of shamefast chastite.
Ther saw I how woful Calistope,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a woman til a bere,
And after was she made the lodesterre:
Thus was it peinted, I can say so ferre;
Hire nose is eke a sterve as men may see.
Ther saw I Diane yturned til a tree,
I mene not hire the goddesse Diane,
But Penus daughter, which that highte Deane.
Ther saw I Atteon an hart ymakod,
For vengeance that he saw Diane all makod:
I saw how that his boundes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knew his naught.
Yet peinted was a litel forthermore,
How Athalante hunted the wilde bore,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroughte hem care and wo.
Ther saw I many another wonder storie,
The which we liste not drawn to memorie.

This goddesse on an hart ful beye sete,
With smale boundes all aboute hire fetz,
And underne the hire feet she hadde a nose,
Wexing it was, and shulde waxes some.
In gaudy grene hire staine clothed was,
With bow in bond, and arwes in a cas.
Hire eyen caste she ful low adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke region.
A woman travailling was him before,
But for hire child so longe was unborne
Ful pitously Laciua gan she call,
And sayed; "Helpe, for thou mayst beste of al
Wel coude he peinten lify that it wrought,
With many a forein he the hewes bought.

Now ben these lites made, and Thesens
That at his grette cost araid thus
The temples, and the theatre everidiel,
Whan it was don, him liked wonder wel.
But stint I wol of Thesens a lite,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approacheth of hir returning,
That everich shuld an hundred knyghtes bring:
The bataille to darreine, as I you told;
And til Athens, hir covnant for to hold,
Hath everich of hem brought an hundred knight
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly ther trowed many a man,
That never, sithen that the world began,
As for to speke of knighthood of hir hood,
As fer as God hath makod see and lood,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a compaignie.
For every wight that loved chevalrie,
And wold, his thankes, han a passant name,
Hath praied, that he might ben of that game,
And wel was him, that therto chosen was.
For if ther fell to-morwe swiche a cas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth par amour, and hath his might,
Were it in Englelond, or elleswer,
They wold, hir thankes, willen to be ther.
To fight for a lady, a! *benedicite*,
It were a lusty sighte for to see.

And right so forden they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knyghtes many on.
Som wol ben armed in an habergeon,
And in a breast plate, and in a gipou;
And som wol have a pair of plates large;
And som wol have a Puce shield, or a targa;
Some wol ben armed on his legges wele,
And have an axe, and som a mace of steele.

Ther n'is no sewe guise, that it n'as old.
Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Erich after his opinion.

There maist thou se coming with Palamon
George himself, the grete king of Traca;
Male was his berd, and manly was his face.
The cercles of his eyen in his bed
They gloweden betwixen yelwe and red,
And like a griffon loked he about,
With kemped heres on his browes stout;
His limmes gret, his braunes hard and stroonger;
His shouldres brode, his armes round and longe.
And as the guise was in his contree,
Full light upon a char of gold stode he,
With foure white bolles in the trais.

Instede of cote-armure on his barrais,
With mayles yelwe, and bright as any gold,
His haddie a bernes skin, cote-blake for oid.
His longe here was kempt behind his bak,
As any ravens fether it shone for blake.
A wreth of gold arm-gret, of huge weight,
Upon his hed sate full of stoncs bright,
With fere rubins and of diamante.

Upon his char ther weren white alouns,
Twenty and mo, as gret as any sterc,
His hounen at the loon or the dere,
And fetred him, with moesel fast ybound,
Covered with gold, and torettes filed round.
His hundred lordes had he in his route
Covered full wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.

With Arcita, in stories as men fied,
The gret Emetrius the king of Jude,
Upon a scelle bay, trapped in stete,
Covered with cloth of gold dispred wele,
Was riding like the god of armes Mars.

His cote-armure was of a cloth of Tars,
Covered with perles, white, and round and grette.
His mail was of brent gold new ybete;
His helme upon his shouldres hanging
Was full of rubins red, as fire sparkling.
His chaize here like ringes was yroune,
His fad was yelwe, and glittered as the Sonne.
His nac was high, his eyen bright citrin,
His lippes round, his colour was sanguin,
His braknes in his face ysprent,
His armes yelwe and blake somdel ymeint,
And as a loon he his loking caste.

Five and twenty yere his age I caste.
His berd was wel begoomen for to spring;
His voyn was as a troupe thoudring.
Upon his hed he wered of lauer grene
A chapeon freshe and lusty for to sene.
Upon his bond he bare for his deduit
A lily tase, as any lily whit.

His hundred lordes had he with him there,
Covered save his hedes in all hir gere,
And richly in alle manere thinges.
His trustoth wel, that erles, dukes, kinges
Were gathered in this noble compaignie,
For love, and for increase of chevalrie.

And this king ther ran on every part
With many a tame loon and leopart.
And in this wise, these lordes all and some
Upon the Sowday to the citee come
Weren prime, and in the loon alight.
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Wher he had brought hem into his citee,
All named hem, erich at his degree,
And fetred hem, and docth so gret labour
To save hem, and don hem all honour,

That yet men wenen that no mannes wit
Of non estat ne coud amenden it.

The ministralcie, the service at the feste,
The grete yestes to the most and beste,
The riche array of Theseus paleis,
Ne who sate first, ne last upon the deis,
What ladies fayrest ben or best dancing,
Or which of hem can carole best or sing,
Ne who moost felingly spekoth of love;
What hawkes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes ligen on the floor adoun,
Of all this now make I no mention;
But of the effect; that thinketh me the beste;
Now cometh the point, and herkeneth if you leste.

The Sowday night, or day began to spring,
When Palamon the larke herde sing,
Although it n'ere not day by houres two,
Yet sang the larke, and Palamon right tho
With holy herte, and with an high corage
He rose, to wendon on his pilgrimage
Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
And in hire boore, he walketh forth a pas
Unto the listes, ther hire temple was,
And down he kneleth, and with humble chere
Aud herts sore, he sayde as ye shul here.

"Fayrest of fayre, o lady min Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcaus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheron,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adon
Have pitye on my bitter teres smart,
And take myn humble prair at thin herte.

"Alas! I ne have no langage to tell
The effecte, ne the torment of min Hell;
Min herte may min harmes not bewry:
I am so confuse, that I cannot say.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wele
My thought, and seest what harmes that I fele,
Consider all this, and rue upon my sore,
As wisely as I shall for evermore,
Emfath my might, thy trowe servant be,
And holden werre alway with chastite:
That make I min avow, so ye me helpe.

I kepe nought of armes for to yeipe,
Ne axe I nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne remoun in this cas, ne valus glorie
Of pris of armes, blown up and down,
But I wol have fully possession
Of Emelle, and die in hire service;
And thou the manere how, and in what wise,
I rekke not, but it may better be,
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in min armes.

For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Your vertue is so grette in Heven above,
That if you liste, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worship evermo,
And on thin autor, wher I ride or go,
I wol don sacrifice, and fires bete.
And if ye wol not so, my lady swete,
Than pray I you, to-morwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herts bere.
Than rekke I not, when I have lost my lif,
Though that Arcita win hire to his wif;
This is the effecte and ende of my praiere;
Yeve me my love, thou blisful lady dere."

When the orison was don of Palamon,
His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full pitously, with alle circumstances,
All tell I not as now his observances.

But at the last the statue of Venus awoke,
And made a signe, wherby that he toke,
That his priere accepted was that day.
For though the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wist he wel that granted was his boon;
And with glad herte he went him home ful soon.

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Began to Venus temple for to goon,
Up rose the Sonne, and up rose Emelie,
And to the temple of Diane gan hire.
Hire maydens, that she thider with hire laddes,
Ful redily with hem the fire they hadde,
Th' encense, the clothes, and the remenaunt all
That to the sacrifice longen shall.

The hornes ful of mede, as was the gise,
Ther lakked nought to don hire sacrifice.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes fayre,
This Emelie with herte debonaire
Hire body wasche with water of a well.
But how she did hire rite I dare not tell;
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game to heren all;
To him that meneth wel it n'ere no charge:
But it is good a man to ben at large.
Hire bright here kumberd was, untressed all.
A coroune of a grene oke coral
Upon hire hed was set ful fayre and mete.
Two fires on the auter gan she bete,
And did hire thinges, as men may behold
In Stace of Thebes, and these tokes old.

Whan kindled was the fire, with pitous chere
Unto Diane she spake, as ye may here.

" O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom both Heven and erthe and see is sene,
Queene of the regne of Pluto, derke and love,
Goddess of maydens, that min herte hast knowe
Ful many a yere, and wost what I desire,
As kepe me fro thy vengeance and thin ire,
That Atteon aboughte cruelly:

Chaste goddesse, wel wotest thou that I
Desire to ben a mayden all my lif,
Ne never wol I be no love us wif.
I am (thou wost) yet of thy compaignie,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerie,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And not to ben a wif, and be with olde,
Nought wol I knowen compaignie of man.

Now helpe me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For the three formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swiche love to me,
And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I prais thee withouten more;
As sende love and pees betwix hem two:
And fro me torne away hir hertes so,
That all hir hote love, and hir desire,
And all hir bey torment, and hir fire
Be quite, or torred in another place.
And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
Or if my destinee be shapen so,
That I shall nedes have on of hem two,
As sende me him that most desireth me.

" Behold, goddess of clene chastite,
The bitter tees, that on my chokis fall.
Sin thou art mayde, and keeper of us all,
My maydenhed thou kepe and wal conserve,
And while I live, a mayde I wol thee serve."

The fires brenne upon the auter clere,
While Emelie was thus in hire priere:
But sodenly she saw a sighte queinte,
For right anon on of the fires queinte,

And quiked again, and after that anon
That other fire was queinte, and all agon:
And as it queinte, it made a whisteling,
As don these bronnes wet in hir brenning.
And at the bronnes ende ontran anon
As it were bloddy dropes many on:
For which so sore agast was Emelie,
That she was wel neigh mad, and gan to cris,
For she ne wiste what it signified;
But only for the fere thus she cried,
And wept, that it was pittee for to bere.

And therwithall Diane gan appere
With bowe in hand, right as an huntresse,
And sayde; " Doughter, stint thi hevinesse.
Among the goddesses highe it is affirmed,
And by eterne word writen and confirmed,
Thou shalt be wedded unto on of tho,
That han for thee so mochel care and wo:
But unto which of hem I may not tell.
Farewel, for here I may no longer dwell.
The fires which that on min auter brenne,
Shal thee declaren er that thou go hence,
Thin aventure of love, as in this cas."

And with that word, the arwes in the cas
Of the goddesses clatzen fast and ring,
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emelie astonied was,
And sayde; " What amouoteth this, alas!
I putte me in thy protection,
Diane, and in thy disposition."
And home she goth anon the nexte way.
This is the effecte, ther n'is no more to say.

The nexte houre of Mars folowing this
Arcite unto the temple walked is
Of ferce Mars, to don his sacrifice
With all the rites of his payen wise.
With pitous herte and high devotion,
Right thus to Mars he sayde his oracion.

" O strunge god, that in the regnes cold
Of Trace honoured art, and lord yhold,
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes all the bridel in thin bond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devise,
Accept of me my pitous sacrifices.
If so be that my yowthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhed, that I may ben on of thine,
Than prais I thee to rewe upon my pine,
For thilke peines, and thilke hote fire,
In which thou whilom brendest for desire
Whanne that thou usedest the besutes
Of fayre yonge Venus, freshe and free,
And haddest hire in armes at thy wille:
Although thee ones on a time mislike,
Whan Valens had caught thee in his las,
And fond the ligging by his wif, alas!
For thilke sorwe that was tho in thin herte,
Have rente as wel upon my paines emerte.

" I am yonge and unkonning, as thou wost,
And, as I trow, with love offended most,
That ever was ony lives creature:
For she, that doth me all this wo endure,
Ne receth never, whether I sink or floot.
And wel I wot, or she me merry berte,
I moste with strengthe win hire in the place:
And wel I wot, withouten helpe or grace
Of thee, no may my strengthe not availle:
Than helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
Fore thilke fire that whilom brenned thee,
As wel as that this fire now brenneth me;

And do, that I to-morwe may han victoria.
 Min be the travalle, and thin be the glorie.
 Thy sovaine temple wol I most honouren
 Of any place, and alway most labouren
 In thy plesance and in thy craftes strong.
 And in thy temple I wol my banner hong,
 And all the armes of my compaignie,
 And evermore, unil that day I die,
 There first I wol before thee finde,
 And eke to this erow I wol me binde.
 My herd, my here that hangeth long adoun,
 That never yet felt non offensivoun
 Of none of me of aere, I wol thee yove,
 And ben thy trewe servant while I live.
 Now, lord, have reuntie upon my sorwes sore,
 Yee me the victorie, I use thee no more."
 The prior stant of Arcite the strange,
 The rings on the temple dore that hong,
 And eke the doves clatteredden ful faste,
 Of which Arcite somewhat him agaste.
 The first drest upon the auster bright,
 That it gan all the temple for to light;
 A sweete smell euen the ground up yaf,
 And Arcite anon his hood up haf,
 And more encouste into the fire he cast,
 With other rites two, and at the last
 The statue of Mars began his hauberke ring;
 And with that soon he herd a murmuring
 And low and dim, that sayde thus, "Victorie."
 In which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
 And thos with joye, and hope wel to fare,
 Arcite anon unto his tunc is fare,
 As fairs as foul is of the brighte Sonne.
 And right anon swiche strif ther is begonne
 As thiche granting, in the Heven above,
 Between Venus the goddess of love,
 And Mars the sterne god armipotent,
 As Jupiter was beyer it to stent:
 That the pale Saturnus the colde,
 That knew so many of a venteres olde,
 And in his olde experyence and art,
 That he ful some hath pleased every part.
 As he sayd, olde hath gret advantage,
 And he is bothe wisdom and usage:
 He may the old out-reunte, but not out rede.
 As he anon, to stenten strif and drede,
 He k that it is again his kind,
 And this strif he gan a remedy find.
 "My dere daughter Verres," quod Saturne,
 "My coun, that hath so wide for to turne,
 He more power than wot any man.
 He is the drenching in the see so wan,
 He is the prison in the derke cote,
 He is the strangel and hanging by the throte,
 He is the murdure, and the charles rebelling,
 He is the prying, and the prive empoysoning,
 He is the vengeance and plesse correction,
 He is I dwell in the signes of the Leon,
 He is the ruine of the high halles,
 He is the falling of the towres and of the walles
 He is the mounour, or the carpenter:
 He is the dampen in shaking the piler.
 He is also the maladies colde,
 He is the tressour, and the castles olde:
 He is the fader of pestilence.
 Wepe no more, I shal do diligence,
 To Palemon, that is thin owen knight,
 He love his lady, as thou hast him bight.
 He Mars shal help his knight yet natheles.
 And thus you ther mot sometime be pees:

And he ys not of o complexion,
 That causeth all day swiche division.
 I am thin eyel, redy at thy will;
 Wepe now no more, I shal thy lust fulfill."
 Now wol I stenten the goddess above,
 Of Mars, and of Venus goddess of love,
 And tellen you as plainly as I can
 The gret effect, for which that I began.
 Gret was the feste in Athenes thilke day,
 And eke the lusty season of that May
 Made every wight to ben in swiche plesance,
 That all that Monday justen they and dance,
 And spenden it in Venus high service.
 But by the cause that they shulden rise
 Early a-morwe for to seen the fight,
 Unto hir reste wenten they at night.
 And on the morwe when the day gan spring,
 Of horn and harness noise and clattering
 Ther was in the hostelries all aboute:
 And to the paleis rode ther many a route
 Of lordes, upon stedes and palfreis.
 Ther mayst thou see devising of harness
 So uncooth and so riche, and wrought so welle
 Of goldsmithy, of brodding, and of steele;
 The sheldes brighte, testeres, and trappures;
 Gold-hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote-armures;
 Lordes in parentes on hir coureres,
 Knightes of retenes, and eke esquieres,
 Nailing the speres, and helmes boketing,
 Guiding of sheldes, with lainers lacing;
 Ther as nedes is, they weren nothing idel:
 The fomy stedes on the golden bridel
 Gnawing, and fast the armureres also
 With file and hammer priking to and fro;
 Yemen on foot, and comen many on
 With shorte staves, thicke as they may gon;
 Pipes, trumpes, nakers, and clarionnes,
 That in the batalle blowen bloody sounes;
 The paleis ful of peple up and doun,
 Here thros, ther ten, holding hir questoun,
 Devising of these Theban knightes two.
 Som sayden thus, som sayde it shal be so;
 Som holden with him with the blacke berd,
 Som with the balked, som with the thik berd;
 Som seide he loked grim, and wolde fighte:
 He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
 Thus was the halles full of devising
 Long after that the Sonne gan up spring.
 The gret Theseus that of his slepe is wakid
 With ministralcie and noise that was makid,
 Held yet the chambre of his paleis riche,
 Til that the Theban knightes bothe yliche
 Honourid were, and to the paleis fete.
 Duk Theseus is at a window sette,
 Araid right as he were a god in truce:
 The peple preseth thiderward ful soone
 Him for to seen, and don high reverence,
 And eke to herken his beste and his sentence.
 An heraud on a scaffold made an O,
 Till that the noise of the peple was ydo:
 And when he saw the peple of noise at still,
 Thus shewed he the mighty dukos will.
 "The lord hath of his high discretion
 Considered, that it were destruction
 To gentil blood, to fighten in the gise
 Of mortal bataille now in this emprise:
 Wherfore to shapen that they shul not die,
 He wol his firste purpos modifie.
 "No man therefore up peice of losse of lif,
 No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knif

Into the listes kend, or thider bring,
 Ne short sword for to stike with point biting
 No man ne draw, ne bere it by his side.
 Ne no man shal unto his felaw ride
 But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounde spere:
 Foin if him list on foot, himself to were.
 And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
 And not slaine, but be brought unto the stake,
 That shal ben ordeined on eyther side,
 Thider he shal by force, and ther abide.
 And if so fall, the chevetaim be take
 On eyther side, or elles sleth his make,
 No longer shal the tourneying ylast.
 God spede you; goth forth and lay on fast.
 With longe sword and with mase fighteth your fill.
 Goth now your way; this is the lordes will."

The vois of the peple touched to the Heven,
 So loude crieden they with mery steven:
 "God save swiche a lord that is so good,
 He winneth no destruction of blood."

Up gon the trompes and the compaignie,
 And to the listes rit the compaignie
 By ordinance, thoroughout the cite large,
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with serge.
 Ful like a lord this noble duk gan ride,
 And these two Thebanes upon eyther side:
 And after rode the queene and Emelie,
 And after that another compaignie
 Of on and other, after hir degree.
 And thus they passen thoroughout the citee,
 And to the listes comen they be time:
 It n'as not of the day yet fully prime.

Whan set was Theseus ful rich and his,
 Ipolita the queene, and Emelie,
 And other ladies in degress aboute,
 Unto the setes preseth all the route.
 And westward, thurgh the gates under Mart,
 Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,
 With baner red, is entred right anon;
 And in the selve moment Palamon
 Is, under Venus, estward in the place,
 With baner white, and hardy chere and face.
 In all the world, to seken up and down,
 So even without variatioun
 Ther n'ere swiche compaignies never twey.
 For ther was non so wise that coude sey,
 That any hadde of other advantage
 Of worthynesse, we of estat, ne age,
 So even were they chosen for to gosse.

And in two reenges fayre they been dresse.
 Whan that hir names red were overich on,
 That in hir nombre gile were ther non,
 Tho were the gates shette, and cried was loode;
 "Do now your devair, yonge knightes proude."

The heraudes left hir priking up and down.
 Now ringen trompes loud and clarion.
 Ther is no more to say, but est and west
 In gon the spere sady in the rest;
 In goth the sharpe spere into the side.
 Ther see men who can juse, and who can ride.
 Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheldes thicke;
 He feleth thurgh the horte-spone the priede.
 Up springen spere twenty foot on highte;
 Out gon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
 The helmes they to-bewen, and to-shrede;
 Out brest the blod, with sterne stremes rede.
 With mighty smees the bones they to-breaste.
 He thurgh the thickest of the throng gan threste.
 Ther stamblen stedes strong, and down goth all.
 He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.

He foineth on his foo with a troncheon,
 And he him hartleth with his hors adoun.
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and with yakte
 Mangre his hed, and brought unto the stake,
 As forwood was, right ther he must abide.
 Another lad is on that other side.
 And somtime doth hem Theseus to rest,
 Hem to refresh, and drinke if hem lest.

Ful oft a day han thiike Thebanes two
 Togeder met, and wrought eche other wo:
 Unhored hath eche other of hem twey.
 Ther n'as no tigre in the vale of Galaphey,
 Whan that hire whelpes is stole, whan it is lite,
 So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite
 For jalous herte upon this Palamon:
 Ne in Belmarie ther n'is so fell leon,
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,
 As Palamon to sieen his foo Arcite.
 The jalous strokes on hir helmes bite;
 Out remeth blood on both hir sides rede.

Somtime an ende ther is of every dede.
 For er the Songe unto the reste went,
 The stronge king Emestrius gan heat
 This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
 And made his swerd depe in his flesh to bite.
 And by the force of twenty is he take
 Unyolden, and ydrawen to the stake.
 And in the rescous of this Palamon
 The stronge king Licurge is borne adoun:
 And king Emestrius for all his strengthe
 Is borne out of his udel a swerdes leangthe,
 So hitte him Palamon or he were take:
 But all for sought, he was brought to the stake!
 His hardy herte might him helpen naught,
 He moste abide, whan that he was caught,
 By force, and eke by composition.

Who sorweth now bat woful Palamon?
 That mooste no more gon again to fight.
 And whan that Theseus had seen that sight,
 Unto the folk that foughten thus eche on,
 He cried, "Ho! no more, for it is don.
 I wol be trewe juge, and not partie.
 Arcite of Ihebes shal have Emelie,
 That by his fortune hath hire fayre ywonne."

Anon ther is a noise of peple begonse
 For joye of this, so loud and high withall,
 It seemed that the listes shulden fall.

What can now fayre Venus don above?
 What saith she now? what doth this queene of he
 But wepeth so, for wanting of hire will,
 Til that hire teres in the listes fall:
 She sayde: "I am ashamed douteless."

Saturnus sayde: "Daughter, hold thy peer
 Mars bath his will, his knight bath all his how
 And by min had thou shalt ben eed gone."

The trompours with the loode minstrelcie,
 The heraudes, that so loude yell and cr'ie,
 Ben in hir joye for wele of Dan Arcite.
 But herkeneth me, and stenteth noise a lite,
 Whiche a miracle ther befell anon.

This heras Arcite hath of his helme ydon,
 And on a courser for to shew his face
 He priketh endelong the large place,
 Loking upward upon this Emelie;
 And she again him cast a friendlich eye,
 (For women, as to speken in comunure,
 They folwen all the favour of fortune)
 And was all his in chere, as his in herte.
 Out of the ground a fury infernal storte,

From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
 For which his hors for fere gan to torne,
 And lepte aside, and foundred as he lepe:
 And er that Arcite may take any kepe,
 He pight him on the pomel of his bed,
 That in the place he lay as he were ded,
 His brest brotten with his sadel brow.
 As bleis he lay as any cole or crow.
 So was the blood yronen in his face.
 Asoun he was yborne out of the place:
 With herte sore, to Theseus paleis.
 Tho was he curren out of his barneis,
 And in a bed ybrought ful fayre and blive,
 For he was yet in memorie, and live,
 And alway crying after Emelie.
 Duk Theseus, with all his compaigne,
 In comen house to Athenes his citee,
 With alle blisse and gret solemnite.
 Al be it that this aventure was falle,
 In syle out discomforten hem alle.
 Men sayden eke, that Arcite shal not die,
 He shal ben heled of his maladie.
 And of another thing they were as fayn,
 That of hem alle was ther non yslein,
 All were they sore yhurt, and namely on,
 That with a spere was thirled his brest bone.
 On other woundes, and to broken armes,
 On haddes salves, and som hadden charmes:
 And fermacies of herbes, and oke save
 They drunken, for they wold hir lives have.
 For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
 Honourith and honoureth every man,
 And made revel all the longe night,
 With the strange lordes, as was right.
 Be ther w'as holden no discomforting,
 That in it juster o a tourneying;
 For sothly ther w'as no discomfite,
 For falking w'as not but an aventure.
 He to be had by force unto a stake,
 And with twenty knightes take,
 Upon all alone, withouten mo,
 And herid forth by armes, foot, and too,
 And eke his stede driven forth with staves,
 With bootmes, bothe yemen and eke knyves,
 That w'as writen him no vilanie:
 For may no man elepen it cowardie.
 For which anon duk Theseus let crie,
 And senten alle rancour and envie,
 The gree as wel of o side as of other,
 And eyther side ylike, as others brother:
 And yave hem giftes after hir degree,
 And holde a feste fully dayes three:
 And covered the kinges worthily
 And of his toon a journey largely.
 And thence went every man the righte way,
 For w'as no more, but farewell, have good day.
 Of this bataille I wos no more endite,
 And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
 And smeth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
 Groweth at his herte more and more.
 He dretted blood, for any leche-craft,
 And compass, and is in his bouke ylast,
 That nyther veine-blood, ne venousing,
 That drinke of herbes may ben his helping.
 That vertue expand, or animal,
 That thurte vertue cleped natural,
 That may the venime roiden, ne expell.
 The popen of his longes gan to swell,
 And every lacerte in his brest adoun
 And shent with venime and corrupcion.

Him gaineth neyther, for to get his lif,
 Vomit upward, ne dounward laxatif;
 All is to-brotten thilke region;
 Nature hath now no domination.
 And certainly ther nature wol not werche,
 Farewel physike: go bere the man to cherche,
 This is all and soun, that Arcite moote die.
 For which he sendeth after Emelie,
 And Palamon, that was his coein dere.
 Than sayd he thus, as ye shal after here.

"Nought may the woful spirit in myn herte
 Declare o point of all my sorwes amerte
 To you, my lady, that I love most;
 But I bequeete the service of my gost
 To you above every creature,
 Sin that my lif en may no longer dure.

"Alas the wo! alas the peines stonge,
 That I for you have suffered, and no kunge!
 Alas the deth! alas min Emelie!
 Alas departing of our compaignie!
 Alas min hertes queene! alas my wif!
 Min hertes ladie, ender of my lif!
 What is this world? what axen men to have?
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave
 Alone withouten any compaignie.

Farewel my swete, farewell min Emelie,
 And softe take me in your armes twey,
 For love of God, and herteneth what I sey.

"I have here with my coein Palamon
 Had strif and rancour many a day ago
 For love of you, and for my jalousie.
 And Jupiter so wis my soule gie,
 To spoken of a servant properly,
 With alle circumstances trewely,
 That is to sayn, trouth, honour, and knightliede,
 Wisdom, humblesse, estat, and high kirrede,
 Freedom, and all that longeth to that art,
 So Jupiter have of my soule part,
 As in this world right now we know I now,
 So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
 That serveth you, and wol don all his lif.
 And if that ever ye shal ben a wif,
 Foryete not Palamon, the gentil man."

And with that word his speche faille began.
 For from his feet up to his brest was comen
 The cold of deth, that had him overcome.
 And yet moreover in his armes two,
 The vital strength is lost, and all ago.
 Only the intellect, withouten more,
 That dwelled in his herte sike and sore,
 Gan failen, when the herte felte deth;
 Dusked his eyen two, and failled his broth.
 But on his ladie yet cast he his eye;
 His laste word was; "Mercy, Emelie!"
 His spirit changed hous, and wente ther,
 As I came never I cannot tellen wher,
 Therefore I stent, I am no divinitaire;
 Of soules find I not in this registre.
 Ne me list not th' opinions to telle
 Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
 Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gie.
 Now wol I speken furth of Emelie.

Shright Emelie, and houbeth Palamon,
 And Theseus his sister take anon
 Swooning, and bare hire from the corpe away.
 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
 To tellen how she wop both even and morwe?
 For in swiche cas wifomen have swiche sorwe,
 When that hir houbonds ben fro hem ago,
 That for the more part they sorwen so,

Or elles fallen in swiche mayntie,
That atte laste certainly they die.
Infinite ben the sorowes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In all the-toun for deth of this Theban:
For him ther wepeth both childe and man.
So gret a weping was ther non certain,
Whan Hector was ybrought, all fremk yaloun
To Troy, stal' the pitous that was there,
Cratching of chekes, rending eke of here.
"Why woldest thou be ded?" thise women crien,
"And haddest gold yough, and Emelie."
No man might gladen this duk Theseus,
Saving his olde fader Egous,
That knew this worldes transmutacions,
As he had seen it chaungen up and down,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse;
And shewed him ensamples and likenesse.

"Right as ther died never man" (quod he)
"That he ne lived in orthe in soun degre,
Right so ther lived never man" (he seyde)
"In all this world, that sometime he ne dayde.
This world n'is but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passing to and fro:
Deth is an end of every worldes sore."

And over all this yet said he mochel more
To this effect, ful wisely to enhort
The peple, that they shuld ben reconfort.

Duk Theseus with all his bery cure
He casteth now, wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best ymakid be,
And eke most honourable in his degre.
And at the last he toke conclusion,
That ther as Brit Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the bataille boon betwene,
That in that selve grove, ope and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His complaint, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fire, in which the office
Of funeral he might all accompyse;
And lete anon comende to hark and here
The oke old, and lay ben on a row
In culpons, wel araid for to burne.
His officers with swifte feet they rounn
And ride anon at his commaundement.
And after this, this Theseus hath sent
After a here, and it all overspradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde;
And of the same suit he cladde Arcite.
Upon his bondes wore his gloves white,
Eke on his hed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hand a sword ful bright and keene.
He laid him bare the visage on the here,
Therwith he wept that pitous was to here.
And for the peple shulde seen him alle,
Whan it was day he brought him to the halle,
That roseth of the crying and the soun.

Tho came this woful Theban Palamon
With fletery berd, and ruggy samby heves,
In clothes blaie, ydrowped all with teres,
And (passing over of weping Emelie)
The refullest of all the compaignie.

And in so much as the service shuld be
The more noble and riche in his degre,
Duk Theseus let forth thre stedes bring,
That trapped were in stels all glittering,
And covered with the armes of Dan Arcite.
And eke upon these stedes gret and white
Ther sate folk, of which on bare his sheid,
Another his spere up in his bondes held;

The thridd bare with him his bow Turkin,
Of brent gold was the cas and the harness:
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shal after here.

The noblest of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carriiden the here,
With slakke pan, and eyen red and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maister stree,
That sprad was all with black, and wonder his
Right of the same is all the strote ywive.
Upon the right hand went olde Egous,
And on that other side duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir bond of gold ful fere,
All ful of honey, milk, and blood, and wine;
Eke Palamon, with ful gret compaignie:
And after that came woful Emelie,
With fire in bond, as was that time the gise,
To don the office of funeral service.

High labour, and ful gret appawling
Was at the service of that fire making,
That with his grene top the Heven rought,
And twenty fadom of brode the awnes straight:
This is to saie, the bougbes were so brode.
Of stre first ther was laied many a lode.

But how the fire was makid up on lighte,
And eke the names how the trees lighte,
As oke, fir, birch, aspe, alder, bolon, poplere,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestain, lund, lunt,
Maple, thorn, hache, hazel, ew, whippelre,
How they were feid, shalI not be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and down
Disherited of her habitacions,
In which they woudden in rest and pces,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;
Ne how the bestes, and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wood gan falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was not wont to see the Soone bright;
Ne how the fire was couched first with stre,
And then with drie stickes cloven a-thre,
And then with grene wood and spicorie,
And then with cloth of gold and with perrie,
And gerlands hanging with ful many a flow,
The mirre, th' excense also with crete odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among all this,
Ne what riches about his body is;
Ne how that Emelie, as was the gise,
Put in the fire of funeral service;
Ne how she srouded when she made the fire,
Ne what she spake, ne what was hir desire;
Ne what Jewelles men in the fire caste,
Whan that the fire was gret and brente faste;
Ne how som cast hir sheid, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestimantes, which they were,
And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and blood,
Into the fire, that brent as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with a huge roote
Thre times riden all the fire afoote
Upon the left bond, with a loud abouting,
And thries with hir speres olatring;
And thries how the ladies gan to crien;
Ne how that led was homeward Emelie;
Ne how Arcite is brent to eschen cold;
Ne how the licha-wake was yhold.
All thilke night, ne how the Grekes play.
The wake-places be kepte I not to say:
Who wrestled best naked, with oile enoint,
Ne who that bare him best in no disjoiint.
I wol not tellen eke how they all gon
Home til Athens whan the play is don;

But shortly to the point now wol I wende,
And make of my longe tale an ende.

By puce and by lengths of certain yeres
All swetes is the mourning and the tere
Of Grotus, by on general awent.
Then someth me ther was a parlement
At Athens, upon certain points and cas:
Amonge the which points yspoken was
To have with certain countres alliance,
And here of Thebeses fully obissance.
For which this noble Thebeses anon
Let wende after gentil Palamos,
Durst of him, what was the cause and why:
But in his black clothes unawfully
He came at his commandement on his;
To mete Thebeses for Remolie.

Was they were set, and heht was al the place,
And Thebeses abiden hath a space,
Or any word came from his wise brest.
His eyes set he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he siked still,
And after that right thus he sayd his will.

"The firste mover of the cause above
Was he firste made the fayre chaine of love,
Gret was th' effect, and high was his entent;
Wel wist he why, and what therof he ment:
For with that fayre chaine of love he bond
The fire, the air, the water, and the lond
In certain bondes, that they may not flee:
The same prince and mover eke" (quod he)

"Both stabled, in this wretched world adoun,
Certain dayes and duracion
To all that are engendred in this place,
Over the which day they no more out pace,
Al now they yet dayes wel abrage,
Thei wold non authorize allege,
For it is proved by experience,

But that we lust declaren my sentence,
Thei may men by this ordre wel discernen,
That thikke mover stable is and eterne.

Wel may men knowen, but it be a foot,
That every part deriveth from his boel.
Thei same hath not taken his beginning
Of no partie no candel of a thing.

But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
Decending so, til it be corraumpable
And therfore of his wise purveyance
He hath so wel beset his ordinance,

That spes of thinges and progressions
Shall enduren by successions,
And not eterne, withouten any lie:

Thei maist thei understand and seen at eye,
So the oke, that hath so long a sorshing
In the time that it ginneth first to spring,
And hath so long a lif, as ye may see,
Yet of the laste wasted is the tree.

Considereth eke, how that the harde stone
Under our feet, on which we trede and goe,
Is wretched, as it lieth by the way.

The brode river sometime weneith drey.
The grete tonnes see we wene and wende.
Thei may ye see that all thing hath an ende.
Wel men and women see we wel also,

That nedes is on of the termes two,
That is to sayn, in youthe or elles age,
That mote be ded, the king as shall a page;
That in his bed, anon in the depes see;

That in the large field, as ye may see:
Thei helpeth nought, all guth that like way:
Thei may I sayn that alle thing mote dey.

What maketh this but Jupiter the king?

The which is prince, and cause of alle thing,
Convertinge ake unto his propre wille,
From which it is derived, soth to telle.
And here-againes no creature on live
Of no degree availleth for to strive.
Than is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertus of necessite,
And take it wel, that we may not eschewe,
And namely that to us all is dewe.
And who so grutcheth ought, he doth folie,
And rebel is to him that all may gie.
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dien in his excoflence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goodle name.
Than hath he don his friend, no him, no shame;
And glader ought his friend ben of his deht,
Whan with honour is yodelen up his breht,
Than whan his name appalled is for age;
For all forgotten is his vassallage.

Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dien when a man is best of name.
The contrary of all this is wilfulnesse.

Why grutchen we? why have we bewinnesse,
That good Arcite, of chivairy the flour,
Departed is, with dutes and honour,
Out of this feole prison of this lif?
Why grutchen here his cousin and his wif
Of his wolfare, that loven him so wel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wet, never a del,
That both his soule, and eke hemself offend,
And yet they now hir lutes not to amend.

"What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But after sove I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of all his grace.
And so that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make of sorwes two
O parfit joye lasting evermo:

And loketh now wher most sorwe is herin,
Thei wol I first amenden and begin.

"Sister," (quod he) "this is my full assent,
With all th' avis here of my parlement,
That gentil Palamos, your own knight,
That serveth you with will, and herte, and might,
And ever hath don, sin ye first him knew,
That ye shall of your grace upon him rew,
And taken him for husband and for lord:
Lene me your hand, for this is oure accord.

"Let see now of your womanly pitie.

He is a kinges brothers some pardoe,
And though he were a pouere bachelere,
Sin he hath served you so many a yere,
And had for you so gret adversite,
It mooste ben considered, loveth me,
For gentil mercy owest to passen right."

Than sayd he thus to Palamos the knight:

"I trow thei nedeth litel revenging
To maken you amoun to this thing.
Comoth ner, and take your lady by the hand."

Betwixen hem was makid soon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or marriage,
By all the conseil of the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodie
Hath Palamos wedded Emelie.
And God that all this wide world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it dewe bought.
For now is Palamos in alle wele,
Living in blisse, in riches, and in hele,
And Emelie him loveth so tenderly,
And he hire serveth al so gently,

That never was ther no word born betwene
Of jakousie, ne of non othre tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelie;
And God save all this fyre compaignie.

THE MILLERES PROLOGUE.

WEAN that the Knight had thus his tale told,
In all the compaignie n' as ther yong ne old,
That he ne said it was a noble storie,
And worthy to be drawn to memoire;
And namely the gentiles everich on.
Our hoste lough and swore, "So mote I gon,
This goth aright; unbokeid is the male;
Let see now who shal tell another tale:
For trewely this game is wel begonne.
Now telleth ye, sire Monk, if that ye come,
Somwhat to quiten with the knyghtes tale."

The Miller that for-dronken was all pale,
So that unethes upon his hors he sat,
He n'old avalet neither hood ne hat,
Ne abiden no man for his curtesie,
But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,
And swore by armes, and by blood, and bones,
"I can a noble tale for the nones,
With which I wol now quite the knyghtes tale."

Our hoste saw that he was dronken of ale,
And sayd; "Abide, Robin, my leve brother,
Som better man shall tell us first another:
Abide, and let us werken thurifuly."

"By Goddes soule" (quod he) "that wol not I,
For I wol speke, or elles go my way."

Our hoste answered; "Tell us a devil way;
Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome." [some:]
"Now herkeneth," quod the Millor, "all and
But first I make a protestacion
That I am dronke, I know it by my soun:
And therefore if that I mispeke or say,
Wite it the ale of Southwerk, I you pray:
For I wol tell a legend and a lif
Both of a carpenter and of his wif,
How that a clerk bath set the wrightes cappe."

The Reve answerd and saide, "Stint thy clappe.
Let be thy lewed dronken harlotrie.
It is a sione, and eke a gret folie
To speiren any man, or him defame,
And eke to bringen wives in swiche a name.
Thou mayst ynough of othre thinges gain."

This dronken Miller spake ful sone again,
And sayde; "Leve brother Osowold,
Who bath no wif, he is no cokewold.
But I say not therefore that thou art on;
Ther ben ful goode wives many on.
Why art thou angry with my tale now?
I have a wif parde as wel as thou,
Yet n' olde I, for the oxen in my plough,
Taken upon me more than ynough
As demen of myself that I am on;
I wol beleven wel that I am non.
An husband shulde not ben inquisitif
Of Goddes private, ne of his wif.
So he may finden Goddes foison there,
Of the remenant nedeth not to enquire."
What shuld I more say, but this Millere
He n' olde his wordes for no man forbere,
But told his cherles tale in his manere,
Me thinketh, that I shal reberse it here.

And therefore every gentil wight I pray,
For Goddes love as deme not that I say
Of evil entent, but that I more reberse
His tales alle, al be they better or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my manere.
And therefore who so list it not to here,
Turne over the leef, and chese another tale,
For he shal find ynow bothe gret and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentilsene,
And eke moralite, and holinesse.
Blameth not me, if that ye chese amis.
The Miller is a cherl, ye know wel this,
So was the Reve, (and many othre mo)
And harlotrie they taken bothe two.
Avineth you now, and put me out of blame;
And eke men shuld not make cresset of game.

THE MILLERES TALE.

WEAN ther was dwelling in Oxenforde
A riche goof, that gestes helde to borde,
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With him ther was dwelling a poure scoler,
Had lerned art, but all his fantasie
Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
And coude a certain of conclusions
To demen by interrogacions,
If that men asked him in certain houres,
When that men shulde have droughte or elles shorte
Or if men asked him what shulde falle
Of every thing, I may not reken alle.

This clerk was cleped hendy Nicholas;

Of derne love he coude and of solas;
And therfo he was stie and ful prive,
And like a maiden meke for to se.
A chambre had he in that hostellerie
Alone withouten any compaignie,
Ful fetisly ydight with herbes sote,
And he himself was swete as is the roto
Of licoris, or any setowale.

His almageste, and bokes grette and smale,
His astridre, longing for his art,
His augrin stones, layen faire apart
On shelves couched at his beddes hed,
His preme ycovered with a falding red.
And all about there lay a gay sautrie,
On which he made on nightes melodie,
So swetely, that all the chambre rong:
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song.

And after that he song the kinges note;
Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
And thus this swete clerk his time spent
After his frendes fiding and his rent.

This carpenter had wedded new a wif,
Which that he loved more than his lif:
Of eightene yere she was I geese of age.
Jalous he was, and bold hire narwe in cage,
For she was wild and yonge, and he was old,
And demed himself belike a cokewold.
He knew not Caton, for his wit was rude,
That bade a man shulde wedde his similitude.
Men shulden wedden after hir estate,
For youthe and elde is often at debate.
But sithen he was fallen in the snare,
He most endure (as othre folk) his care.

Fayre was this yonge wif, and therwithal
As any wescil hire body gret and smal.
A ceint she wored, barred all of silk,
A barne-cloth eke as white as morwe milk.

Uppon hire lenden, ful of many a gure,
 White was hire smok, and broaded all before
 And eke behind on hire colere aboute
 Of cole-black silk, within and eke withoute.
 The tapes of hire white volupere
 Were of the same suit of hire colere;
 Ere miles brode of silk, and set full bye:
 And sikerly she had a likerous eye.
 Ful smal ypalled were hire browes two,
 And they were bent, and black as any sho.
 She was wel more blisful on to see
 Than is the newe perjenete tree;
 And softer than the wolfe is of a wether.

And by hire girdle heng a purse of leather,
 Taped with silk, and peried with latoun.
 In all this world to taken up and down
 Ther n'is no man so wise, that coude thenche
 So gay a popelot, or swiche a wenche.
 Ful brighter was the shining of hire hewe,
 Than in the tour the noble yforged newe.
 But of hire song, it was as loud and yerne,
 As any swallow sitting on a berne.
 Therto she coude skip, and make a game,
 As any kid or calf following his dame.
 Hire mouth was swete as braket or the meth,
 Or lord of appels, laid in hay or heth.
 Whanng she was, as is a joly colt,
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
 A buche she bare upon hire low colere,
 As brode as is the boose of a bokelere.
 Hire shous were laced on hire legges hie;
 She was a primerole, a piggesnie,
 For my lord to liggyn in his bedde,
 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.

Now hire, and eft hire, so befall the cas,
 That on a day this hendy Nicholas
 Ful with the yonge wif to rage and pleye,
 While that her husband was at Oseney,
 As clerkes ben ful subtil and ful queint,
 And prively he caught hire by the queint,
 And sayde; "Ywis, but if I have my will,
 For demer love of thee, lemman, I spill."
 And held hire faste by the haunch bones,
 And sayde; "Lemman, love me wel at once,
 Or I wol dea, as so God me save."

And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave;
 And with hire hed she writthed faste away,
 And sayde; "I wol not kisse thee by my fay.
 Why let be," (quod she) "let be, Nicholas,
 Or I wol crie out harrow and alas."

Do way your bondes for your curtesie."
 This Nicholas gan mercy for to crie,
 And spake so faire and profered him so fast,
 That the hire love him granted at the last,
 And swore hire oth by Seint Thomas of Kant,
 That she would ben at his commandement,
 Whan that she may hire leiser wel espie.

"My husband is so ful of jalousie,
 That but ye waiten wel, and be prive,
 I not right wel I n'am but ded," quod she.
 "Ye moosten be ful demer as in this cas."
 "Nay, therof care you not," quod Nicholas:
 "A clerk had litherly beset his while,
 But if he coude a carpenter begile."

And thus they were accorded and ysworne
 To write a time, as I have said before
 Whan Nicholas had don thus every dol,
 And thached hire about the lendes wel,
 He lamed hire swete, and takoth his sautrie,
 And phieth fast, and maketh melodie.

Than fell it thus, that to the parish cherche
 (Of Cristes owen werkis for to werche)
 This good wif went upon a holy day:
 Hire forehead shone as bright as any day,
 So was it washen, whan she lete hire werk.

Now was ther of that chirche a parish clerk,
 The which that was ycleped Absolon.
 Crulle was his here, and as the gold it shon,
 And strutted as a fenne large and brode;
 Ful straight and even lay his joly shode.
 His rode was red, his eyen grey as goos,
 With poules windowes corven on his shous.
 In hosen red he went ful fetisly.
 Yclad he was ful smal and properly,
 All in a kirtel of a light waget;
 Ful faire and thicke ben the pointes set.
 And therupon he had a gay surprise,
 As white as is the blomme upon the rise.

A mery child he was, so God me save;
 Wel coude he leten blod, and clippe, and shave,
 And make a chartre of lond, and a quitaunce.
 In twenty manere coude he trip and dance,
 (After the scole of Oxenforde tho)
 And with his legges casten to and fro;
 And playen songes on a smal ribble;
 Therto he song sometime a load quynible.
 And as wel coude he play on a giterne.
 In all the toum n'as brewhous ne taverne,
 That he ne visited with his soles,
 Ther as that any galliard tapstere was.
 But soth to say he was somdel squimous
 Of farting, and of speche dangerous.

This Absolon, that joly was and gay,
 Goth with a censor on the holy day,
 Censuring the wives of the parish faste;
 And many a lovely loke he on hem caste,
 And namely on this carpenteres wif:
 To loke on hire he thought a mery lif.
 She was so propre, and swete, and likerous.
 I dare wel sein, if she had ben a mous,
 And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon.

This parish clerk, this joly Absolon,
 Hath in his herte swiche a love-longing,
 That of no wif toke he non offering;
 For curtesie, he sayd, he n'olde non.

The Moone at night ful clere and brighte shon,
 And Absolon his giterne bath ytake,
 For paramours he thoughte for to wake.
 And forth he goth, jolif and amorous,
 Til he came to the carpenteres hous,
 A litel afte the cockes had ycrow,
 And dressed him up by a shot window,
 That was upon the carpenteres wal.
 He singeth in his vois gentil and smal;
 "Now, dere lady,—if thy wille be,
 I pray you that ye—wol rewre on me;"
 Ful wel accordant to his gitering.

This carpenter awoke, and herd him sing,
 And spake unto his wif, and said anon,
 "What, Absolon, heres thou not Absolon,
 That chanteth thus under our boures wal?
 And she answered hire husband therewithal;
 "Yes, God wot, Johc, I bere him every del."

This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel?
 Fro day to day this joly Absolon
 So loveth hire, that him is wo-begon.
 He waketh all the night, and all the day,
 He kembeth his lockes brode, and made him gay.
 He weeth hire by menes and brocage,
 And swore he wolde ben hire owen page.

He singeth brukking as a nightingale.
He sent hire pinnen, mathe, and spiced ale,
And wafres piping hot out of the glide:
And for she was of toon, he profered mede.
For som folk wol be wounou for richesse,
And som for strokes, and som with gentillesse.

Somtime to shew his lightnesse and maistrie
He playeth Herode on a skaffold his.
But what availeth him as in this case?
So loveth she this bendy Nicholas,
That Absolon may blow the bukkes borne:
He ne had for his labour but a scoorne.
And thus she maketh Absolon hire ape,
And all his earnest tourneth to a jape.
Ful soth is this proverbe, it is no lie;
Men say right thus alway; "The neighe slye
Maketh oft time the fer leef to be lothe."
For though that Absolon be wood or wrothe,
Because that he fer was from hire sight,
This neighe Nicholas stood in his light.

Now here thee wel, thou bendy Nicholas,
For Absolon may waille and sing alas.

And so befell that on a Saturday,
This carpenter was gon to Osenay,
And hendy Nicholas and Alison
Accorded ben to this conclusion,
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wile
This sely jalous husband to begile;
And if so were the game went aright,
She shuld sleepe in his armes alle night,
For this was hire desire and his also.
And right anon, withouten wordes mo,
This Nicholas no longer wolde tarie,
But doth ful soft unto his chambre carie
Both mete and drinks for a day or twey.

And to hire husband bad hire for to sey,
If that he axed after Nicholas,
She shuld say, she n'iste not wher he was;
Of all the day she saw him not with eye.
She trowed he was in som maladie,
For for no crie hire maiden cond him calle
He n'olde answer, for nothing that might falle.

Thus passeth forth all thilke Saturday,
That Nicholas still in his chambre lay,
And ete, and slept, and did what him list
Till Sunday, that the Sonne goth to rest.

This sely carpenter bath greet morwalle
Of Nicholas, or what thing might him sile,
And said; "I am adrad by Seint Thomas
It stondeth not aright with Nicholas:
God shilde that he died sodenly.
This world is now ful tikel sikery.

I saw to-day a corps yborne to cherche,
That now on Monday last I saw him werche.

"Go up" (quoth he unto his knave) "anon;
Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a ston:
Loke how it is, and tell me boldely."

This knave goth him up ful sturdely,
And at the chambre dore while that he stood,
He cried and knocked as that he were wood:
"What how? what do ye, maister Nicholas?
How may ye slepen all the longe day?"
But all for nought, he herde not a word.
An hole he foud ful low upon the bord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe,
And at that hole he loked in ful depe,
And at the last he had of him a sight.

This Nicholas sat ever gaping upright,
As he had tyked on the newe Mone.

Adoun he goth, and telleth his maister soone,

In what array he saw this ilke man.

This carpenter to blissen him began,
And said; "Now helpe us Seinte Bridewise.
A man wote litel what shal him betide.
This man is fallen with his astronomie
In som woodnesse or in som agonie.
I thought ay wel how that it shulde be.
Men shulde not know of Goddes privete.
Ya blessed be alway a lewed man,
That pought but only his beleve can.
So ferd another clerk with astronomie;
He walked in the felde for to prie
Upon the sterres, what there shuld befall,
Till he was in a marlepit yfalle.
He saw not that. But yet by Seint Thomas
Me reweth sore of bendy Nicholas:
He shal be rated of his studying,
If that I may, by Jesus, Heven king.

"Get me a staf, that I may underspore
While that thou, Robin, hevost of the dore:
He shal out of his studying, as I gese."
And to the chambre dore he gan him drewe.
His knave was a strong carl for the noce,
And by the haspe he haf it of at ones;
Into the flore the dore fell anon.

This Nicholas sat ay as stille as a ston,
And ever he gaped upward into the aire.

This carpenter woad he wore in despeire,
And hent him by the shuldres mightily,
And shoke him hard, and cried spitoously;
"What, Nicholas? what how man? loke adoun!
Awake, and thinke on Cristes passoun.
I crouche thee from elves, and from wightes."
Therwith the nightespal said he anon rightes,
On foure helves of the hous aboute,
And on the threswold of the dore withoute.
"Jesu Crist, and Seint Benedight,
Blisse this hous from every wicked wight,
Fro the nightes mare, the wite Pater-nostar;
Wher wocest thou Seint Peters suster?"

And at the last this bendy Nicholas
Gan fir to siken sove, and said; "Alas!
Shal all the world be lost estances now?"

This carpenter answered; "What seigest thou?
What? thinke on God, as we do, men that swinke."

This Nicholas answered; "Fetch me a drinke:
And after wol I speke in privete
Of certain thing that toucheth thee and me:
I wol tell it non other man certain."

This carpenter goth doun, and cometh again,
And brought of mighty ale a large quart;
And whan that ache of hem had drunken his part,
This Nicholas his dore faste shette,
And doun the carpenter by him he sette,
And saide; "John, min boote lefe and dere,
Thou shalt upon thy trouthe sweve me here,
That to no wight thou shalt my conseil wrey:
For it is Cristes conseil that I say,
And if thou tell it mas, thou art forlore:
For this vengeance thou shalt have therefore,
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood."

"Nay, Crist forbede it for his holy blood,"
Quod tho this sely man; "I am no labbe,
Ne though I say it, I n'am not lefe to gabbe.
Say what thou wolt, I shal it never telle
To child ne wif, by him that barwed Helle."

"Now, John," (quod Nicholas) "I wol not lie
I have yfounde in min astrologie,
As I have loked in the Moone bright,
That now on Monday next, at quarter night,

That fall a man, and that so wild and wood
 That half so greet was never Noes flood.
 This wold" (he said) "In lesse than in an houre
 That al be dremt, so hidous in the shoure:
 That shal maskinde deschebe, and lese his lif."
 This carpenter answered; "Alas my wif!
 And shal she drenchen? alas myn Alisoun!"
 Forsoke of this he fell almost adoun,"
 And said; "Is ther no remedy in this cas?"
 "Way yes, for God," quod hendi Nicholas;
 "If thou wolt werken after lore and rede;
 Thou maist not werken after thin owen hede.
 For thus saith Salomon, that was ful trewe;
 Werke all by counsell, and thou shalt not rewe.
 And if thou werken wolt by good counsell,
 I undertake, withouten mast or sayl,
 Yet shal I savee hire, and thou and me.
 Hast thou not herd how saved was Noe,
 When that our Lord had warned him beforethe,
 That all the world with water shuld be lorne?"
 "Yes," (quod this carpenter) "ful yere ago."
 "Hast thou not herd?" (quod Nicholas) "also
 The sorwe of Noe with his felawship,
 Or that he might get his wif to ship?
 He had be lever, I dare wel undertake,
 At thilke time, than all his wethers bleke,
 That he had had a ship hireself alone.
 And therefore wost thou what is best to dooe?
 This arth best, and of an hastif thing
 Men may not precibe and maken tarryng.
 And so get us fast into this in
 A leeching trough or othe a kemelnyu,
 For sche of us; but luke that they ben large,
 In which we mowen swimme as in a barge:
 And have therein vitaille sufficient
 But for a day; so on the remenant;
 The water shall aslake and gon away
 And then prime upon the nexte day.
 But Noe may not wete of this, thy knave,
 Ne shal thy mayden Gille I may not save:
 And so why: for though thou ase me,
 I wil not telle Goddes privete.
 Both thou and she, but if thy wittes madde,
 Thou have as greet a grace as Noe hadde.
 Thy wif shal I wol savee out of doute.
 So now thy way, and speke thee hereabout.
 "But when thou hast for hire, and thou, and me,
 Upon to these kneading tabbes thre,
 Thou shalt thou hang hem in the rooffe ful hie,
 That no man of our purveyance espie:
 And when thou hast don thus as I have said,
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem ylaid,
 And set an eye to smite the cord a-two
 When that the water cometh, that we may go,
 And breke as hole on high upon the gable
 Into the garden ward, over the stable,
 That we may frely passen forth our way,
 When that the grete shoure is gon away.
 And shal thou swim as mery, I undertake,
 As doth the white drike after hire drake:
 And wol I clepe, "How Alisoun, how John,
 Be mery: for the flood wol passe anon."
 And thou wolt sein, "Hailie maister Nicholas,
 And merve, I seee thee wol, for it is day."
 And thus shall we be lordes all our lif
 Of all the world, as Noe and his wif,
 And of o thing I warne thee ful right,
 As we arised on that ilke night,
 That we ben entred into shippes bord,
 That none of us we speke not o word,

Ne clepe no cris, but be in his priere,
 For it is Goddes owen beste dere.
 "Thy wif and thou moete hangen for a-twime,
 For that betwixen you shal be no sinne,
 No more in loking thin ther shal in dede.
 This ordinance is said; go, God thee spede.
 To-morwe at night, when men ben all asleepe,
 Into our kneading tabbes wol we crepe,
 And sitten ther, abiding Goddes grace.
 Go now thy way, I have no leger space
 To make of this no longer sermoning:
 Men sein thus: "Send the wise, and say nothing:
 Thou art so wise, it needeth thus nought teche.
 Go, save our lives, and that I thee beseeche."
 This sely carpenter goth forth his way,
 Ful oft he said "Alas, and wale wa,"
 And to his wif he told his privete,
 And she was ware, and knew it bet than he
 What all this queeste cast was for to say.
 But nathles she ferde as she wold dey,
 And said; "Alas! go forth thy way anon.
 Helpe us to escape, or we be ledde eche on.
 I am thy trowe veray wedded wif;
 Go, dere spouse, and helpe to save our lif."
 Lo, what a greet thing is affection,
 Men may die of imagination,
 So depe may impression be take.
 This sely carpenter beganeth quake:
 Him thinketh veraily that he may see
 Noes flood comen walwing as the see
 To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.
 He wepeth, waileth, maketh sory chere;
 He siketh, with ful many a sory swoogh.
 He goth and geteth him a kneading trough,
 And after a tabbe, and a kemelin,
 And prively he sent hem to his in:
 And hang hem in the rooff in privete,
 His owen hood than made he ladders thre,
 To clumbe by the runges and the stalkes
 Unto the tabbes hanging in the balkes;
 And vitailled bothe kemelin, trough and tabbe,
 With bread and cheese, and good ale in a jubbe,
 Sufficing right ynow as for a day.
 But er that he had made all this array,
 He sent his knave, and eke his wenche also
 Upon his nedes to London for to go.
 And on the Monday, when it drew to night,
 He shette his dore, withouten candle light,
 And dressed all thing as it shalde be.
 And shortly up they cloumben alle thre.
 They sitten stille wel a furlong way.
 "Now, *Pater noster*, clere," said Nicholas,
 And "Amen," quod John, and "Amen," said Alisoun:
 This carpenter said his devotion,
 And still he sit, and biddeth his priere,
 Awaiting on the rain, if he it here.
 The dede slepe, for wery businesse,
 Fell on this carpenter, right as I gesse,
 Abouten curfew-time, or litel more.
 For travaille of his guth he groweth sore,
 And eft he routeth, for his hed mistay.
 Doon of the ladder staiteth Nicholas,
 And Alisoun ful soft adoun hire spede.
 Withouten wordes moe they went to bedde,
 Ther as the carpenter was wont to lie;
 Ther was the revel, and the melodie.
 And thus lith Alisoun, and Nicholas,
 In businesse of weirthe and in solas,
 Til that the bell of *Lauds* gan to ring.
 And fress in the chancel gon to sing.

This parish clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alway so wo-begyn,
Upon the Moosday was at Osenay
With compaignie, him to disport and play;
And asked upon cas a chioister
Ful prively after John the carpenter;
And he drew him apart out of the church.
He said, "I w'ot; I saw him not here wiche
Sith Saturday; I trow that he be worst
For timbre, ther our abbot hath him seat.
For he is wont for timbre for to go,
And dwellen at the Grange a day or two:
Or elles he is at his hous certain,
Wher that he be, I cannot sothly sein."
This Absolon ful joly was and light,
And thoughte, now is time to wake at night,
For sikerly, I saw him nat stiring
About his dore, sin day began to spring.
So mote I thrive, I shal at cockes crow
Ful prively go knocke at his window,
That stant ful low upon his boures wall:
To Alisoun wol I now tellen all
My love-longing; for yet I shal not misse,
That at the leste way I shal hire kisse.
Some maner comfort shal I have parfay,
My mouth bath itched all this longe day:
That is a signe of kissing at the leste.
All night me mette sike, I was at a feste.
Therefore I wol go slepe an houre or twey,
And all the night than wol I wake and pley."

When that the firste cocke hath crowe, anon
Up riseth this joly lover Absolon,
And him arayeth gay, at point devise.
But first he cheweth grein and licourise,
To smellea sote, or he had spoke with here,
Under his tonge a trewe love he bere,
For therby wend he to ben gracious.
He cometh to the carpenteres hous,
And still he stant under the shot window;
Unto his brest it raught, it was so low;
And soft he cougheth with a semisoun.

"What do ye booycoumbe, swete Alisoun?
My faire bird, my swete sinamome.
Awaketh, lemman min, and speke to me.
Ful listli thinke ye upon my wo,
That for your love I swete ther as I go.
No wonder is though that I swelte and swote,
I mourne as doth a lamb after the tete.
Ywis, lemman, I have swiche love-longing,
That like a turtel trewe is my mourning.
I may not ete no more than a maid."

"Go fro the window, jacks fool," she said:
"As helpe me God, it wol not be, compaigne.
I love another, or elles I were to blame,
Wel bet than thee by Jesu, Absolon
Go forth thy way, or I wol cast a ston;
And let me slepe; a twenty dival way."

"Alas!" (quod Absolon) "and wala wa!
That trewe love was ever so yvel besette:
Than kisse me, sin that it may be no bette,
For Jesu love, and for the kwe of me."

"Wilt thou then go thy way therwith?" quod she.
"Ya certes, lemman," quod this Absolon.
"Than make thee redy," (quod she) "I come anon."

This Absolon doon set him on his knees,
And saide; "I am a lord at all degrees:
For after this I hope ther cometh more;
Lemman, thy grace, and, swete bird, thyu ore."

The window she undoth, and that in haste. [faste.
"Have don," (quod she) "come of, and spede thee

Let that our neighbours thee espie."

This Absolon gau wipe his mouth ful drie.
Derke was the night, as pitch or as the cole,
And at the window she put out hire hote,
And Absolon him felle ne bot ne wern,
But with his mouth he list hire naked en
Ful savorly, or he was ware of this.

Abak he sterte, and thought it was amis,
For wel he wiste a woman hath no berd.
He felt a thing all rowe, and long yberd,
And saide; "Fy, alas! what have I do?"

"Te he," quod she, and clap' the window to;
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.

"A berd, a berd," said hendy Nicholas;
"By goddes corpus, this goth faire and wel."

This sely Absolon herd every del,
And on his lippe he gas for anger bite;
And to himself he said, "I shal thee quite."
Who rubbeth now, who frosteth now his lippe
With dust, with sood, with straw, with cloth, with
Bet Absolon? that saith full oft, "Alas! [chippes,
My soule betake I unto Sathanas,
But me were lever than all this toun" (quod he)

"Of this despit awroken for to be.
Alas! alas! that I me had ybent."

His hote love is cold, and all yqueint.
For fro that time that he had list hire en,
Of paramours ne raught he not a kere,
For he was heled of his maladie;
Ful often paramours he gas desfe,

And wepe as doth a child that is ybete.
A softe pas he went him over the strete

Until a smith, men callen dan Gerveis,
That in his forge smithed plow-harnais;

He sharpeth share and cultre besily.
This Absolon knocketh all enily,

And said; "Undo, Gerveis, and that anon."

"What, who art thou?" "I am I Absolon."

"What? Absolon, what? Cristes swete tre,
Why rise ye so rath? ey benedicite,

What eileth you? some gay gite, God it wote,
Hath brought you thus upon the virotoke:

By Seint Neote, ye wote wel what I mene."

This Absolon ne raughte not a bene
Of all his play; no word again he yaf.
He hadde more tawe on his distaf

Than Gerveis knew, and saide; "Friend so dera,
That hote culter in the chemise here

As leue it me, I have therwith to don:
I wol it bring again to thee ful soon."

Gerveis answered; "Certes, were it gold,
Or in a pike nobles all untold,

Thou shuldest it have, as I am a trowe smith.
Ey, Cristes foot, what wol ye don therwith?"

"Therof," quod Absolon, "be as it may;
I shal wel tellen thee another day:"

And caught the culter by the colde stele,
Ful soft out at the dore he gan to stele,

And went unto the carpenteres wall.
He coughed first, and knocked therwithall

Upon the window, right as he did er.

This Alisoun answered; "Who is ther
That knocketh so? I warrant him a thefe."

"Nay, nay," (quod he) "God wot, my swete la!
I am thin Absolon, thy dereling.

Of gold" (quod he) "I have thee brought a ring,
My mother yave it me, so God me save,

Ful fine it is, and therof wol ygrave:
This wol I yeven thee, if thou me kisse."

This Nicholas was risen for to pise,

And thought he wolde amenden all the jape,
He shalde kisse his ers er that he scape:
And up the window did he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth prively
Over the buttok, to the hancche hon.
And therewith spake this clerk, this Absolon,
"Speke swete bird, I n'ot not wter thou art."

This Nicholas anon let seene a fart,
As gret as it had ben a thounder dint;
That with the stroke he was wel nie yblint:
And he was redy with his yrem hote,
And Nicholas amid the ers he smote.

Off goth the skirne an handbrede al aboute.
The hote culter brented so his trouthe,
That for the smert he wened for to die;
As be were wood, for wo be gan to crye,
"Help, water, water, help for Goddars herte."

The carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
And herd on cris water, as he were wood,
And thought, "Alas, now cometh Noes flood."
He set him up withouten wordes mo,
And with his axe he smote the cord atwo;
And down goth all; he foud neyther to selle
Ne breed ne ale, til he came to the selle,
Upon the flore, and ther awoone he lay.

Up sterten Alison and Nicholas,
And crieden, "Out and harow!" in the strete.
The neighboures bothe unale and grette
In ranson, for to gauen on this man,
That yet awoone lay, bothe pale and wan:
For with the fall he brosten hath his arm,
But stonden he trust onto his owen harm,
For when he spake, he was upon hore down
Wak hendy Nicholas and Almoun.

They tolde every man that he was wood;
He was agaste so of Noes flood
Thurgh fantasie, that of his vanities
He had ybought him kneeding tubbes thre,
And had hem honged in the roof above;
And that he praised hem for Goddes love
To siten in the roof *per compaignie*.

The folk gan laughen at his fantasie,
Unto the roof they kyken, and they gape,
And turned all his harm into a jape.
For what so that this carpenter answerd,
It was for naught, no man his reson herd.
With othes gret he was so sworne adoun,
That he was holden wood in all the toun.
For everich clerk anon right held with other;
They said, the man was wood, my leve brother;
And every wight gan laughen at this straf.

Thus swived was the carpenteres wif,
For all his keeping, and his jalousie;
And Absolon hath kist hire nether eye;
And Nicholas is scalded in the toste.
This tale is don, and God save all the route.

THE REVES PROLOGUE.

WHAN folk han laughed at this nice cas
Of Almoun and hendy Nicholas,
Some folk diversely they saide,
But for the more part they lought and plaide;
As at this tale I saw so man him grieve,
But it were only Osowold the Reve.
Because he was of carpenteres craft,
A Mad we is in his herte yrest;
He gan to grutch and biamen it a litte.
"So the ik," quod he, "ful wel coode I him quite

With blering of a proude milleres eye,
If that me list to speke of ribandrie.
But ik am olde; me list not play for age;
Gres time is don, my foddre is now forage.
This white top writeth min olde yeris;
Min herte is also moulde as min heris;
But if I fare as doth an open-ers;
That ilke fruit is ever longer the wear,
Til it be roten in mullok, or in stre.
"We olde men, I drede, so faren we,
Til we be roten, can we not be ripe;
We hoppe alway, while that the world wol pipe;
For in our wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
To have a hore hed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leke; for though our might be gon,
Our will desireth folly ever in on:
For whan we may not do, than wol we speken,
Yet in our ashen cold is fire yreken.

"Foure glides han we, which I shal devise,
Avanting, lying, anger, and covetise.
These foure sparkes longen unto elde.
Our olde limes now wel hem unwelede.
But will we shal not failen, that is sothe.
And yet have I alway a coltes tothe,
As many a yere as it is passed hence,
Sin that my tappe of lif began to renne.
For sikerly, whan I was borne, anon
Deth drew the tappe of lif, and let it gon:
And ever sith both so the tappe yronne,
Til that almost all empty is the tonne.
The strome of lif now droppeth on the chimbe
The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wretchednesse, that passed is ful yore:
With olde folk, save dotage, is no more."

Whan that our hoste had herd this sermoung,
He gan to speke as lordly as a king,
And sayde: "What amounteth all this wit?
What? shall we speke all day of holy writ?
The devel made a Reve for to preche,
Or of a souter a shipman, or a leche.

"Say forth thy tale, and tary not the time:
Lo Depeford, and it is half way prime:
Lo Grenewich, ther many a shrew is inne.
It were al time thy tale to begiue."

"Now, sires," quod this Osowold the Reve,
"I pray you alle, that ye not you greve,
Though I answer, and somdel set his howve.
For leful is with force force off to shouve.

This drooken Miller bath ytold us here,
How that begiled was a carpentere,
Paraventure in soorne, for I am on:
And by your leve, I shal him quite anon.
Right in his cheris termes wol I speke.
I pray to God his necke mote to-breke.
He can wel in min eye seen a-stalk,
But in his owen he cannot seen a halk."

THE REVES TALE.

AT Trompington, not fer fro Cartebritte,
Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigg,
Upon the whiche brook ther stont a meile:
And this is veray sothe, that I you telle.
A miller was ther dwelling many a day,
As any peacock he was proude and gay:
Pipen he coude, and fabe, and nettes bete,
And turnen cuppes, and wrastlen wel, and shete.
Ay by his belt he bare a long parade,
And of a sword ful trenchant was the blade.

A joly popper bare he in his pouchen;
 Ther n'as no man for peril drest him touche.
 A Shefeld thawtel bare he in his hose
 Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.
 As pilled as an ape was his skull.
 He was a market-bater at the full.
 Ther dorste no wight hood upon his legges,
 That he ne swore he shold aken obegges.

A thefe he was fortoth, of corn and mole,
 And that a sie, and usant for to stole.
 His name was hoteu deimes Simkin.
 A wif he hadde, comen of noble kin:
 The person of the town hire father was.
 With hire he yaf ful many a puzze of bras,
 For that Simkin shuld in his blood alibe.
 She was yfostered in a nonnerie:
 For Simkin wolde no wif, as he sayde,
 But she were wel ymarried, and a mayde,
 To save his estat of yemourie:

And she was proud, and port as is a pie.
 A ful faire sight was it upon hem two.
 On holy dayes before hire wold he go
 With his tipet ybounde about his heed;
 And she came after in a gite of red,
 And Simkin hadde bosen of the same.
 Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but dame:
 Was non so hardy, that went by the way,
 That with hire dorste rage or oon play,
 But if he wold be slain of Simekin
 With parade, or with knif, or todekin.
 (For jalous folk ben perilous evermo:
 Algate they wold hir wives wonden so.)
 And eke for she was smodel smotourish,
 She was as digne as water in a ditch,
 And al so ful of holter, and of bismare.
 Hire thoughte that a ladie shuld hire spare,
 What for hire kinrede, and hire mortelrie,
 That she had lerned in the nonnerie.

A daughter hadden they betwix hem two
 Of twenty yere, withoosten any mo,
 Saving a child that was of half yere age,
 In cradle it lay, and was a propre page.
 This wenche thicke and wel ygrowen was,
 With camuse nose, and eyen grey as glas;
 With buttokes brode, and brestes round and his;
 Bot right faire was hire here, I wol not lie.

The person of the town, for she was faire,
 In purpos was to maken hire his halve
 Both of his catel, and of his messuage,
 And strange he made it of hire marriage.
 His purpos was for to bestowe hire his
 Into som worthy blood of manestrie.
 For holy chirches good mote ben descended
 On holy chirches blood that is descended.
 Therefore he wolde his holy-blood honoure,
 Though that he holy chirche shuld devour.

Gret soken hath this miller out of doute
 With whete and malt, of all the hand aboute;
 And namely ther was a gret college
 Men clepe the Soier hall at Cantebregre,
 Ther was hir whete and eke hir malt yground.
 And on a day it happed in a stound,
 Sike lay the mannciple on a maladie,
 Men wonden wisly that he sholde die.
 For which this miller stalle both mete and corn
 An hundred times more than beforen.
 For therforen he stalle bot curteisly,
 But now he was a thefe outrageously.
 For which the warden childe and made fare,
 But therof set the miller not a tare;

He craked best, and swore it n'as no so.

Then were ther yonge poure scoleres two,
 That dwelten in the halle of which I say;
 Testif they were, and lusty for to play;
 And only for hir mirth and revelrie
 Upon the warden bestly they cris,
 To yewe hem love but a litel stound,
 To go to mille, and seen hir corn yground:
 And hardly they dorste lay hir necke,
 The miller shuld not stein hem half a packe
 Of corn by sleighte, so by force hem reve.

And at the last the warden yawe hem love:
 John knight that on, and Alein knight that oth,
 Of o town were they born, that highte Strothet,
 For in the north, I can not tellen where.

This Alein mekoth rody all his gere,
 And on a hors the mak he cast anon:
 Forth goth Alein the clerk, and also John,
 With good sword and with bokeler by his side.
 John knew the way, him needed not no guide,
 And at the mille the mak adoun he laith.

Alein spake first: "All baile, Simound, in faith,
 How fares thy faire daughter, and thy wif?"

"Alein, welcome" (quod Simkin) "by my fik,
 And John also: how now, what do ye here?"

"By God, Simound," (quod John) "wode heu so per
 Him behoves serve himself that has na swain,
 Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sein.
 Our mannciple I hope he wol be ded,
 Swa werkes ay the wanges in his hed:
 And therfore is I come, and eke Alein,
 To grind our corn and cary it home aguin:
 I pray you speke us heuon that we may."

"It shal he do" (quod Simkin) "by my knyght:
 What wol ye don while that it is in hand?"

"By God, right by the hopper wol I stand,"
 (Quod John) "and seen how that the corn gas in.
 Yet saw I never by any fader here,
 How that the hopper waggis til and fra."

Alein answered; "John, and wolt thou see?
 Than wol I be benethe by my croon,
 And see how that the mele fallis adoun
 In til the trogh, that shal be ay depart:
 For, John, in faith I may ben of your sort;
 I is as ill a miller as is ye."

This miller smiled at hir mistee,
 And thought, "All this n'is don but for a wile.
 They wenes that no man may hem begile,
 But by my thrift yet shal I hiere hir sie,
 For all the sleighte in hir philosophie.
 The more quicste knakkes that they make,
 The more wol I stein whan that I take.
 In stede of flour yet wol I yawe born been.
 The grettest clerkes ben not the wisest men,
 As whilom to the wolf thus spake the mone:
 Of all hir art ne count I not a tere."

Out at the dore he goth ful prively,
 Whan that he saw his time, softly.
 He loketh up and doun, til he hath found
 The clerkes hors, ther as he stood ybound
 Behind the mille, under a lewesall:
 And to the hors he goth him faire and well,
 And stripeth of the biddel right anon.

And whan the hors was late, he gas to gon
 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares ronne,
 And furth, with wehen, thurgh thick and thinne.
 This miller goth aguin, no word he said,
 But doth his note, and with these clerkes paid,
 Till that hir corn was faire and wel yground.
 And whan the mele is socked and ybound,

His John goth out, and fast his hors away,
 Had gon to crye, "Harow and wala wa!
 Her hors is lost: Alein, for Godde's banes,
 Rise on thy feet; come of, man, al at ones:
 His! our warden has his palfrey lost."
 "This Alein al forgot both mele and corn;
 He was out of his mind his husbandrie;
 "What, whilke way is he gon?" he gan to crye.
 The wif came leping inward at a reune,
 He seyde; "Alas! youre hors goth to the fenne
 His wilde mares, as fast as he may go.
 He shal come on his bond that bond him so,
 And he that better shuld have knit the rein."
 "Alas!" quod John, "Alein, for Christes paine
 By down thy sword, and I shal min akwa.
 In ful wight, God wate, as is a re.
 Goddes saule he shal not scape us bathe.
 He sayd thou put the capel in the lathe?
 Hele, Alein, by God thou is a foune."
 These seyl clerkes han ful fast yronne
 Toward the fen, bothe Alein and eke John:
 When the miller saw that they were gon,
 He had a bachel of hir flour hath take,
 And had his wif go kneede it in a cake.
 He seyde; "I trow, the clerkes were aferde.
 I can a miller make a clerkes berde,
 I sell his st. Ye, let hem gon hir way.
 Where they gon. Ye, let the children play:
 I get him not so lightly by my crown."
 These seyl clerkes rousen up and down
 "Kepe, kepe; stand, stand; jonne, wardenere.
 Heleste thou, and I shal kepe him here."
 Shortly, til that it was very night
 He coude not, though they did all hir might,
 The capel catch, he ran alway so fast:
 In a ditch they caught him at the last.
 Dry and wet, as bestes in the rain,
 With seyl John, and with him cometh Alein.
 "Good John, "the day that I was borne!
 How we driven til hething and til scorn.
 Men is stolne, men wol us founes calle,
 We wardenin, and eke our felawes alle,
 "Nemely the miller, wala wa!"
 He plaineth John, as he goth by the way
 Toward the millo, and bayard in his bond.
 The miller sitting by the fire he food,
 He was sight, and farther might they nought,
 For the love of God they him beought
 To serve and of ece, as for hir peny.
 The miller saide agen, "if ther be any,
 He is it, yet strull ye have your part.
 "Jonne is streit, but ye have lerned art;
 By arguments maken a place
 He made, of twenty foot of space.
 "He now if this place may suffice,
 He make it rounne with speche, as is your gise."
 "Sonne," said this John, "by Seint Cathberd
 Thou mery, and that is faire answerd.
 "He here say, man sal take of twa things,
 As he fodes, or slike as he bringes.
 "Specially I pray thee, bonse derte,
 He have mete and drinke, and make us chere,
 He sal paven trewely at the full:
 He empty hand, men may na haukes tull.
 "He our silver ready for to spend."
 The miller to the town his daughter send
 He had bread, and rosted hem a goos,
 He had hir hors, he shuld no more go loos:
 He his owen chambere hem mad a bedde,
 He states and with chalonis faire yspredde,
 VOL. I.

Nat from his owen bed ten foot or twelve:
 His daughter had a bed all by hireselve,
 Right in the same chambere by and by:
 It mighte be no bet, and cause why.
 Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
 They soupen, and they speken of solace,
 And drunke ever strong ale at the best.
 Abouten midnight wente they to rest.
 Wel hath this miller vernished his hed.
 Ful pale he was, for-dronken, and nought red.
 He yoseth, and he speketh thurgh the nose,
 As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
 To bed he goth, and with him goth his wif:
 As any jay she light was and jolif,
 So was hire joly whistle wel ywette.
 The cradel at hire beddes feet was sette,
 To rocken, and to yeve the child to souke.
 And whan that dronken was all in the crouke
 To bedde went the daughter right anon,
 To bedde goth Alein, and also John.
 Ther n'as no more; nedeth hem no dwale.
 This miller hath so wily hibbed ale,
 That as an hors he smorteth in his slepe,
 Ne of his tail behind he toke no kepe.
 His wif bare him a burdon a ful strong;
 Men might hir routing heren a furlong.
 The wenche routeth eke *par compaignis*.
 Alein the clerk that herd this melodie,
 He poketh John, and sayde: "Sleepest thou?
 Herdest thou ever slike a song er now?
 Lo whilke a complain is ymell hem alle.
 A wilde fire upon hir bodies falle,
 Wha herked ever slike a ferly thing?
 Ye, they shall have the flour of yvel ending.
 This lange night ther tides me no repite.
 But yet na force, all shal be for the beste.
 For, John," sayde he, "as ever mote I thrive,
 If that I may, yon wenche wol I swive.
 Some esement has lawe yshapen us.
 For, John, ther is a lawe that saith thus,
 That if a man in o point be agreed,
 That in another he shal be releved.
 Our corn is stolne, sothly it is na say,
 And we han had an yvel fit to-day.
 And sin I shal have nan amendeunt
 Again my lose, I wol have an esement:
 By Godde's saule, it shal nan other be."
 This John answered; "Alein, advise thee:
 The miller is a perilonous man," he sayde.
 "And if that he out of his slepe abraide,
 He mighte don us bathe a vilanie."
 Alein answered; "I count him nat a fie."
 And up he rist, and by the wenche be crept.
 This wenche lay upright, and faste slept,
 Til he so nigh was, er she might espie,
 That it had ben to late for to crye:
 And shortly for to say, they were at on-
 Now play, Alein, for I wol speke of John.
 This John lith still a furlong way or two,
 And to himself he maketh routh and wo.
 "Alas!" quod he, "this is a wicked jape;
 Now may I say, that I is but an ape.
 Yet has my felaw somewhat for his harme;
 He has the miller's daughter in his arme:
 He aunted him, and hath his nedes spedde,
 And I lie as a draf-sak in my bedde;
 And whan this jape is told another day,
 I shal be halden a daffe or a cokenay:
 I wol arise, and aunte it by my fay:
 Unhardy is unsely, thus men say."
 D

And up he rose, and softly he went
 Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hent,
 And bare it soft unto his bedden fete.
 Soe after this the wif hire rooting late,
 And gan awake, and went hire out to pissen,
 And came again, and gan the cradel misse,
 And groped here and ther, but she foud non.
 "Alas!" quod she, "I had almost misgon.
 I had almost gon to the clerkes bedde.
 Ey benedicite, than had I foule yspocde."
 And forth she goth, til she the cradel foud.
 She gropeth alway forther with hire hond,
 And foud the bed, and thoughte nat but good,
 Because that the cradel by it stood,
 And n'iste wher she was, for it was derk,
 But faire and wel she crept in by the clerk,
 And lith ful still, and wold han caught a slepe.
 Within a while this John the clerk up lepe,
 And on this gode wif he laisth on sore;
 So mery a fit he had she nat ful yore.
 He priketh hard and depe, as he were mad.

This joly lif han these two clerkes had,
 Til that the thridde cok began to sing.
 Alein wex werie in the mornening,
 For he had swooken all the longe night,
 And sayd; "Farewel, Malkin, my swete wight.
 The day is come, I may no longer bide,
 But evermo, wher so I go or ride,
 I is this awen clerk, so have I heie."
 "Now, dere lemman," quoth she, "go farwele:
 But or thou go, o thing I wol thee tell.
 Whan that thou wendest homeward by the mell,
 Right at the estree of the dore behind
 Thou shalt a cake of half a bushel find,
 That was ymaked of thin owen mede,
 Which that I halpe my fader for to stele.
 And goode lemman, God thee save and kepe."
 And with that word she gan almost to wepe.

Alein uprist and thought, or that it daw
 I wol go crosen in by my felaw:
 And foud the cradel at his hand anon.
 By God," thought he, "all wrang I have misgon:
 My hed is tottie of my swink to night,
 That maketh me that I go nat aright.
 I wol wed by the cradel I have misgo;
 Here lith the miller and his wif also.
 And forth he goth a twenty divel way
 Upto the bed, ther as the miller lay.
 He wend have crosen by his felaw John,
 And by the miller in he crept anon,
 And caught him by the nekke, and gan him shake,
 And sayd; "Thou John, thou swinehed, awake
 For Cristes saule, and here a noble game:
 For by that lord that called is Seint Jame,
 As I have thries as in this short night
 Swived the millers dougnter bolt-upright,
 While thou hast as a coward ben agast."

"Ye, false harlot," quod the miller, "hast?
 A false traitour, false clerk," quod he,
 "Thou shalt be ded by Godde's dignitee,
 Who dorste be so bold to disparage
 My daughter, that is come of swiche lineage.
 And by the throte-bolle he caught Alein,
 And he him hent despitously again,
 And on the nose he smote him with his fist;
 Doun ran the bloody streme upon his brest:
 And in the flore with stome and mouth to-brok
 They walwe, as don two pigges in a poke.
 And up they gon, and doun again anon,
 Til that the miller spored at a ston,

And doun he fell backward upon his wif,
 That doyn nothing of this nice strif:
 For she was fall asleepe a litel wight
 With John the clerk, that waked had all eight:
 And with the fall out of hire slepe she braide.
 "Helpe, holy crois of Bronholme," she sayde,
 "In swete tress, Lord, to thee I call.
 Awake, Simond, the fend is on me fall;
 Myn herte is broken; helpe; I n'am bot ded;
 Ther lith on up my wombe, and up myn bed.
 Helpe, Simkin, for the false clerkes sght."
 This John stert up as fast as ever he might,
 And graspeh by the wallis to and fro
 To find a staf, and she stert up also,
 And knew the estres bet than did this John,
 And by the wall she toke a staf anon:
 And saw a litel shesmering of a light,
 For at an hole in shone the Mone bright,
 And by that light she saw been bothe two,
 But sikerly she n'iste who was who,
 But as she saw a white thing in hire eye.
 And whan she gan this white thing espie,
 She wend the clerk had drew a volopere;
 And with the staf she drew ay nere and nere,
 And wend han hit this Alein atte full,
 And smote the miller on the pillid skull,
 That doun he goth, and cried, "Harrow: I dre
 These clerchen bete him wel, and let him lie,
 And greithen hem, and take hir hors anon,
 And eke hir mele, and on hir way they gon:
 And at the mille dore eke they toke hir cake
 Of half a bushel flour, ful wel ybake.

Thus is the proude miller wel ybete,
 And hath ylost the grinding of the whete,
 And paid for the souper every del
 Of Alein and of John, that bete him wel;
 His wif is swived, and his daughter als;
 Lo, swiche it is a miller to be fals.
 And therfore this proverbe is sayd ful soth,
 Ilim thar not winnen wel that evil doth;
 A gilour shal himself begiled be:
 And God that siteth hie in magestee
 Save all this compaignie, gret and small.
 Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

THE COKE'S PROLOGUE.

THE COKE OF LONDON, while the Reve spake,
 For joye (him thought) he clawed him on the
 "A ha," quod he, "for Cristes passion,
 This miller had a sharpe conclusion,
 Upon this argument of herbergeage.
 Wel sayde Salomon in his langage,
 Ne bring not every man into thin hous,
 For herberwing by night is perilous.
 Wel ought a man avised for to be
 Whom that he brought into his privetee.
 I prayto God an yve me sorwe and care,
 If ever, sithen I highte Hodge of Ware,
 Herd I a miller bet yette a-werk;
 He had a jape of malice in the derk.
 "But God forbode that we stinten here,
 And therfore if ye vouchen sauf to here
 A tale of me that am a poure man,
 I wol you tell as wel as ever I can
 A litel jape that fell in our citee."
 Our Hoste answerd and sayde; "I graht it

Now tell on, Roger, and loke that it be good,
 For many a pastee hast thou letten blood,
 And many a Jacke of Dover hast thou sold,
 That hath been twice hot and twice cold.
 Of many a pilgrim hast thou Cristes curse,
 For of thy perseloe yet fare they the worse,
 That they han eten in thy stobbe goos;
 For in thy shop goth many a fle loos.
 Now tell on, gentil Roger by thy name,
 But yet I pray thee be not wroth for game;
 A meo may say ful soth in game and play."
 "Thou sayst ful soth," quod Roger, "by my fay;
 But soth play *quode spel*, as the Fleming saith;
 And therefore, Herry Bailly, by thy faith,
 Be thou not wroth, or we departen here,
 Though that my tale be of an hostelere.
 But natheles, I wol not telle it yet,
 But as we part, ywis thou shalt be quit."
 And therewithal he laugh and made chere,
 And sayd his tale, as ye shul after here.

THE COKE'S TALE.

A maner whilom dwelt in our citee,
 And of a craft of vitailens was he:
 Called he was, as goldfisch in the shawe,
 Housse as a bery, a gumpere short felawe;
 With lokkes blacke, kembed ful festisly.
 Duncens he coude so wel and jolily,
 That he was cleped Perkin Reveleour.
 He was so ful of love and paramour,
 As is the hive ful of hony swete;
 Wel was the wunche with him nighte mete.
 At every bridales would he sing and huppe;
 He loved bet the taverns than the shoppes.
 For when ther any ridyng was in Chepe,
 Out of the shoppes thider would he lepe,
 And til that he had all the night yore,
 And danced wel, he wold not counse agerin;
 And gadered him a meicnie of his sort,
 To huppe and sing, and maken swiche disport;
 And ther they sotten steven for to mete
 To pleisur at the dis in swiche a strete.
 For in the town no was ther no prentis,
 Than finer coude caste a pair of dis
 Than Perkin coude, and therto he was fre
 Of his dispence, in place of privitee.
 That found his maister wel in his chaffare,
 For often tyme he found his box ful bare.
 For schyly, a prentis, a reveleour,
 That hansteth dis, riot and paramour,
 His maister shal it in his shoppes abide,
 Al have he no part of the ministracie.
 For theft and riot they ben convertible,
 Al can they play on giterne or ribible.
 Revel and truth, as in a low degree,
 They ben ful wroth all day, as men may see.
 The joly prentis with his maister abode,
 Til he was seigh out of his prentishode,
 Al were he nibbed bothe erly and late,
 And somtyme had with revel to Newgate.
 But at the last his maister him bethought
 Upon a day, when he his paper sought,
 Of a poverbe, that saith this same word;
 "Wol bet is rotes appel out of bord,
 Than that it rote alle the remenant;
 So sweth it by a riotous servant;

It is wel lesse harm to let him pace,
 Than be shende all the servants in the place.
 Therefore his maister gaf him a quitaunce,
 And bad him go, with sorwe and with meschaunce.
 And thus this joly prentis had his leve:
 Now let him riot all the night or leve.
 And for ther n'is no thefe without a louke,
 That helpeth him to wasten and to souke
 Of that he briben can, or borwe may,
 Anon he sent his bed and his array
 Unto a comper of his owen sort,
 That loved dis, and riot, and disport;
 And had a wif, that held for contenance
 A shoppes, and swived for hire sustenance.

THE

MAN OF LAWES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoste saw wel, that the brighte Sonne
 The ark of his artificial day had roone;
 The fourthe part, and half an houre and more;
 And though he were not depe expert in lore,
 He wiste it was the eighte and twenty day
 Of April, that is messager to May;
 And saw wel that the shadow of every tree
 Was as in lengthe of the same quantitee
 That was the body erect, that caused it;
 And therefore by the shadow he toke his wit,
 That Phebus, which that shone so clere and bright,
 Degrees was five and forty clombe on hight;
 And for that day, as in that latitude,
 It was ten of the clok, he gan conclude;
 And sodenly he plight his hors aboute.
 "Lordings," quod he, "I warne you all this route,
 The fourthe partie of this day is gon.
 Now for the love of God and of Saint John
 Leseth no time, as ferforth as ye may.
 Lordings, the time it wasteth night and day,
 And steleth from us, what prively sleping,
 And what thurgh negligence in our waking,
 As doth the strete, that turneth never again,
 Descending from the montagne into a plain.
 Wel can Senek and many a philosopre
 Bewaiten time, more than gold in coffre.
 For losse of catel may recovered be,
 But losse of time shendeth us," quod he.
 It wol not come again withouten drede,
 No more than wol Malkins maidenbede,
 When she hath lost it in hire wantounesse.
 Let us not moolen thus in idleness.
 "Sire man of Lawe," quod he, "so have ye blis,
 Tell us a tale anon, as forward is.
 Ye ben submitted thurgh your free assent
 To stonde in this cas at my judgement.
 Acquitheth you now, and boldeth your behest;
 Than have ye don your devoir at the best."
 "Hoste," quod he, "*de par dieus jeo assente*,
 To breken forward is not min entente.
 Behest is dette, and I wold hold it fays
 All my behest, I can no better sayn,
 For swiche lawe as man yeveth another wight,
 He shuld himselfen useen it by right.
 Thus wol our text: but natheles certain
 I can right now no thrifty tale sain,
 But Chauocer (though he can but lewedly
 On metres and on riming craftily)

Hath sayd hem, in swiche English as he can,
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man.
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another.
For he hath told of lovers up and down,
Mo than Ovide made of mentoun
In his *Epietolis*, that ben ful olde.

What shuld I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?

In youthe he made of Coys and Alcyon,
And sitheu bath he spoke of everich on
Thise noble wives, and thise lovers eke.
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Clepeth the *Saintes Legende of Cupide*:
Ther may he se the large woundes wide
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thisbe;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The plaint of Deianire, and Hermonion,
Of Adriane, and Yaphisilee;
The barreine ile stondeth in the see;
The dreint Leandre for his fayre Hero;
The teres of Heleine, and eke the wo
Of Briseide, and of Ladonia;
The crueltee of thec, queene Medea,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals,
For thy Jason, that was of love so fals.
O Hipermeestra, Penelope, Alceste,
Your wifhood he commendeth with the beste.

"But certainly no word he writeth he
Of thilke wicke ensample of Canace,
That loved hire owen brother sinfully;
(Of all swiche cursed stories I say fy)
Or elles of Tyrins Appolonius,
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Berast his daughter of hire maidenhede,
That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
Whan he hire threw upon the pavement.
And therefore he of ful avisement
Nold never write in noon of his sermons
Of swiche unkinde abhominations;
Ne I wol non reherse, if that I may.
But of my tale how shal I don this day?
Me were loth to be likened douteles
To Muses, that men clepe Pierides,
(*Metamorphosus* wote what I mene)
But natheles I recche not a bene,
Though I come after him with hawebake,
I spoke in prose, and let him rimes make."
And with that word, he with a sobre chere
Began his tale, and sayde, as ye shull here.

THE

MAN OF LAWS TALE.

O REATHFUL harm, condition of poverté,
With thirst, with cold, with hunger so confounded,
To asken helpe thee shameth in this herte,
If thou nou ask, so sore art thou ywounded,
That veray nede unwrappeth al thy wound hid.
Maugre this hed thou must for indignance
Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy dispence.

Thou blamest Crist, and sayst ful bitterly,
He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
Thy neighebour thou witeest sinfully,
And sayst, thou hast a litel, and he hath all:
Parfay (sayst thou) somtime he reken shall.
Whan that his tayl shal breccen in the glede,
For he nought helpeth needful in hir nede.

Herken what is the sentence of the wise,
Bet is to dien than have indignance.
Thy selve neighebour wol thee despise,
If thou be poure, farewell thy reverence.
Yet of the wise man take this sentence,
Alle the dayes of poure men ben wicke,
Beware therefore or thou come to that pricke.

If thou be poure, thy brother hateth thee,
And all thy frendes fleen fro thee, alas!
O riche marchants, ful of wele ben ye,
O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas,
Your bagges ben not filled with ambes aa,
But with sis cink, that renneth for your chance;
At Cristenmasse mery may ye dance.

Ye soken lond and see for your winninges,
As wise folk ye knowen all th' estat
Of regnes, ye ben fathers of tidings,
And tales, both of pees and of debat:
I were right now of tales desolat,
N'ere that a marchant, gon in many a yere,
Me taught a tale, which that ye shull here.

In Surrie whilom dwelt a compaignie
Of chapmen rich, and therto mad and trowe,
That wide where serten hir spicorie,
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of bewe.
Hir chaffare was so thriftilly and so newe,
That every wight hath deintee to chaffare
With hem, and eke to sellen hem hir ware.

Now fell it, that the maisters of that sort
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende,
Were it for chapmanhood or for disport,
Non other message wold they thider sende,
But comen himself to Rome, this is the coudre;
And in swiche place as thought hem advantage
For hir entente, they taken hir herbergage.

Sojourned han these marchants in that town
A certain time, as fell to hir plesance:
And so befell, that the excellent renoun
Of the emperoures daughter dame Costance
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto these Surrien marchants, in swiche wise
Fro day to day, as I shal you devise.

This was the comun vois of every man:
"Our emperour of Rome, God him so,
A daughter hath, that sin the world began,
To reken as wel hire goodnesse as beaute,
N'as never swiche another as is she:
I pray to God in honour hire sustene,
And wold she were of all Europe the queene."

"In hire is high beaute withouten pride,
Youthe, withouten greched or folie:
To all hire werkes vertue is hire guide;
Humblenesse hath slaien in hire tyrannis:
She is mirroure of alle cortisie,
Hire herte is veray chambre of holinesse,
Hire hond ministre of fredom for almese."

And al this vois was soth, as God is trewe,
But now to purpos let us turne agein.
These marchants han don fraught hir shippes
And whan they han this blisful maiden seen,
Home to Surrie ben they went ful fayn,
And don hir nedes, as they han dou yore,
And liven in wele, I can say you no more.

Now fill it, that these marchants stood in grace
Of him that was the soudan of Surrie:
For when they came from any strange place
He wold of his beaigne curtesie
Make hem good chere, and besyie espie
Things of sundry regnes, for to lere
The wonder that they mighte seen or here.

Amonges other thinges specially
These marchants han him told of dame Custance
So gret noblesse, in earnest sericously,
That this soudan hath caught so gret plesance
To see hire figure in his remembrance,
That all his lust, and all his beay cure
Was for to love hire, while his lif may dure.

Forwriten in thilke large book,
Which that men clepe the Heven, ywritten was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love shuld han his deth, alas!
As is the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, God wot, who so coude it rede,
The deth of every man withouten drede.

In sterres many a winter therbeforen
Was writ the deth of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Judas, or they were born;
The deth of Thebes; and of Hercules,
Of Sampson, Turron, and of Socrates
The deth; but nevres wittes ben so dull,
That no wight can wel rede it at the full.

This soudan for his prive counceil sent,
And shortly of this matere for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entent,
And seyde hem certain, but he might have grace
To his Custance, within a litel space,
He shal be ded, and charged hem in his
To stape for his lif soon remedie.

Some men, diverse thinges saide;
They argumenres casten up and down;
Many a subtil reson forth they laiden;
They spoken of magike, and abusoun;
But finally, as in conclusoun,
They cannot seen in that non avantage,
As in an other way, save mariage.

Thus saw they therein swiche difficultee
By way of reson, for to speke al plain,
Seynere ther was swiche diversitee
Seynere hir bothe lawes, that they sayn.
They trowen that no Cristen prince wold fayn
Wolde his child under our lawe swete,
That us was yeven by Mahound our prophete.

And he answered; "Rather than I lese
Custance, I wol be cristened douteles:
I wote hem hire, I may non other chese,
I pray you hold your arguments in pesse,
With my lif, and both not rechelous
To passe hire that both my lif in cure,
As in this wo I may not long endure."

What nedeth greter dilatation?
I say, by tretise and ambassetrie,
And by the popes mediation,
And all the churchis, and all the chevalrie,
That in destruction of Maugmetrie,
And in exerce of Cristes lawe dere,
They has accorded so as ye may here;

How that the soudan and his baronage,
And all his lieges shuld ycristened be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certain gold, I n'ot what quantitee,
And hereto finden suffisant surete.
The same accord is sworne on eyther side;
Now, fair Custance, almighty God thee guide.

Now wolden som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shuld tellen all the purveiance,
The which that the emperour of his noblesse
Hath shapen for his daughter dame Custance.
Wel may men know that so gret ordinaunce
May no man tellen in a litel clause,
As was arraied for so high a cause.

Bishopes ben shapen with hire for to wende,
Lordes, ladies, and knightes of renown,
And other folk yow, this is the end.
And notified is thurghout al the toun,
That every wight with gret devotioun
Shuld prayen Crist, that he this mariage
Receive in grece, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hire departing,
I say the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no longer taryng,
But forward they ben dressen all and some.
Custance, that was with sorwe all overcome,
Ful pale aris, and dremeth hire to wende,
For wel she seeth ther n'is non other ende.

Alas! what wonder is it though she wept?
That shal be sent to straunge nation
Fro frendes, that so tendresly hire kept,
And to be bounde under subjection
Of on, she knoweth not his condicion.
Husbandes ben all good, and han ben yore,
That knowen wives, I dare say no more.

"Fader," she said, "thy wretched child Custance,
Thy youge daughter, fostered up so soft,
And ye, my moder, my sovaine plesance
Over all thing, (out taken Crist on loft)
Custance your child hire recommendeth oft
Unto your grace; for I shal to Surrie,
Ne shal I never seen you more with eye.

"Alas! unto the Barbare nation
I muste gon, sin that it is your will;
But Crist, that starfe for our redemption,
So yeve me grace his bestes to fulfill,
I wretched woman no force though I spill;
Women arn borne to thraldom and penaunce,
And to ben under mannes governance."

I trow at Troye whan Pirrus brake the wall,
Or Ilion brent, or Thebes the citee,
Ne at Rome for the harm thurgh Hannibal,
That Romans bath venqueshed times thre,
N'as herd swiche tendre weping for pitee,
As in the chambre was for hire parting,
But forth she mote, wheder she wepe or sing.

O firste moving cruel firmament,
With thy diurnal swegh that croodest ay,
And hurtlest all from est til occident,
That naturally wold hold another way;
Thy croodest set the Haven in swiche array
At the beginning of this ferce viage,
That cruel Mars hath slain this marriage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helpeles fall, alas!
Out of his angle into the derkest hou.
O Mars, o Atyzar, as in this cas;
O feble Mone, unhappy ben thy pas,
Thou knittest thee ther thou art not received,
Ther thou were wel fro thennes art thou weived.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, alas!
Was ther no philosopre in al thy toum?
Is no time bet than other in swiche cas?
Of viage is ther non electioun,
Namely to folk of high condition,
Nat whan a rote is of a birth yknowe?
Alas! we ben to lewed, or to slow.

To ship is brought this woful faire maid
Solempnly, with every circumstance:
"Now Jesu Crist be with you all," she said.
Ther n'is no more, but "Farewel, fair Custauce."
She paieeth hire to make good countenance,
And forth I let hire sayle in this manere,
And turne I wol againe to my matere.

The mother of the soudan, well of vices,
Espied hath hire sones pleine entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifices:
And right anon she for her conseil sente,
And they hen comen, to know what she mente,
And when assembled was this folk in fere,
She set hire doun, and sayd as ye shul here.

"Lordez," she sayd, "ye knowen everich on,
How that my soce in point is for to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by Goddes messager Mahomete:
But on avow to grete God I hete,
The lif shal rather out of my body sterte,
Than Mahometes lawe out of myn herte.

"What shuld us tiden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance,
And afterward in Helle to ben drawe,
For we reneied Mahound our ovrance?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal say, assenting to my lore?
And I shal make us sauf for evermore."

They sworn, and assented every man
To live with hire and die, and by hire stound:
And everich on, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen hire shal all his frendes foud.
And she bath this emprise ytaken in bond,
Which ye shull hereon that I shal devise,
And to hem all she spake right in this wise.

"We shul first feine us Cristendom to take;
Cold water shal not greve us but a lite:
And I shal swiche a feste and revel make,
That, as I trow, I shal the soudan quite.
For tho his wif be critened never so white,
She shal have nede to wash away the rede,
Though she a font of water with hire lede."

O soudanesse, rote of iniquitee,
Virago thou Sempramee the second,
O serpent under femininitee,
Like to the serpent depe in Helle ybound:
O feined woman, all that may confound
Vertue and innocence, thurgh thy malice,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice.

O Sathan envious, sin thilke day
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowest thou to woman the olde way.
Thou madest Eva bring us in servage,
Thou wolt fordon this cristen mariage:
Thin instrument so (wals wa the while!)
Makest thou of women whan thou wolt begie.

This soudanesse, whom I thus blame and warre,
Let prively hire conseil gon hir way:
What shuld I in this tale longer tarie?
She rideth to the soudan on a day,
And sayd him, that she wold reneie hire lay,
And Cristendom of prestes bondes fong,
Repenting hire she hethen was so long;

Beseching him to don hire that honour,
That she might han the Cristen folk to fest:
"To plesen hem I wol do my labour."
The soudan saith, "I wol don at your best,"
And kneeling, thanked hire of that request;
So glad he was, he n'iste not what to say,
She kist hire sone, and home she goth hire way.

Arrived ben these Cristen folk to londe
In Surrie, with a gret solempne rout,
And hastily this soudan sent his comde,
First to his mother, and all the regne about,
And sayd, his wif was comen out of doute,
And praide hem for to rideen again the queene,
The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the presse, and riche was th' array
Of Surriens and Romanes met in fere.
The mother of the soudan riche and gay
Received hire with all so glad a chere,
As any mother might hire daughter dere:
And to the nexte citee ther beside
A softe pas solempnly they ride.

Nought trow I, the triumph of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swiche a boi,
Was realer, or more curious,
Than was th' assemblee of this blisful host:
Butte this scorpion, this wicked goit,
The soudanesse, for all hire flatering
Cast under this ful mortality to sting.

The soudan cometh himself sone after this
So realy, that wonder is to tell:
And welcometh hire with alle joye and blis.
And thus in mirth and joye I let hem dwell,
The fruit of this matere is that I tell.
Whan time came, men thought it for the best
That revel stint, and men go to hir rest.

The time come is, this olde soudanesse
Ordeined hath the feste of which I tolde,
And to the feste Cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ya bothe yonge and olde.
Ther may men fest and realtee behold,
And deintees mo than I can you devise,
But all to dere they bought it or they rise.

O souden wo, that ever art successour
To worldly blis, spreint is with bitternesse
Th' ende of the joys of our worldly labour:
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
Herken this conseil for thy sikernes:
Upon thy glade day have in thy minde
The unware wo of harm, that cometh behinde

For shortly for to token at a word,
The soudan and the Cristen everich on
Ben all to-bewe, and stiked at the bord,
But it were only dame Custance alone.
This olde soudaness, this cursed croone,
Bath with hire freendes dou this cursed dode,
As she hirself wold all the contree lede.

He ther was Sarrien non that was converted,
That of the conseil of the soudan wot,
That he n'as all to-bewe, or he astered:
And Custance han they taken anon fote-hot,
Aed in a ship all sterole (God wot)
They ban hire set, and bidden hire lerne saye
Out of Sarrie againward to Itaille.

A certain tresor that she thither ladde,
And soth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee,
They han hire yeven, and clothes eke she hadde,
And both she saylech in the salte see:
O my Custance, ful of benigntee,
O emperours younge daughter dere,
As that is lord of fortune be thy stere.

He wouth hire, and with ful pitous vois
Unto the crois of Crist thus sayde she.
O dere, o weleful aunter, holy crois,
That of the lambes blood ful of pitee,
That wash the world fro the old iniquitee,
Be in the fende, and fro his claws kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.

"Victorious tree protection of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of Heven, with his woundes newe,
The white lamb, that hurt was with a spere;
The lesser of fendes, out of him and here
In which thy limmes faithfully extenden,
Be kepe, and yeve me might my lif to amenden."

Two and dayes flet this creature
Thurghout the see of Greece, unto the strait
Of Maroc, as it was hire aventure:
As many a sory mele now may she baite,
As hire deth ful often may she waite,
As that the wilde waves wol hire drive
Unto the place ther as she shal arrive.

How mighten asken, why she was not slain?
As at the feste who might hire body save?
And I answer to that demand again,
The saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
As ever yight, save he, master or knave,
As with the leou frette, or he asterie?
As yight but God, that he bare in his herte.

And let to shew his wonderful miracle
As hire, for we shuld seen his mighty werkes:
That, which that is to every harm triacle,
As certain menes off, as known clerkes,
As that thing for certain ende, that ful derke is
As mannes wit, that for our ignorance
As can not know his prudent purveiance.

How sith she was not at the feste ysawe,
As hepte hire fro the drenching in the see?
As hepte Jonas in the fishes mawe,
As he was spouted up at Ninivee?
As I may men know, it was no wight but he
As hepte the peple Ebraike fro drenching,
As he drey flet thurghout the see passing.

Who bade the foure spiritis of tempest,
That power han to anoyen loud and see,
Both north and south, and also west and est,
Anoyen neyther see, ne lond, ne tree?
Sothly the commander of that was he
That fro the tempest ay this woman kepte,
As wel whan she awoke as whan she slepte.

Wher might this woman mete and drinke have?
Three yere and more, how lasteth hire vitaille?
Who fed the Egyptias Mary in the cave
Or in desert? no wight but Crist sans faille.
Five thousand folk it was as gret marvaille
With loves five and fishes two to fede:
God sent his foyson at hire grette nede.

She driveth forth into our ocean
Thurghout our wide see, til at the last
Under an hold, that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond, the wave hire cast,
And in the sand hire ship stiked so fast,
That thennes wolde it not in all a tide:
The wille of Crist was that she shuide abide.

The constable of the castle down in fare
To seen this wrecke, and al the ship he sought,
And fond this very woman ful of care;
He fond also the tresour that she brought:
In hire langage mercy she bestought,
The lif out of hire body for to twinne,
Hire to deliver of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latin corrupt was hire spoebe,
But algate therby was she understoode.
The constable, whan him list no longer seebe,
This woful woman brought he to the loode.
She knoleth down, and thanketh Goddes soode;
But what she was, she wolde no man weye
For foule ne faire, though that she shulde deye.

She said, she was so mused in the see,
That she forgate hire minde, by hire trouth.
The constable hath of hir so gret pitee
And eke his wif, that they wepen for routh:
She was so diligent withouten slouth
To serve and plesen everich in that place,
That all hire love, that loken in hire face.

The constable and dame Hermegild his wif
Ware payences, and that contree every wher;
But Hermegild loved Custance as hire lif;
And Custance hath so long sojourned ther
In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
Til Jesu hath converted thurgh his grace
Dame Hermegild, constablaesse of that place.

In all that lond no Cristen dorste route;
All Cristen folk ben fled fro that contree
Thurgh payences, that conquereden all aboute
The plages of the north by lond and see.
To Wales fled the Cristianitee
Of olde Bretons, dwelling in this ile;
Ther was hir refuge for the mene while.

But yet n'ere Cristen Bretons so exiled,
That ther n'ere som which in hir privitee
Honoured Crist, and bethen folk begiled;
And neigh the castle swiche ther dwelten three:
That on of hem was blind, and might not see,
But it were with thilke eyen of his minde,
With which men mowen see whan they ben blinde.

Bright was the Sonne, as in that sommers day,
For which the constable and his wif also
And Custance, han ytake the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong way or two,
To plaiein, and to romen to and fro;
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette,
Croked and olde, with eyen fast ysette.

"In the name of Crist," cried this blinde Breton,
"Dame Hermegild, yeve me my sight again."
This lady wexe afraied of that soun,
Lest that hire husband, shortly for to sein,
Wold hire for Jesu Cristes love have slain,
Til Custance made hire bold, and had hire werche
The will of Crist, as daughter of holy cherche.

The constable wexe abashed of that sight,
And sayde; "What amounteth all this fare?"
Custance answerd; "Sire, it is Cristes might,
That helpeh folk out of the fendes snare."
And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him believe.

This constable was not lord of the place
Of which I speke, ther as he Custance fond,
But kept it strongly many a winter space,
Under Alla, king of Northumberland,
That was ful wise, and worthy of his hond
Againe the Scottes, as men may wel here;
But tourne I wol againe to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to begile,
Saw of Custance all hire perfection,
And cast anon how he might quite hire while,
And made a younge knight, that dwelt in that town,
Love hire so hote of fonic affection,
That veraily him thought that he shuld spille,
But he of hire might ones han his wille.

He woeth hire, but it availeth nought,
She wolde do no sime by no wey;
And for despit, he compassed his thought
To maken hire on shameful deth to dey.
He waiteth whan the constable is away,
And prively upon a night he crepte
In Hermegildes chambre while she slepte.

Wery, forwaked in hire orisons,
Slepeh Custance, and Hermegilde also.
This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptacions,
All softly is to the bed ygo,
And cut the throte of Hermegilde stow,
And layd the bloody knif by dame Custance,
And went his way, ther God yeve him mischance.

Sone after cometh this constable home againe,
And eke Alla, thet king was of that lond,
And saw his wife despitously yslain,
For which ful oft he wept and wrong his bond;
And in the bed the bloody knif he fond
By dame Custance, alas! what might she say?
For verry wo hire wit was all away.

To king Alla was told all this mischance,
And eke the time, and wher, and in what wise,
That in a ship was fouden this Custance,
As here before ye han herd me devise:
The kinges herte of pitee gan agrise,
Whan he saw so benigne a creature
Falle in disce and in misaventure.

For as the lamb toward his deth is brought,
So stant this innocent before the king:
This false knight, that bath this treson wrought,
Bereth hire in hond that she hath don this thing:
But natheles ther was gret murmuring
Among the peple, and sayn they cannot seme
That she had don so gret a wickednesse.

For they han seen hire ever so vertuous,
And loving Hermegild right as hire lif:
Of this bare witness everich in that hous,
Save he that Hermegild slow with his knif:
This gentil king hath caught a gret motif
Of this witness, and thought he wold enquire
Deper in this cas, trouthe for to lere.

Alas! Custance, thou hast no champion,
Ne fighten canst thou not, so wala wa!
But he that starf for our redemption,
And boud Sathan, and yet lith ther he lay,
So be thy stronge champion this day:
For but if Crist on thee miracle kithre,
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slaine as swithre.

She set hire down on knees, and thus she myde;
"Immortal God, that savedest Sossane
Fro false blame, and thou merciful mayde,
Mary I mene, daughter to saint Anne,
Before whos child angels singen Osanne,
If I be gilteles of this felonie,
My socour be, or elles shal I die."

Have ye not seen sometime a pale face
(Among a prees) of him that bath ben lad
Toward his deth, wher as he geteth no grace,
And swiche a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was so bestad,
Amonges all the faces in that route,
So stant Custance, and loketh hire aboute.

O queenes living in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everich on,
Haveth som routhe on hire adversitee;
An emperours daughter stant alone;
She hath no wight to whom to make hire more;
O blood real, that stondeh in this drede,
Fer ben thy frendes in thy grete nede.

This Alla king hath swiche compassion,
As gentil herte is fulfilled of pitee,
That fro his eyen ran the water doum.
"Now hastily do fecche a book," quod he;
"And if this knight wol swerem, how that she
This woman slow, yet wol we us avsie,
Whom that we wol that shal ben our justice."

A Breton book, written with Evangiles,
Was fet, and on this book he swore anon
She giltef was, and in the mene whiles
An hond him smote upon the nekke bone,
That doum he fell at ones as a stone:
And both his eyen brost out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd, in general audiance,
That sayd; "Thou hast desclandred gilteles
The daughter of holy chirche in high presence;
Thus hast thou don, and yet hold I my pecc"
Of this merveille agast was all the prees,
As massed folk they stonden everich on
For drede of wreche, save Custance alone.

Out was the drede and eke the repentance
Of hem that hadden wronge respectioun
Upon this rely innocent Custance ;
And for this miracle, in conclusion,
And by Custances meditation,
The king, and many another in that place,
Crowned was, thanked be Cristes grace.

This false knight was slain for his untrouthe
By jugement of Alla hastily ;
And yet Custance had of his deeth greet routhe ;
And after this Jesus of his mercy
Made Alla wedden ful solemne
This holy woman, that is so bright and shene,
And thus hath Crist ymade Custance a queene.

But who was woful (if I shal not lie)
Of this wedding bet Donegild and no mo,
The kinges mother, ful of tyrannie ?
Hir thoughte hire cursed herte breast abro ;
She wold not that hire sone had do so ;
Hir thoughte a despit, that he shulde take
A strange a creature unto his make.

He list not of the chaf ne of the stre
Whiche so long a tale, as of the cour.
What shulde I tellen of the realite
Of this mariage, or which cours goth before,
Who bloweth in a troupe or in an horn ?
The fruit of every tale is for to say ;
They eat and drinke, and dance, and sing, and play.

They go to bed, as it was skill and right,
Though that wives ben ful holy thinges,
They musten take in patience a night
Such maner necessities, as ben plesinges
To folk that ben ywedded hem with ringes,
And lay a lye hir holiness aside
For the tyme, it may no bet beside.

As hire he gat a knave child anon
And to a bishop, and his constable eke
He tok his wif to kepe, when he is gon
A custard ward, his fowen for to seke.
As hire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
A long is gon with childen til that still
He list hire chambere, abiding Cristes will.

As tyme is come, a knave child she bare ;
Wheris at the fontayne they him calle.
The constable doth forth come a messenger,
And wote unto his king that criped was Alle,
That this blisful tidings is befallie,
And other thinges spedeful for to say.
He hath the lettre, and forth he goth his way.

The messenger, to don his advantage,
To the kinges mother rideth swithe,
And woteth hire ful faire in his langage.
Wheris," quod he, "ye may be glad and blithe,
For thurke God an hundred thousand sithes,
Your lady queene hath child, withouten doute,
A boye and a maye of all this regne aboute.

As hire the lettre seled of this thing,
That I must bere in all the best I may ;
I wot ought unto your sone the king,
As your servant bothe night and day."
Wheris answered, "As now at this tyme may ;
I have I wot all night thou take thy rest,
I wote not I say thee what me list."

This messenger drank sodly ale and wine,
And stolen were his lettres prively
Out of his box, while he slept as a swine ;
And conterfeted was ful subilly
Another lettre, wrought ful sinfully,
Unto the king directe of this matere.
Fro his constable, as ye shal after here.

This lettre spake, the queene delivered was
Of so horrible a fendliche creature,
That in the castle non so hardy was
That any while dorste therein endure :
The mother was on eke by aventure
Ycome, by charmes or by sorcerie,
And everich man hateth hire compaignie.

Who was this king when he this lettre had seyn,
But to no oght he told his sorres sore,
But of his owen hand he wrote again ;
"Welcome the sode of Crist for evermore
To me, that am now lerned in this lore :
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesance,
My lust I put all in thyn ordinaunce.

"Kepeth this child, or be it foule or faire,
And eke my wif, unto myn home coming ;
Crist when him list may senden me an heire,
More agreable than this to my liking."
This lettre he seled, prively weping,
Whiche to the messenger was taken sone,
And forth he goth, ther is no more to done.

O messenger, fulfilled of drunkenesse,
Strong is thy breth, thy finnes fultron ay,
And thou bewraiest alle consciences ;
Thy mind is lorn, thou janglest as a jay ;
Thy face is tounred in a new array ;
Ther drunkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no counsell hid withouten doute.

O Donegild, I ne have non English digne
Unto thy malice, and thy tyrannie :
And therefore to the feyde I thee resignie,
Let him endite of thy traitorie.
Fy manish, fy ; o may by God I lie ;
Fy fendliche spirit, for I dare wel telle,
Though thou bere walke, thy spirit is in Helle.

This messenger cometh fro the king again,
And at the kinges modres court he light,
And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
And plesed him in all that ever the night.
He drunke, and wel his girdel underpight ;
He slepeth, and he sooreth in his gwe
All night, until the sonne gan arise.

Eft were his lettres stolen everich on,
And conterfeted lettres in this wise.
The king commanded his constable anon
Up peine of hanging and of high Jewise,
That he shulde soffren in no wise
Custance within his regne for to abide
Three daies, and a quarter of a tide ;

But in the same ship as he hire fowd,
Hire and hire youge sone, and all hire gese
He shulde put, and crowde hire for the lond,
And charge hire, that she never eft come there.
O my Custance, wel may thy ghost have fere,
And sleeping in thy drume ben in penance,
When Donegild cast all this ordinaunce.

This messenger on morwe when he awoke,
Unto the castel hait the nexte way;
And to the constable he the lettre toke;
And whan that be this pitous lettre sey,
Ful off he seyde "Alas, and wala wa;
Lord Crist," quod he, "how may this world en-
So ful of sinne is manny a creature.

"O mighty God, if that it be thy will,
Sis thou art rightful juge, how may I be
That thou wolt suffren innocence to spill,
And wicked folk regas in Prosperitee?
A! good Custance, alas! so wo is me,
That I wote be thy tormentour, or day
On shames deth, ther is non other way."

Wepen both yung and old in al that place,
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sent:
And Costance with a dedly pale face
The fourthe day toward the ship she went:
But natheles she taketh in good entent
The will of Crist, and kneeling on the stound
She seyde, "Lord, ay welcome be thy sounde."

"He that me keeps fro the false blame,
While I was in the lond amonges you,
He can me kepe fro harme and eke fro shame
In the salt see, although I se not how:
As strong as ever he was, be it yet now,
In him trust I, and in his another dene,
That is to use my sail and eke my stene."

Hire litel child lay weping in hire arm,
And kneeling pitously to him she said,
"Fees, litel sone, I wol do thee no harm."
With that hire couverchieff of hire hed she braid,
And over his litel eyen she it laid,
And in hire arme she lulleth it ful fast,
And into the Haven hire eyen up she cast.

"Mother," quod she, "and maydon bright Marie,
Soth is, that though womannes eggement
Mankind was forme, and damed ay to die,
For which thy child was on a crois yrent:
Thy blisful eyen saw all his torment,
Than is ther no comparison betwene
Thy wo, and any wo man may sustene."

"Thou saw thy child yslain before thin eyen,
And yet now liveth my litel child parfay:
Now, lady bright, to whom all woful crien,
Thou glory of womanhed, thou faire May,
Thou haven of refute, bright sterre of day,
Rew on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Resten on every reful in distresse."

"O litel child, alas! what is thy gilt,
That never wroughtest sinne as yet parde?
Why wol thin harde father have thee spilt?
O mercy, dore constable," quod she,
"As let my litel child dwell here with thee:
And if thou darst not save him fro blame,
So kisse him ones in his faders name."

Therwith she loketh backward to the lond,
And saide; "Farewel, housbond routeless!"
And up she rist, and walketh down the stound
Toward the ship, hire foloweth all the gress:
And ever she praieth hire child to hold his pces,
And taketh hire leve, and with an holy entent
She blisseth hire, and into the ship she went.

Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hire a fol long space:
And other necessarie that shuld nedde
She had ynow, beried be Goddes grace:
For wind and wezher, Almighty God purchas,
And bring hire home, I can no better say,
But in the see she driveth forth hire way.

Alla the king cometh home some after this
Unto his castel, of the which I told,
And asketh wher his wif and his child is;
The constable gan about his herte cold,
And plainly all the matere he him told
As ye han herd, I can tell it no better,
And shewed the king his sele and his letter;

And seyde; "Lord, as ye commanded me
Up peyne of deth, so have I don certain."
This messenger tormented was, til he
Moste bemarkow, and telles plat and plain.
Fro night to night in what place he had lain:
And thus by wit and subtil enquiring
Imaged was by whom this harm gan spring.

The hand was knowen that the lettre wrote,
And all the viciue of this cursed dede;
But in what wise, certainly I n'ot.
The effect is this, that Alla out of drede
His mother slew, that moun men plainly rede,
For that she traitour was to hire ligeance:
Thus endeth this old Donegild with meeschance.

The sorwe that this Alla night and day
Maketh for his wif and for his child also,
Ther is no tunge that it talen may.
But now wol I agen to Costance go,
That fleteth in the see in peine and wo
Five yere and more, as liked Cristes woode,
Or that hire ship approach to the loode.

Under an bethen castel at the last,
(Of which the name in my text I not God)
Custance and eke hire child the see up cast.
Almighty God, that saved all mankind,
Have on Custance and on hire child some raide,
That fallen is in hethen hood ofraunce
In point to spill, as I shal tell you some.

Down fro the castel cometh ther many a wight
To gauren on this ship, and on Costance:
But shortly fro the castel on a night,
The lordes steward (God yere him meeschance)
A thief, that had reneyed our creance,
Came into the ship alone, and said, he wolde
Hire lasten be, whether she wolde or n'olde.

Wo was this wretched woman the begon,
Hire childre cried, and she cried pitously:
But blisful Mary helpe hire right anon,
For with hire strugling wel and mightily
The thief fell over bord al sodenly,
And in the see he dreached for vengeance,
And thus hath Crist unswarmed kept Custance

O foule lust of luxurie, to thin ende,
Nat only that thou faintest mannes mind,
But veraily thou wolt his body shende.
Th' ende of thy werk, or of thy lustes blind,
Is complaining: how many may men find,
That not for weik sometime, but for th' entent
To don this sinne, ben other slain or shent.

How may this weke woman han the strength
 Here to defend again this renegade?
 O Colias, uncounturable of length,
 How mighte David maken these so moute?
 So younge, and of armure so desolate,
 How dost he loken upon thy dreful face?
 Wel may men seen it was but Goddes grace.

Who yaf Judith courage or hardinesse
 To sleen his Holofernes in his tent,
 And to deliver out of wretchednesse
 The peple of God? I say for this entent,
 That right as God spirit of vigour sent
 To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
 So sent he might and vigour to Custance.

Foth goth hire ship throughout the narwe mouth
 Of Joubare and Septe, driving alway,
 Sometime west, and sometime north and south,
 And sometime east, ful many a very day:
 To Cristen moder (blessed be she ay)
 With shapen through hire endles goodnesse
 To make an end of all hire hevinesse.

Now let us stut of Custance but a throw,
 And speke we of the Romane emperor,
 That out of Sorrie hath by lettres knowe
 The daughter of Cristen folk, and dishonour
 Due to his daughter by a false traitour,
 I mene the cursed wicked soudanesse,
 That at the first let sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperor hath sent upon
 This senatour, with real ordinance,
 And other lordes, God wote, many on,
 To Survives to taken high vengeance:
 They brausen, sleen, and bring hem to meschance
 Ful many a day: but shortly this is th' ende,
 Sheward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repairith with victorie
 To Rome ward, sayyng ful really,
 And met the ship driving, as saith the storie,
 In which Custance sitteth ful piously:
 Nothing he knew he what she was, ne why
 She was in swiche array, ne she wil sey
 Of hire entent, though that she shoulde dey.

He bringeth hire to Rome, and to his wif
 He yaf hire, and hire younge some also:
 And with the senatour she lad hire lif
 Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
 Woful Custance, and many another mo:
 And longe time dwelled she in that place,
 In holy werkes ever, as was hire grace.

The senatours wif hire aunte was,
 But for all that she knew hire never the more:
 It wol no longer tarien in this cas,
 But to king Alla, which I spake of yore,
 That for his wif wepeth and siketh sore,
 It wol returne, and let I wol Custance
 Under the senatours governance.

King Alla, which that had his moder slain,
 Upon a day fell in swiche repentance,
 That if I shortly tellen shal and plain,
 In Rome he cometh to receive his penance,
 And sette him in the popes ordinance
 In high and low, and Jesu Crist beought,
 For to purge his wicked werkes that he had wrought.

The fame anon throughout the toon is born,
 How Alla king shal come on pilgrimage,
 By herbergours that wenten him beforen,
 For which the senatour, as was usage,
 Rode him agayne, and many of his linage,
 As wel to shewen his high magnificence,
 As to don any king a reverence.

Gret chere doth this noble senatour,
 To king Alla, and he to him also;
 Everich of hem doth other gret honour;
 And so befell, that in a day or two
 This senatour is to king Alla go
 To fest, and shortly, if I shal not lie,
 Custances some went in his compaignie.

Some men wold sain at requeste of Custance
 This senatour hath lad this child to feste:
 I may not tellen every circumstance,
 Be as he may, ther was he at the lette:
 But soth is this, that at his mothers herte
 Beforen Alla, during the metes space,
 The child stood, looking in the kinges face.

This Alla king hath of this child gret wonder,
 And to the senatour he said anon,
 "Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?"
 "I n'ot," quod he, "by God and by Saint John;
 A moder he hath, but fader hath he non,
 That I of wote;" but shortly in a stound
 He told Alla how that this child was found.

"But God wot," quod this senatour also,
 "So vertuous a liver in all my lif
 Ne saw I never, as she, ne berd of mo
 Of worldly woman, maiden, widewe or wif:
 I dare wel sayn hire hadde lever a knif
 Thurghout hire brest, than ben a woman wilke,
 Ther is no man coude bring hire to that prikke."

Now was this child as like unto Custance
 As possible is a creature to be:
 This Alla hath the face in remembrance
 Of dame Custance, and thereon mused he,
 If that the childes moder were aught she
 That is his wif, and prively he sighte,
 And sped him fro the table that he mighte.

"Parfay," thought he, "fantome is in min hed,
 I ought to deme of skilful jugement,
 That in the salte see my wif is ded."
 And afterward he made his argument;
 "What wot I, if that Crist have hider sent
 My wif by see, as wel as he hire lent
 To my contres, fro thence that she went?"

And after noon home with the senatour
 Goth Alla, for to see this wonder chance.
 This senatour doth Alla gret honour,
 And hastily he sent after Custance:
 But trusteth wel, hire luste not to dance,
 When that she wiste wherfore was that sonde,
 Unsethe upon hire feet she mighte stonde.

When Alla saw his wif, faire be hire grette,
 And wept, that it was routhe for to see,
 For at the firste look he on hire sette
 He knew wel verily that it was she:
 And she for sorwe, as dumb stant as a tree:
 So was hire herte shette in hire distresse,
 When she remembered his unkindnesse.

Twice she swooneth in his own sight,
He wepeth and him ensometh pitously :
" Now God," quod he, " and all his helmes bright
So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
That of youre harme as gylteles am I,
As is Maurice my sone, so like your face,
Eliës the sead me fetche out of this place."

Long was the sobbing and the bitter paine,
Or that hir woful hertes mighten ease,
Gret was the pitee for to have hem please,
Thurgh whiche piteines gan hir wo increase.
I pray you all my labour to releas,
I may not tell hir wo until to-morwe,
I am so wery for to speke of mervay.

But finally, when that the noth is wist,
That Alla gilteles was of hire wo,
I trow an hundred times han they list,
And swiche a blisse is ther betwix hem two,
That save the joye that lasteth evermo,
Ther is non like, that any creature
Hath seen or shal, while that the world may dure.

Tho praised the hire husband mekely
In releef of hire longe pitous pine,
That he wold pray hire fader specially,
That of his magestee he wold encline
To vouchesauf som day with him to dine :
She praised him eke, he shulde by no way
Unto hire fader no word of hire say.

Some men wold asyn, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message until this emperour :
But as I gesse, Alla was not so nice,
To him that is so soveraine of honour,
As he that is of Cristen folk the flour,
Send any child, but it is bet to deme
He went himself, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath granted gentilly
To come to dinner, as he him besoughte :
And wel reda I, he loked besilly
Upon this child, and on his daughter thought.
Alla goth to his inne, and as him ought
Arrased for this feste in every wise,
As forforth as his conning may suffice.

The morwe came, and Alla gan him dreame,
And eke his wif, this emperour to mete :
And forth they ride in joye and in gladnesse,
And when she saw hire fader in the strete,
She light adoun and falleth him to fete.
" Fader," quod she, " your yonge child Custance
Is now ful close out of your remembrance.

" I am your daughter, your Custance," quod she,
" That whiloun ye han sent into Surrie ;
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put alone, and dampned for to die.
Now, goode fader, I you mervay crie,
Send me no more into non hethemense,
But thanketh my lord here of his kindnesse."

Who can the pitous joye tellen all
Betwix hem thre, sin they ben thus ymette ?
But of my tale make an ende I shal,
The day goth fast, I wol no longer lette.
These glade folk to dinner ben ysette,
In joy and blisse at mete I let hem dwell,
A thousand fold wel more than I can tell.

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Made by the pope, and lived Cristonly,
To Cristes chirche did he gret honour :
But I let all his storie passen by,
Of Custance is my tale specially,
In the olde Romane gestes men may find
Maurices lif, I bore it not in mind.

This king Alla, when he his time sey,
With his Custance, his holy wif so swete,
To Eng lond ben they come the righte way,
Ther as they live in joye and in quiele.
But litel while it lasteth I you bete,
Joye of this world for time wol not abide,
Fro day to night it changeth as the tide.

Who lived ever in swiche delite o day,
That him ne merved other conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envie, or pride, or passion, or offence ?
I ne say but for this end this sentence,
That litel while in joye or in plesance
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

For Deth, that taketh of his and low his rest,
When passed was a yere, even as I gesse,
Out of this world this king Alla he beste,
For whom Custance hath ful gret bevisance.
Now let us praies God his soule blisse :
And dame Custance, finally to say,
Toward the town of Rome goth hire way.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And findoth ther hire frendes hale and sound :
Now is she seaped all hire aventure :
And when that she hire fader hath yfound,
Down on hire knees falleth she to ground,
Weping for tendernesse in herte bithe
She herieth God an hundred thousand sith.

In vertus and in holy almese dede
They liven alle, and never asonder weude ;
Till deth departeth hem, this lif they lede :
And fareth now wel, my tale is at an ende.
Now Jesu Crist, that of his might may sende
Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place,

THE

WIF OF BATHES PROLOGUE.

" Extraneous, though non auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage :
For, lordings, sin I twelf yere was of age,
(Thanked be God that is eterne on live)
Husbondes at chirche dore have I had five,
(If I so often might han wedded be)
And all were worthy men in hir degree.
" But me was told, not longe time agoon,
That sithen Crist ne went never but onis
To wedding, in the Cane of Galilee,
That by that like ensample taught he me,
That I ne shulde wedded be but ones.
Lo, herke eke, which a sharpe word for the m

Beside a welle Jesu, God and zoon,
 Spake in represe of the Samaritan:
 "Thou hast yhadde fyve husbonds, sayde he;
 And thilke man, that now hath wedded thee,
 Is not thy husband: "thus said he certain;
 What that he ment thereby, I can not sain,
 But that I seke, why that the fyfthe man
 Was now husband to the Samaritan?
 How many might she have in marriage?
 Yn herd I never telleu in min age
 Upon this nombre diffinitious;
 Men may devyne, and glosen up and down.
 "But wel I wot, expresse withouten lie
 God had us for to wex and multiplie;
 That gentil text can I wel understand.
 Riz we I wot, he sayd, that min husband
 Shuld leve sader and moder, and take to me;
 But of no nombre mention made he,
 Of bigamie or of octogamie;
 Why shuld men than speke of it vilanie?
 "Is here the wise king dan Salomon,
 I wot he hadde wives mo than on,
 As welle God it leful were to me
 To be refreshed half so oft as he)
 Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives?
 He was hath swiche, that in this world on live is.
 And wot, this noble king, as to my witte,
 On the first night had many a mery fyfte
 Of ech of hem, so wot was him on live.
 I wold be God that I have wedded fyve,
 To come the sixthe whan that ever he shall.
 With I wol not hepe me chaste in all,
 Than min husband is fro the world ygon,
 Than Cristen man that wedde me anon.
 Now than the apostle saith, that I am fro
 To welle, a' Goddes half, wher it liketh me.
 To wite that to be wedded is no sinne;
 Better is to be wedded than to brinne.
 "What reketh me though folk say vilanie
 Of shrewd Lamech, and his bigamie?
 I wot vel Abraham was an holy man,
 And Jacob eke, as fer as ever I can,
 And ech of hem had wives mo than two,
 And many another holy man also.
 Ther can ye seen in any maner age
 That highe God defended marriage
 By expresse word? I pray you telleth me,
 At wher commanded be virginitee?
 "I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
 The apostle, whan he spake of usidenhede,
 He said, that precept therof had he non:
 He may counseile a woman to ben on,
 But counseiling is no commandement;
 Forpat it is in our owen jugement.
 "For hadde God commanded usidenhede,
 He had be dampned wedding out of drede;
 And certes, if ther were no sode yswore,
 Virginitee than wherof shuld it growe?
 "Poude durste not commanden at the last
 Thing, of which his maister yaf non best.
 He durst is sette up for virginitee,
 Whan he so seay, who reuoneth best let-see.
 And this word is not take of every wight,
 But ther as God wol yve it of his might.
 And wel that the apostle was a maid,
 And thesels, though that he wrote and said,
 He wot that every wight were swiche as he,
 He durst but counseil to virginitee.
 And for to ben a wif he yaf me leve,
 And indolence, so a'is it non repreve

To wedden me, if that my make die,
 Withoute exception of bigamie;
 All were it good no woman for to touchen,
 (He ment as in his bed or in his couche)
 For peril is both fire and tow to assemblen;
 Ye know what this ensample may resemble.
 "This is all and soon, he held virginitee
 More prouff than wedd'ing in frooteen:
 (Frooteen clepe I, but if that he and she
 Wold lede hir lives all in chastitee)
 I grant it wel, I have of non curie,
 Who maidenhede preferre to bigamie;
 It liketh hem to be clese in body and gost:
 Of min estat I wol not maken best.
 "For wel ye know, a lord in his household
 Ne hath nat every vessell all of gold:
 Som ben of tree; and don hir lord service.
 God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise,
 And everich hath of God a propre gift.
 Som this, som that, as that him liketh shift.
 Virginitee is gret perfection,
 And continence eke with devotion:
 But Crist, that of perfection is welle,
 Ne bade not every wight he shulde go sette
 All that he had, and yere it to the poure,
 And in swiche wise folow him and his lore:
 He spake to hem that wold live parfitly,
 And, lordings, (by your leve) that am nat I;
 I wol bestow the flour of all myn age
 In th' actes and the fruit of marriage.
 "Tell me also, to what conclusion
 Were membes made of generation,
 And of so parfit wise a wight ywrought?
 Trusteth me wel, they were nat made for nougt.
 Glose who so wol, and say bothe up and down,
 That they were made for purgatioun
 Of urine, and of other things smale,
 And eke to know a female from a male:
 And for non other cause? saye ye no?
 The experience wot wel it is not no.
 So that the clerkes be not with me wroth,
 I say this that they maken ben for both,
 This is to sayn, for office, and for ese
 Of engendrure, ther we not God displese.
 Why shuld men elles in hir bookes sette,
 That man shal yelden to his wif hire dette?
 Now wherwith shuld he make his payement,
 If he no need his sely instrument?
 Than were they made upon a creature
 To purge urine, and eke for engendrure.
 "But I say not that every wight is hold,
 That hath swiche harmeis as I to you told,
 To gon and usen hem in engendrure;
 Than shuld men take of chastitee no cure.
 Crist was a maide, and shapen as a man,
 And many a saint, with that this world began,
 Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.
 I n'ill savie with no virginitee.
 Let hem with bred of pured whete be fed,
 And let us wives eten barly bred.
 And yet with barly bred, Mark telleth can,
 Our Lord Jesu refreshed many man.
 In swiche estat as God hath cleped us,
 I wol persever, I n'am not precious,
 In wifhode wol I use min instrument
 As frely as my maker hath it sent.
 If I be dangerous God yere me sorwe,
 Min husband shal it have both ever and morwe,
 Whan that him list come forth and pay his dette.
 An husband wol I have, I wol not lette,

Which shal be both my dettour and my thrall,
 And have his tribulation withall
 Upon his flesh, while that I am his wif.
 I have the power during all my lif
 Upon his propre body and nat be;
 Right thus the apostle told it unto me,
 And bad our husbands for to love us wel;
 All this sentence me liketh every del.”
 Up stert the pardoner, and that anon;
 “Now dame,” quod he, “by God and by Seint John,
 Ye ben a noble prechour in this caa.
 I was about to wed a wif, alas!
 What? shuld I bie it on my flesh so dere?
 Yet had I lever wed no wif to-yeere.”
 “Abide,” quod she, “my tale is not begonne.
 Nay, thou shalt drinke of another tonne
 Er that I go, shal savour worse than ale.
 And whan that I have told thee forth my tale
 Of tribulation in marriage,
 Of which I am expert in all min age,
 (This is to sayn, myself hath ben the whippe)
 Than maigest thou chesen wheder thou wolst sippe
 Of thilke tonne, that I shal abroche.
 Beware of it, er thou to neigh approche.
 For I shal tell ensamples mo than ten:
 “Who so that n’ill beware by other men
 By him shal other men corrected be:”
 Thise same wordes writeth Ptibolomee,
 Rede in his Almageste, and take it there.”
 “Dame, I wol pray you, if your will it were,”
 Sayde this pardoner, “as ye began,
 Tell forth your tale, and spareth for no man,
 And techeth us yonge men of your practike.”
 “Gladly,” quod she, “sin that it may you like.
 But that I pray to all this compaignie,
 If that I speke after my fantasie,
 As taketh not a greefe of that I say,
 For min entente is not but for to play.
 “Now sires; than wol I tell you forth my tale.
 As ever mote I drinke win or ale
 I shal say soth, the hostboudes that I bad
 As three of them were good, and two were bad.
 The three were goode men and riche and olde.
 Unethes mighten they the statute holde,
 In which that they were bounden unto me.
 Ye wol wel what I mene of this parde.
 As God me helpe, I laugh whan that I thinke,
 How pitously a-night I made hem swinke,
 But by my fay, I tolde of it no store:
 They had me yoven hir lond and hir tresore,
 Me neded not do lenger diligence
 To win hir love, or don hem reverence.
 They loved me so wel by God above,
 That I netolde no deintee of hir love.
 A wise woman wol besie hire ever in non
 To geten hir love, ther as she hath non.
 But sith I had hem holly in min bood,
 And that they hadde yeven me all hir bood,
 What shuld I takes kepe hem for to please,
 But it were for my profit, or min ease?
 I set hem so a-werke by may fay,
 That many a night they songen “Wala wa.”
 The bacon was not fit for hem, I trow,
 That som men have in Resex at Donnow.
 I governed hem so wel after my lawe,
 That eche of hem ful blisful was and fawe
 To bringen me gay thinges for the feyre.
 They were ful glade whan I spake hem fayre.
 For God it wol, I chidde hem spitoously.
 Now herkeneth how I bare me properly.

“Ye wise wives, that can understood,
 Thus shul ye speke, and bere hem wroog on hand,
 For half so boldely can ther no man
 Sweren and lien as a woman can.
 (I sey not this by wifes that ben wise,
 But if it be whan they hem misaivise.)
 A wise wif if that she can hire good,
 Shal beren hem on bood the cow is wood,
 And taken witness of hire owen mayd
 Of hir assent: but herkeneth how I sayd.
 “Sire olde keynard, is this thin aray?
 Why is my neighbooures wif so gay?
 She is honoured over al wher she goth,
 I sit at home, I have no thrifty cloth.
 What dost thou at my neighbooures hous?
 Is she so faire? art thou so amorous?
 What rownest thou with our maide? *benedick*,
 Sire olde lechour, let thy japes be.
 “And if I have a gossib, or a frend,
 (Withouten gilt) thou chidest as a feend,
 If that I walke or play unto his hous.
 “Thou comest home as dronken as a moor,
 And prechest on thy benche, with evil prof:
 Thou sayst to me, it is a gret meschiefe
 To wed a poure woman, for costage:
 And if that she be riche of high parage,
 Than sayst thou, that it is a tourmentrie
 To soffre hire pride and hire melancolie.
 And if that she be faire, thou veray knave,
 Thou sayst that every honour wol hire have.
 She may no while in chastitee abide,
 That is assailed upon every side.
 Thou sayst som folk deaire us for richesse,
 Som for our shepe, and som for our fairnesse,
 And som, for she can other sing or dance,
 And som for gentillesse and dalliance,
 Some for hire bondes and hire armes smale:
 Thus goth all to the devil by thy tale.
 Thou sayst, men may not kepe a castel wel,
 It may so long assailed be over al.
 And if that she be foul, thou sayst, that she
 Coveteth every man that she may see;
 For as a spaniel, she wol on him lepe,
 Til she may finde som men hire to chepe.
 Ne non so grey goos goth ther in the lake,
 (As sayst thou) that wol ben withoute a make.
 And sayst, it is an hard thing for to welde
 A thing, that no man wol, his thankes, helde.
 “Thus sayst thou, lorel, whan thou gost to
 And that no wise man nedeth for to wed,
 Ne no man that entendeth unto Heven.
 With wilde thonder dint and fry leven
 Mote thy welked netke be to-broke. [un]
 “Thou sayst, that dropping houses, and
 And chiding wives maken men to fleo
 Out of hir owen hous; a, *benedick*,
 What nieth swiche an old man for to chide?
 “Thou sayst, we wives wol our vices hile,
 Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe.
 Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe.
 “Thou sayst, that oxen, asses, hore, and howe
 They ben assaid at diverse stoundes,
 Basins, lavours, or that men hem bie,
 Spores, stooles, and all swiche husbandrie,
 And so ben potes, clothes, and aray,
 But folk of wives maken non assay,
 Til they ben wedded, olde dotard shrewe!
 And than, sayst thou, we wol our vices shewe.
 “Thou sayst also, that it displeaseth me,
 But if that thou wolst preisen my beautee,

And but thou pore alway upon my face,
 And clepe me faire dame in every place;
 And let thou make a feate on thilke day
 That I was borne, and make me fresh and gay;
 And let thou do to my noyice honour,
 And to my chamberere within my hour,
 And to my siders folk, and myn allies;
 Thus sayt thou, olde barcl' ful of lies.
 "And yet also of our prentis Jankin,
 For his cripe here, shinin as gold so fin,
 And for he squiereth me both up and doun,
 Yet hast thou caught a false suspicion:
 I wol him nat, though thou were ded to-morwe.
 "But tel me this, why hidest thou with sorwe
 The keyes of thy chest away fro me?
 It is my good as well as thin perle,
 What weneest thou make an idiot of our dame?
 Now by that lord that cleped is Seint Jame,
 Thou shalt nat bothe, though that thou were wood,
 Be maister of my body and of my good,
 That on thou shalt fargo mangre thin eyen.
 What helpeth it of me to engreue and spien?
 I know thou woldest locke me in thy chestes.
 Thou shuldest say, fayr wif, go wher thee leste;
 Take your disport; I wol nat leve no takes;
 I know you for a trewe wif, dame Alea.
 "We love no man, that taketh kepe or charge
 Wher that we gon, we wol be at our large.
 Of alle men yblesed mote be he
 That was astrologien dan Ptholomee,
 That sayth this proverbe in his *Almageste*:
 "Of alle men his wisdom is higheste,
 That roketh not who hath the world in bond.
 "By this proverbe thou shalt wel understood,
 How thou yough, what that thee rekke or care
 How verily that other folkes fare?
 For certes, olde dotard, by your leve,
 We shalven have questur right yough at eve.
 He is to gret a nigard that wol verne
 To use to light a candel at his lanternes;
 He shall have never the lesse light parde.
 How thou yough, thee that nat plaimen thee.
 "Thou say also, if that we make us gay
 With clothing and with precious array,
 That it is peril of our chastitee.
 And yet, with sorwe, thou enforcest thee,
 And sayt thisse wordes in the apostles name:
 "In heven made with chastitee and shame
 The women shul appareile you," (quod he)
 And nat in tramed here, and gay perrie,
 To perle, ne with gold, ne clothes riche.
 "After thy tract, ne after thy rubriche
 Thou wol not work as mocheil as a goat.
 "Thou sayt also, I walke out like a cat;
 For who so wolde songe the cattles skin,
 Thus wol the cat wel dwellen in hire in;
 And if the cattles skin be sike and gay,
 The wol nat dwellen in hous half a day,
 But forth she wol, or any day be dowed,
 To shev hire skin, and gon a caterwauld.
 This is to say, if I be gay, sirs shrews,
 I wol renne out, my bovel for to shewe.
 The olde fool, what helpeth thee to spien?
 Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyen
 To be my wardecorps, as he can best,
 He schal he shall not kepe me but me lest:
 But comde I make his berd, so mote I the.
 "Thou sayest eke, that at her ben thinges thre,
 Which thinges gretly troublen all this erthe,
 And that no wight ne may endure the fertibe:

O helo sirs shrews, Joun about thy lif.

"Yet prechest thou, and sayst, an hateful wif
 Yerkene is for on of this manobence.
 Be ther non other maner resemblence
 That ye may liken your parables to,
 But if a sely wif be on of tho?"

"Thou likenest eke womans love to Helle,
 To barren lond, ther water may not dwelle.

"Thou likenest it also to wilde fire;
 The more it brenneth, the more it hath desire
 To consume every thing, that brenn wol be.

"Thou sayest, right as wormes shende a tre,
 Right so a wif destroyeth hire husband;
 This knowen they that ben to wives bond."

"Lordings, right thus, as ye han understood,

Bere I stify min old husbondes on bond,
 That thus they saiden in hir drunkenness;
 And all was false, but as I toke witness
 On Jankin, and upon my nece also.

O Lord, the peire I did hem, and the wo,

Ful gilteles, by Goddes swete pine;

For as an horn, I comde hit and whine;

I comde plain, and I was in the gilt,

Or elles ofttime I had ben spik.

Who so first cometh to the mill, first grind;

I plained first, so was our werre yntind.

They were ful glad to excuse hem ful blive

Of thing, the which they never agit hir live.

Of wenches wold I heren hem on bond,

Whan that for sike unnothes might they stond,

Yet tikeled I his herte for that he

Wend that I had of him so gret chiertee:

I swore that all my walking out by night

Was for to espie wenches that he dight:

Under that colour had I many a mirth;

For all swiche wit is yeven us in our birth;

Deceite, weping, spinning, God hath yeven

To woman kindly, while that they may live.

And thus of o thing I may avanten me,

At th' ende I had the beter in eche degree,

By sleight or force, or by som maner thing,

As by continual murmur or gratching,

Namely a-bed, ther hadden they meschance,

Ther wold I chide, and doo hem no plesance:

I wold no lenger in the bed abide,

If that I felt his arme over my side,

Til he had made his raunson unto me,

Thaugh wold I soffre him to do his nicete.

And therefore every man this tale I tell,

Winne who so may, for all is for to sell:

With empty bond men may no haukes lure,

For winning wold I all his lust endure,

And maken me a feined appetit,

And yet in besoon had I never delit:

That maketh me that ever I wold hem chide.

For though the pope had siten hem beside,

I wold not spare hem at hir owen bord,

For by my trouthe I quitte hem word for word.

As helpe me veray God omnipotent,

Tho I right now shuld make my testament,

I ne owe hem not a word, that it n'is quit,

I brought it so abouten by my wit,

That they must yeve it up, as for the best,

Or elles had we never ben in rest.

For though he loket as a wood leon,

Yet shuld he faille of his conclusion.

"Than wold I say, 'Now, goode lefe, take kepe.

How mekely loketh Wilkin oure shepe!

Come ner my spouse, and let me be thy cheke.

Ye shalden be al patient and meke,

And in his way, it happed him to ride
In all his care, under a forest side,
Wher as he saw upon a dance go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo.
Toward this ilke dance he drew ful yerne,
In hope that he som wisdom shulde lerne;
But certainly, er he came fully there,
Yvanished was this dance, he n'iste not wher;
No creature saw he that bare lif,
Save on the grene he saw sitting a wif,
A fouler wight ther may no man devise.
Againe this knight this olde wif gan arise,
And said; "Sire knight, here forth us lith no way.
Tell me what that ye seken by your fay.
Paraventure it may the better be:
Thise olde folk con mochel thing," quod she.

"My leve mother," quod this knight, "certain,
I n'am but ded, but if that I can saun,
What thing it is that women most desire:
Coude ye me wisse, I wold quite wel your hire."
"Plight me thy trouthe here in myn hand," quod
"The nexte thing that I requere of thee [she,
Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might,
And I wold tell it you or it be night." [graunte."

"Have here myn trouthe," quod the knight, "I
"Thanne," quod she, "I dare me wel avaunte,
Thy lif is sauf, for I wold stand therby,
Upon my lif the queene wol say as I:
Let see, which is proudest of hem alle,
That wereth on a kerchef or a calle,
That dare sayn nay of that I shal you teche.
Let us go forth withouten lenger speche."

Tho rowded she a pistel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
When they ben comen to the court, this knight
Said, he had hold his day, as he had light,
And redy was his answer, as he saide.
Ful many a noble wif, and many a maide,
And many a widewe, for that they ben wiss,
(The queene hireself sitting as a justice)
Assembled ben his answer for to here,
And afterward this knight was bode appere.

To every wight commanded was silence,
And that the knight shuld tell in audience,
What thing that worldly women toven best.
This knight ne stood not still, as doth a best,
But to this question anon answerd

With manly vois, that all the court it herd.
"My liege lady, generally," quod he,
"Women desiren to han souverainete,
As well over hir husband as hir love,
And for to ben in maistrie him above.
This is your most desire, though ye me kille,
Doth as you list, I am here at your wille."

In all the court ne was ther wif no maide,
Ne widewe, that contraried that he saide,
But said, he was worthy to han his lif.
And with that word up stert this olde wif,
Which that the knight saw sitting on the grene.
"Mercy," quod she, "my soveraine lady queene,
Er that your court depart, as doth me right.
I taughte this answer unto this knight,
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing I wold of him requere,
He wold it do, if it lay in his might.

Before this court than pray I thee, sire knight,"
Quod she, "that thou me take unto thy wif,
For wel thou wost, that I have kept thy lif:
If I say false, say nay upon thy fay."
This knight answerd, "Alas and wala wa!

I wot right wel that swiche was my behest.
For Goddes love as chese a new request:
Take all my good, and let my body go."

"Nay then," quod she, "I shrewed us bothe twe
For though that I be olde, foule, and pore,
I n'olde for all the metal ne the ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wif I were and eke thy love."

"My love?" quod he, "nay my dampnation.
Alas! that any of my nation
Shuld ever so foule disparage be."
But all for nought; the end is this, that be-
Constrained was, he nedes must hire wed,
And taketh this olde wif, and goth to bed.

Now wolden som men sayn paraventure,
That for my negligence I do no cure
To tellen you the joye and all the array,
That at the feste was that ilke day.

To which thing shortly answeren I shal:
I say ther was no joy no feste at al,
Ther n'as but bevinense and mochel sorwe,
For prively he wedded hire on the morwe,
And all day after hid him as an oyle,
So wo was him, his wif loked so foule.

Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought.
When he was with his wif a-bed ybrought,
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.

This olde wif lay smiling evermo,
And said: "O dere husband, *bracedile*,
Fareth every knight thus with his wif as ye?
Is this the law of king Artoures boos?

Is every knight of his thus dangerous?
I am your owen love, and eke your wif,
I am she, which that saved bath your lif,
And certes yet did I you never unright.
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
Ye faren like a man had lost his wif.
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tell it,
And it shal ben amended, if I may."

"Amended?" quod this knight, "alas I nay, I
It wol not ben amended never mo;
Thou art so lothly, and so olde also,
And therto comen of so low a kind,
That litel wonder is though I walwe and wind;
So wolde God, min herte wolde brest."

"Is this" quod she, "the cause of your unright
"Ye certainly," quod he, "no wonder is."

"Now sire," quod she, "I coude amend all
If that me list, ere it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighten bere you unto me.

"But for ye speken of swiche gentillese,
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therfore shullen ye be gentilmen;
Swiche arrogance n'is not worth an hen."

"Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Prive and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And take him for the grettest gentileman.
Crist wol we claime of him our gentillesse,
Not of our elders for hir old richesse.

For though they yere us all hir heritage,
For which we claim to ben of high parage,
Yet may they not bequethen, for no thing,
To non of us, hir vertuous living,
That made hem gentilmen called to be,
And bade de folwen hem in swiche degree.

"Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
That highte Dant, speken of this sentence:
Lo, in swiche maner rime is Dantes tale.

"Ful selde up riseth by his branches amale

Povert of man, for God of his goodnesse
 Wol that we chaine of him our gentilleſſe:
 For of our elders may we nothing blame
 But temporal thing, that man may hurt and maime.

"Eke every wight wot this as wel as I,

If gentilleſſe were plan'ed naturally
 Unto a certein lineage down the line,
 Rive and apert, than wol they never fine
 To doo of gentilleſſe the faire office,
 They mighten do no vilanie or vice.

"Take fire and bere it into the derkeſt bouſe

Betwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
 And let men abete the dore, and go thence,
 Yet wol the fire as faire lie and brene
 As twenty thousand men might it behold;
 His office naturel ay wol it hold,
 By peril of my lif, til that it die.

"Here may ye see wel, how that gentrie
 Is not annexed to poſſeſſion,

Whiche folk we don hir operation
 Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind.

"For God it wot, men noon fol often find
 Whiche ſone do ſhame and vilanie.

"And he that wol hao pris of his gentrie,

For he was boren of a gentil bouſe,
 And had his elders noble and vertuous,

And n'ill himſelve do no gentil dedes,
 He ſerve his gentil auncestrie, that ded is,

He ſ'is not gentil, he he duk or erl;
 For vilans unful dedes make a Cheryl.

"For gentilleſſe n'is but the renomee
 Of this auncestres, for hir high bountee,

Whiche is a ſtrange thing to thy perſone:
 Thy gentilleſſe cometh fro God alone.

"This cometh our veray gentilleſſe of grace,
 And was no thing bequethed us with our place.

"Thinketh how noble, as ſaith Valerium,
 We thinke Tollius Hoſtilium,

That out of povertie roſe to high nobleſſe.
 Senek, and redeth eke Boece,

How ſhall ye ſeeen expreſſe, that it n' dred is,
 For he is gentil that doth gentil dedis.

"And therefore, leve husband, I thus conclude,
 To be it that my auncestres weren rude,

And may the highe God, and so hope I,
 Grant me grace to liven vertuouſly:

"For am I gentil, whan that I beginne
 To liven vertuouſly, and weiven tinne.

"And ther as ye of povertie me repreve,
 The highe God, on whom that we beleve,

Whiche wil povertie cheſe to lede his lif:
 And certes, every man, maiden, or wif

Shal understand that Jhesu Heven king
 Shal not cheſe a vicious living.

"Glad povertie is an honest thing certain.
 Senek and other clerkes ſain.

"For so that halt him paid of his povertie,
 He hold him rich, al had he not a ſherte.

"For that coveteth is a poure wight,
 For he wol han that is not in his might.

"For he that ought bath, he coveteth to have,
 For he is riche, although ye hold him but a knave.

"For povertie is ſinne properly.
 Jheronim ſaith of povertie merrily:

"For poure man whan he goth by the way,
 Whan the theves he may ſing and play.

"For povertie is hateful good; and, as I ſeie,
 It ſhal get bringer out of buſineſſe;

"For gett meander eke of ſapience
 To him, that taketh it in patience.

Povertie is this, although it ſeme elenge,
 Poſſeſſion that no wight wol challenge.

Povertie ful often, whan a man is low,
 Maketh his God, and eke himſelf to know:

Povertie a ſpectakel is, as thinketh me,
 Thorgh which he may his very frendes ſee.

And therefore, sire, ſin that I you not greve,
 Of my povertie no more me repreve.

"Now, sire, of elde, that ye repreven me,
 And certes, sire, though non auctoritee

Were in no book, ye gentiles of honour
 Sain, that men ſhuld an olde wight honour,

And clepe him fader, for your gentilleſſe;
 And auctour what I finden, as I ſeie.

"Now ther ye ſain that I am foule and old,
 Than drede ye not to ben a cokewold.

For filthe, and elde also, so mote I the,
 Ben grete wardens upon chaſtite.

But natheles, ſin I know you deit,
 I ſhal fulfill your worldly appetit.

"Cheſe now" (quod she) "on of theſe thinges
 twey,

To han me foule and old til that I dey,
 And be to you a trewe humble wif,

And never you displea in all my lif:
 Or elles wol ye han me youge and faire,

And take your aventure of the repaire,
 That ſhal be to your hous because of me,

Or is som other place it may wel be?
 Now cheſe yourſelve whether that you liketh."

This knight answerd him, and sore sikeſth,
 But at the last he said in this manere;

"My lady and my love, and wif so dery,
 I put me in your wise governance,

Cheseth yourſelf which may be most plesance
 And most honour to you and me also,

I do no force the whether of the two:
 For as you liketh, it sufficeth me."

"Than have I got the maisterie," quod she,
 "Sin I may cheſe and governe as me list."

"Ye certes, wif," quod he, "I hold it bert."
 "Kise me," quod she, "we be no lenger

wrothe,

For by my trouth I wol be to you bothe,
 This is to sayn, ye bothe faire and good.

I pray to God that I mote sterren wood,
 But I to you be al so good and trewe,

As ever was wif, sin that the world was newe;
 And but I be to-morwe as faire to ſeem,

As any lady, emperice, or queene,
 That is betwix the est and eke the west,

Doth with my lif and deth right as you leſt.
 Cast up the curtein, loke how that it is."

And whan the knight saw veraily all this,
 That she so faire was, and so youge therto,

For joye he bent hire in his armes two:
 His herte bathed in a bath of blisse,

A thousand time a-row he gan hire kiſſe:
 And she obeyed him in every thing,

That mighte don him plesance or liking.
 And thus they live unto hir lives ende

In perfit joye, and Jhesu Crist us sende
 Husbandes meke and youge, and fresh a-bed,

And grace to overlive hem that we wed.
 And eke I pray Jhesu to short hir lives,

That wol not be governed by hir wives.
 And old and angry nigards of dispence,

God send hem ſone a veray pestilence.

THE FRERES PROLOGUE.

This worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
He made alway a manere louring chere
Upon the Sompneur, but for honestee
No vilains word as yet to him spake he:
But at the last he said unto the wif;
"Dame," (quod he) "God yevs you right good lif,
Ye have here touchet, all so mote I the,
In scole matere a ful gret difficultee,
Ye han said mochel thing right wel, I sey:
But, dame, here as we riden by the way,
Us nedeth not to speken but of game,
And let auctoritees in Goddes name
To preching, and to scole eke of clergie.

"But if it like unto this compaignie,
I wol you of a sompneur tell a game;
Parde ye may wel knowen by the name,
That of sompneur may no good be said;
I pray that non of you be evil spaid;
A sompneur is a renner up and down
With mandements for fornicacioun,
And is ybete at every tounes ende."

Thospake our Hoste; "A, sire, ye shuld ben hende
And curteis, as a man of your estat,
In compaignie we wiln have no debat:
Tellethe your tale, and let the sompneur be."
"Nay," quod the Sompneur, "let him say by me
What so him list; when it cometh to my lot,
By God I shal him quiten every grot.
I shal him tellen which a gret honour
It is to be a flatering limitour,
And eke of many another maner crime,
Which nedeth not rehersen at this time,
And his office I shal him tell ywis."
Our Hoste answered; "Pees, no more of this."
And afterward he said unto the Frere,
Tell forth your tale, min owen maister dere.

THE FRERES TALE.

Whilow ther was dwelling in my contree
An archedeke, a man of high degree,
That boldely did execution
In punishing of fornication,
Of witchecraft, and eke of bauderie,
Of defamacion, and avouterie,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of sacraments,
Of usure, and of simonie also;
But certes lechours did he gretest wo;
They shulden singen, if that they were hent;
And smale tithers weren foule yshent,
If any persone wold upon hem plaine,
Ther might asert hem non pecunial peine.
For smale tithes, and smale offering,
He made the peple pitously to sing;
For er the bishop bent hem with his crook
They weren in the archedeke's book;
Than had he thurgh his jurisdiction
Power to don on hem correction.

He had a sompneur redy to his hood,
A slier boy was non in Englelend;
For subtilly he had his espialle,
That taught him wel wher it might ought availle.
He coude spare of lechours on or two,
To techen him to foure and twenty mo.

For though this sompneur wold be as an hare,
To tell his harlotrie I wol not spare,
For we ben out of hir correction,
They han of us no jurisdiction,
Ne never shul have, terme of all hir lives—
"Peter, so ben the women of the stives,"
Quod this Sompneur, "yput out of our care."
"Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,"
Our Hoste said, "and let him tell his tale.
Now telleth forth, and let the Sompneur gale,
Ne spareth not, min owen maister dere."

This false thief, this sompneur, quod the Pres,
Had alway handes redy to his hood,
As any hauke to lure in Englelood,
That told him all the secretes that they knewe,
For hir acquaintance was not come of newe;
They weren his approvers prively.
He toke himself a gret profit thereby:
His maister knew not alway what he wan.
Withooten mandement, a Jewed man
He coude sompne, up peise of Cristes curse,
And they were inly glad to fille his purse,
And maken him gret festes at the male.
And right as Judas hadde purses smale
And was a thief, right swiche a thief was he,
His maister hadde but half his doctee.
He was (if I shal yeven him his laud)
A thief, and eke a sompneur, and a baud.

He had eke wenches at his reteneu,
That whether that sire Robert or sire Haa,
Or Jakke, or Rauf, or who so that it were
That lay by hem, they told it in his ere.
Thus was the wenche and he of on assent.
And he wold fecche a feined mandement,
And sompne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pill the man, and let the wenche go.
Than wold he say; "Frend, I shal for thy sake
Do strike thee out of oure letters blake;
Thee thar no more as in this cas travaille;
I am thy frend ther I may thee availle."
Certain he knew of briboures many mo,
Than possible is to tell in yeres two:
For in this world n'is dogge for the bowe,
That can an hurt dere from an hole yknowe,
Bet than this sompneur knew a slier lechour,
Or an avouter, or a paramour:
And for that was the fruit of all his rent,
Therefore on it he set all his entent.

And so befall, that ones on a day
This sompneur, waiting ever on his pray,
Rode forth to sompne a widewe an olde ribbe,
Feining a cause, for he wold has a bribe.
And happed that he saw befor him ride
A gay yeman under a forest side:
A bow he bare, and arwes bright and kepe,
He had upon a courtsey of grene,
An but upon his hed with frenges blake. [atak]

"Sire," quod this sompneur, "haille and!
"Welcome," quod he, "and every good fele
Whider ridest thou under this grene shaw?"
(Seide this yeman) "wolt thou fer to-day?"

This sompneur him answerd, and saide, "Nay;
Here fast by" (quod he) "is min entent
To riden, for to reisen up a rent,
That longeth to my lordes duetee."

"A, art thou than a baillif?" "Ye," quod b
(He dorste not for veray fith and shame
Say that he was a sompneur, for the name.)

"De par dieus," quod this yeman, "leve broht
Thou art a baillif, and I am another.

I am unknown, as in this contree.
Of this acquaintance I wol prayen thee,
And eke of brotherhod, if that thee list.
I have gold and silver lying in my chest;
If that thee hap to come into our shire,
Al shal be thin, right as thou wolt desire." [faith.]
"Graud mery," quod this soupneur, "by my
trouthe in others bond his trouthe faith,
For to be sworne brethren til they dey.
is delysance they riden forth and play.

This soupneur, which that was as ful of jangles,
so ful of venyze ben thise wariangles,
and ever enquerung upon every thing,
"Brother," quod he, "wher is now your dwelling,
another day if that I shuld you seche?"

This yeman him answered in softe speche;
"Brother," quod he, "fer in the north contree,
Wheris I hope somtime I shal thee see.
Or we depart I shal thee so w-1 wisse,

That of min hous we shalt thou never misse."

"Now brother," quod this soupneur, "I you pray,
Telle me, while that we riden by the way,
(lik that ye ben a baillif as am I)
In an office how I may moste winne.

And sperech not for conscience or for sinne,
But, in my brother, tell me how do ye."

"Now by my trouthe, brother min," said he,
"As I shal tellen thee a faithful tale.

My weges ben ful streit and eke ful smaile;
My led is hard to me and dangerous,

And min office is ful laborious;
And therefore by extorcion I leve,
Forth I take all that men wol me yeve.

Algate by sleighte or by violence
For ye to yere: I win all my dispence;
I can no better tellen faithfully."

"Now certes," (quod this soupneur) "so fare I;
I speere not to taken, God it wote,
But if it be to hevye or to tote.

What I may gete in conseil prively,
No maner conscience of that have I.

For sin extorcion, I might not liven,
Be of swiche japez wol I not be shiven.

But mak we conscience know I non;
I shew thise sbrifte-faders everich on.

We be we met by God and by Seint Jame.
But leve brother, tell me than thy name."

Quod this soupneur, "Right in this mene while
The yeman gan a litel for to smile.

"Brother," quod he, "wolt thou that I thee telle?
I am a ferd, my dwelling is in Helle,

And here I ride about my poure chasing,
To wote wher men wol give me any thing.

My pourechas is th' effect of all my rente.
Like how thou ridest for the same entente

To wissen good, thou rekkest never how,
Right so fare I, for riden wol I now

Unto the worldis ende for a praye." [ye?]
"A," quod this soupneur, "benedicite, what say
I wote ye were a yeman trewely.

Ye here a summe shap as wel as I
Have ye than a figure determinat

In Helle, ther ye ben in your estat?"

"Ray certes," quod he, "ther have we non,
But when as liketh we can take us on,

Or elles make you wene that we ben shap
Somtime like a man, or like an ape;

Or like an engel can I ride or go;
It is no wonder thing though it be so,

A lousy jorgeour can deceiven thee,
And parde yet can I more craft than he." [gon
"Why," quod the soupneur, "ride ye than or
In sondry shap, and not alway in on?"

"For we," quod he, "wol us swiche forme make,
As most is able our preyre for to take."

"What maketh you to han all this labour?"
"Ful many a cause, leve sire soupneur,"

Saide this fend. "But alle thing hath time;
The day is short, and it is passed prime,

And yet we wan I nothing in this day;
I wol entend to winning, if I may,

And not entend our thinges to declare:
For, brother min, thy wit is al to bare

To understand, although I told hem thee.
But for thou axest, why labouren we:

For somtime we be Goddes instruments,
And menes to don his commandements,

When that him list, upon his creatures,
In divers actes and in divers figures,

Withouten him we have no might certain,
If that him list to stonden theragain.

And somtime at our priere han we leve,
Only the body, and not the soule to greve:

Witnessen on Job, whom that we diden wo.
And somtime han we might on bothe two,

This is to sain, on soule and body eke.
And somtime be we suffered for to seke

Upon a man, and don his soule unreste
And not his body, and all is for the beste.

When he withstandeth our temptacion,
It is a cause of his salvation,

Al be it that it was not our entente
He shuld be sauf, but that we wold him hente.

And somtime be we servant unto man,
As to the archebishop Seint Dunstan,

And to the apostle servant eke was I."

"Yet tell me," quod this soupneur, "faithfully,
Make ye you newe bodies thus alway

Of elements?" The fend answered, "Nay;
Somtime we feine, and somtime we arise

With dede bodies, in ful sondry wise,
And speke as renably, and faire, and wel,

As to the phitonome did Salmuel:
And yet wol som men say it was not he.

I do no force of your divinitee.
But o thing warne I thee, I wol not jape,

Thou wolt algates wete how we be shap:
Thou shalt hereafterward, my brother dere,

Come, wher thee nedeth not of me to lere,
For thou shalt by thin owen experience

Comme in a chaire rede of this sentence,
Bet than Virgile, while he was on live,

Or Dant also. Now let us riden blive,
For I wol holden compaignie with thee,

Til it be so that thou forsake me." [betide.
"Nay," quod this soupneur, "that shal never

I am a yeman known in ful wide;
My trouthe wol I hold, as in this case.

For though thou were the devil Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I hold to thee, my brother,

As I have sworne, and eche of us to other,
For to be trewe brethren in this case,

And bothe we gon abouten our pourechas.
Take thou thy part, what that men wol thee yeve,

And I shal min, thus may we bothe leve.
And if that any of us have more than other,

Let him be trewe, and part it with his brother."

"I graunte," quod the devil, "by my fay."
And with that word they riden forth his way,

And right at entry of the tounes ende,
To which this sompneur shope him for to wende,
They saw a cart, that charged was with hay,
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.
Depe was the way, for which the carte stood:
The carter moote, and cried as he were wood,
"Heit scot, heit brok, what, spare ye for the stones?
The fend," quod he, "you fecche body and bones,
As ferforthly as ever ye were folod,
So mochel wo as I have with you tholed.
The devil have al, bothe hors, and cart, and hay."

The sompneur sayde, "Here shal we have a pray,"
And nere the fend he drow, as nought ne were,
Fol prively, and rouned in his ere:
"Herken my brother, herken, by thy faith,
Herest thou nog, how that the carter saith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yve it thee,
Both hay and cart, and eke his caples three."
"Nay," quod the devil, "God wot, never a del,
It is not his entente, trust thou me wel,
Axe him thyself, if thou not trowest me,
Or elles stint a while and thou shalt see."

This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they begonne to drawn and to stoupe.
"Heit now," quod he, "ther Jesu Crist you blesse,
And all his bondes werk, both more and lesse:
That was wel twight, min owen liard boy,
I pray God save thy body and Seint Eloy.
Now is my cart out of the slough parde."
"Lo, brother," quod the fend, "what told I thee?
Here may ye seen, min owen dere brother,
The cherl spake o thing, but he thought another.
Let us go forth abouten our viage;
Here win I nothing upon this cariage."

Whan that they comen somewhat out of toun,
This sompneur to his brother gan to roun;
"Brother," quod he, "here woneth an old rebekke,
That had almost as lefe to lese hire nekke,
As for to yere a peny of hire good.
I wol have twelf pens though that she be wood,
Or I wol somone hire to our office;
And yet, God wot, of hire know I no vice.
But for thou canst not, as in this contree,
Winnen thy cost, take here ensample of me."

This sompneur clappeth at the widewes gate;
"Come out," he sayd, "thou olde very trate;
I trow thou hast som frere or preest with thee."
"Who clappeth?" said this wife, "Beneficite,
"God save you, sire, what is your swete will?"
"I have," quod he, "of somons here a bill.

Up peine of cursing, loke that thou be
To-morwe before the archedekekes knee,
To answer to the court, of certain thinges."

"Now, Lord," quod she, "Crist Jesu, king of
So wisly helpe me, as I ne may. [kinges,
I have ben sike, and that ful many a day.
I may not go so fer," quod she, "ne ride,
But I be ded, so priketh it in my side.

May I not axe a libel, sire sompneur,
Add answer ther by my procuratour
To swiche thing as men wold apposen me?"

"Yes," quod this sompneur, "pay anon, let see,
Twelf pens to use, and I wol thee acquite,
I shal no profit han therby but lite:
My maister hath the profit and not I.
Come of, and let me riden hastily;
Yere me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie."

"Twelf pens," quod she, "now lady Seinte Marie
So wisly helpe me out of care and sime,
This wide world though that I shuld it winne,

Ne have I not twelf pens within my hold.
Ye knowen wel that I am poure and old;
Kithe your almesse upon me poure wretch?

"Nay than," quod he, "the foule fend me let
If I thee excuse, though thou shuldest be spyt."

"Alas!" quod she, "God wot, I have no p
"Pay me," quod he, "or by the swete Seinte

As I wol bere away thy newe passe
For dette, which thou owest me of old,
Whan that thou madest thy husband colow
I paid at home for thy correction."

"Thou best," quod she, "by my salvation,
Ne was I never or now, widew ne wif,
Sompnoed unto your court in all my lif;
Ne never I n'as but of my body trewe.
Unto the devil rough and blake of hewe
Yere I thy body and my panne also."

And whan the devil herd hire curses so
Upon hire knees, he sayd in this manere;
"Now, Mably, min owen moder dere,
Is this your will in earnest that ye sey?"

"The devil," quod she, "so fetche him or
And panne and all, but he wol him repeat."

"Nay, olde stot, that is not min entent,
Quod this sompneur, "for to repenten me
For any thing that I have had of thee;
I wold I had thy smok and every cloth."

"Now brother," quod the devil, "be not
Thy body and this panne ben min by right.
Thou shalt with me to Helle yet to-night,
Wber thou shalt knowen of our privetes
More than a maister of divinitee."

And with that word the foule fend him bes
Body and soule, he with the devil went,
Wber as this sompneur han his heritage;
And God that maketh after his image
Mankinde, save and gide us all and some,
And lene this sompneur good man to becom

"Lordings, I coude have told you," quod
"Had I had leiser for this Sompneur bere,

After the text of Crist, and Poule, and Jehu,
And of oure other doctours many on,
Swiche peines, that your hertes might agrise,
Al be it so, that no tonge may devise,
Though that I might a thousand winter talle,
The peines of thilke cursed hous of Helle.

But for to kepe us fro that cursed place,
Waketh, and prayeth Jesu of his grace,
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
Herkneth this word, beware as in this cas.
The leon sit in his awaite alway
To sle the innocent, if that be may.

Dispoeth ay your hertes to withstand
The fend, that you wold maken thral and bond.
He may not tempten you over your might,
For Crist wol be your champion and your knight
And prayeth, that this Sompneur him repent
Of his misdedes, or that the fend him bent."

THE

SOMPNEURES PROLOGUE.

THIS Sompneur in his stirops high he stood,
Upon this frere his herte was so wood,
That lik an aspen leaf he quok for ire:
"Lordings," quod he, "but o thing I desire,
I you beseeche, that of your curtesie,
Sin ye han herd this false frere lie,

As suffere me I may my tale telle.
 "This frere besteth that he knoweth Helle,
 God, God it wot, that is but litel wonder,
 Hous and fendes ben but litel asonder.
 "For parde, ye han often time herd telle,
 How that a frere ravished was to Helle
 As prik oves by a visoun,
 And as an angel lad him up and down,
 And shewen him the peines that ther were,
 In all the place saw he not a frere,
 In other folk he saw ynow in wo.
 "Dato this angel spake the frere tho;
 Now, sire, quod he, 'han freres swiche a grace,
 And all men shal comen in this place?'
 "Yes,' quoth this angel, 'many a millionum:'
 And unto Sathanas he lad him doun.
 And now hath Sathanas,' saith he, 'a tayl
 Under than of a carrike is the sayl?
 And up thy tayl, thou Sathanas' quod he,
 And saw furth this ers, and let the frere see
 How is the nest of freres in this place,
 More than half a furlong way of space,
 And so as bees out swarmen of an hive,
 And of the devils ers ther gonten drive
 About thousand freres on a route.
 About Helle they swarmed all aboute,
 From ager, as fast as they may gon,
 And in his ers they crepen everich on:
 And he his tayl agen, and lay ful still.
 This frere, whan he lokod had his fill
 In the tormentes of this sorry place,
 In spirit God restored of his grace
 His body agen, and he awoke,
 And tholes for frere yet he quoke,
 And the devils ers ay in his mind,
 And it is his heritage of veray kind.
 "God save you alle, save this curued Frere;
 And he wol I end in this manere."

THE

SOMPNOURES TALE.

Now, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,
 A town coveyed ycalled Holderness,
 Whiche ther went a limitour aboute
 In poete, and eke to bag, it is no doute.
 In besell that on a day this frere
 Preched at a chirche in his manere,
 And specially aboven every thing
 That he the people in his preching
 Prechast, and to yeve for Goddes sake,
 With men mighten holy houses make,
 For as divine service is honoured,
 Ther as it is wasted and devoured,
 Ther it nedeth not for to be yeven,
 Ther to pampouners, that mowen leven
 And be God in wel and abundance.
 "Prechable," sayd he, "deliveren fro penance
 Thousands soules, as wel olde as yonge,
 And whiche that they ben hastily yonge,
 Ther to hold a preest jolif and gay,
 Ther to hold not but o masse on a day.
 "Prechable," quod he, "soun the soules.
 And it is, with feshbook or with oules
 Ther to ychew, or to bren or bake:
 And he spake you hastily for Cristes sake."
 And whan this frere had said all his entent,
 And how he wol jete forth his way he went.

Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem leest,
 He went his way, no lenger wold he rest,
 With scrippe and tipped staf, ytucked bie:
 In every hous he gan to pore and prie,
 And begged mele and chese, or elles corn.
 His felaw had a staf tipped with horn,
 A pair of tables all of ivory,
 And a pointel ypolished fetisly,
 And wrote alway the names, as he stood,
 Of alle folk that yave hem any good,
 Askaunce that he wolde for hem preye.
 "Yeve us a bushel whete, or malt, or reye,
 A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of chese,
 Or elles what you list, we may not chese;
 A Goddes halpenny, or a unase penny;
 Or yeve us of your bragn, if ye have any,
 A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,
 Our suster dere, (so here I write your name)
 Bacon or beef, or swiche thing as ye find."
 A sturdy harlot went hem ay behind,
 That was hir hostes man, and bare a salkic,
 And what men yave hem, laid it on his bakke.
 And whan that he was out at dore, anon
 He planed away the names everich on,
 That be before had written in his tables:
 He scerred hem with nides and with fables. [Frere:
 "Nay, ther thou list, thou Sompnour," quod the
 "Pees," quod our Hoste, "for Cristes moder dere,
 Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at all."
 "So thrive I," quod this Sompnour, "so I shall."
 So long be went for hous to hous, til he
 Came to an hous, ther he was wont to be
 Refreshed more than in a hundred places,
 Wike lay the husband man, whos that the place is,
 Bedred upon a coche low he lay:
 "Deus Sic," quod he, "O Thomas, frend, good day,"
 Sayde this frere all curtisly and soft.
 "Thomas," quod he, "God yelde it you, ful oft
 Have I upon this benche faren ful wele,
 Here have I eten many a mery mele."
 And fro the benche he drove away the cat,
 And laied adoun his potet and his hat,
 And eke his scrip, and set himself adoun:
 His felaw was ywalked into town
 Forth with his knave, into that hostelrie,
 Wher as he shope him thilke night to lie.
 "O dere maister," quod this sike man,
 "How have ye faren sin that March began?
 I saw you not this fourteze night and more."
 "God wot," quod he, "laboured have I ful sore,
 And specially for thy salvation
 Have I shyd many a precious orison,
 And for our other frendes, God ham blisse.
 I have this day ben at your chirche at messe,
 And said a sermon to my simple wit,
 Not all after the text of holly writ,
 For it is hard to you, as I suppose,
 And therefore wol I teche you ay the glose.
 Glousing is a ful glorious thing certain,
 For letter sleth, so as we clerkes tain.
 Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,
 And spend hir good ther it is resonable.
 And ther I saw our dame, a, wher is she?"
 "Yonder I trow that in the yard she be,"
 Sayde this man, "and she wol come anon."
 "Ey maister, welcome be ye by Seint John,"
 Sayde this wif, "how fare ye curtisly?"
 This frere ariseth up ful hastily,
 And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
 And kisseth hire swete, and chirkeoth as a sparwe

With his lippes: "Dame," quod he, "right wel,
As he that is your servaunt every del.
Thanked be God, that you yaf soule and lif,
Yet saw I not this day so faire a wif
In all the chirche, God so save me."

"Ye, God amende defautez, sire," quod she,
"Algates welcome be ye, by my fay."

"Grand mercy, dame, that have I found alway.
But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,
I wolde pray you that ye not you greve,
I wol with Thomas speke a litel throw:
Thise curates ben so negligent and slow
To greden tendrely a conscience.
In shrift, in preching is my diligence
And study, in Peters wordes and in Poules,
I walke and salue Cristen mennes soules,
To yeld our Lord Jesu his propre rent;
To sprede his word is sette all main entent."

"Now by your faith, o dere sire," quod she,
"Chideth him wel for Seinte Charitee.

He is ay angry as is a pissemire,
Though that he have all that he can desire,
Though I him wrie a-night, and make him warm,
And over him lay my leg and eke myn arm,
He groweth as our bore, lith in our stie:
Othev disport of him right non have I,
I may not please him in no maner cas.

"O Thomas, *jeo vous die*, Thomas, Thomas,
This maketh the fend, this muste ben amended.
Ire is a thing that high God hath defended,
And therof wol I speke a word or two."

"Now, maister," quod the wif, "er that I go,
What wol ye dize? I wol go theraaboute."

"Now, dame," quod he, "*jeo vous die ausi cloute*,

Have I nat of a capon but the liver,
And of your white bred nat but a shiver,
And after that a rosted pigges head,
(But I ne wolde for me no beest were ded)
Than had I with you homely sustenance.
I am a man of lite sustenance.

My spirit hath his fostering in the Bible,
My body is ay so rody and so penible
To waken that my stomak is destroyed.
I pray you, dame, that ye be nought annoied,
Though I so freedly you my conseil shewe;
By God I n'old have told it but a fewe."

"Now, sire," quod she, "but o word or I go.
My child is ded within thise wokes two,
Sone after that ye went out of this town."

"His deth saw I by revelacion,"

Sayde this frere, "at home in our dortour,
I dare wel saiz, that er than half an hour
After his deth, I saw him borne to blame
In min avision, so God me wisse.

So did our sextein, and our fermerere,
That han ben trewe freres fifty yere;
They may now, God be thanked of his love,
Maken hir jubilee, and walke alone.

And up I arose, and all our covert eke,
With many a tere trilling on our cheke,
Withouten noise or clatering of belles,
Te deum was our song, and nothing elles,
Save that to Crist I bade an orison,
Thanking him of my revelacion,
For, sire and dame, trusteth me right wel,
Our orisons ben more effectuel,
And more we seen of Cristes secrez thinges,
Than borel folk, although that they be kinges.
We live in poverte, and in abstinence,
And borel folk in richeme and dispence

Of mete and drinke, and in hir foule delit.
We han this worldes lust all in despit.
Lazar and Dives liveden diversely,
And divers guerdon hadden they therby.

Who so wol pray, he must fast and be cleve,
And fat his soule, and make his body leve.
We fare, as sayth the apostle; cloth and food
Sufficeth us, though they be not ful good.
The clenensse and the fasting of us freres,
Maketh that Crist accepteth our praiere.

"Lo, Moises forty daies and forty night
Fasted, er that the high God ful of might
Spoke with him in the mountagne of Sney:
With empty wombe of fasting many a day,
Received he the lawe, that was writen
With Goddes finger; and Eli, wel ye witen,
In mount Oreb, er he had any speche
With highe God, that is our lives leche,
He fasted long, and was in contemplanse.

"Aaron, that had the temple in governaunce,
And eke the other preestes everich on,
Into the temple whan they shuldun go
To praien for the peple, and do servise,
They n'olden drinke in no maner wise
No drinke, which that might hem drunken make

But ther in abstinence pray and wake,
Lest that they deiden: take heed what I say—
But they be sovre that for the peple pray—

Ware that I say—no more: for it sufficeth
Our Lord Jesu, as holy writ deviseeth,
Yave us ensample of fasting and praiere:

Therefore we mendiaunts, we sely freres,
Ben wedded to poverte and continence,
To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,
To persecucion for rightwisesse,
To weping, misericorde, and to clenensse.
And therfore may ye see that our praiere
(I speke of us, we mendiaunts, we freres)
Ben to the highe God more acceptable
Than yours, with your festes at your table.

"Pro Paradis first, if I shal not lie,
Was man out chased for his glotonie,
And chast was man in Paradis certain.
But herken now, Thomas, what I shal mie,
I have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shal find it in a maner glose;
That specially our swete Lord Jesu
Spake this by freres, whan he sayde thus,
Blessed be they that poure in spirit ben.
And so forth all the gospel may ye see,
Whether it be liker our profession,

Or hirs that swimmen in possession,
Fie on hir pompe, and on hir glotonie,
And on hir lewedness: I hem desie.
Me thinketh they ben like Jovinian,
Fat as a whale, and walken as a swan;
Al violent as botel in the spence;
Hir prair is of ful gret reverence;
Whan thay for soules say the Psalm of Davit,
Lo, but they say, *Cor meum exultavit*.

"Who foloweth Cristes gospel and his love
But we, that humble ben, and chast, and pore
Workers of Goddes word, not auditors?
Therefore right as an hauke upon a soure
Up springeth into the aire, right so praiere
Of charitable and chast besy freres,
Maken hir soure to Goldes eres two.
Thomas, Thomas, so mote I ride or go,
And hy that lord that cleped is Seint Ives,
N'ere thou our broder, shuldest thou not thrit

In our chaire pray we day and night
 To Crist, that he thee sende hele and might
 Thy body for to welden hastily."
 "God sei," quod he, "nothing therof fele I,
 As help me Crist, as I in fewe yeres
 Have spented upon divers manner freres
 But assay a pound, yet fare I never the bet;
 Certain my good have I almost bestet:
 I shal my good, for it is al ago."
 The frere answered, "O Thomas, dost thou so?
 That nedeth you diverse freres to seeke?
 That nedeth him that hath a parfit leche,
 To seeke other leches in the toune?
 How innocente is your confousion.
 Wold ye than me, or elles our covent,
 To pray for you ben insufficient?
 I wote, that jape n'is not worth a mite;
 For maladie is for we han to lite,
 Yere that covent half a quarter otes;
 Yere that covent four and twenty grotes;
 Yere that frere a peny, and let him go:
 I sey, Thomas, it may no thing be so,
 That is a ferkyn worth parted on twelve?
 I seche thing that is oned in himselfe
 More strong than when it is yecatered.
 I wote, of me thou shalt not ben yfatered,
 For I wold han our labour al for nought,
 To please God, that all this world bath wrought,
 That the workman worthy in his hire,
 I wote, might of your tresor I desire
 For myself, but that all our covent
 To pray for you is ay so diligent:
 I wote, that Cristes owen chirche,
 I wote, if ye wol lernen for to wirche,
 To bring up of chirches may ye finde
 To be good, in Thomas lif of Inde.
 "Ye ligen here ful of anger and of ire,
 In which the Devil set your herte on fire,
 In which here this holy innocet
 Lay, that is so good and patient.
 Therefore trow me, Thomas, if thou best,
 I wote not with thy wif, as for the best.
 Here this word away now by thy faith,
 To bring swiche thing, lo, what the wise saith:
 "Within thy hoes me be thou no leas;
 I wote suggeste do usen oppression;
 I wote, make thou not thin acquaintance to see.
 And yet, Thomas, eftsones charge I thee,
 To come from ire that in thy bosom slepeth,
 To see the serpent, that so slyly crepeth
 In the gras, and stingeth subtilly.
 I wote, my sone, and herken patiently,
 For twenty thousand men han lost hir lives,
 Dyring with hir lemmans and hir wives,
 For which ye han so holy and meek a wif,
 That nedeth you, Thomas, to maken strif?
 For n'is ywis no serpent so cruel,
 That man treadeth on his tail, ne half so fel,
 As Thomas is, when she hath caught an ire;
 For vengeance is than all hire desire.
 I wote, in a tyme, on of the grete seven,
 That was ascribide unto the God of Heven,
 That he himselfe it is destruction.
 I wote, every leved vicar and parson
 That day, how ire engoudereth homicide;
 For he is each executoor of pride.
 I wote, I could of ire say so moche sorwe,
 That I shuld lysten til to-morwe.
 Therefore pray I God both day and night,
 That he sende God send him lital might.

It is gret harm, and certes gret pitee
 To sette an irous man in high degree.
 "Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
 As saith Senek, that during his estat
 Upon a day out riden knyghtes twe.
 And, as fortune wold that it were so,
 That on of hem came home, that other nought.
 Anon the knight before the jure is brought,
 That saide thus; 'Thou hast thy felaw slain,
 For which I deme thee to the deth certain.'
 And to another knight commanded he;
 'Go, lede him to the deth, I charge thee.'
 And happed, as they wenten by the wey
 Toward the place ther as he shulde dey,
 The knight came, which men woude had be dede.
 Than thoughten they it was the beste rede
 To lede hem bothe to the jure again.
 They seiden, 'Lord, the knight ne hath not slain
 His felaw, here he stodeth hol alive.'
 "Ye shall be ded,' quod he, 'so mot I thrive,
 That is to say, both on, and two, and three.'
 And to the firste knight right thus spake he.
 "I damned thee, thou must algate be ded:
 And thou also must nedes lese thy n bed,
 For thou art cause why thy felaw deyeth.'
 And to the thridde knight right thus he seyeth,
 'Thou hast not don that I commaunded thee.'
 And thus he did do slen hem alle three.
 "Irous Cambises was eke dronkelew,
 And ay delighted him to ben a shrew.
 And so befell, a lord of his reime,
 That loved vertuous moralitee,
 Sayd on a day betwix hem two right thus:
 'A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
 And dronkenness is eke a foule record
 Of any man; and namely of a lord.
 Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
 Awaiting on a lord, and he n'ot wher.
 For Goddes love drinke more attemperey:
 Win maketh man to lese wretchedly
 His mind, and eke his limmes everich on.'
 'The reverer shalt thou see,' quod he, 'anon,
 And prove it by thy nown owen experience,
 That win ne doth to folk no swiche offence.
 Ther is no win bereveth me my might
 Of bond, ne foot, ne of min eyen sight.'
 And for despit he dranke moche more
 An hundred part than he had don before,
 And right anon, this cursed irous wreche
 This knyghtes sone let before him fetche,
 Commanding him he shuld before him stand:
 And sodenly he took his bow in hand,
 And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
 And with an arwe he slow the child right ther.
 "Now whether have I a siker hound or non?"
 Quod he, 'Is all my might and minde agon?
 Hath win bereveth me min eyen sight?'
 "What shuld I tell the answer of the knight?
 His sone was slain, ther is no more to say.
 Beth ware therefore with lordes for to play,
 Singeth *Plachto*, and I shal if I can,
 But if it be unto a poure man:
 To a poure man men shal his vices telle,
 But not to a lord, though he shuld go to Hele.
 "Lo, irous Cyrus, thilke Persien,
 How he destroyed the river of Gisen,
 For that an hors of his was dreint therin,
 When that he wente Babilon to win:
 He made that the river was so smal,
 That wimmen might it waden over al.

Lo, what" said he, "that so wel techen can?
 Ne be no felaw to non ironis man,
 Ne with no wood man walke by the way,
 Lest thee repent; I wol no further say:

"Now, Thomas, leve brother, leve this ire,
 Thou shalt me find as just, as is a squire;
 Hold not the devils knif ay to thin herte,
 Thine anger doth thee all to sore smerte,
 But shew to me all thy confession."

"Nay," quod the sike man, "by Seint Simon
 I have ben shriven this day of my curst;
 I have him told al holly min estat."
 "Nedeth no mo to speke of it, sayth he,
 But if me list of min humilitee,

"Yeve me than of thy gold to make our cloistre,"
 Quod he, "for many a muscle and many an oistre,
 Whan other men han ben ful wel at ease,
 Hath been our food, our cloistre for to rease:
 And yet, God wot, uneth the fundament
 Parfourmed is, ne of our pavement
 N'is not a tile yet within our woones:

By God we owen forty pound to stones.
 Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed Helle,
 For elles mote we oure bokes selle,
 And if ye lacke oure predicacion,
 That goth this world all to destruction.
 For who so fro this world wold us bereve,
 So God me save, Thomas, by your leve,
 He wold bereve out of this world the Sonne.
 For who can teche and worken as we come?
 And that is not of lital time," (quod he)

"But eithen Elie was, and Elisee,
 Han freres ben, that find I of record,
 In charitee, ythouked be our Lord.
 Now, Thomas, help for Seinte Charitee."

And down anon he sette him on his knee.
 This sike man woxe wel neigh wood for ire,
 He wolde that the frere had ben a-fro
 With his false dissimulation.

"Swiche thing as is in my possession,"
 Quod he, "that may I yeve you and non other:
 Ye sein me thus, how that I am your brother."
 "Ye certes," quod this frere, "ye, trusteth wel;
 I took our dame the letter of our sele."

"Now wel," quod he, "and somewhat shal I yeve
 Unto your holy covenant while I live;
 And in thin hond thou shalt it have anon,
 On this condition, and other non,
 That thou depart it so, my dere brother,
 That every frere have as moche as other:
 This shalt thou sweere on thy profession
 Witbouten fraud or cavilacion."

"I swere it," quod the frere, "upon my faith."
 And therwithal his bond in his he layth;
 "Lo here my faith, in me shal be no lak."

"Than put thin bond adoun right by my bak,
 Seide this man, "and grope wel behind,
 Besethe my buttoke, ther thou shalte find
 A thing, that I have bid in privatee."
 A, thought this frere, that shal go with me.
 And down his hond he launcheth to the clifte,
 In hope for to finden ther a gifte.
 And whan this sike man felte this frere
 About his towel gropen ther and here,
 Amid his hond he let the frere a fart;
 Ther n'is no capel drawing in a cart,
 That might han let a fart of swiche a sorn.

The frere up sterte, as doth a wood leoune:
 "A, false cherl," quod he, "for Goddes bones,
 This hast thou in despit don for the nones:

Thou shalt abide this fart, if that I may."

His meinie, which that harden this sffray,
 Came leping in, and chased out the frere,
 And forth he goth with a ful angry chere,
 And set his felaw, ther as lay his store:
 He loked as it were a wilde bore,
 And grinte with his teeth, so was he wroth.
 A sturdy pas down to the court he goth,
 Wher as ther woned a man of gret honour,
 To whom that he was alway confessor:
 This worthy man was lord of that village.
 This frere came, as he were in a rage,
 Wher as this lord sat eting at his bord:
 Unnethe might the frere speke a word,
 Til atte last he saide, "God you see."

This lord gan loken, and saide, "Benedicite!
 What? frere John, what maner world is thin?
 I see wel that som thing ther is amiss;
 Ye loken as the wood were ful of thevis.
 Sit down anon, and tell me what your griev is,
 And it shal ben amended, if I may."

"I have," quod he, "had a despit to day,
 God yelde you, adoun in your village,
 That in this world ther n'is so poure a page,
 That he n'olde have abhominacion
 Of that I have received in youre toun:
 And yet ne groveth me nothing so sore,
 As that the olde cherl, with lokkes here,
 Blasphemed hath oure holy covenant eke."

"Now, maister," quod this lord, "I you beseech
 "No maister, sire," quod he, "but servisech
 Though I have had in scole that honour.
 God liketh not, that men us Rabi call,
 Neither in market, ne in your large hall."

"No forces," quod he, "but tell me all your greif
 "Sire," quod this frere, "an odious manche
 This dey betid is to min ordre, and me,
 And so per consequens to eche degree
 Of holy chirche, God amende it sone."

"Sire," quod the lord, "ye wot what is to be
 Distempere you not, ye ben my confessor.
 Ye ben the salt of the erthe, and the swourer;
 For Goddes love your patience now hold;
 Telle ma your greif." And he anon him told
 As ye han herd before, ye wot wel what.

The lady of the hous ay stille sat,
 Til she had herd what the frere said.

"Ey, goddes moder," quod she; "blisful
 Is ther ought elles? tell me faithfully."

"Madame," quod he, "how thinketh you therof?
 "How that me thinketh?" quod she; "so God
 I say, a cherie hath don a cherles dede.
 What shuld I say? God let him never the;
 His sike hed is ful of vanitee;
 I bold him in a maner frenesie."

"Madame," quod he, "by God I shal not
 But I in other wise may ben awake,
 I shal diffame him over all, ther I speke;
 This false blasphemour, that charged see
 To parten that wol not departed be,
 To every man ylike, with meschance."

The lord sat stille, as he were in a trance,
 And in his harte he rolled up and down,
 "How had this cherl imagination
 To shewen swiche a probleme to the frere.
 Never erst or now ne herd I swiche matere;
 I trow the Devil put it in his mind.
 In all Arismetris shal ther no man find
 Before this day of swiche a question.
 Who shulde make a demonstration,

That every man shuld ben ylike his part
As of a soon or savour of a fart!

O vice proude cheri, I shrews his face.

"Lo, sires" quod the lord, with harde grace,

"Who ever herd of swiche a thing or now?

To every man ylike? tell me how.

It is as impossible, it may not be.

By, nice cheri, God led him never the.

The rounching of a fart, and overy soon,

It's bat of air reverberation,

And ever it wasteth lite and lite away;

For n's no man can demen, by my fay,

If that it were departed equally.

What? lo my cheri, lo yet how shrewedly

Was my confessor to-day he spake;

I hold him certain a demoniake.

Now ste your mete, and let the cheri go play,

Let him go bouge himself a devil way."

Now stood the lordes squier atte bord,

That carf his mete, and herde word by word

All this thing, of which I have you sayd.

"My lord," quod he, "be ye not evil apaid,

Sende telle for a gounse-cloth

To ye, sire frere, so that ye be not wroth,

For that this fart shuld even ydeled be

Amonge your covent, if it liked thee."

"Tell," quod the lord, "and thou shalt have anon

Gounse-cloth, by God and by Seint John." [faire,

"My lord," quod he, "whan that the weder is

Woden wise, or pertourbing of aire,

Bring a cart-whele here into this hall,

I like that it have his spokes all;

And spekes hath a cart-whele comunly;

And bring me than twelf freres, wete ye why?

Christene is a covent as I gesse:

My confessor here for his worthynesse

Shall performe up the noubre of his covent.

And shall they knele adoun by on assent,

And to every spokes end in this manere

Shally lay his nose shal a frere;

And my noble confessor, ther God him save,

Shal hold his nose upright under the nave.

And shal this cheri, with bely stif and tought

Shally labour, hider ben byought;

And shal hit on the whiele right of this cart

Shally the nave, and make him let a fart,

And ye shall seen, up peril of my lif,

And every preef that is demonstratif,

That equally the soon of it wol wende,

That he stinks, unto the spokes ende,

That this worthy man, your confessor,

Shally prove he is a man of gret honour)

Shally have the frste fruit, as reson is.

And the noble usage of freres yet it is,

That worthy men of hem shul first be served.

And certainly he hath it wel deserved;

And hath to-day taught us so mochel good,

That preching in the pulpit ther he stood,

And I may vocchessanf, I say for me,

That he hadde the frste smel of fartes three,

And so void all his brethreun hardely,

And shally break him so faire and holyty."

And the lord, the lady, and eche man, save the frere,

And shally seen, that Jankin spake in this manere

As of Esclide, or elles Philoosoe.

And shally the cheri, they sayden, subtiltee

Shally the highte wit made him speken as he spake;

And he's no fool, ne no demoniake.

And shally Jankin hath ywonne a newe gounse;

And shally tale in don, we ben almost at tounse.

THE CLERKES PROLOGUE.

"Sires Clerk of Oxenforde," our Hoste said,

"Ye ride as stille and coy, as doth a maid,

Were newe spouses, sitting at the bord:

This day ne herd I of your tonge a word.

I trow ye studie abouten soon sophime:

But Salomou saith, that every thing hath time.

For Goddes sake as beth of better chere,

It is no time for to studien here.

Tell us som mery tale by your fay;

For what man that is entred in a play,

He nedes most unto the play assent.

But precheth not, as freres don in Lent,

To make us for our olde sounes wepe,

Ne that thy tale make us not to slepe.

"Tell us som mery thing of adventures,

Your termes, your coloures, and your figures,

Kepe hem in store, til so be ye endite

Hic stile, as whan that men to kinges write.

Speketh so plain at this time, I you pray,

That we may understanden what ye say."

This worthy Clerk benignely answerde;

"Hoste," quod he, "I am, under your yerde,

Ye have of us as now the governance,

And therefore wolde I do you obeysance,

As fer as reson asketh hardely:

I wol you tell a tale, which that I

Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,

As preved by his wordes and his werk.

He is now ded, and nailed in his cheste,

I pray to God so yeve his soule reste.

"Fraunceis Petrark, the laureat poete,

Highte this clerk, whos rethorike swete

Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,

As Lynyan did of philosophie,

Or law, or other art particuiere:

But Deth, that wol not suffre us dwellen here,

But as it were a twinkling of an eye,

Hem both hath slaine, and alle we shul dya.

"But forth to tellen of this worthy man,

That taughte me this tale, as I began,

I say that first he with his stile enditeth

(Or he the body of his tale writeth)

A probleme, in the which descrieveth be

Piemont, and of Saluces the countree,

And speketh of Apennin the hilles bis,

That ben the boundes of west Lumbardie:

And of mount Vesutus in special,

Wher as the Poo out of a-welle smal

Taketh his frste springing and his sour,

That estward ay encreth in his cours

To Emelie ward, to Ferrara, and Venise,

The which a longe thing were to devise.

And trewely, as to my judgement,

Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,

Save that he wol cooveyen his matere:

But this is the tale which that ye now here."

THE CLERKES TALE.

Twain is right at the west side of Itaille

Down at the rote of Vesulus the cold,

A lusty plain, habundant of vitaille,

Ther many a toun and four thou meist behold,

That founded were in time of fathers old,

And many another delitable sighte,

And Saluces this noble countree highte.

A markis whilom lord was of that lond,
As were his worthy elders him before,
And obeysant, ay redy to his hond,
Were all his lieges, bothe lesse and more:
Thus in delit he liveth, and hath don yore,
Belovéd and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Both of his lordes, and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to speken of linage,
The gentilest yborne of Lumbardie,
A faire person, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curtesie:
Discret ynough, his contree for to gie,
Sauf in som thinges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considered nought
In time coming what might him befide,
But on his lust present was all his thought,
And for to hauke and hunt on every side:
Wel neigh all other curus lat he slide,
And eke he n'old (and that was worst of all)
Wedden no wif for ought that might befall.

Only that point his peple bare so sore,
That flockmel on a day to him they went,
And on of hem, that wisest was of lore,
(Or elles that the lord wold best assent
That he shuld tell him what the peple ment,
Or elles coud he wel shew swiche matere)
He to the markis said as ye shull here.

"O noble markis, your humanitee
Assureth us and yeveth us hardnesse,
As oft as time is of necessitee,
That we to you now tell our hevinesse:
Accepteth, lord, than of your gentillesse,
That we with pitous herte unto you plaine,
And let your eres nat my vois disdaine.

"Al have I not to don in this matere
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet for as moch as ye, my lord so dere,
Han alway shewed me favour and grace,
I dare the better aske of you a space
Of audience, to shewen our request,
And ye, my lord, to don right as you lest.

"For certes, lord, so wel us liketh you
And all your werke, and ever have don, that we
Ne couden not ourself devesen how
We mighten live in more felicitee:
Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be,
That for to be a wedded man you lest,
Than were your peple in soverain hertes rest.

"Boweth your necke under the blisful yok
Of soveraintee, and not of servise,
Which that men clepen sponssails or wedlok:
And thinketh, lord, among your thoughtes wise,
How that our dayes passe in sondry wise;
For though we slepe, or wake, or ronne, or ride,
Ay seth the time, it wold no man abide.

And though your grene youthe floure as yet,
In crepeth age alway as still as ston,
And deth manaseth every age, and smit
In eche estat, for ther escapeth non:
And al so certain, as we knowe eche on
That we shul die, as uncertain we all
Ben of that day when deth shal on us fall.

"Acceptest than of us the trewe entent,
That never yet refuseden your best,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assent,
Chese you a wif in short time at the most,
Borne of the gentillest and of the best
Of all this lond, so that it oughte seeme
Honour to God and you, as we can deme.

"Deliver us out of all this beyr drede,
And take a wif, for highe Goddes sake:
For if it so befell, as God forbede,
That thurgh you: deth your linage shuld slide,
And that a strange successour shuld take
Your heritage, o! we were us on Rve:
Wherfore we pray you hastily to wive."

Hir meke praire and hir pitous chere
Made the markis for to han pitee.
"Ye wol," quod he, "min owen peple dere,
To that I never er thought constrainen me.
I me rejoiced of my libertee,
That maiden time is found in mariage;
Ther I was free, I moste ben in servage.

"But natheles I see your trewe entent,
And trust upon your wit, and have don ay:
Wherfore of my free will I wol assent
To wedden me, as soone as ever I may.
But ther as ye han profred me to-day
To chesen me a wif, I you release
That chois, and pray you of that profer chese.

"For God it wot, that children often ben
Unlike hir worthy elders hem before,
Bountee cometh al of God, not of the stren
Of which they ben ygendred and ybore:
I trust in Goddes bountee, and therfore
My mariage, and min estat, and rest
I him betake, he may don as him lest.

"Let me alone in chesing of my wif,
That charge upon my bak I wol endure:
But I you pray, and charge upon your lif,
That what wif that I take, ye me assure
To worship hire while that hire lif may dure.
In word and werk both here and elles where,
As she an emperoures daughter were.

"And furthermore this shuld ye swere, that ye
Again my chois shul never grutch me stire.
For sith I shul forgo my libertee
At your request, as ever mote I thrive,
Ther as min herte is set, ther wol I wive:
And but ye wol assent in swiche manere,
I pray you speke no more of this matere."

With hertly will they sworn and assenten
To all this thing, ther saide out o wight ay:
Beseching him of grace, or that they wnten,
That he wold granten hem a certain day
Of his sponssaille, as soone as ever he may,
For yet alway the peple somewhat dred,
Lest that this markis wold no wif wed.

He granted hem a day, swiche as him lest,
On which he wold be wedded sikerly,
And said he did all this at hir request;
And they with humble herte ful boxumly
Kneling upon hir knees ful reverently
Him thouken all, and thus they han an end
Of hir entente, and home agen they wend.

And herupon he to his officeres
 Comendeth for the feste to purwaye,
 And to his privee knightes and squieres
 Swiche charge he yave, as him list on hem lay :
 And they to his commandement obeye,
 And eche of hem doth al his diligence
 To do unto the feste al reverence.

PARS SECUNDA.

Now for fro thilke paleis honourable,
 Wher as this markis shope his marriage,
 Ther stood a thorpe, of sighte delitable,
 In which that poure folk of that village
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,
 And of hir labour toke hir sustenance,
 And that the erthe yave hem habundance.

Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man,
 Which that was holden pourer of hem all :
 The highe God sometime senden can
 His grace unto a litel oxes stall :
 These men of that thorpe him call
 His daughter had he, faire ynowgh to sight,
 And Grisildis this youge maiden hight.

For hir to speke of vertuous beautee,
 Ther was she on the fairest under Sonne :
 And pourely yfostred up was she :
 Her likenes lust was in hire herte yroune ;
 And of the well than of the tonne
 She drinke, and for she wolde vertue please,
 She knew wel labour, but non idel ease.

And though this mayden tendre were of age,
 And in the brest of hire virginitiee
 Ther was enclosed sad and ripe corage :
 And in gret reverence and charitee
 She olde poure fader fastred she :
 For sheep spinning on the feld she kept,
 And wolde not ben idel til she slept.

And when she homward came she wolde bring
 Herbes and other herbes times oft,
 In which she shred and sethe for hire living,
 And made hire bed ful hard, and nothing soft :
 And by she kept hire fadres lif on left
 With every obediensce and diligence,
 And that child maye don to fadres reverence.

Now Grisildis, this poure creature,
 And eche other this markis sette his eye,
 And he on hunting rode paraventureure :
 And when it fell that he might hire espie,
 And with wanton loking of folie
 His eyes cast on hire, but in and wise
 He hire there he wold him oft advise,

And when in his herte hire womanhede,
 And eche hire vertue, passing any wight
 In yowge age, as wel in chere as dede,
 And though the people have no gret insight
 In vertue, he considered ful right
 The housewife, and disposed that he wold
 Wedde hire only, if ever he wedden shold.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
 Tellen what woman that it shulde be,
 For which mervaille woodred many a man,
 And saiden, when they were in privetees,
 " Wol not our lord yet leve his vanitee ?
 Wol he not wedde ? alas, alas the wolle !
 Why wol he thus himself and us begile ? "

But natheles this markis hath do make
 Of gemmes, sette in gold and in saure,
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildes sake,
 And of hire clothing toke he the mesure
 Of a maiden like unto hire stature,
 And eke of other ornamentes all,
 That unto swiche a wedding shulde fall.

The time of underne of the same day
 Approcheth, that this wedding shulde be,
 And all the paleis put was in array,
 Both hallis and chambres, eche in his degree,
 Houses of office stuffed with plente
 Ther mayst thou see of deintuous vitaille,
 That may be found, as far as lasteth Itaille.

This real markis richely arraide,
 Lordes and ladies in his compaignie,
 The which unto the feste weren praide,
 And of his revenue the bachelorie,
 With many a soun of sondry melodie,
 Unto the village, of the which I told,
 In this array the righte way they hold.

Grisilde of this (God wot) ful innocet,
 That for hire shapen was all this array,
 To fetchen water at a welle is went,
 And cometh home as soon as ever she may.
 For wel she had herd say, that thilke day
 The markis shulde wedde, and, if she might,
 She wolde fayn han seen som of that sight.

She thought, " I wol with other maidens stonde,
 That ben my felawes, in our dore, and see
 The markisese, and therto wol I fonde
 To don at home, as soon as it may be,
 The labour which that longeth unto me,
 And than I may at leiser hire behold,
 If she this way unto the castel hold. "

And as she wolde over the threswold goo,
 The markis came and gan hire for to call,
 And she set don hire water-pot anon
 Beside the threswold in an oxes stall,
 And down upon hire knees she gan to fall.
 And with sad countenance kneleth still,
 Till she had herd what was the lordes will.

This thoughtful markis spake unto this maid
 Ful soberly, and said in this manere :
 " Wher is your fader, Grisildis ? " he said.
 And she with reverence in humble chere
 Answered, " Lord, he is al rody here. "
 And in she goth withouten lenger lette,
 And to the markis she hire fader fette.

He by the bond than toke this poure man,
 And said thus, when he him had aside :
 " Janicola, I neither may ne can
 Lenger the plesance of min herte hide,
 If that thou vouchesauf, what so betide,
 Thy daughter wol I take or that I wend
 As for my wife, unto hire lives end.

"Thou lovest me, that wot I wel certain,
And art my faithful liegeman ybore,
And all that liketh me, I dare wel saie
It liketh thee, and specially therefore
Tell me that point, that I have said before,
If that thou wolt unto this purpos drawe,
To taken me as for thy sou in lawe."

This soden cas this man astoned so,
That red he wex, abaist, and al quaking
He stood, unnethe said he wordes mo,
But only thus; "Lord," quod he, "my willing
Is as ye wol, ne ageins your liking
I wol no thing, min owen lord so dere,
Right as you list, governeth this matere."

"Than wol I," quod this markis softely,
"That in thy chambre, I, and thou, and she,
Have a collation, and wost thou why?
For I wol ask hire, if it hire wille be
To be my wif, and reule hire after me:
And all this shal be don in thy presence,
I wol not speke out of thin audience."

And in the chambre, while they were aboute
The trette, which as ye shul after here,
The peple came into the hous withoute,
And wondred hem, in how honest manere
Potentilly she kept hire fader dere:
But utterly Grisildis wonder might,
For never erst ne saw she swiche a sight.

No wonder is though that she be astoned,
To see so gret a gest come in that place,
She never was to non swiche gestes woned,
For which she lokod with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this matere for to chace,
This are the wordes that the markis said
To this benigne, veray, faithful maid.

"Grisilde," he said, "ye shuln wel understand,
It liketh to your fader and to me,
That I you wedde, and eke it may so stand
As I suppose, ye wol that it so be:
But this demaundes aske I first," (quod he)
"That sin it shal be don in hasty wise,
Wol ye assent, or elles you avise?"

"I say this, be ye redy with good herte
To all my lust, and that I freely may
As me best thinketh do you laugh or smerte,
And never ye to grutchen, night ne day,
And eke whan I say ys, ye say not nay,
Neither by word, ne frowning countenance?
Swere this, and here I swere our alliance."

Woodring upon this thing, quaking for drede,
She saide; "Lord, indigne and unworthy
Am I, to thilke honour, that ye me bede,
But as ye wol yourself, right so wol I:
And here I swere, that never willingly
In werk, ne thought, I nill you disobie
For to be ded, though me were loth to deie."

"This is ynough, Grisilde min," quod he.
And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere,
Out at the dore, and after than came she,
And to the peple he said in this manere:
"This is my wif," quod he, "that stondeb here.
Honorreth her, and loveth hire, I pray,
Who so me loveth, ther n'is no more to say."

And for that nothing of hire olde gere
She shulde bring into his hous, he had
That women shuld despoilen hire right there?
Of which these ladies weren nothing glad
To handle hire clothes wherin she was clad:
But natheles this maiden bright of hew
Fro fro to bed they clothed han all new.

Hire heres han they kempt, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingers smal
A coroune on hire hed they han ydressed,
And sette hire ful of pouches gret and smal:
Of hire array what shuld I make a tale?
Unpeth the peple hire knew for hire fairnesse,
Whan she transmewed was in swiche richesse.

This markis hath hire spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and than hire sette
Upon an hors snow-white, and wel ambling,
And to his paleis, or he longer lette,
(With joyful peple, that hire lad and mette)
Conveyed hire, and thus the day they spende
In revel, till the Soone gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I say, that to this nowwe markiesse
God hath swiche favour sent hire of his grace,
That it ne semeth not by likelinessse
That she was borne and fed in rudenessse,
As in a cote, or in an oxen stall,
But nourished in an emperoures hall.

To every wight she waxen is so dere,
I say, that to this nowwe markiesse
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore,
And fro hire birthe knew hire yere by yere,
Unpethes trowed they, but doret han swere,
That to Janticle, of which I spake before,
She daughter n'as, for as by conjecture
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For though that ever vertuous was she,
She was encreced in swiche excellences
Of thewes good, yset in high boundtes,
And so discrete, and faire of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That eche hire loveth that loketh on hire face.

Not only of Saluces in the toun
Published was the bountee of hire name,
But eke beside in many a region,
If on saith wel, another saith the same:
So spredeth of hire hic bountee the fame,
That men and women, yong as wel as old,
Gon to Saluces upon hire to behold.

Thus Walter lowly, nay but really,
Wedded with fortunat homestete,
In Goddes pees liveth ful eaily
At home, and grace ynough outward had he:
And for he saw that under low degree
Was honest vertue hid, the peple him held
A prudent man, and that is seen ful seid.

Not only this Grisildis thurgh hire wit
Coude all the fete of wify homlinessse,
But eke whan that the cas required it,
The comune profit coude she redresse:
Ther n'as discord, rancour, ne hevinessse
In all the lond, that she ne coude appese,
And wisely bring hem all in hertes ese.

Though that hire husband about were or non,
 If gentilmen, or other of that cuntrye
 Were wroth, she wolde bringen hem at on,
 So wise and ripe wordes hadde she,
 And jugement of so gret equitee,
 That she from Heven sent was, as men wend,
 To save, and every wrong to amend.

Not longe time after that this Grisilde
 Was wedded, she a daughter hath ybore,
 All had hire lever han borne a knave child:
 This was the markis and his folk therfore,
 Glad was the markis and his folk therfore,
 For though a maiden child come all before,
 She may unto a knave child atteine.
 So likelyd, sin she n'is not barrene.

PARS TERTIA.

... as it befallith times mo,
 ... that this child had soaked but a throue,
 ... the markis in his berte konged so,
 ... tempt his wif, hire unchace for to knowe,
 ... he no might out of his berte throue
 ... his marvellous dear his wif to assay,
 ... he, God wot, he thought hire to assay.

... had assaid hire ynough before,
 ... he found hire ever good, what nedeth it
 ... for to tempt, and alway more and more?
 ... though som men praise it for a subtil wit,
 ... as for me, I say that evil it sit
 ... assay a wif whan that it is no nede,
 ... he yuen hire in anguish and in drede.

... which this markis wrought in this manere;
 ... some a-night alone ther as she lay
 ... in steme face, and with ful trouble chere,
 ... sayde thus; "Grisilde," (quod he) "that day
 ... I you take out of your poure array,
 ... I set you in estat of high noblesse,
 ... she n'is not forgotten, as I gese.

... ay, Grisilde, this present dignitee,
 ... which that I have put you, as I trow,
 ... with you not forgetful for to be
 ... I you take in poure estat ful low,
 ... they wete ye mote youreself know.
 ... the hede of every word that I you say,
 ... he is no right that hereth it but we tway.

... he wete youreself wel how that ye came here
 ... the hous, it is not long ago,
 ... though to me ye be right lefe and dere,
 ... my gentils ye be nothing so:
 ... I say, to hem it is gret shame and wo
 ... to be segretes, and ben in servage
 ... he, that borne art of a smal linage.

... and assaid in thy daughter was ybore,
 ... the wordes han they spoken douteles,
 ... desire, as I have don before,
 ... have my lif with hem in rest and pees:
 ... they not in this cas be reccheles;
 ... he do with thy daughter fur the best,
 ... as I wold, but as my gentils lest.

COL. I.

"And yet, God wote, this is ful loth to me:
 But natheles withouten youre weting
 I wol nought do, but thus wol I" (quod he)
 "That ye to me answeren in this thing.
 Show now youre patience in youre working,
 That ye me hight and swore in youre village
 The day that makid was our mariage."

Whan she had herd all this, she not amereid
 Neyther in word, in chere, ne countenance,
 (For as it semed, she was not agrieved)
 She sayde: "Lord, all lith in your plesance,
 My child and I, with bertely oblesance
 Ben youre all, and ye may save or spill,
 Your owes thing: werketh after your will.

Ther may no thing, so God my soule save,
 Like unto you, that may displese me:
 Ne I desire nothing for to have,
 Ne drede for to lese, sauf only ye:
 This will is in myn herte, and ay shal be,
 No length of time, or deth may this deface,
 Ne change my corage to an other place."

Glad was this markis for hire answering;
 But yet he feined as he were not so,
 Al dreery was his chere and his loking,
 Whan that he shuld out of the chambre go.
 Some after this, a furlog way or two,
 He prively hath told all his entent
 Unto a man, and to his wif him sent.

A maner sergeant was this prive man,
 The which he faithful often founden had
 In thinges gret, and eke swiche folk wel can
 Don execution on thinges bad:
 The lord knew wel, that he him loved and drad.
 And whan this sergeant wist his lordes will,
 Into the chambre he stalked him ful still.

"Madame," he sayd, "ye mote foryeve it me,
 Though I do thing, to which I am constrained:
 Ye ben so wise, that right wel known ye,
 That lordes bestes may not ben yfeined,
 They may wel be bewailed and complained,
 But men mote nedes to hir lust obey,
 And so wol I, ther n'is no more to say.

"This child I am commanded for to take."
 And spake no more, but out the child he hent
 Despitously, and gan a chere to make,
 As though he wold have slain it, or he went.
 Grisilde moest al suffer and al consent:
 And as a lambe, she sitteth meke and still,
 And let this cruel sergeant do his will.

Suspicious was the diffame of this man,
 Suspect his face, suspect his word also,
 Suspect the time in which he this began:
 Alas! hire daughter, that she loved so,
 She wende he wold han slaien it right tho,
 But natheles she neither wept ne siked,
 Conforming hire to that the markis liked.

But at the last to spoken she began,
 And mekely she to the sergeant praid
 (So as he was a worthy gentil man)
 That she might kisse hire child, or that it deid:
 And in hire barme this litel child she leid,
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to blisse,
 And lulled it, and after gan it kisse.

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And thus she sayd in hire benigne vois:
 " Farewel, my child, I shal thee never see,
 But sin I have thee marked with the crois,
 Of thilke fader yblowesd more thou be,
 That for us died upon a crois of tree:
 Thy soule, litel child, I him betake,
 For this night shalt thou dien for my sake."

I trow that to a porice in this cas
 It had ben hard this routhe for to see:
 Wel might a moder than han cried " Alas,"
 But natheles so sad stedfast was she,
 That she endured all adversitee,
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
 " Have here agen your litel younge mayde."

" Goth now" (quod she) " and doth my lordes best:
 And o thing wold I pray you of your grace,
 But if my lord forbade you at the lest,
 Burieth this litel body in som place,
 That bestes ne no briddes it to-race."
 But he no word to that purpos wold say,
 But toke the child and went upon his way.

This sergeant came unto his lord again,
 And of Grisildes wordes and hire chere
 He told him point for point, in short and plain,
 And him presented with his daughter dera.
 Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere,
 But natheles his purpos held he still,
 As lordes don, whan they wol have hir will.

And bad this sergeant that he prively
 Shulde this child ful softe wind and wrappe,
 With alle circumstances tendrely,
 And carry it in a cofre, or in a lappe;
 But upon paine his hed of for to swappe
 That no man shulde know of his intent,
 Ne whens he came, ne whider that he went;

But at Boloigne, unto his suster dere,
 That thilke time of Pavie was countesse,
 He shuld it take, and shew hire this matere.
 Beseeching hire to don hire besinees
 This child to fostren in all gentillesse,
 And whos child that it was he bade hire hide
 From every wight, for ought that may betide.

This sergeant goth, and hath fulfild this thing.
 But to this marquis now retorne we;
 For now goth he ful fast imagining,
 If by his wives chere he mighte see,
 Or by hire wordes apperceive, that she
 Were changed, but he never couyd hire finde,
 But ever in on ylike sad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as besy in service
 And eke in love, as she was woot to be,
 Was she to him, in every maner wise;
 Ne of hire daughter not a word spake she:
 Non accident for non adversitee
 Was seen in hire, ne never hire daughters name
 Ne neyened she, for earnest ne for game.

PARS QUARTA.

In this estat ther passed ben foure yere
 Er she with child was, but, as God wold,
 A knave child she bare by this Waitere
 Ful gracious, and fair for to behold:
 And whan that folk it to his fader told,

Not only he, but all his contree mery
 Was for this child, and God they thanke and pray.

Whan it was two yere old, and from the best
 Departed of his sorice, on a day
 This markis caughte yet another leet
 To tempte his wif yet offer, if he may.
 O! nedeles was she tempted in assay.
 But wedded men ne conhen no mesure,
 Whan that they finde a patient creature.

" Wif," quod this markis, " ye han herd of this
 My peple sikely bereu our mariage,
 And namely sin my soue yboren is,
 Now is it wese than ever in all our age:
 The murmur sleth myn herte and my courage,
 For to myn eres cometh the vois so amerte,
 That it wel nie destroyed hath myn herte."

" Now say they thus, ' Whan Walter is agen,
 Than shal the blood of Jamicle succede,
 And ben our lord, for other han we non.'
 Swiche wordes sayn my peple, it is no drede.
 Wel ought I of swiche inuifur taken hede,
 For certainly I dred al swiche sentence,
 Though they not plainen in myn audience."

" I wolde live in pees; if that I might:
 Wherefore I am disposed utterly,
 As I his suster served or by night,
 Right so thinks I to serve him prively.
 This warne I you, that ye not sodenly
 Out of yourself for ne wo shuld outrage,
 Beth patient, and therof I you praise."

" I have," quod she, " sayd thus and ever shal,
 I wol no thing, ne nill no thing certain,
 But as you list: not greveth me at al,
 Though that my daughter and my soue be slain.
 At your commandement: that is to sein,
 I have not had no part of children twein,
 But first sikenease, and after wo and peice."

" Ye ben my lord, doth with your owen thing
 Right as you list, asketh no rede of me:
 For as I left at home al my clothing
 Whan I came first to you, right so" (quod she)
 " Left I my will and al my libertee,
 And toke your clothing: wherefore I you pray,
 Doth your plesance, I wol youre lust obey."

" And certes, if I hadde prescience
 Your will to know, er ye your lust me told,
 I wold it do withouten negligence:
 But now I wote your lust, and what ye wold,
 All your plesance ferme and stable I hold,
 For wist I that my deth might do you ese,
 Right gladly wold I dien, you to plesce."

" Deth may not maken no comparisoun
 Unto your love." And whan this markis say
 The constance of his wif, he cast adoun
 His eyen two, and woodreth how she may
 In patience suffer al this array:
 And forth be goth with dreery contenance,
 But to his herte it was ful gret plesance.

This ugly sergeant in the same wise
 That he hire daughter caughte, right so he
 (Or worse, if man can any worse devise)
 Hath hent hire soon, that ful was of beutes:
 And ever in on so patient was she,
 That she no chere made of hevynesse,
 But kist hire son and after gan it blisse.

Save this she praised him, if that he might,
 Ere liste some be wold in crthe grave,
 His tendre limmes, delicat to sight,
 Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.
 But she non answer of him mighte have,
 He went his way, as him no thing ne sought,
 But to Boloigne he tendrely it brought.

This markis woodreth ever lengor the more
 Upon hire patience, and if that he
 He hadde sothly knowen therbefore,
 That partly hire children loved she,
 He wold han wend that of som subtiltee
 And of malice, or for cruel corage,
 That she had suffrid this with sad visage.

But wel he knew, that went him self, certain
 She loved hire children bett in every wise,
 But now of women wold I adun feyn,
 If thise amysies mighten not suffise;
 What could a sturdy husband more devise
 To prove hire wifhood, and hire stedfastnesse,
 And be continuing ever in stuhfastnesse?

But ther was folk of swiche cobolition,
 That, when they han a certain purpos take,
 They can not stint of hir intention,
 But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
 They wold not of hir firste purpos slake:
 Right so this markis fully hath purposed
 To tempt his wif, as he was first disposed.

Wherwith, if by word or contenance
 That she to him was changed of corage:
 But never could he finden variance,
 She was ay on in herte and in visage,
 And ay the further that she was in age,
 The more trewe (if that it were possible)
 She was to him in love, and more penible.

For which it seemed that, that of hem two
 Ther was best o will; for as Walter lest,
 The same lust was hire plesance also;
 And God be thanked, all fell for the best.
 He shewed wel, for no worldly unrest
 A wif, as of hire self, no thing ne sholde
 Wile in effect, but as hire husband wolde.

The schandere of Walter wouder wide spradde,
 That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
 For he a poure woman wedded hadde,
 With murdered both his children prively:
 Which murdour was among hem comunly.
 The wouder is: for to the peplez ere
 Ther came no word, but that they murdered were.

For which ther as his peple therbefore
 Had loved him wel, the schandere of his diffame
 Made hem that they him hatoden therfore:
 For he a mardrouer is an hateful name.
 But wothes, for earnest ne for game,
 He of his cruel purpos wolde stete,
 To tempt his wif was sette all his entente.

Whan that his daughter twelf yere was of age,
 He to the court of Rome, in subtil wise
 Enformed of his will, sent his message,
 Commanding him, swiche billes to devise,
 As to his cruel purpos may suffise,
 How that the pope, as for his peplez rest,
 Bade him to wed another, if him list.

I say he bade, they shulden contrefete
 The popes bulles, making mention
 That he hath leve his firste wif to lete,
 As by the popes dispensation,
 To stinten rancour and dissension
 Betwix his peple and him: thus spake the bull,
 The which they han published at the full.

The rude peple, as no wonder is,
 Wenden ful wel, that it had ben right so:
 But whan thise tidings came to Grisildis,
 I demer that hire herte was ful of wo;
 But she ylike sad for evermo
 Disposed was, this humble crestans,
 The adversites of fortune al to endure;

Abbing ever his lust and his plesance,
 To whom that she was yeven; herte and al;
 As to hire terey worldly suffisance.
 But shortly if this storie tell I shal,
 This markis writen hath in special
 A lettre, in which he sheweth his entente,
 And secretly he to Boloigne it sente.

To the erl of Payis, which that hadde tho
 Wedded his auster, prayed he specially
 To bringen home again his children two
 In honourable estat al openly:
 But o thing he him prayed utterly,
 That he to no wight, though men wold enquire,
 Shulde not tell whos children that they were.

But say, the maiden shuld ywedded be
 Unto the markis of Saluces anon.
 And as this erl was prayed, so did he,
 For at day sette he on his way is gon
 Toward Saluces, and lordes many on
 In rich armie, this maiden for to gide,
 Hire younge brother riding-hire beside.

Arraid was toward hire mariage
 This freshe maiden, ful of geynes oere,
 Hire brother, which that seven yere was of age,
 Arraid eke ful fresh in his manere:
 And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere
 Toward Saluces shaping hir journey
 Fro day to day they riden in hir way.

PARA QUINTA.

Among al this, after his wicked usage,
 This markis yet his wif to tempten more
 To the uttereste prefe of hire corage,
 Fully to have experience and love,
 If that she were as stedfast as before,
 He on a day in open audience
 Ful boistously hath said hire this sentence:

" Certes; Grisilde, I had yough plesance
To han you to my wif, for your goodnesse,
And for your trouthe, and for your obeyssaunce,
Not for your linage, ne for your richesse,
But now know I in very sothfastnesse,
That in greet lordship, if I me wel arise,
Ther is greet servitude in sondry wise.

" I may not don, as every ploughman may:
My peple me constraineith for to take
Another wif, and crien day by day;
And eke the pope rancour for to slake
Consenteth it, that dare I undertake:
And trewely, thus moche I wol you say,
My newe wif is coming by the way.

" Be strong of herte, and voide anon hire place,
And thilke dowter that ye broughtez me
Take it agayn, I grant it of my grace.
Returneth to your fadres hous;" (quod he)
" No man may alway have prosperitee.
With even herte I rede you to endure
The stroke of fortune, or of a venture."

And she agen answerd in patience:
" My lord," quod she, " I wote, and wist alway,
How that betwixen your magnificence
And my poterte no wight ne can ne may
Maken comparisoun, it is no nay;
I ne held me never digne in no manere
To be your wif, ne yet your chamberrere.

" And in this hous, ther ye me lady made,
(The highe God take I for my witnessse,
And all so wisly be my soule glad)
I never held me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse;
And ever shal, while that my lif may dure,
Aboven every worldly creatura.

" That ye so looke of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobley,
Wheras I was not worthy for to be,
That thanke I God and you, to whom I prey
Foryelde it you, ther is no more to say:
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwell unto my lifes ende;

" Ther I was fostred of a childe ful smal,
Til I be ded my lif ther wol I lede,
A widew clene in body, herte and al.
For sith I yave to you my maidenhede;
And am your trewe wif, it is no drede,
God shilde swiche a lordes wif to take
Another man to husband or to make.

" And of your newe wif, God of his grace
So graunte you wele and prosperitee:
For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to be.
For sith it liketh you, my lord," (quod she)
" That whilom weren all myn hertes rest,
That I shal go, I wol go when you lest.

" But ther as ye me profre swiche dowaire
As I first brought, it is wel in my mind,
It were my wretched clothes, nothing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O goode God! how gentil and how kind
Ye semed by your speche and your visage,
The day that makid was our mariage!

" But soth is said, algate I find it trewe,
For in effect it proved is on me,
Love is not old, as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for non adversitee
To dien in this cas, it shal not be
That ever in word or werk I shal repent,
That I you yave min herte in hole content.

" My lord, ye wote, that is my fadres place
Ye dide me stripe out of my peure wode,
And richely ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I noight ekes out of drede,
But faith, and nakednesse, and maidenhede;
And here agen your clothing I restore,
And eke your wedding ring for evermore.

" The remenant of your Jeweles redy be
Within your chambere, I dare it anly sayn:
Naked out of my fadres hous" (quod she)
" I came, and naked I trose towe agayn.
All your plesance wolde I solve fain:
Bot yet I hope it be not your content,
That I smokkes out of your paleis west.

" Ye coude not do so dishonour a thing,
That thilke wombe, in which your children lay,
Shuide before the peple, in my walking,
Be seen al bare: wherfore I you pray
Let me not like a worme go by the way:
Remember you, min owen lord so dere,
I was your wif, though I unworthy were.

" Wherfore in guerdon of my maidenhede,
Which that I brought and not agen I bere,
As vochesauf to yere me to my mede
But swiche a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrie the wemke of hire
That was your wif: and here I take my leve
Of you, min owen lord, lest I you greve."

" The smok," quod he, " that thou hast on thy heed
Let it be still, and here it forth with thee."
But wel unnethe thilke word he spake,
But went his way for routhe and for pitee.
Before the folk hireselven stripeth she,
And in hire smok, with foot and heed al bare,
Toward hire fadres hous is she fare.

The folk hire fulwen weping in hire way,
And fortune ay they cursen as they go:
But she fro weping kept hire eyen drey,
Ne in this time word ne spake she non.
Hire fader, that this tiding herd anon,
Curseth the day and time, that nature
Shope him to ben a lives creatura.

For out of doute this olde poure man
Was ever in suspect of hire mariage:
For ever he domed, sin it first began,
That whan the lord fulfilled had his corage,
Him wolde thinko it were a disparage
To his estat, so lowe for to alight,
And voiden hire as soone as ever he might.

Agayn his daughter hastily goth he,
(For he by noise of folk knew hire coming)
And with hire elde cote, as it might be,
He covereth hire ful neweful weping:
But on hire body might he it not bring,
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By daies fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader for a certain space
Dwelleth this flour of wofy patience,
That nother by hire wordes ne hire face,
Before the folk, ne eke in hir absence,
Ne showed she that hire was don offence,
Ne of hire high estat no remembrance
Ne hadde she, as by hire contenance.

No wonder is, for in hire gret estat
Hire goot was ever in pleine humilitee;
No tendre mouth, no herte delicat,
No pompe, no semblant of realtee;
But ful of patient benignitee,
Discrete, and proudeles, ay honourable,
And to hire husband ever make and stable.

Men speke of Job, and most for his humblesse,
As clerkes, when hem list, can wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in sothfastnesse,
Though clerkes prisen women but a lite,
Ther can no man in humblesse him souquite
As woman can, ne can he half so trewe
As women ben, but it be falle of newe.

PARS SEXTA.

From Boloigne is this erl of Pavia come,
Of which the fame up sprang to more and lesse:
And to the peplel eris all and some
Was cooth eke, that a newe markisess
He with him-brought, in swiche pompe and richesse,
That never was ther seen with mannes ey
No noble array in al West Lombardie.

The markis, which that shope and knew all this,
That that this erl was come, sent his message
Forthlike poure wofy Grisilde;
And she with humble herte and glad visage,
Ful with no swollen thought in hire courage,
Came at his best, and on hire knees hire sette,
And reverently and wisely she him grette.

"Grisilde," (quod he) "my will is utterly,
his maiden, that shal wedded be to me,
receiveth be to-morwe as really
is it possible is in myn hous to be:
and eke that every night in his degree
have his estat in sitting and service,
and high plesance, as I can best devise.

"I have no woman sufficient certain
the chambers for to array in ordinaunce
for my lust, and therefore wolde I fain,
that this were all swiche manere governaunce;
how knowest eke of old all my plesance;
though this array be bad, and evil besey,
that thou thy devour at the beste wey."

"Not only, lord, that I am glad" (quod she)
To don your lust, but I desire also
to for to serve and please in my degree,
Withouten feining, and shal evermo:
ne never for no wele, ne for no wo,
ne shal the goot within myn herte stente
to love you best with all myn trewe entente."

And with that word she gan the hous to dight,
And tables for to sette, and beddes make,
And peined hire to don all that she might,
Praying the chamberewers for Goddes sake
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake,
And she the moote servicable of all
Hath every chambre arraid, and his hall.

Abouten undern gan this erl alight,
That with him brought thise noble children twey;
For which the peple ran to see the sight
Of hir array, so richely besey:
And than at erst amonges hem they sey,
That Walter was no fool, though that him list
To change his wif; for it was for the best.

For she is fairer, as they demen all,
Than is Grisilde, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit betwene hem shuld fall,
And more pleasant for hire high lineage:
Hire brother eke so faire was of visage
That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesance,
Commending now the markis governaunce.

"O stormy peple, unseed and ever untrew,
And undiscrete, and changing as a fane,
Delighting ever in romel that is newe,
For like the Moone waxen ye and wane:
Ay ful of clapping, dere ynough a jave,
Your dome is fals, your constance eke preveth,
A ful gret fool is he that on you leveth."

Thus maiden made folk in that citee,
When that the peple gased up and down:
For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
To have a newe lady of hir toune.
No more of this make I now mentiooun,
But to Grisilde agou I wol me dresse,
And telle hire constance and hire besowne.

Ful besy was Grisilde in every thing,
That to the feste was appertinent;
Right naught was she abais of hire clothing,
Though it were rude, and soundel eke to-rent,
But with glad chere to the yate is went
With other folk, to grette the markisess,
And after that doth forth hire besowne.

With so glad chere his gastes she receiveth,
And comynly everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man apperceiveth,
But ay they wondren what she might be,
That in so poure array was for to see,
And coude swiche honour and reverence,
And worthily they prisen hire prudence.

In all this mene while she ne stent
This maiden and eke hire brother to commend
With all hire herte in ful benigne entent,
So wel, that no man coude hire prisen amend:
But at the last when that thise lordes wend
To sitten down to mete, he gan to call
Grisilde, as she was besy in the hall.

"Grisilde," (quod he, as it were in his play)
"How liketh thee my wif, and hire beautee?"
"Right wel, my lord," quod she, "for in good fay,
A fairer saw I never nou than she:
I pray to God yere you prosperitee;
And so I hope, that he wol to you send
Plesance ynough unto your lives end."

Under the yoke of marriage ybound :
 Wel may his herte in joye and blisse abound.
 For who can be so buzom as a wif ?
 Who is so trewe and eke so estontif
 To kepe him, sike and hole, as is his make ?
 For wele pr wo she n'll him not forsake :
 She n'is not wery him to love and serve,
 Though that he lie bedrede til that he starve.

And yet som clerkes saien, it is not so,
 Of which be Theophrast is ou of tho :
 What force though Theophrast list for to lie ?
 " No take no wif," quod he, " for husbandrie,
 As for to spare in household thy dispence :

A trewe servant doth more diligence
 Thy good to kepe, than doth thin owen wif,
 For she wol claimen half part al hire lif.
 And if that thou be sike, so God me save,
 Thy veray frendes or a trewe knave
 Wol kepe thee bet than she, that waiteth ay
 After thy good, and hath don many a day."

This sentence, and an hundred thinges wese
 Writeth this man thre God his bones cure.
 But take no kepe of al swiche vanities,
 Defesth Theophrast, and herkenesth me.

A wif is Goddes yeste veraily ;
 All other maner yestes hardely,
 As loundes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
 Or mebles, all ben yestes of fortune,
 That passen as a shadow on the wall :
 But drede thou not, if plainly speke I shal,
 A wif wol last and in this hous endure,
 Wel lenger than thee list paraventure.

Marriage is a ful gret sacrament ;
 He which that hath no wif I hold him shent ;
 He liveth helpeles, and all desolat :
 (I speke of folk in secular estat)
 And herkeneth why, I say not this for nought,
 That woman is for mannes helpe ywrought.
 The highe God, whan he had Adam makid,
 And saw him al alone bely naked,
 God of his grete goodnesse saide than,
 " Let us now make an helpe unto this man
 Like to himself," and than he made him Eva.

Here may ye see, and hereby may ye preve,
 That a wif is mannes helpe and his comfort,
 His paradis terrestre and his dirport :
 So buzom and so vertuous is she,
 They mousten nedes live in unitee :
 O flesh they ben, and o flesh, as I gesse,
 Hath but on herte in wele and in distresse.

A wif ? a ! seinte Marie, *beneficite*,
 How might a man have any adversite
 That hath a wif ? certes I cannot seye,
 The blisse the which that is betwix hem tweye
 Ther may no tonge telle or herte thinke.
 If he be poore, she helpeth him to swinke ;
 She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a del ;
 All that hire husband doth, hire liketh wel ;
 She saith not ones nay, whan he saith ye ;
 " Do this," saith he ; " al redy, sive," saith she.

O blisful ordre, o wedlok precious,
 Thou art so tuery, and eke so vertuous,
 And so commended, and approved eke,
 That every man that holt him worth a leke,
 Upon his bare kness ought all his lif
 Thanken his God, that him hath sent a wif,
 Or elles pray to God him for to send
 A wif, to last unto his lives end,
 For than his lif is set in sikernesse,
 He may not be deceyved, as I gesse,

So that he werche after his wifes rede ;
 Than may he boldly bereu up his bede,
 They ben so trewe, and therwithal so wice.
 For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wise,
 Do alway so, as women wol thee rede.

Lo how that Jacob, as thise clerkes rede,
 By good conseil of his mother Robekke
 Bounde the kiddes skyn about his nekke ;
 For which his fadres benison he wan.

Lo Judith, as the storie eke tell can,
 By good conseil she Goddes peple kept,
 And slow him Holofernes while he slept.

Lo Abigail, by good conseil how she
 Saved hire husband Nabal, whan that he
 Shuld han be slain. And loke, Hester also
 By good conseil delivered out of wo
 The peple of God, and made him Mardochee
 Of Assuere enhancous for to be.

Ther n'is no thing in gree superlatif
 (As saith Senek) above an humble wif.
 Suffer thy wifes tonge, as Caton bit,
 She shal command, and thou shalt suffer it,
 And yet she wol obey of curtesie.

A wif is keeper of this husbandrie :
 Wel may the sike man bewaile and wepe,
 Ther as ther is no wif the hous to kepe.
 I warne thee, if wisely thou wilt werche,
 Love wel thy wif, as Crist loveth his cherche :
 If thou lovest thyself, loveth thou thy wif.
 No man hateth his flesh, but in his lif .
 He fostreth it, and therefore bid I thee
 Cherish thy wif, or thou shalt never the
 Husband and wif, what so men jape or pley,
 Of worldly folk holden the siker way :
 They ben so knit, ther may non harm beide,
 And namely upon the wifes side.

For which this January, of whom I told,
 Considered hath within his dayes old
 The lusty lif, the vertuous quiete,
 That is in marriage lony-swete,
 And for his frendes on a day he sent
 To tellen hem th' effect of his entent.

With face sad, his tale he hath ben told :
 He sayde, " Frendes, I am here and old,
 And almost (God wot) on my piltres brinke,
 Upon my soule somewhat most I thinke.
 I have my body folily dispended,
 Blessed be God that it shal ben amended :
 For I wol ben certain a wedded man,
 And that anon in all the best I can.
 Unto som maiden, faire and tendre of age,
 I pray you shapeth for my mariage
 All sodenly, for I wol not abide :
 And I wol fonde to capien on my side,
 To whom I may be wedded hastily.
 But for as moche as ys ben more than I,
 Ye shullen rather swiche a thing capien
 Than I, and wher me beste were to allien.

" But o thing warn I you, my frendes depe,
 I wol non old wif han in no manere :
 She shal not passen twenty yere certain.
 Old fish and yonge flesh wold I have fain,
 Bet is" (quod he) " a pike than a pikereel,
 And bet than old beef is the tendre veel.
 I wol no woman thirty yere of age,
 It is but bonestraw and gret forage,
 And eke thise olde widewes (God it wote)
 They comen so moch craft on Wades tote,
 So moched broken harm whan that hem lest,
 That with hem shuld I never live in rest.

for every scoles maken subtil clerkes ;
 of many scoles half a clerk is ;
 but certainly a yong thing men may gie,
 right as mee may warm wax with handes pie.
 Therefore I say you plainly in a clause,
 and son old wif han right for this cause.
 " For if so were I hadde swiche meschaunce,
 that I is hire no coode have no plesance,
 how shuld I lede my lif in a voutrie,
 and so straight to the devil when I die.
 My children shuld I non upon hire geten ;
 for were we lever boundes had me eten,
 than that min heritage shulde fall
 to strange handes : and this I tell you all.
 And so, I wot the cause why
 she shulde wedde : and furthermore wot I,
 for spechth many a man of marriage,
 but wot no more of it than wot my page,
 by which causes a man shuld take a wif.
 He may not liven chast his lif,
 but him a wif with gret devotion,
 cause of leful procreacion
 children, to the honour of God above,
 and not only for paramour or love ;
 for in they shulden lecherie eschue,
 I yold hir dette when that it is due :
 for that esche of hem shuld helpen other
 meschise, as a suster shal the brother,
 and live in chastitee ful holly.
 " But, sires, (by your leve) that am not I,
 for God be thanked, I dare make avaunt,
 that my knyghtes stark and sufficient
 shal do all that a man belongeth to :
 and myselfen best what I may do.
 Though I be poor, I fare as doth a tre,
 that blossmeth er the fruit ywrozen be ;
 for many tre a's neither drie ne shed :
 and me as wher heor but on my bed.
 For here and all my lissanes ben as green,
 for ever though the yere is for to seme,
 for in that ye han herd all rain comen,
 for ye to my will ye wolde assent."
 And thus men diversely him told
 of manye many examples old ;
 and blamed it, some praised it certain ;
 and some liste, shortly for to sein,
 that all dry falleth alteration
 (for in manye frendes in disputacion)
 for fell a strife betwix his brethren two,
 which that on was cleped Piscebo,
 which was sothly called was that other.
 And thus he sayd ; " O January brother,
 that I wote han he, my lord so dere,
 that I wote aske of any that is here :
 that ye ben so ful of aspience,
 that ye be kith for your high prudence,
 for you be the word of Salomon.
 For when he word sayd he unto us everich on ;
 that alle thing by conseil, thus sayd he,
 that then he shalt thou not repeten thee.
 For though that Salomon spake swiche a word,
 for evere dere brother and my lord,
 for evere God, my soule bringe at rest,
 that I your own conseil is the best.
 For, brother min, take of me this motif,
 for I have ben a court-man all my lif,
 for God it wot, though I unworthy be,
 for evere stoude in ful gret degree
 of manye lordes of ful high estat :
 that I had I never with non of hem debat,

I never hem contraried twelye.
 I wot wel that my lord can more than I ;
 What that he saith, I hold it firme and stable,
 I say the same, or-elles thing scamble.
 A ful gret fool is any conseilour,
 That serveth any lord of high honour,
 That dare presume, or ones thinken it,
 That his conseil shuld passe his lordes witt :
 Nay, lordes be no foolkes by my fay.
 Ye han yourselves shewed here to-day
 So high sentence, so holly, and wel,
 That I consent, and confirme every del
 Your wordes all, and your opinioun.
 By God ther a's no man in all this toune
 Ne in Itaille, cood bet han sayd :
 Crist halt him of this conseil wel apaid.
 And twelye it is an high courage
 Of any man that stopen is in age,
 To take a yong wif : by my fader kin
 Your herte bougeth on a joly pin.
 " Doth now in this masteire right as you lest,
 For finally I hold it for the best."
 Justina, that ay stille sat and herd,
 Right in this wise he to Piscebo answerd.
 " Now, brother min, be patient I pray,
 Sin ye han said, and herkneth what I say.
 " Senche among his other wordes wise
 Saith, that a man ought him right wel advise,
 To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel.
 And sith I ought avisen me right wel,
 To whom I yeve my good away for me,
 Wel more I ought avisen me, parde,
 To whom I yeve my body : for alway
 I warne you wel it is no childes play
 To take a wif without avisement.
 Men must enqueren (this is min assent)
 Whether she be wise and sober, or dronkelewe,
 Or proud, or elles other wises a shrew,
 A chidester, or a wastour of thy good,
 Or riche or poure, or elles a man is wood.
 Al be it so, that no man finden shal
 Non in this world, that trotteth hol in al,
 No man, ne beste, swiche as men can devise,
 But natheles it ought ynough suffice
 With any wif, if so were that she had
 Mo goode thewys, than hire riches had :
 And all this axeth leiser to enquire.
 For God it wot, I have wept many a tere
 Ful prively, sin that I had a wif.
 Praise who so wol a wedded mannes lif,
 Certain I find in it but cost and care,
 And observances of alle bilases bare.
 And yet, God wot, my neighebouris aboute,
 And namely of women many a route,
 Sein that I have the most stedfast wif,
 And eke the mekest on that bereth lif.
 But I wot best, wher wringeth me my sho.
 Ye may for me right as you liketh do.
 Aviseth you, ye ben a man of age,
 How that ye entren into mariage ;
 And namely with a yong wif and a faire.
 By him that made water, fire, erthe, and airo,
 The youngest man, that is in all this route,
 Is besy yow to bringen it aboute
 To han his wif alone, trusteth me :
 Ye shul not plesen hire fully yves three,
 This to sein, to don hire ful plesance.
 A wif axeth ful many an observance.
 I pray you that ye be not evil apaid."
 " Wel," quod this January, " and hast thou saide !

Straw for Senek, and straw for thy proverbes,
I counte not a panier ful of herbes
Of soles termes; wiser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assented here right now
To my purpos: Placebo, what saye ye?"

"I say it is a cursed man," quod he,
"That letteth matrimonie alkerly."
And with that word they risen sodenly,
And ben assented fully, that he shoulde
Be wedded whan him list, and wher he woulde.

High fantasie and curious beainesse
Fro day to day gan in the soule empress
Of January about his mariage.
Many a faire shap, and many a faire visage
Ther passeth through his herte night by night.
As who so toke a mirroure polished bright,
And set it in a comune market place,
Than shuld he see many a figure pace.
By his mirroure, and in the same wise
Gan January in with his thought devise
Of maidens, which that dwelten him beside:
He wiste not wher that he might abide.
For if that on have beautee in hire face,
Another stont so in the peples grace.
For hire sadnesse and hire benignitee,
That of the peple the grettest vois hath she:
And som were riche and hadden a bad name.
But natheles, betwix earnest and game,
He at the last appointed him on on,
And let all other from his herte gon,
And chees hire of his owen auctoritee,
For love is blind all day, and may not see.
And whan that he was in his bed ybrought,
He purtreied in his herte and in his thought
Hire freshe beautee, and hire age tendre,
Hire middel smal, hire armes long and sclendre,
Hire wise governance, hire gentillnesse,
Hire womanly bearing, and hire sadnesse.

And whan that he on hire was condescended,
Him thought his chois it might not ben amended;
For whan that he himself concluded had,
Him thought ech other mannes wit so bad,
That impossible it were to replie
Again his chois; this was his fantasie.

His frendes sent he to, at his instance,
And praid hem to don him that plesance,
That hastily they wolden to him come;
He woulde abregge hir labour all and some:
Neded no more to hem to go ne ride,
He was appointed ther he woulde abide.

Placebo came, and eke his frendes some,
And alderfirst he bade hem all a bome,
That non of hem pou arguments make
Again the purpos that he hath ytake:
Which purpos was pleasant to God (said he)
And veray ground of his prosperitee.

He said, ther was a maiden in the town,
Which that of beautee hadde gret renowne,
Al were it so she were of smal degree,
Sufficeth him hire youth and hire beautee:
Which maid (he said) he wold han to his wif
To lede in ece and bolinesse his lif;
And thanked God, that he might han hire all,
That no wight with his blisse parten shall:
And praid hem to labour in this neede,
And shapen that he faille not to spede.
For than, he said, his spirit was at ese;
"Than is" (quod he) "nothing may me displese,
Save o thing pricketh in my conscience,
The which I wol reherse in your presence.

"I have" (quod he) "herd said ful yow age,
Ther may no man ben parfitte blisses two,
This is to say, in Erthe and eke in Heven.
For though he kepe him fro the siknes newe,
And eke from every branch of thilke tree,
Yet is ther so parfit felicitie,
And so gret ese and lust in mariage,
That ever I am agast now in min age,
That I shal leden now so mery a lif,
So delicat, withouten wo or strif,
That I shal han min Heven in Erthe here
For sin that veray Heven is bought so dere
With tribulation and gret penance,
How shuld I than, living in swiche plesance
As alle wedded men don with hir wif,
Come to the blisse, ther Crist etarne on live at
This is my dred, and ye, my brethren twic,
Assoileth me this question I ppeic."

Jurtinus, which that hated his folie,
Answerd anon right in his jaspicie;
And for he wold his longe tale abryge,
He wolde non auctoritee allegge,
But sayde, "Sire, so ther be non obstacle
Other than this, God of his his miracle,
And of his mercy may so for you werche,
That er ye have your rights of holy cherche,
Ye may repert of wedded mannes lif,
In which ye sein ther is no wo ne strif:
And elles God forbede, but if he sein
A wedded man his grace him to repert
Wel often, rather than a singre man.
And therefore, sire, the best rede that I can,
Despire you not, bot haveth in memoere,
Paraventure she may be your purgatorie;
She may be Goddes memo and Goddes whippie
Than shal your soule up unto Heven skippe
Swifter than doth an arrow of a bow.
I hope to God hereafter ye shal know,
That ther n'is noq so gret felicitie
In mariage, ne never more shal be,
That you shal let of your salvation,
So that ye use, as skill is and reason,
The lustes of your wif attemptrely,
And that ye plesse hire nat to amoreusly:
And that ye kepe your eke from other sinne.
My tale is don, for my wit is but thinne.
Beth not agast therof my brother dere,
But let us waden out of this matere.
The wif of Bath, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which ye now han in honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space;
Fareth now wel, God have you in his grace."

And with this word this Justine and his bro
Han take hir leve, and esche of hem of othe.
And whan they saw that it must nedes be,
They wroughten so by sleights and wise tretise,
That she this maiden, which that Marius sighte,
As hastily as ever that she might,
Shal wedded be unto this January.
I trow it were to longe you to tary,
If I you told of every script and bond,
By which that she was feoffed in his lond;
Or for to rekken of hire rich array.
But finally ycomen is the day,
That to the chiroche buthe ben they went,
For to receive the holy sacrament.
Forth cometh the possent, with stole about his
And bade hire be like Sara and Rebecke,
In wisdoms and in trouthe of mariage:
And sayd his orisons, as is usage.

And crouched hem, and bade God shuld hem blisse,
 And made all siker ynow with holinesse.
 Thus ben they wedded with solemnitee;
 And at the feste sitteth he and she
 With other worthy folk upon the deia,
 All ful of joye and blisse in the palace,
 And ful of instruments, and of vitaille,
 The more delectous of all Italie.
 There ben stood swiche instruments of soom,
 That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
 He maken never swiche a melodie.
 In every court in carue loudre minstrelie,
 That never Job trowped for to here,
 Ne he Theodoman yet half so clere
 At Thebes, when the citee was in doute.
 For as the win hem shinketh al aboute,
 And Venus laugheth upon every knight,
 For January was become hire knight,
 And wolde bothe assaie his corage
 (As Heretes, and eke in mariage)
 And with hire freibound in hire hond aboute
 In such before the bride and all the route.
 And certainly I dare right wel say this,
 In weene, that God of wedding is,
 He never his lif so mery a wedded man.
 Hold thou thy pece, thoo poet Marcian,
 For writest us that ike wedding mery
 Of hire Phelologie and him Mercurie,
 And of the songes that the Muses songe:
 And al in both thy pen and eke thy tonge
 He to descriven of this mariage.
 And tendre youth hath wedded stooping age,
 For swiche mirth that it may not be writen;
 In which it yourself, than may ye witen
 That I lie or son in this matere.
 And thus that sit with so benigne a chere,
 He to behold it seemed faerie,
 For he better looked never with swiche an eye
 In lawere, so make a look hath she,
 For yeu not devise all hire beautee;
 And thus much of hire beautee tell I may,
 For she was like the brighte morwe of May
 And of all beautee, and plesance.
 This January in ravished in a trance,
 Every time he toketh in hire face,
 And in his herte he gan hire to manace,
 For he that night in armes wold hire streine
 Under than ever Paris did Heleine.
 For natheles yet had he greet pitee
 For that thilke night offenden hire must be,
 And thought, "Alas, o tendre creature,
 For wolde God ye mighten wel endure
 My corage, it is so sharpe and kene;
 And agast ye shal it nat sustene.
 For God forbode, that I did all my might,
 For wolde God that it were waxen night,
 And that the night wol lasten ever mo.
 For wold that all this peple were ago."
 And finally he doth all his labour,
 For he best mighte, saving his honour,
 For he herte hem fro the mete in subtil wise.
 The time came that reoun was to rise,
 And after that men dance, and drincken fast,
 And spices all about the hous they cast,
 And ful of joye and blisse in every man,
 And that a squier, that highte Damian,
 Which cam before the knight ful many a day:
 He was so raviat on his lady May,
 For that for the very peine he was in wood;
 For that he wekt, and rouned ther he stood:

So sore hath Venus hurt him with hire brood,
 As that she bare it dancing in hire hond.
 And to his bed he went him hastily;
 No more of him as at this time speke I;
 But ther I let him wepe ynow and plaine,
 Til freshe May wol rewen on his peine.
 O perilous fere, that in the bedstraw bredeth I!
 O famuler fo, that his service badeth!
 O servant traitour, false of holy bewe,
 Like to the neddre in bosom she untrewe,
 God shelde us alle from your acquaintance!
 O January, drunken in plesance
 Of mariage, see how thy Damian,
 Thin owen squier and thy boren man,
 Entendeth for to do thee vianie:
 God grante thee thin homly fo to espie.
 For in this world n'is worse pestilence,
 Than homly fo, all day in thy presence.
 Parformed hath the Bonne his arke diurne,
 No longer may the body of him sojourne
 On the orisont, as in that latitude:
 Night with his mantel, that is derke and rude,
 Gan oversprede the hemisperie aboute:
 For which departed is this lusty route
 Fro January with thank on every side.
 Home to hir houses lustily they ride,
 Ther as they don hir thinges, as hem leet,
 And when they saw hir time gon to rest.
 Some after that this hastif January
 Wold go to bed, he wol no longer tary.
 He drinketh Ipuocras clarre, and vernage
 Of spices hot, to encrease his corage:
 And many a lettarie had he ful fine,
 Swiche as the cursed monk dan Constantine
 Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*;
 To ete hem all he wolde nothing eschide:
 And to his prieve frendes thus sayde he:
 "For Goddes love, as soon as it may be,
 Let voiden all this hous in curteis wise."
 And they han don right as he wol devise.
 Men drincken, and the travers drawe anon;
 The bride is brought a-bed as still as ston;
 And when the bed was with the preest yblessed,
 Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed,
 And January hath fast in armes take
 His freshe May, his paradis, his make.
 He lulleth hire, he kisseth hire ful oft;
 With thicke-bristles of his berd unsoft,
 Like to the skin of houndfish, sharp as beere,
 (For he was shave al newe in his manere)
 He rubbeth hire upon hire tendre face,
 And sayde thus; "Alas! I mote trespass
 To you, my spouse, and you greetly offend,
 Or time come that I wol don descend.
 But natheles considereth this" (quod he)
 "Ther n'is no werkman, whatsoever he be,
 That may both werken wel and hastily:
 This wol be don at leiser partlytly.
 It is no force how lodge that we play;
 In trowe wedlok couplid be we tway;
 And blessed be the yoke that we ben inne,
 For in our actes may ther be no sinne.
 A man may do no sinne with his wif,
 Ne hurt himselfen with his owen knif:
 For we have leve to play us by the law."
 Thus laboureth he, til that the day gan dawne,
 And than he taketh a sop in fine clarre,
 And upright in his bed than sitteth he,
 And after that he sang ful loud and clere,
 And kist his wif, and maketh wanton chere.

He was al notich, ful of regerte,
 And ful of jergon, as a flecked pie.
 The slacke skin about his necke shaketh,
 While that he sang, so chaunteth he and craketh.
 But God wot what that May thought in hire herte,
 Whan she him saw up sitting in his sherte
 In his night cap, and with his necke leue:
 She praiseth not his playing worth a bene.
 Than sayd he thus: " My reste wol I take
 Now day is come. I may no lenger wake;"
 And down he layd his hed and slept til prime,
 And afterward, whan that he saw his time,
 Up riseth January, but freshe May
 Held hire in chambre til the fourthe day,
 As usage is of wives for the beste.
 For every labour somtyme moste han reste,
 Or elles longe may be not endure;
 This is to say, no livers creature,
 Be it of fish, or brid, or best, or man.

Now wol I speke of woful Damian,
 That langureth for love, as ye shul here;
 Therefore I speke to him in this manere.
 I say, " O sely Damian, alas!
 Answer to this demand, as in this cas,
 How shalt thou to thy lady freshe May
 Tellen thy wo? She wol alway say nay;
 Eke if thou speke, she wol thy wo bewrein;
 God be this help, I can no better seyn."

This sike Damian in Venus fire
 So brenneth, that he dieth for desire;
 For which he put his lif in aventure,
 No lenger might he in this wise endure,
 But prively a penner gan he borwe,
 And in a lettre wrote he all his sorwe,
 In manere of a complaint or a lay,
 Unto his faire freshe lady May.
 And in a purse of silk, heng on his sherte,
 He hath it put, and layd it at his herte.

The Moone that at noon was thikke day
 That January had wedded freshe May
 In ten of Taure, was into Cancer gliden;
 So long hath Mains in hire chambre abiden,
 As custome is unto thise nobles alle.
 A bride shal not eten in the halle,
 Til dayes four or three dayes at the feste
 Ypassed ben, than let hire go to feste.
 The fourthe day complete fro noon to noon,
 Whan that the highe messe was ydoon,
 In halle sat this January and May,
 As fresh as is the brighte somers day.
 And so befel, how that this goode man
 Remembered him upon this Damian,
 And sayde; " Seinte Marie, how may it be,
 That Damian entendeth not to me?
 Is he ay sike? or how may this betide?"
 His squier, which that stoden ther beside,
 Excused him, because of his siknesse,
 Which letteth him to don his businessse:
 Non other cause mighte make him tary.

" That me forthinketh," quod this January;
 " He is a gentil squier by my trouthe,
 If that he died, it were gret harme and routha.
 He is as wise, discreet, and as secree,
 As any man I wote of his degree,
 And therto manly and eke servisable,
 And for to ben a thrifty man right able.
 But after mete as soon as ever I may
 I wol myselfe visite him, and eke May,
 To don him all the comfort that I can."
 And for that word him blamed every man,

That of his bountee and his gentilece
 He wolde so comforten in siknesse
 His squier, for it was a gentil dode.

" Dame," quod this January, " take goode
 As after mete, ye with your women alle,
 (Whan that ye ben in chambre out of this halle)
 That all ye gon to see this Damian:
 Doth him disport, he is a gentil man,
 And telketh him that I wol him visite,
 Have I nothing but rested me a lite:
 And spede you faste, for I wol abide
 Til that ye slepen faste by my side."
 And with that word he gan unto him calle
 A squier, that was marshal of his halle,
 And told him certain thinges that he wolde.

This freshe May hath straight hire way
 With all hire women unto Damian.
 Doun by his beddes side sit she thus,
 Comforting him as goodly as she may.

This Damian, whan that his time he say,
 In secree wise, his purse, and eke his bill,
 In which that he ywritten had his will,
 Hath put into hire hood withouten more,
 Save that he siked wonder depe and sore,
 And softly to hire right thus sayd he;
 " Mercie, and that ye nat discover me:
 For I am ded, if that this thing be kid."

This purse hath she in with hire bosome
 And want hire way; ye got no more of me;
 But unto January ycome is she,
 That on his beddes side sat ful soft.
 He taketh hire, and kineth hire ful oft:
 And layd him down to slepe, and that anon.
 She feined hire, as that she muste gon
 Ther as ye wote that every night mot nede
 And whan she of this bill hath taken hede,
 She rent it all to cloutes at the last,
 And in the privce softly it cast.

Who studieth now but faire freshe May?
 Adoun by olde January she lay,
 That slepte, til the cough hath him awakod
 Anon he prayd hire stripen hire al naked,
 He wolde of hire, he said, have som plesance
 And said, hire clothes did him encombrance
 And she obeieth him, be hire left or loth.
 But lest that precious folk be with me wroth
 How that he wrought, I dare nat to you telle
 Or wheder hire thought it paradis or Hell;
 But ther I let hem werken in hir wise
 Til evereong rang, and that they must arise.

Were it by destinee, or aventure,
 Were it by infinnce, or by nature,
 Or constellation, that in swiche estat
 The Heven stood at that time fortunat,
 As for to put a bill of Venus werkes
 (For alle thing hath time, as sayn thise clerkes)
 To any woman for to get hire love,
 I cannot say, but grette God above,
 That knoweth that non act is causeles,
 He deme of all, for I wol hold my pees.
 But soth is this, how that this freshe May
 Hath taken swiche impression that day
 Of pitep on this sike Damian,
 That for hire herte she ne drivon can
 The remembrance for to don him see. [dit
 " Certain" (thought she) " whom that this I
 I rekke not, for here I him assure,
 To love him best of any creature,
 Though he no more hadde then his sherte."
 Lo, pitep renneth one in gentil herte.

he may ye see, how excellent franchise
 women is when they been narwe avise.
 In tyraunt it, as ther been many on,
 as both as herte as hard as any ston,
 whi wold han lette him sterven in the place
 if other than han granted him hire grace:
 Thus rejoyce in his cruel pride,
 broken not to ben an homicide.
 This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
 hit of hire bond a lettre maketh she,
 which she graunteth him hire veray grace;
 he lacked nought, but only day and place,
 so that she might unto his lust suffice:
 it shal be, right as he wol devise.
 And when she saw hire time upon a day
 hiten this Damian goth this May,
 hastily this lettre down she threat
 in his pitee, rede it if him leet.
 Liketh him by the hood, and hard him twist
 secretly, that so wight of it wist,
 shode him bou all bol, and forth she went
 away, when he for hire sent.
 Which Damian the next morwe,
 found was his siknesse and his sorwe.
 Liketh him, he prometh him and piketh,
 with all that his lady lust and liketh;
 hit to January he goth as lowe,
 for did a dogge for the bove.
 So pleasant unto every man,
 seek it all, who so that don it can)
 every wight is fain to speke him good;
 only in his ladies grace he stood.
 As let I Damian about his neide,
 by my tale forth I wol procede.
 In chertes holden that folicitie
 in delf, and therefore certain be
 noble January, with all his might
 not wise as logeth to a knight,
 then to liven ful deliciously
 living, his array, as honestly
 degree was maketh as a kinges.
 In other of his honest thinges
 and a gardin walked all with ston,
 for a gardin wote I no wher non.
 No doute I veraily suppose,
 what wrote the Roman of the Robe,
 of it the beautee wel devise:
 as mighte not suffice,
 whi he be god of gardins, for to tell
 beautee of the gardin, and the well,
 stand under a labourer away gone.
 When time he Pluto and his queene
 upon, and alle his Faerie,
 when hem and maken melodie
 in that well, and daunced, as men told.
 In noble knight, this January the old
 he danceth both in it to walke and pley,
 he wol suffice no wight here the key,
 he himself, for of the smal wicket
 he clew of silver a cliket,
 which when that him list he it ussette.
 When that he wold pay his wives dette
 when he saw thider wold he go,
 they his wif, and no wight but they two;
 things which that were not don a-bedde,
 the gardin parfourned hem and spekke.
 In this wise many a merry day
 in the January and freche May,
 swiddy joye may not alway endure
 January, as to no creature.

O soden hap, o thou fortune unstable,
 Like to the scorpion so deceivable,
 That fastest with thy had when thou wolt sting;
 Thy tayl is deth, though thin enveniming.
 O brotel joye, o swete poyson queinte,
 O monstre, that so sotilly canst peinte
 Thy giftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,
 That thou deceivest bothe more and lesse,
 Why hast thou January thus deceived,
 That haddest him for thy ful frend received?
 And now thou hast berast him both his eyes,
 For sorwe of which desireth he to dycn.

Alas! this noble January fre,
 Amidde his lust and his prosperitee
 Is waxen blind, and that all sodenly.
 He wepeth and he wailoth pitously;
 And therewithall, the fiwe of jalousie
 (Lest that his wif shuld fall in som folle)
 So brent his herte; that he wolde fain,
 That som man had both him and hire yelain;
 For nother after his deth, ne in his lif,
 Ne wold he that she were no love ne wif,
 But ever live as a widowe in clothes blaie,
 Sole as the turtle that hath lost hire make.
 But at the last, after a mouth or tway
 His sorwe gan awragen, soth to say:
 For when he wist it might non other be,
 He petiously toke his adversitee:
 Save out of doute he ne may nat forgo,
 That he n'as jalous ever more in on:
 Which jalousie it was so outrageous,
 That neither in halle, ne in non other hous,
 Ne in non other place never the mo
 He w'old suffre hire for to ride or go,
 But if that he had bonde on hire alway.
 For which ful often wepeth freche May
 That loveth Damian so brentingly,
 That she moote either dien sodenly,
 Or elles she moote han him as hire leet:
 She waited when hire herte to-brest:

Upon that other side Damian
 Becomen is the sowefullert man
 That ever was, for neither night ne day
 Ne might he speke a word to freche May,
 As to his purpos of no swiche matere,
 But if that January must it here,
 That had an hand upon hire evermo.
 But natheles, by writing to and fro,
 And privy signes, wist he what she ment,
 And she knew eke the fin of his entent.

O January, what might it thee availle,
 Though thou might seem, as for as shippes saille?
 For as good is blind to deceived be,
 As be deceived, when a man may see.
 Lo Argus, which that had an hundred eyes,
 For-all that ever he coude pore or pries,
 Yet was he blest, and, God wot, so ben we,
 That wemen wily that it be not so:
 Paste over is an ese, I say no more.

This freche May, of which I spake of yore,
 In warm weu hath captured the cliket,
 That January bare of the smal wicket,
 By which into his gardin oft he went;
 And Damian that knew all hire entent
 The cliket confreted prively:
 Ther n'is no more to say, but hastily
 Som wonder by this cliket shal betide,
 Which ye shal hereen, if ye wol abide.

O noble Ovide, soth mayest thou, God wote,
 What sleight is it if love be long and hote,

That he n'ill find it out in som manere?
 By Pyramus and Thisbe may men lere;
 Though they were kept ful long and streit over all
 They ben accorded, rowning thorgh a wall,
 Ther no wight coude han founden swiche a sleighte.
 But now to purpos; er that daimes sighte
 Were passed of the month of Juil, befall,
 That January hath caught so gret a will,
 Thorgh egging of his wif, him for to play
 In his gardin, and no wight but they tway.
 That in a morwe unto this May said he;
 "Rise up, my wif, my love, my lady free;
 The turtles vois is herd, myn owen swete;
 The winter is gon, with all his raines wete:
 Come forth now with this eyen columbeid.
 Wel fairer ben thy brasts than ony wine.
 The gardin is enclosed all aboute;
 Come forth, my white spouse, for out of doute,
 Thou hast me wounded in myd herte, o wif:
 No spot in thee n'as never in all thy lif.
 Come forth and let us taken our disport,
 I chese thee for my wif and my comfort."

Swiche olde lewed wordes used he.
 On Damian a signe made she,
 That he shuld go before with his oikket.
 This Damian hath opened the wicket,
 And in he stert, and that in swiche manere,
 That no wight might him see neyther yhere,
 And still he sit under a bush. Anon
 This January, as blind as is a ston,
 With Maits in his hand, and no wight no,
 Into this freshe gardin is ago,
 And clapped to the wicket sodenly.

"Now wif," quod he, "here n'is but thou, and I,
 That art the creature that I best love:
 For by that Lord that sit in Haven above,
 I hadde leve dien on a knif,
 Than thee offenden, dere trewe wif.
 For Goddes sake, thinke how I thee chese,
 Not for no covetise deuteles,
 But only for the love I had to thee.
 And though that I be old and may not see,
 Beth to me trewe, and I wol tell you why;
 Certes three thinges shal ye win thorby;
 First love of Crist, and to yourself honour,
 And all min heritage, toun and tour.
 I yeve it you, maketh chartres as you lest:
 This shal be don to-morwe er Sonns rest,
 So wisly God my soule bring to bliss;
 I pray you on this covenant ye me kisse.
 And though that I be jealous, wite me nought;
 Ye ben so depe enprented in my thought,
 That whan that I consider your beautee,
 And therwithall the unlikely elde of me,
 I may not certes, though I shulde die,
 Forbere to ben out of your compaignie
 For veray love; this is withouten doute:
 Now kisse me, wif, and let us rone aboute."

This freshe May, whan she thise wordes herd,
 Benignoly to January answerd,
 But first and forward she began to wepe:
 "I have," quod she, "a soles for to kepe
 As wel as ye, and also min honour,
 And of my wifhood thilke tendre flour,
 Which that I have assured in your hond,
 Whan that the preest to you my body bond:
 Wherefore I wol answer in this manere
 With leve of you, min owen lord so dere.

"I pray to God that never daw that day,
 That I ne starve, as foule as woman may,

If ever I do unto my kin that shame,
 Or elles I outpeise so my name.
 That I be false; and if I do that lakke,
 Do stripen me and put me in a makke,
 And in the nexte river do me drenchen:
 I am a gentil woman, and no wench.
 Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewe,
 And women han represe of you ay newe.
 Ye con non other dalaunce, I leve,
 But speke to us as of untrust and reprewe."

And with that word she saw wher Damian
 Sat in the bush, and coughen she began;
 And with hire finger a signe made she,
 That Damian shuld climb up on a tre,
 That charged was with fruit, and up he went
 For verayly he knew all hire entent,
 And every signe that she coude make,
 Wel bet than January hire owen make.
 For in a lettre she had told him all
 Of this matere, how that he werken shall.
 And thus I lak him sitting in the pory,
 And January and May roming ful sory.

Bright was the day, and blew the firmament;
 Phebus of gold his streames doun hath sent
 To gladden every flour with his warmesse;
 He was that time in Gemini, I gesse,
 But litel fro his declination
 Of Cancer, Joves exaltation.
 And so befell in that bright morwe tide,
 That in the gardin, on the further side,
 Pluto, that in the king of Faerie,
 And many a lady in his compaignie
 Folwing his wif, the queene Proserpine,
 Which that he ravished out of Ethna,
 While that she gadred floures in the cunte,
 (In Claudian ye may the story rede,
 How that hire in his grisely carte he sette)
 This king of Faerie adoun him sette
 Upon a benche of turves freshe and grene,
 And right anon thus said he to his queene.

"My wif," quod he, "ther may no wight say me!
 The experience so preveth it every day,
 The treson which that woman doth to man.
 Ten hundred thousand stories tell I can
 Notable of your untrouth and brochelese.

"O Salomon, richest of all richesse,
 Fulfilled of sapience and worldly glorie,
 Ful worthy ben thy wordes to memorie
 To every wight, that wit and reason can.
 Thus praiseth he the bountee yet of man;
 'Among a thousand men yet foud I on,
 But of all women fond I never non.'
 Thus saith this king, that knew your wickednesse!
 And Jesus, filius Sirach, as I gesse,
 He speketh of you but selden reverence.
 A wilde fire, a corrupt pestilence,
 So fall upon your bodies yet to-night:
 Ne see ye not this honourable knight?
 Because, alas! that he is blind and old,
 His owen man shal make him a cokewold.
 Lo, wher he sit, the lechour, in the tree.
 Now wol I graunten of my majestee
 Unto this olde blinde worthy knight,
 That he shal have again his eyes sight,
 Whan that his wif wol don him vianie;
 Than shal he knowen all hire harlotrie,
 Both in represe of hire and other mo."

"Ye, sire," quod Proserpine, "and wol ye so!
 Now by my modre Ceres soule I swere,
 That I shal yeve hire sufficient answer,

And she woum after for hire sake;
 For though they han in any gilt ytake,
 Wit face bold they shal hermalde excuse,
 And here hem down that wolden hem excuse.
 In lacke of answers, was of an shul doun.
 And had ye seen a thing wich bothe youre eyen,
 Ye shal we so vantage it hardely,
 And wepe and weewe and obiden subtilly,
 That ye shal hem as loved as hem god.

"What reketh me of your ascriptions?
 I wete wel that this Jewe, this Salomon,
 Bad of us women foolkes many on;
 But though that he no found no good woman,
 For hath yfoolkes many an other man
 Women ful good, and trewe, and vertuous;
 Whanne on hem that dwelte in Cristes house,
 With martyrdom they poverd hir constance.
 The Romains gesses taken remembrance
 Of many a voray trewe wif also.

"But, sire, as he wot woth, al he it so,
 Though that he said he found no good woman,
 I pray you take the sentence of the man:
 He meant thus, that is soverain boonesse
 N'is us but God, wo, noughter he us shal.

"By, for the veray God that n'is but oo,
 What makes ye so trooble of Salomon?
 What though he made a temple, Goddes hous?
 What though he riched were and glorious?
 So made he eke a temple of false goddes,
 Nor might he don a thing that more forbode is?
 Jude as fair as ye his name emphasre,
 He was a lechour, and sin idolatre,
 And in his elde he curay God forsoke.

"And if that God the Middle (as with the tolme)
 Loved him for his fathers sake, he shold
 Has his regne rather than he woldo.
 "I tete out of Mi the vilanie,

That he of women wrote, a bookefulle.

"I am a woman, nudes moste I speke,
 Or well wete that fithre mi herte broke.
 As so he said that we be jangleresses,
 As ever mote I brookles hole my tresses,
 I shal not spare for no curtesee

To speke him harm; that sayth us vilanie."

"Dame," quod this Pluto, "be no leger wroth,

I prete it up; but sin I swore mi oth,

That I wold graunten him his sight again,

By word shal stand, that warne I you certain:

I am a king, it fit me not to lie."

"And I," quod she, "am queene of Faerie.

How swere she shal han I undertake,

Let us no more wordes of it make."

"Peroch," quod he, "I wot you not contrary."

Now let us tarne again to January,

That is the garden with his faire May

Speeth wel merer than the poppingay:

"You love I best, and shal, and other non."

So long about the alleys he he gon,

To he was comen again to thilke pery,

Wher as this Damian stitheth ful mery

On high, among the freshe leves grene.

Thus freshe May, that is so bright and shene,

Come for to site, and said; "Alas my side!

"Sire, sire," quod she, "for ought that may betide

I noute have of the peres that I see,

Or I noute die, so sore longeith me

To eke of the smale peres grene:

Help for hire love that is of Heven queene.

I will you wel a woman in my pit

May have to fruit so greet an appetit,

That she may dien, but she of it have."

"Alas!" quod he, "that I n'adde here a knave,

That coude climb, alas! alas!" (quod he)

For I am blinde." "Ye, sire, no force," quod she;

"But wold ye vouchesauf for Goddes sake,

The pery in with your armes for to take,

(For wel I wot that ye mistrusten me)

Than wel I climben wold ynoogh," (quod she)

"So I my fate might setten on your back."

"Certes," said he, "therin shal be no lack.

Might I you helpen with min berthe blood."

He stoopeth down, and on his back she stood,

And caught hire by a twist, and up she goth.

(Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wroth,

I can nat glose, I am a rude man:)

And sodenly anon this Damian

Gan pulle up the smock, and in he throng.

And whan that Pluto saw this grete wrong,

To January he yaf again his sight,

And made him see as wel as ever he might.

And wan he thus had caught his sight again,

Ne was ther never ceas of thing so fair:

But on his wif his thought was ever mo.

Up to the tree he cast his eyen two,

And saw how Damian his wif had dressed

In swiche manere, it may not ben expressed,

But if I wold speke uncurtesely.

And up he yaf a roving and a cry,

As doth the mother whan the child shal die;

"Out! help! alas! hawm!" he gan to cry;

"O strange lady store, what doest thou?"

And she answered: "Sire, what alleth you?

Have patience and reason in your minde;

I have you holpen on both your eyen blinde.

Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lies,

As me was taught to helpen with your eyen,

Was nothing better for to make you see,

Than stroge with a man upon a tree:

God wot, I did it in ful god entent."

"Strugle!" quod he, "ye algate in it went.

God yeve you both on shames deth to dien!

He swired thee; I saw it with min eyen;

And elles be I honged by the haise."

"Than is," quod she, "my medicine al false.

For certainly, if that ye mighten see,

Ye wold not say these wordes unto me.

Ye have som giting, and do parfit sight,"

"I see," quod he, "as wel as ever I might,

(Thanked be God) with both min eyen two,

And by my feith me thought he did thee so."

"Ye mase, ye mase, goode sire," quod she;

"This thank have I for have made you see:

Alas!" quod she, "that ever I was so kind."

"Now, dame," quod he, "let al passe out of mind:

Come down, my lefe, and if I have misaid,

God helpe me so, as I am erif aspid.

But by my fadres soule, I wende have sein,

How that this Damian had by thee sein,

And that thy smock had lein upon his breast."

"Ye, sire," quod she, "ye may wene as you list:

But, sire, a man that waketh of his slepe,

He may not sodenly wel taken kepe

Upon a thing, ne seen it parfitly,

Til that he be adawed veraily.

Right so a man, that long hath blind ybe,

He may not sodenly so wel ysee,

First whan his sight is newe comen agein,

As be that hath a day or two ysein.

Til that your sight ysateled be a while,

Ther may ful many a sighte you begile.

Beware, I pray you, for by Heven king
 Ful many a man wenech to see a thing,
 And it is all another than it smeth:
 He which that misconceiveth oft misdremeth."
 And with that word she lep down fro the tree.
 This January who is glad but he?
 He kisseth hire, and clippeth hire ful oft,
 And on hire wombe he stroketh hire ful soft;
 And to his paleis' home he hath hire lad.
 Now, goode men, I pray you to be glad.
 Thus endeth here my tale of Januarie,
 God blame us, and his moder Seinte Marie.

THE SQUIRES PROLOGUE.

"By Goddes mercy," sayde oure Hoste then,
 "Now swiche a wif I preie God kepe me fro.
 Lo, swiche sleightes and subtilitees
 In women ben; for ay as bees as bees
 Ben they us sely men for to deceiue,
 And from a sothe wol they ever weie:
 By this Marchantes tale it prevech wel.
 But natheles, as trewe as any stele,
 I have a wif, though that she poure be;
 But of hire trouge a lubbing shrew is she;
 And yet she hath an hepe of vices mo.
 Therof no force; let all swiche thinges go.
 But wete ye what? In counsel he it seyde,
 Me reweth sore I am unto hire trayde;
 For and I shulde rekene every vice,
 Which that she hath, ywis I were to nice;
 And cause why, it shulde reported be
 And told to hire of som of this compaignie,
 (Of whom it nedeth not for to declare,
 Sin women comen uter swiche chaffare)
 And eke my wit sufficeth not therto
 To telle all; wherefore my tale is do.
 "Squier, come ner, if it youre wille be,
 And say somewhat of love, for certes ye
 Comen theron as moche as any man."
 "Nay, sire," quod he, "but swiche thing as I can
 With hardy wille, for I wol not rebelle
 Agein youre lust, a tale wol I telle.
 Have me excused if I speke amis;
 My wille is good; and lo, my tale is this.

THE SQUIERES TALE.

At Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie,
 Ther dwelt a king that werried Russie,
 Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man;
 This noble king was cleped Cambuscan,
 Which in his time was of so gret renown,
 That ther n'as no wher in no region,
 So excellent a lord in alle thing:
 Him lacked nought that longeth to a king,
 As of the secte of which that he was borne.
 He kept his lay so which he was ysworn,
 And therto he was hardy, wise, and riche,
 And pitous and just, and alway yliche;
 Trewe of his word, benigne and honourable;
 Of his courage as any centre stable;
 Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous,
 As any bachelor of all his hous.
 A faire person he was, and fortunate,
 And kept alway so wel real estat,

That ther n'as no wher swiche another man.

This noble king, this Tartre Cambuscan,
 Hadde two sones by *Bisteta* his wif,
 Of which the eldest sone highis *Algarid*,
 That other was ycleped *Camballo*.

A daughter had this worthy king also,
 That yongest was, and highis *Canace*;
 But for to tellen you all hire beaute,
 It lith not in my tounge, ne in my coming.
 I dare not undertake so high a thing:
 Min English eke is unassufficient,
 It muste ben a restor excellent,
 That coude his colours lenging for that art,
 If he shuld hire descriven omy part:
 I am not swiche, I mote speke as I can.

And so befell, that when this Cambuscan
 Hath twenty winter borne his diademe,
 As he was went fro yere to yere I deme,
 He let the feste of his nativite
 Don crien, throughout Sarra his citee,
 The last daye of March, after the yere,
Phobus the soun ful jolif was and clep,
 For he was nigh his exaltacion.

In *Martes* face, and in his manerion
 In *Aries*, the colerike hote signis;
 Ful lusty was the wether and benigne
 For which the fowles again the sounn shone,
 What for the secon and the yonge grons,
 Ful loude soogen hir affectionis:
 Hei'n' sounn had gotten been protectionis
 Again the sword of winter keene and cold.

This Cambuscan, of which I have you told,
 In real vestments, sit on his deis
 With diademe, ful high in his paleis;
 And hok his feste so solemne and so riche,
 That in this world me was ther non it like.
 Of which if I shal tellen all the array,
 Than wold it occupien noners day;
 And eke it nedeth not for to devise
 At ever cours the order of hir service.
 I wol not tellen of hir strange sewes,
 Ne of hir trawles, ne of hir herowes.
 Eke in that lord, as tellen knightes old,
 Ther is som mete that is ful deroute hold,
 That in this lond men receche of it ful small:
 Ther w'is no man that may reporten al.
 I wol not tarien you, for it is prime,
 And for it is no fruit, but lose of time,
 Unto my purpos I wol have resoun.

And so befell that after the thridde cours
 While that this king sit thus in his nobley,
 Herking his ministralles hir thinges play
 Before him at his bord deliciously,
 Yu at the halle dore al sodenly
 Ther came a knight upon a stede of bees,
 And in his bond a brood mirroure of glas;
 Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
 And by his side a naked sword hanging;
 And up he rideth to the highe bord.
 In alle the halle no was ther spoke a word,
 For mervaille of this knight; him to behold
 Ful beily they waiten yong and old.

This strange knight that come thus sodenly
 Al armed save his hed ful reboly,
 Salueth king and queene, and lordes alle
 By order, as they saten in the halle,
 With so high reverence and observance,
 As wel in speche as in his countenance,
 That Gawais with his olde curtisye,
 Though he were cumen agen out of *Faerie*,

It coude him not amenden with a word,
 And after this, before the highe bord
 He with a many vois sayd his message,
 After the forme used in his langage,
 Withouten vice of syllable or of letter,
 And for his tale shoulde seeme the better,
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
 As techeth art of speche hem that it lere.
 Al be it that I cannot soone his stile,
 He cannot climes over so high a stile,
 Yet say I this, as to comun entent,
 The much amounteth all that ever he ment,
 Yf so be that I have it in mind.

He sayd; "The king of Arabie and of Inde,
 My hege lord, on this solempe day
 bierth you as he best can and may,
 and sendeth you in honour of your feste
 by me, that am al redy at your herte,
 his stede of bras, that esily and wel
 he in the space of a day naturel,
 (This is to sayn, in four and twenty houres)
 For so you list, in drought or elles shoures,
 Turn your body into every place,
 In which your herte willeth for to pace,
 Withouten wezme of you, thurgh foule or faire.
 Dr if you list to steen as high in the mire,
 He doth an egle, when him list to sove,
 His nose stede shal bere you evermore
 Withouten harme, till ye be ther you leat,
 Though that ye slepen on his back or rest.)
 And come again, with writhing of a pin.
 He that it wrought, he coude many a gin;
 He vnted many a constellation,
 He had don this operation,
 And knew ful many a seke and many a bond.

"This mirroure eke, that I have in min hond,
 last swiche a night, that men may in it see,
 For ther shal falle ony adversitee
 Into your regne, or to yourself also,
 And openly, who is your friend or fo.
 And over all this, if any lady bright
 And not hire herte on any maner wight,
 If he false, she shal his treason see,
 He acce love, and all his subtiltee
 is openy, that ther shal nothing hide.

"Wherfore again this lusty somer tide
 His mirroure and this ring, that ye may se,
 He hath sent to my lady Canace,
 And excellent daughter that is here.

"The vertue of this ring, if ye wol here,
 is this, that if hire list it for to were
 Upon hire thombe, or in hire purse it bere,
 This is so foule that fleeth under Heven,
 That she we shal wel understand his steven,
 And know his mening openly and plaine,
 And answer him in his langage again:
 And every grus that groweth upon rote
 He shal eke know, and whom it wol do hote,
 He be his cronicles never so depe and wide.

"This asked sword, that hangeth by my side,
 which vertue hath, that what man that it myke,
 throughout his armure it wol kerue and bite,
 Wher it so thicke as is a branched oke:
 And what man that is wounded with the stroke
 And never be hote, til that you list of grace
 Stenken han with the platte in thilke place
 Ther he is hurt; this is as much to saun,
 To smeten with the platte sword again
 Stenken him in the wound, and it wol close.
 This is the very soth withouten glose,

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It failleth not, while it is in your bold."

And when this knight bath thus his tale told,
 He rideth out of halle, and down he light:
 His stede, which that shone as Sonne bright,
 Stant in the court as stille as any ston.
 This knight is to his chambre ladde anon,
 And is unarmed, and to the mete ysette.
 These presents ben ful richeliuh yfette,
 This is to saun, the swerd and the mirroure,
 And borne anon into the highe tour,
 With certain officers ordained therfore;
 And unto Canace the ring is bore
 Solempoely, ther she sat at the table;
 But sikerly, withouten any fable,
 The hors of bras, that may not be remued;
 It stant, as it were to the ground yglued;
 Ther may no man out of the place it drive
 For non engine, of windas, or polive:
 And cause why, for they con not the craft,
 And therefore in the place they han it left,
 Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
 To voiden him, as ye shal after here.

Gret was the press, that swarmed to and fro
 To gauren on this hors that stondeh so:
 For it so high was, and so brod and long,
 So wel proportioned for to be strong,
 Right as it were a stede of Lumbardie;
 Therwith so horsly, and so quik of eye,
 As it a gentil Pouleis courser were:
 For certes, fro his tayl unto his ere
 Nature no art ne coude him not amend
 In no degre, as all the peple wend.

But evermore hir moste wonder was,
 How that it coude gon, and was of bras;
 It was of faerie, as the peple seued.
 Diverse folk diversely han demed;
 As many heds, as many wittes ben.
 They murmured, as doth a swarme of been,
 And maden skilles after hir fantasies,
 Rehersing of the olde poetries,
 And sayd it was ylike the Pegasus,
 The hors that hadde winges for to flee,
 Or elles it was the Grekes hors Sinon,
 That broughte Troye to destruction,
 As men moun in thise olde gestes rede.

"Min herte" (quod on) "is evermore in drede,
 I trow som men of armes ben therin,
 That shapen hem this citee for to win:
 It were right good that al swiche thing were know."
 Another rownd to his felaw low.

And sayd, "He lieth, for it is rather like
 An apparence ymade by som magike,
 As jogelours plain at thise festes grete."
 Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
 As lewed peple demen comunly
 Of thinges, that ben made more subtilly
 Than they can in hir lewednesse comprehende,
 They demen gladly to the badder ende.

And som of hem wondred on the mirroure,
 That born was up in to the maister tour,
 How men mighte in it swiche thinges see.

Another answered, and sayd, "It might wel be
 Naturally by compositions
 Of angles, and of sie reflections;"
 And saide that in Rome was swiche on.
 They speke of Alhazen and Vitellon,
 And Aristotle, that writen in hir lives
 Of queinte mirroure, and of prospectives,
 As knownen they, that han hir bookes herd.

And other folk han wondred on the sword,

Q

That wolde percen thurghout every thing :
 And fell in speche of Telephus the king,
 And of Achilles for his queinte spere,
 For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,
 Right in swiche wise as men may with the sword,
 Of which right now ye have yourselven herd.
 They spoken of sondry harding of metall,
 And spoken of medicines therewithal,
 And how, and when it shuld yharded be,
 Which is unknoung slgates unto me.

The spoken they of Canacees ring,
 And saiden all, that swiche a wonder thing
 Of craft of ringes herd they never non,
 Save that he Moises and king Salomon
 Hadden a name of conning in swiche art.
 Thus saun the peple, and drawn hem apart.

But natheles som saiden that it was
 Wonder to maken of ferne ashen glas,
 And yet is glas nought like ashen of ferne,
 But for they han yknowen it so ferne,
 Therefore ceseth hir jangling and hir wonder.

As sore woodren som on cause of thowder,
 On ebbe and flood, on gosomer, and on mist,
 And on all thing, til that the cause is wist.

Thus janglen they, and demen and devise,
 Til that the king gan fro his bord arise.

Phebus hath left the angle meridional,
 And yet ascending was the beste real,
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian,
 When that this Tartre king, this Cambuscan,
 Rose from his bord, ther as he sat ful hie :
 Before him goth the loude ministralcia,
 Til he come to his chambre of parements,
 Ther as they sounden divers instruments,
 That it is like an Heven for to here.

Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere :
 For in the Fish hir lady set ful hie,
 And loketh on hem with a frendly eye.

This noble king is set upon his trose ;
 This strange knight is fet to him ful some,
 And on the daunce he goth with Canace.

Here is the revell and the jolitee,
 That is not able a dull man to devise :
 He must han knowen love and his servise,
 And ben a festlich man, as fresh as May,
 That shulde you devisen swiche array.

Who coude tellen you the forme of daunces
 So uncouth, and so freshe contenaunces,
 Swiche subtil lokings and dissimulings,
 For dred of jalous mennes apperceivings ?
 No man but Launcelot, and he is ded.
 Therefore I passe over all this lustyhed,
 I say no more, but in this jolinesse
 I lete hem, til men to the souper hem dresse.

The steward bit the spices for to hie
 And eke the win, in all this melodie ;
 The ushers and the squierie ben gon,
 The spices and the win is come anon :
 They ete and drinke, and when this had an end,
 Unto the temple, as reson was, they wend :
 The service don, they soupen all by day.

What nedeth you reheren hir array ?
 Eche man wot wol, that at a kinges fest
 Is plentee, to the most and to the lest,
 And deintees mo than ben in my knowing.

At after souper goth this noble king
 To seen this hors of bras, with all a route
 Of lordes and of ladies him aboute.
 Swiche wondrous was ther on this hors of bras,
 That sin the gret assaige of Troie was,

Ther as men woodred on an hors also,
 Ne was ther swiche a woodring, as was tho.
 But finally the king asketh the knight
 The vertue of this courser, and the might,
 And praid him to tell his governaunce.

This hors anon gan for to trip and daunce,
 When that the knight laid hond up on his reins,
 And saide, " Sire, ther n'is no more to saun,
 But when you list to riden any where,
 Ye moten trill a pin, stand in his ere,
 Which I shal tellen you betwixt us two,
 Ye moten nempne him to what place also,
 Or to what contrie that you list to ride.

" And when ye come ther as you list abide,
 Bid him descend, and trill another pin,
 (For therin lieth the effect of all the gin)
 And he wol doum descend and don your will,
 And in that place be wol abiden still :
 Though al the world had the contrary swere,
 He shal not thennes be drawe ne be bore.
 Or if you list to bid him thennes gon,
 Trille this pin, and he wol vanish anon
 Out of the sight of every maner wight,
 And come agen, be it by day or night,
 When that you list to clepen him again
 In swiche a guise, as I shal to you sin
 Betwixen you and me, and that ful soone.
 Ride when you list, ther n'is no more to dome."

Enfourmed when the king was of the knight,
 And hath conceived in his wit aright
 The maner and the forme of all this thing,
 Ful glad and blith, this noble doughty king
 Repaireth to his revel, as beforre.
 The bridel is in to the tour yborne,
 And kept among his Jewels lefe and dere :
 The hors vanisht, I n'ot in what manere,
 Out of hir sight, ye get no more of me :
 But thus I lete in lust and jolitee
 This Cambuscan his lordes festeyng,
 Til that wel nigh the day began to spring.

PARS SECUNDA.

The notice of digestion, the slepe,
 Gan on hem winke, and had hem taken kepe,
 That mochel drinke, and labour wol have rest :
 And with a galping mouth hem all he test,
 And said, that it was time to lie adoun,
 For blood was in his dominicoun :
 Cheriabeth blood, natures friend, quod he.

They thanken him galping, by two by thre
 And every wight gan drawe him to his rest,
 As slepe hem bade, they toke it for the best.

Hir dremes shal not now be told for me ;
 Ful were hir bedes of fumosites,
 That causeth drems, of which ther is no chary
 They slegen til that it was prime large,
 The mooste part, but it were Canace ;
 She was ful mesurable, as women be.
 For of hire father had she take hire leve
 To gon to rest, some after it was eve ;
 Hire liste not appalled for to be,
 Nor on the morwe unfastliche for to see ;
 And slept hire firste slepe, and than awoke.
 For swiche a joye she in hire herte toke
 Both of hire queinte ring, and of hire mirrouer
 That twenty time she changed hire colour ;
 And in hire slepe right for the impression
 Of hire mirrouer she had a vision.

Wherefore, or that the Sonne gan up glide,
She clepeth upon hire maistresse hire beside,
And saide, that hire luste for to arise.

These olde women, that ben gladly wise,
As hire maistresse, answered hire anon,
And said; "Madame, whider wol ye gon
Therfor? for the folk ben all in rest."

"I wol," quod she, "arisen for me lest
No longer for to slepe, and walken aboute."

Hire maistresse clepeth women a gret route,
And up they risen, wel a ten or twelve;
Cy nich framke Canace hireseive,

As rody and bright, as the yonge Sonne,
That in the Raim is foure degres yronne;
No higher was he, when she reddy was;

And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed after the lusty season sote
Lightly for to playe, and walken on fote,

Mought but with five or sixe of hire meinie;
And in a trencech forth in the park goth she.

The vapour, which that for the erthe glode,
Kaketh the Sonne to seme rody and brode:

As asheles, it was so faire a sight,
That it made all hir hertes for to light,

What for the season, and the morweining,
And for the foules that she berde sing.

For right anon she wiste what they ment
Right by hir song, and knew al hir entent.

The knotte, why that every tale is tolde,
If it be taryed til the lust he colde

Of hem, that han it herkened afore ye,
The swour pamech ever lenger the more,

For falschewe of the prolixitee:
And by that same reson thinketh me

I shal into the knotte condescende,
And maken of hire walking sone an ende.

Amids a tree for-dry, as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in hire walk,

Ther sat a faucon over hire hed ful his,
That with a pitous vois so gan to crie,

That all the wood resounded of hire cry,
And heken had hireself so pitously

With bathe hire wings, til the rede blood
Was ending the tree, ther as she stood.

And over in on alway she cried and stright,
And with hire bek hireselven she so twight,

That ther a's tigre, ne no cruel best,
That dwelleth other in wood, or in forest,

That a'olde han wept, if that he wepen coude,
He seve of hire, she a'stright alway so loud.

For ther was never yet no man on live,
I that he coude a faucon wel describe,

That herde of swiche another of fayrenesse
As wel of plamage, as of gentilese,

Of shape, of all that might yrekened be.
A faucon peregrine semed she

As she had, and ever as she stood,
She resonned now and now for lack of blood,

Thi wol might is she fallen fro the tree.
Thi fair kinges daughter Canace,

That on hire finger bare the queinte ring,
Therfor which she understood wel every thing

That sey foule may in his leden sain,
And coude answer him in his leden again,

And understooden what this faucon seyde,
And wel might for the route almost she deyde:

And in the tree she goth ful hastily,
And on this faucon loketh pitously,

And held hire lap abroad, for wel she wist
The faucon muste fallen fro the twist

Whan that she swouned next, for fante of blood.
A longe while to waiten hire she stood.
Til at the last she spake in this manere
Unto the hawk, as ye shul after here.

"What is the cause, if it be for to tell,
That ye ben in this furial peine of Hell?"

Quod Canace unto this hawk above;
"Is this for sorwe of deth, or losse of love?"

For as I trow, these be the causes two,
That causen most a gentil herte wo.

Of other harme it nedeth not to speke,
For ye yourself upon yourself awreke,

Which preveth wel, that other ire or drede
Mote ben encheson of your cruel dede,

Sin that I se non other wight you chace.
For the love of God, as doth yourself grace:

Or what may he your helpe? for west ne est
Ne saw I never er now no brid ne best,

That ferde with himself so pitously.
Ye ale me with your sorwe verally,

I have of you so gret compassion.
For Goddes love come fro the tree adoun;

And as I am a kinges daughter trewe,
If that I verally the causes knewe

Of your disece, if it lay in my might,
I wold amend it, or that it were night,

As wisly help me the gret God of kind.
And herbes shal I right ynough yfind,

To elen with your hurtes hastily."
The shrigh this faucon yet more pitously

Than ever she did, and fell to ground anon,
And lith aswouned, as ded as lith a ston,

Til Canace hath in hire lappe hire take,
Unto that time she gan of swoune awake:

And after that she out of swoune abraide,
Right in hire haukes leden thus she sayde.

"That pitce reaneth sone in gentil herte
(Feling his similitude in peines amerte)

is proved alle day, as men may see,
As wel by werke as by auctoritee,

For gentil herte kitheth gentilese.
I see wel, that ye have on my distresse

Compassion, my faire Canace,
Of veray womanly benignitee,

That nature in your principles hath set.
But for non hope for to fare the bet,

But for to obey unto your herte free,
And for to maken other yware by me,

As by the whelpe chastised is the leon,
Right for that cause and that conclusion,

While that I have a leiser and a space,
Min harme I wol confessen er I pace."

And ever while that on hire sorwe told,
That other wept, as she to water wold,

Til that the faucon had hire to be still,
And with a sike right thus she said hire till.

"Ther I was bred, (alas that like day!)
And fustred in a roche of marble gray

So tendrely, that nothing ailed me.
I ne wist not what was adversitee,

Til I coude flec ful high under the skie.
Tho dwelled a tercelet me faste by,

That semed welle of alle gentilese,
Al were he ful of treson and falschewe.

It was so wrapped under bumble chere,
And under hew of trowth in swiche manere,

Under plesance, and under besy peice,
That no wight coude have wend he coude feine,

So depe in greyn he died his coloures,
Right as a serpent hideth him under floures,

Til he may see his tyme for to bite ;
 Right so this god of loves hypocritis
 Doth so his ceremonies and obeissance,
 And kepeth in semblant alle his observance,
 That souneth unto gentillesse of love.
 As on a tombe is all the faire above,
 And under is the corpe, swiche as ye wote ;
 Swiche was this hypocrite both cold and hote,
 And in this wise he served his entent,
 That, save the food, non wiste what he ment :
 Til he so long had weped and complained,
 And many a yere his service to me fained,
 Till that miu herte, to pitous and to nice,
 Al innocent of his crowned malice,
 For-fered of his deth, as thoughts me,
 Upon his othes and his secrettee,
 Granted him love, on this conditioun,
 That evermo min honour and renoun
 Were saved, bothe privee and apert ;
 This is to say, that, after his desert,
 I yave him all miu herte and all my thought,
 (God wote, and he, that other ways nought)
 And toke his herte in change of miu for ay.
 But soth is said, gon sithen is many a day,
 A trewe wight and a thooft thinken not on.

" And when he saw the thing so fer ygon,
 That I had granted him fully my love,
 In swiche a guise as I have said above,
 And yeven him my trewe herte as free
 As he swore that he yaf his herte to me,
 Anon this tigre, ful of doubleness,
 Fell on his knees with so gret humblesse,
 With so high reverence, as by his chere,
 So like a gentil lover of manere,
 So ravished, as it semed, for the joys,
 That never Jason, ne Paris of Troye,
 Jason ? certes, ne never other man,
 Sin Lamech was, that alderfirst began
 To loveu two, as writen folk beforen,
 Ne never sithen the first man was borne,
 Ne coude man by twenty thousand part
 Contrefete the sophimes of his art ;
 Ne were worthy to unbolc his galoche,
 Ther doubleness of faining shuld approche,
 Ne coude so thanke a wight, as he did me.
 His maner was an Heven for to see
 To any woman, were she never so wise ;
 So painted he and kempt, at point devise,
 As wel his wordes, as his contenance.
 And I so loved him for his obeissance,
 And for the trouthe I domed in his herte,
 That if so were that any thing him smerte,
 Al were it never so lite, and I it wist,
 Me thought I felt deth at myn herte twist
 And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
 That my will was his willes instrument ;
 This is to say, my will obeyed his will
 In alle thing, as far as reason fill,
 Keeping the boundes of my worship ever :
 Ne never had I thing so lefe, ne lever,
 As him, God wot, ne never shal no mo.

" This lasteth longer than a yere or two,
 That I supposed of him nought but good.
 But finally, thus at the last it stood,
 That fortune wolde that he muste twin
 Out of that place, which that I was in.
 Wher me was wo, it is no question ;
 I cannot make of it description.
 For o thing dare I tellen boldely,
 I know what is the prync of deth therby,

Swiche harme I felt, for he ne might byleve.

" So on a day of me he toke his leve,
 So sorwful eke, that I wend veraily,
 That he had felt as moche harme as I,
 When that I herd him speke, and sawe his bewe.
 But natheles, I thought he was so trewe,
 And eke that he repairen shuld again
 Within a litel while, soth to saun,
 And reson wold eke that he muste go
 For his honour, as often beppeth so,
 That I made vertue of necessitee,
 And toke it wel, sin that it muste be.
 As I best might, I hid fro him my sorwe,
 And toke him by the bond, Seint John to borwe,
 And said him thus ; ' Lo, I am yourres all,
 Beth swiche as I have ben to you and thall.'

" What he answerd, it nedeth not rebarre ;
 Who can say bet than he, who can do werse ?
 When he hath al wel said, than hath he done.
 Therefore behoveth him a ful long space,
 That shal ete with a fend ; thus herd I say.

" So at the last he muste forth his way,
 And forth he fleeth, til he come ther him lest.
 When it came him to purpos for to rest,
 I trow that he had thilke text in mind,
 That alle thing repairing to his kind
 Gladeth himself ; thus saun men as I geese :
 Men loven of propre kind newefangellesse,
 As briddes doo, that men in cages fede.
 For though thou night and day take of hem beed
 And strew hir cage faire and soft as silke,
 And give hem sugre, hony, bred, and milke,
 Yet right anon as that his dore is up,
 He with his feet wol spuren down his cup,
 And to the wood he wol, and wormes ete ;
 So newefangel ben they of hir mete,
 And loven noveltees of propre kind ;
 No gentillesse of blood ne may hem bind.

" So ferd this tercelet, alas the day !
 Though he were gentil borne, and fresh, and gay
 And goodly for to seen, and humble, and free,
 He saw upon a time a kite flee,
 And sodeynly he loved this kite so,
 That all his love is cleue fro me ago :
 And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise.
 Thus hath the kite my love in hire service,
 And I am lorn withouten remedy."

And with that word this faucon gan to cry,
 And swouneth eft in Canacee harme.
 Gret was the sorwe for that hankes harme,
 That Canace and all hire women made ;
 They n'isten how they might the faucon glade.
 But Canace hom bereth hire in hire lap,
 And softly in plastes gan hire wrap.
 Ther as she with hire bek had hurt hirselve.

Now cannot Canace but herbes delive
 Out of the ground, and maken salves newe
 Of herbes precious and fine of howe,
 To helen with this hawk ; fro day to night
 She doth hire businesse, and all hire might.
 And by hire beddes hod she made a mew,
 And covered it with velouettes blew,
 In signe of trouthe, that is in woman sene ;
 And all without the mew is painted grene,
 In which were painted all thise false fowles,
 As ben thise tidifes, tercelettes, and owles ;
 And pies, on hem for to cry and chide,
 Right for despit were painted hem beside.

Thus lete I Canace hire hawk keeping,
 I wol no more as now speke of hire ring,

To come oft to purpos for to sain,
 How that this faucon gat hire love again
 Repentant, as the story telleth us,
 By mediation of Camballus
 The kinges sone, of which that I yow told.
 But hencesforth I wol my processe hold
 To speke of aventures, and of batailles,
 That yet was never herd so gret mervailles.
 First wol I tellen you of Cambuscan,
 That is his time many a citee was;
 And after wol I speke of Algaris,
 How that he was Theodora to his wif,
 For whom ful oft in gret peril he was,
 He had he ben holpen by the hors of bras.
 And after wol I speke of Camballo,
 That fought in listes with the brethren two
 For Canace, er that he might hire winne,
 And ther I left I wol again beginne:

THE FRANKLEINES PROLOGUE

"In faith, Squier, thou hast thee wel yquit
 had gentilly, I praise wel thy wit,"
 Quod the Frankelein; "considering thin yowthe,
 to bekingly thou speakest, sire, I louche the
 as to my dome, ther is non that is here,
 Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,
 If that thou live; God yere thee goode chance,
 And in vertue send thee continuance,
 For of thy speking I have gret deintee.
 I have a sone, and by the Trinitee
 I were me lever than twenty pound worth lond,
 Though it right now were fallen in my hond,
 He were a man of swiche discrecion,
 In that ye ben: sic on possession,
 In that a man be vertuous withal.
 I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,
 For he to vertue listeth not to entend,
 But for to play at dis, and to dispend,
 And lese all that he hath, is his usage:
 And he had lever talken with a page,
 Than to communcie with any gentil wight,
 Ther he might lereen gentiltee a right."
 "Sore for your gentillesse," quod our Hoste.
 "What? Frankelein, parde, sire, wel thou wost,
 That eche of you mote tellen at the lest
 A tale or two, or broken his behest."
 "That know I wel, sire," quod the Frankelein,
 "I pray you haveth me not in disdein,
 Though I to this man speke a word or two."
 "Tell on thy tale, withouten wordes mo."
 "Gladly, sire Hoste," quod he, "I wol obey
 Unto your will; now herkeneth what I sey;
 I wol you not contrarien in no wise,
 As for as that my wittes may suffice.
 I pray to God that it may plesen you,
 Thus wet I wel that it is good ynow.
 "These olde gentil Bretons in hir dayes
 Of diverse aventures maden layes,
 Burewed in hir firste Breton tonge;
 Which layes with hir instruments they songe,
 Of dises reciden hem for hir plesance,
 And so of hem have I in remembrance,
 Which I shal sayn with good wille as I can.
 "But, sire, because I am a borel man,
 In my beginning first I yow besoeche
 How me excused of my rude speche.

I lerned never rhetorike certain;
 Thing that I speke, it mote be bare and plain.
 I slept never on the mount of Parnaso,
 Ne lerned Marcus Tollins Cicero.
 Colours ne know I non, withouten drede,
 But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
 Or elles swiche as men die with or peinte;
 Colours of rhetorike ben to me queinte;
 My spirit feleth not of swiche watere.
 But if you lust my tale shul ye here."

THE FRANKLEINES TALE.

In Armorique, that called is Bretaine,
 Ther was a knight, that loved and didd his peine
 To serve a ladie in his beste wise;
 And many'a labour, many a gret emprise
 He for his lady wrought, or she were woune;
 For she was on the fairest under Sonne,
 And eke therto comen of so high kiurede,
 That wel unnethe durst this knight for drede
 Tell hire his wo, his peine, and his distresse.
 But at the last, she for his worthinesse,
 And namely for his meke obeysance,
 Hath swiche a pitee caught of his penance,
 That prively she fell of his accord
 To take him for hire husband and hire lord;
 (Of swiche lordship as men han over hir wives)
 And, for to lede the more in blisse hir lives,
 Of his free will he swore hire as a knight,
 That never in all his lif he day ne night
 Ne shulde take upon him no maistrie
 Agains hire will, ne kithe hire jalousie,
 But hire obey, and folwe hire will in al,
 As any lover to his lady shal:
 Save that the name of soveraintee
 That wold he han for shame of his degree.
 She thonked him, and with ful gret humblesse
 She saide; "Sire, sin of your gentillesse
 Ye profren me to have so large a reine,
 Ne wolde God never betwix us tweine,
 As in my gilt, were either werre or strif:
 Sire, I wol be your humble trewe wif,
 Have here my trowth, till that myn herte breste."
 Thus ben they both in quiete and in reate.
 For o thing, sire, sauffy dare I seie,
 That frendes everich other must obie,
 If they wol louge holden compaignie.
 Love wol not be constrained by maistrie.
 When maistrie cometh, the God of love anon
 Beteth his winges, and farewell, he is gon.
 Love is a thing, as any spirit, free.
 Women of kind desiren libertee,
 And not to be constrained as a thral;
 And so don men, if sothly I say shal.
 Loke who that is most patient in love,
 He is at his avantage all above.
 Patience is an high vertue certain,
 For it venquisheth, as these clerkes sain,
 Things that rigour never shulde atteine.
 For every word men may not chide or pleine.
 Lerneth to suffer, or, so mote I gon,
 Ye shul it leine whether ye wol or non.
 For in this world certain no wight ther is,
 That he ne doth or sayth somtime amis.
 Ire, sikennesse, or constellation,
 Win, wo, or changing of complexion,
 Causeth ful oft to don amis or spoken:
 On every wrong a man may not be wroken.

After the time must be temperance
To every wight that can of governance,
And therefore hath this worthy wise knight
(To live in ease) suffrance hire behight;
And she to him ful wisely gan to swere,
That never shuld ther be default in here.

Here may men seen an humble wise accord:
Thus hath she take hire servant and hire lord,
Servant in love, and lord in marriage.
Than was he both in lordship and servage?
Servage? nay, but in lordship al above,
Sin he hath both his lady and his love:
His lady certes, and his wif also,
The which that law of love accordeth to.
And when he was in this prosperitee,
Home with his wif he goth to his contree,
Not fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling was,
Wher as he liveth in blisse and in solas.

Who coude tell, but he had wedded be,
The joye, the ease, and the prosperitee.
That is betwix an husband and his wif?
A yere and more lasteth this blissful lif,
Til that this knight, of which I spake of thus,
That of Cairrud was cleped Arrivagus,
Shope him to go and dwelle a yere or twaine
In Englelond, that cleped was eke Bretaigne,
To seke in armes worship and honour:
(For all his lust he set in swiche labour)
And dwelte ther two yere; the book saith thus.

Now wol I stint of this Arrivagus,
And speke I wol of Dorigene his wif,
That loveth hire husband as hire hertes lif.
For his absence wepeth she and siketh,
As don this noble wives when hem liketh;
She morneth, waketh, waiteth, fasteth, plaineth;
Desir of his presence hire so distraineth,
That all this wide world she set at nought.
Hire frendes, which that knew hire hevly thought,
Comforten hire in all that ever they may;
They prechen hire, they telle hire night and day,
That causeles she sleth hireself, alas!
And every comfort possible in this cas
They don to hire, with all hir businesse,
Al for to make hire leve hire hevinesse.

By processe, as ye knowen everich on,
Men mowe so longe graven in a ston,
Til som figure therin emprented be:
So long han they comforted hire, til she
Received hath, by hope and by reason,
The emprenting of hir consolation,
Thurgh which hire grete sorwe gan assuage;
She may not alway duren in swiche rage.
And eke Arrivagus, in all this care,
Hath sent his lettres home of his welfare,
And that he wol come hastily again,
Or elles had this sorwe hire herte slain.

Hire frendes saw hire sorwe gan to slake,
And preiden hire on knces for Goddes sake
To come and romen in hir compaignie,
Away to driven hire derke fantasie:
And finally she granted that request,
For wel she saw that it was for the best.

Now stood hire castel faste by the see,
And ofte with hire frendes walked she,
Hire to disporten on the bank an hire,
Wher as she many a ship and barge sie,
Sailing hir cours, wher as hem list to go.
But than was that a parcel of hire wo,
For to hireself ful oft, "Alas!" said she,
"Is ther no ship, of so many as I see,

Wol bringen home my lord? than were my hert
Al warished of his bitter poines umerte."

Another time wold she sit and thinke,
And cast her eyen downward fro the brake;
But when she saw the grisly rockes blake,
For veray fere so wold hire herte quake,
That on hire feet she might hire not sostene.
Than wold she sit adoun upon the grece,
And pitously into the see behold,
And say right thus, with careful sikis cold.

"Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveance
Ledest this world by certain governance,
In idel, as men sain, ye nothing make.
But, Lord, thise grisly fendly rockes blake,
That semen rather a foule confusoun
Of werk, than any faire creation
Of swiche a parfit wise God and stable,
Why han ye wrought this werk unreasonel?
For by this werk, north, south, ne west, ne est,
Ther n'is yfostred man, ne brid, ne best:
It doth no good, to my wit, but anyeth.
See ye not, Lord, how mankind it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodies of mankind
Han rockes slain, al be they not in mind;
Which mankind is so faire part of thy werk,
Thou madest it like to thyu owen merk.
Than, semeth it, ye had a gret chertee
Toward mankind; but how than may it be,
That ye swiche menes make it to destroyen?
Which menes don no good, but ever anyes."

"I wote wel, clerkes wol sain as hem les
By arguments, that all is for the best,
Though I ne can the causes nought yknow;
But thinke God that made the wind to blow,
As kepe my lord, this is my conclusion:
To clerkes lete I all disputous:
But wolde God, that all thise rockes blake
Were sonken into Helle for his sake.

These rockes slee min herte for the fere."
Thus wold she say with many a pitous tere.
Hire frendes saw that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort,
And shape hem for to plaien somwher elles.
They leden hire by rivers and by welles,
And eke in other places delitable;
They dancen and they play at ches and table.

So on a day, right in the morwe tide,
Unto a gardin that was ther beside,
In which that they had made hir ordinaunce
Of vitaille, and of other purveance,
They goo and plaie hem all the longe day:
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May had peynted with his softe shouthe
This gardin ful of leres and of floures:
And craft of mannes hond so curiously
Arrayed had this gardin trewely,
That never was ther gardin of swiche pris,
But if it were the veray Paradis.
The odour of floures, and the freshe sight,
Wold han ynakad any herte light
That ever was born, but if to gret sikenesse
Or to gret sorwe held it in distresse,
So ful it was of beautee and plesance.

And after dinner gonnen they to dance
And sing also, sauf Dorigene alone,
Which made alway hire complaint and hire
For she ne saw him on the dance go,
That was hire husband, and hire love also:
But natheles she must a time abide,
And with good hope let hire sorwe alide.

Upon this dance, amonges other men,
 Danced a squier before Dorigen,
 That fresher was and jolier of array,
 As to my dome, than is the mouth of May.
 He singeth, daunceth, passing any man,
 That is or was sin that the world began;
 Therwith he was, if men shuld him discrive,
 One of the bestes faying men on live,
 Yong, strong, and virtuous, and riche, and wise,
 And wel beloved, and holden in great pris.
 And shortly, if the soth I tellen shal,
 Daweing of this Dorigene at al,
 This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
 Which that cycled was Aurelius,
 Had loved hire best of any creature
 Two yere and more, as was his aventure:
 But never dorst he tell hire his grevance,
 Withooten cop be dranke all his penance.
 He was dispeired, nothing dorst he say,
 In his songes somewhat wold he wray
 In so, as in a general complaining;
 He said, he loved, and was beloved nothing,
 Of swiche matere made he many layes,
 Songs, complaints, roundels, virolayes;
 How that he dorste not his sorwe telle,
 But languisheth, as doth a furie in Helle;
 And eke he must, he said, as did Eoco
 For Narcissus, that dorst not tell hire wo.
 In other maner than ye here me say,
 He dorst he not to hire his wo bewray,
 In that paraventure sometime at dances,
 Ther yonge folk kепен hir observances,
 It may wel be he looked on hire face
 In swiche a wise, as man that azeth grace,
 But nothing wiste she of his entent.
 Kethelus it happed, or they thennes went,
 Because that he was hire neighbour,
 And was a man of worship and honour,
 And had yknowen him of time yore,
 They fell in speche, and forth ay more and more
 Unto his purpos drow Aurelius;
 And when he saw his time, he seide thus.
 "Madame," quod he, "by God that this world made,
 So that I wist it might your herte glade,
 I wold that day, that your Arviragus
 Went over see, that I Aurelius
 Had went ther I shuld never come again;
 For wel I wot my service is in vain,
 My gardon w'is but bresting of min herte.
 Madame, raeth upon my pones smerte,
 For with a word ye may me sleen or save.
 Here at your feet God wold that I were grave.
 I se here as now no leiser more to sey:
 Have mercy, swete, or ye wot do me dey."
 He gas to loke upon Aurelius;
 "Is this your will," quod she, "and say ye thus?
 Kever erst," quod she, "ne wist I what ye ment:
 But now, Aurelie, I know your entent.
 By d'like God that yaf me soule and lif,
 He shal I never ben an outwawe wif
 In word ne werk, as far as I have wit,
 I od ben his to whom that I am knit:
 Take this for final answer as of me."
 He after that in play thus aside she.
 "Aurelie," quod she, "by high God above
 Yet wil I graunten you to ben your love,
 (So I you see so pitously complain)
 Take, what day that endeleng Britaigne
 Ye remne all the rockes, ston by ston,
 That they se litten ship us bote to gun,

I say, when ye han made the cost so elece
 Of rockes, that ther n'is no ston ysece,
 Than wol I love you best of any man,
 Have here my trowth, in all that ever I can;
 For wel I wote that it shal never betide.
 Let swiche folie out of your herte glide.
 What deintee shuld a man have in his lif
 For to go love another mannes wif,
 That hath hire body when that he this liketh?"
 Aurelius ful often sore siketh;
 "Is ther non other grace in you?" quod he.
 "No, by that Lord," quod she, "that maked me."
 Wo was Aurelie when that he this herd,
 And with a soeweful herte he thus answered.
 "Madame," quod he, "this were an impossible.
 Than moste I die of soden deth horrible."
 And with that word he turned him anon.
 Tho come hire other frendes many on,
 And in the alleyes romed up and down,
 And nothing wist of this conclusioun.
 But sodenly begounen revel newe,
 Til that the brighte Sonne had lost his hewe,
 For the orizont had left the Sonne his light;
 (This is as much to sayn as it was night)
 And bome they gon in mirthe and in solas;
 Sauf only wrecche Aurelius, alas!
 He to his hous is gon with sorweful herts.
 He saith, he may not from his deth asterte,
 Him semeth, that he felt his herte cok.
 Up to the Heven his boundes gon he hold,
 And on his knees bare he set him douz,
 And in his raving said his orisoun.
 For veray wo out of his wit he braide,
 He n'iste what he spake, but thus he saide;
 With pitous herte his plaint hath he begonne
 Unto the goddess, and first unto the Sonne.
 He said; "Apollo, god and governour
 Of every plants, herbe, tree, and flour,
 That yevest after thy declination
 To eche of hem his time and his season,
 As that thin herbergh changeth low and high;
 Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable eie
 On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorne.
 Lo, lord, my lady hath my doth ysworne
 Withooten gilt, but thy benignitee
 Upon my dedly herte have sou pitie.
 For wel I wot, lord Phebus, if you leest,
 Ye may me helpen, sauf my lady, best,
 Now voucheth sauf, that I may you devise
 How that I may be holpe and in what wise.
 "Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
 That of the see is chief goddess and queene,
 Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
 Yet emperice aboven him is she:
 Ye knowe wel, lord, that right as hire desire
 Is to be quiked and lighted of your fire,
 For which she feloweth you ful besily,
 Right so the see desirith naturelly
 To folwen hire, as she that is goddess
 Both in the see and rivers more and lesse.
 Wherefore, lord Phebus, this is my request,
 Do this miracle, or do min herte brest;
 That now next at this oppositioun,
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leon,
 As preyeth hire so gret a flood to bring,
 That five fadome at the lest it overspring
 The highest rock end in Armorike Britaigne,
 And let this flood endure yeres twaine:
 Than certes to my lady may I say,
 Holdeth your best, the rockes ben away.

Lord Phebus, this miracle doth for me,
 Prey hire she go no faster cours than ye;
 I say this, preyeth your suster that she go
 No faster cours than ye thise yeres two:
 Than shal she ben even at ful alway,
 And spring-flood lasten bothe night and day.
 And but she vouchesauf in swiche manere
 To graunten me my soveraine lady dere,
 Prey hire to sinken every rock adoun
 Into hire owen derke region
 Under the ground, they Pluto dwalleth in,
 Or nevermo shal I my lady win.

"Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke.
 Lord Phebus, see the tares on my cheke,
 And on my peine have som compassion."
 And with that word, in sorwe he fell adoun,
 And longe time he lay forth in a trance.
 His brother, which that knew of his penance,
 Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought.
 Despised in this tarment and this thought
 Let I this woful creature be,
 Chese he for me whether he wol live or die.

Arviragus with hele and gret honour
 (As he that was of chevalrie the flour)
 Is comen home, and other worthy men:
 O, blisful art thou now, thou Dorigen,
 That hast thy lusty husband in this armes,
 The freshe knight, the worthy man of armes,
 That loveth thee, as his owen hertes lif:
 Nothing list him to be imaginatif,
 If any wight had spoke, while he was out,
 To hire of love; he had of that no doute;
 He not endenteth to no swiche matere,
 But danceth, justeth, and maketh mery chere.
 And thus in joye and blime I let hem dwell,
 And of the sike Aurelius wol I tell.

In langour and in turment furious
 Two yere and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
 Er any foot on erthe he mighte gon;
 Ne comfort in this time he had no non,
 Sauf of his brother, which that was a clerk.
 He knew of all this wo and all this werk;
 For to non other creature certain
 Of this matere he dowte no word sein;
 Under his brest he bare it more secree,
 Than ever did Pamphilus for Galathee.
 His brest was hole withouten for to seen,
 But in his herte ay was the arwe kene,
 And wel ye knowe that of a surmoure
 In surgerie is perikous the cure,
 But men might touch the arwe or come therby.

His brother wepeth and waileth prively,
 Til at the last him fell in remembrance,
 That while he was at Orleans in France,
 As yonge clerkes, that ben likerous
 To redeu artes that ben curiours,
 Seken in every halke and every berne
 Particular sciencas for to lerne,
 He him remembered, that upon a day
 At Orleans in studie a book he say
 Of magike nature, which his fellow,
 That was that time a bachelor of law,
 Al were he ther to lerne another craft,
 Had prively upon his desk ylaft;
 Which book spake moche of operations
 Touching the eight and twenty mansions
 That loogen to the Moone, and swiche folie
 As in our dayes n'is not worth a fle!
 For holy cherches feith, in our beleva,
 Ne suffreth non illusion us to greva.

And whan this book was in his remembrance,
 Anou for joye his herte gan to dance,
 And to himself he saied prively;
 "My brother shal be warished bastily:
 For I am siker that ther be sciencas,
 By which men maken divers apparencas,
 Swiche as thise subtil tregetoures play.
 For oft at festes have I wel herd say,
 That tregetoures, within an halle large,
 Have made come in a water and a barge,
 And in the halle rowen up and doun.
 Somtime hath semed come a grim leon,
 And somtime floures spring as in a mede,
 Somtime a vine, and grapes white and rede,
 Somtime a castel al of lime and stou,
 And whan hem liketh voideth it anon:
 Thus semeth it to every mannes sight.

"Now than conclude I thus, if that I might
 At Orleans som olde felaw find,
 That hath thise Moones mansions in miad,
 Or other magike naturel above,
 He shuld wel make my brother have his lowe
 For with an apparence a clerk may make
 To mannes sight, that all the rockes blake
 Of Bretaigue were voided everich on,
 And shippes by the brinke comen and gon,
 And in swiche forme endure a day or two:
 Than were my brother warished of his wo,
 Than must she nedes holden hire behest,
 Or elles he shal shame hire at the lest."

What shuld I make a longer tale of this!
 Unto his brothers bed he comen is,
 And swiche comfort he gaf him, for to gon
 To Orleans, that he up stert anon,
 And on his way forthward than is he fare,
 In hope for to ben liased of his care.

Whan they were come almost to that cite,
 But if it were a two furlong or three,
 A yonge clerk rozing by himself they mette,
 Which that in Latine thriffully hem grette.
 And after that he sayd a wonder thing;
 "I know," quod he, "the cause of your comyng
 And or they further any foote went,
 He told hem all that was in hir entent.

This Breton clerk him axed of felawes,
 The which he had yknowen in olde dawes,
 And he answered him that they dede were,
 For which he wept ful often many a tere.

Doun of his hors Aurelius light anon,
 And forth with this magicien is gon
 Home to his hous, and made hem wel at ease:
 Hem lacked no vitaille that might hem please.
 So wel arraied hous as ther was on,
 Aurelius in his lif saw never non.

He shewed him, or they went to nouperes,
 Forestes, parkes ful of wilde dera.
 Ther saw he hartes with hir hornes hie,
 The grettest that were ever seen with cie.
 He saw of hem an hundred slain with hoodes
 And non with arwes blode of bitter woundes.
 He saw, whan voided were the wilde dera,
 Thise fauconers upon a faire rivere,
 That with hir haukes ban the beron slain.

Tho saw he knightes justen in a plain.
 And after this he did him swiche plesance,
 That he him shewed his lady on a dance,
 On which himselfen denced, as him thought.
 And whan this maister, that this magike wroug
 Saw it was time, he clapped his hoodes two,
 And farewel, al the revel is ago.

And yet remood they never out of the hoos,
 While they saw all faise sightes merveillous;
 Bet in his studie, ther his bookes be,
 They ston still, and no wight but they three.
 To him this maister called his squier,
 And sayd him thus, "May we go to souper?
 Almost an hoore it is, I undertake,
 So I you bede our souper for to make,
 Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
 Into my studie, ther my bookes be."
 "Sire," quod this squier, "whan it liketh you,
 It is al redy, though ye wol right now."
 "Go we than souper," quod he, "as for the best,
 This amorous folk sometime mooste han rest."
 At after souper fell they in tretes
 What summe shuld this maisters gerdoun be,
 To reuue all the rockes of Breitaigne,
 And ete from Gerouande to the mouth of Saine.
 He made it strange, and swore, so God him save,
 Lesse than a thousand pound he wold not have,
 He gladly for that summe he wold not gon.
 Aurelius with blisful herte anon
 Answered thus; "Eie on a thousand pound:
 This wide world, which that men sayis is round,
 I wold it yere, if I were lord of it.
 This bargaine is ful-drive, for we ben knit;
 Ye shul be paid trewely by my touth.
 The blak, for non negligence or slouth,
 Retare us here no longer than to morwe." (borwe."
 "Nay," quod this clerk, "have here my faith to
 The god is gon Aurelius whan him lest,
 And wel might all that night he had his rest.
 That for his labour, and his hope of blisse,
 His woful herte of penance had a fissa.
 Upon the morwe whan that it was day,
 Breitaigne token they the righte way,
 Aurelie, and this magician him beside,
 And ben descended ther they wold abide:
 And this was, as the bookes me remember,
 The colde frosty season of December.
 Phebus wasse old, and hewed like laton,
 That in his hote declination
 Wasse as the burned gold, with strames bright;
 And now in Capricorne adoun he light,
 Ther as he shone ful pale, I dare wel sain.
 The bitter frostes with the sleet and rain
 Destroyed han the grene in every yerd.
 The fowles sit by the fire with double berd,
 And driaketh of his bugle horn the wine;
 And han stant braunce of the tasked swine,
 And "Nowel" crieth every lusty man.
 Aurelius in all that ever he can,
 Cometh to his maister chere and reverence,
 And praieth him to don his diligence
 And bringen him out of his paines smerte,
 With a swerd that he wold slit his herte.
 This colde clerk swiche rooth hath on this man,
 That night and day he spedeth him, that he can,
 And win a time of his conclusion;
 And he is to sayn, to make illusion,
 To swiche an apparence or joglerie,
 (As no termes of astrologie)
 That she and every wight shuld wene and say,
 That of Breitaigne the rockes were away,
 And elles they were sooken under ground.
 And the last he hath his time yfound
 To make his japes and his wretchednesse
 Swiche a superstitious cursednesse.
 And tables Tolcaines forth he brought
 And wel corrected, that ther lacked nought,

Nother his collect, ne his expans yeres,
 Nother his rotes, ne his other geres,
 As ben his centres, and his argumentes,
 And his proportionel convenientes
 For his equations in every thing.
 And by his eighte speres in his working,
 He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was above
 Fro the hed of thilke fix Aries above,
 That in the ninthe spere considered is.
 For sotilly he calculated all this.
 Whan he had found his firste mansion,
 He knew the remenant by proportion;
 And knew the rising of his Moone wel,
 And in wboos face, and terme, and every del;
 And knew ful wel the Moones mansion
 Accordant to his operation;
 And knew also his other observances,
 For swiche illusions and swiche meschances,
 As hethen folk used in thilke daies.
 For which no lenger maketh he delaies,
 But thurgh his magiks, for a day or tway,
 It semed all the rockes were away.
 Aurelius, which that despoired is,
 Whether he shal han his love, or fare amis,
 Awaiteth night and day on this miracle:
 And whan he knew that ther was non obstacle,
 That voided were thise rockes everich ou,
 Down to his maisters feet he fell anon,
 And sayd; "I woful wretch Aurelius,
 Thanke you, my lord, and lady min Venne,
 That me han holpen fro my cares cold."
 And to the temple his way forth hath he hold,
 Theras he knew he shuld his lady see.
 And whan he saw his time, anon right he
 With dredful herte and with ful humble chere
 Salued hath his sovaine lady dere.
 "My rightful lady," quod this woful man,
 "Whom I most drede, and love, as I bert can,
 And lothest were of all this world displese,
 N'ere it that I for you have swiche disce,
 That I must die here at your foot azun,
 Nought wold I tell how me is wo begun.
 But certes other muet I die or plaine;
 Ye sie me gilteles for veray peine.
 But of my deth though that ye han no rooth,
 Aviseth you, or that ye breke your touth:
 Repenteth you for thilke God above,
 Or ye me sie, because that I you love.
 For, madame, wel ye wote what ye have hight;
 Not that I chalenge any thing of right
 Of you, my sovaine lady, but of grace;
 But in a gardin yond, in swiche a place,
 Ye wote right wel what ye beligheten me,
 And in myn hond your trouthe pligheten ye,
 To love me best; God wote ye said so,
 Although that I unworthy be therto;
 Madame, I speke it for the honour of you,
 More than to save my hertes lif right now:
 I have don so as ye commanded me,
 And if ye vouchesauf, ye may go see.
 Doth as you list, have your behest in mind,
 For quick or ded, right ther ye shul me find:
 In you lith all to do me live or dey,
 But wel I wote the rockes bea away."
 He taketh his love, and she astonied stood;
 In al hire face n'as o drope of blood:
 She wened never han come in swiche a trappe.
 "Alas!" quod she, "that ever this shuld happe!
 For wend I never by possibilitie,
 That swiche a monstro or merveille might be;

It is again the process of nature."
 And home she goth a sorowful creature,
 For veray fere unnethees may she go.
 She wepeth, waiteth all a day or two,
 And swooneth, that it routhe was to see:
 But why it was, to no wight tolde she,
 For out of town was gon Arrivagus.
 But to hirself she spake, and saied thus,
 With face pale, and with ful sory chere,
 In hire complaint, as ye shul after here.

"Alas!" quod she, "on thee, Fortone, I plain,
 That unware hast me wrapped in thy chain:
 Fro which to escapen, wote I no socour,
 Sauf only deth, or elles dishonour:
 On of thisse two beboveth me to chese.
 But natheles, yet had I lever lese
 My lif, than of my body have a shame,
 Or know myselfe false, or lese my name;
 And with my deth I may be quit ywis.
 Hath ther not many a noble wif or this,
 And many a maid ylaine hireself, alas!
 Rather than with hire body don trespas?
 Yes certes; lo, thisse stories bere witnessse.

"When thirty tyrants ful of cursednesse
 Had slain Phidoo in Athens at the fest,
 They commanded his doughtren for to arrest,
 And bringen hem before hem in despit
 Al naked, to fulfill hir foule delit;
 And in hir fadres blood they made hem dance
 Upon the pavement, God yve hem menchance.
 For which thisse woful maidens ful of drede,
 Rather than they wold lese hir maidenhede,
 They prively ben stert into a welle,
 And drent hemselven, as the bookes telle.

"They of Messene let esquire and seke
 Of Lacedonie fifty maidens eke,
 On which they wolden don hir lecherie:
 But ther was non of all that compaignie
 That she n'as slaine, and with a glad entent
 Chees rather for to dien, than assent
 To ben oppressed of hire maidenhede.
 Why shuld I than to dien ben in drede?"

"Lo eke the tyrant Aristocleides,
 That loved a maid hight Stimpthalides,
 Whan that hire father slaine was on a night,
 Unto Dianes temple goth she right,
 And hente the image in hire handes two,
 Fro which image wold she never go,
 No wight hire handes might of it arrace,
 Til she was slaine right in the selve place.

"Now sin that maidens hadden swiche despit
 To be defouled with mannes foule delit,
 Wel ought a wif rather hemselven sle,
 Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.

"What shal I sayn of Hasmubales wif,
 That at Cartage beraft hireself hire lif?
 For whan she saw that Romains wan the town,
 She toke hire children all, and skipt adoun
 Into the fire, and chees rather to die,
 Than any Romain did hire vilane.

"Hath not Lucrece ylaine hireself, alas!
 At Rome, whan that she oppressed was
 Of Tarquise? for hire thought it was a shame
 To liven, whan she hadde lost hire name.

"The seven maidens of Milecie also
 Han slaine hemself for veray drede and wo,
 Rather than folk of Gaule hem shuld oppresse.

"Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
 Coude I now tell us touching this matere.

"Whan Abradate was slain, his wif so dere

Hirselven slow, and let hire blood to glide
 In Abradates woundes, depe and wide,
 And sayd, my body at the lestis way
 Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.

"What shuld I mo ensamples hereof sein!
 Sin that so many han hemselven slain
 Wel rather than they wold defouled be,
 I wol conclude that it is bet for me
 To sle myself than be defouled thus.
 I wol be trewe unto Arrivagus,
 Or elles sle myself in some manere,
 As did Demoticoes daughter dere,
 Because she wolde not defouled be.

"O Sodalus, it is ful gret pitee
 To reden how thy doughtren died, alas!
 That slowe hemselven for swiche maner cas.

"As gret a pitee was it or wel more,
 The Theban maiden, that for Nichanore
 Hirselven slow, right for swiche manere wo.
 Another Theban mayden did right so,
 For on of Macedoines had hire oppressed,
 She with hire deth hire maidenhed redressed.

"What shal I sein of Niceratos wif,
 That for swiche cas beraft hireself hire lif?"

"How trewe was eke to Alcibiades
 His love, that for to dien rather chees,
 Than for to suffre his body unburiesed?"

"Lo, which a wif was Alceste eke?" (quod she)
 "What sayth Homere of good Penelope!
 All Greece knoweth of hire chastitee.

"Parde of Laodonia is writen thus,
 That whan at Troye was slain Protechian,
 No lenger wolde she live after his day.

"The same of noble Portia tell I may;
 Withoute Brutus coude she not live,
 To whom she had all hol hire herte yve.

"The perfit wifhood of Artemisio
 Honoured is thurghout all Barbarie.

"O Teuta queene, thy wifly chastitee
 To alle wives may a mirour be."

Thus plaind Dorigene a day or twey,
 Purposing ever that she wolde dey;
 But natheles upon the thirde night
 Home came Arrivagus, the worthy knight,
 And axed hire why that she weep so sore:
 And she gan wepen ever lenger the more.

"Alas," quod she, "that ever I was yborn
 Thus have I said," (quod she) "thus have I sworn
 And told him all, as ye have herd before:
 It nodeth not reherse it you no more.

This husband with glad chere in frendly wise
 Answerd and sayd, as I shal you devise.

"Is ther ought elles, Dorigene, but this?"

"Nay, nay," quod she, "God helpe me, all
 This is to much, and it were Goddes will."

"Ye, wif," quod he, "let slegen that is all
 It may be wel paraventure yet to-day.
 Ye shal your trouthe holden by my fay.

For God so wisly have mercy on me,
 I had wel lever stiked for to be,
 For veray love which that I to you have,
 But if ye shuld your trouthe kepe and save.
 Trouthe is the best thing that man may kepe"
 But with that word be breast anon to wepe,
 And sayd; "I you forbeode on peine of deth,
 That never while you lasteth lif or breth,
 To no wight tell ye this misaventure.
 As I may best I wol my wo endure.
 Ne make no contenance of hevynesse,
 That folk of you may demen harme or gress."

And forth he cleped a squier and a maid,
 "Goth forth anon with Dorigene," he said,
 "And bringeth hire to swiche a place anon."
 They take hir leve, and on hir way they gon:
 But they ne wisten why she thider went,
 She n'olde no wight tellen hire entent.
 This squier, which that highte Aurelius,
 On Dorigene that was so amorous,
 Of aventure happed hire to mete
 Amid the toun, right in the quikkest strete,
 As she was bound to go the way forthright
 Toward the gardin, ther as she had hight.
 And he was to the gardinward also;
 For wel he spied whan she wolde go
 Out of hire hoo, to any maner place;
 But thos they met of aventure or grace,
 And he salued hire with glad entent,
 And axeth of hire whiderward she went.
 And she answered, half as she were mad,
 "Unto the gardin, as myn husband bad,
 My trouthe for to hold, alas! alas!"
 Aurelius gan wondrous on this cas,
 And in his berte had gret compassion
 Of hire, and of hire lamentation,
 And of Arviragus the worthy knight,
 That bad hire holden all that she had hight,
 So loth him was his wif shuld breke hire trouthe.
 And in his berte he caught of it gret routhe,
 And in his berte he caught of it gret routhe,
 Considering the best on every side,
 That fro his lust yet were him lever abide,
 Than do so high a cherlish wretchednesse
 Agines franchise, and alle gentillesse;
 For which in fewe wordes sayd he thus,
 "Madame, say to your lord Arviragus,
 That in I see the grette gentillesse
 Of him, and eke I see wel your distresse, [routhe]
 That him were lever have shame (and that were
 Than ye to me shuld breken thus your trouthe,
 I hadde wel lever ever to suffren wo,
 Than to depart the love betwix you two,
 I noo releas, madame, into your hound
 On every seourment and every bond,
 That ye has made to me, as heretofore,
 So thilke time that ye were yborne.
 Bese here my trouthe, I shal you never repreve
 Of so behest, and here I take my leve,
 As of the trewest and the beste wif,
 That ever yet I knew in all my lif."
 But every wif beware of hire behest;
 On Dorigene remembreth at the lest.
 Thus cas a squier don a gentil dede,
 As wel as cas a knight, withouten drede.
 She thanketh him upon hire knees here,
 And come unto hire husband is she fare,
 And told him all, as ye han herd me sayd:
 And, trusteth me, he was so wel sayyd,
 That it were impossible me to write.
 What shuld I lenger of this cas endite?
 Arviragus and Dorigene his wif
 In souverain blisse leden forth hir lif,
 Neer of ne was ther anger hem betwene;
 He cherished hire as though she were a queene,
 And she was to him trewe for evermore:
 Of thisse two folk ye get of me no more.
 Aurelius, that his cost hath all forlorne,
 Careth the time, that ever he was borne.
 "Alas!" quod he, "alas that I beight
 Of pure gold a thousand pound of wight
 Unto this philosophere! how shal I do?
 I see no more, but that I am fordo."

Min heritage mote I nedes sell,
 And ben a begger, here I n'll not dwell,
 And shamen all my kinrede in this place,
 But I of him may geten better grace.
 But natheles I wol of him assay
 At certain daies yere by yere to pay,
 And thanke him of his grette curtesie.
 My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol not lie."
 With herte sore he goth unto his cofre,
 And brougte gold unto this philosophere,
 The value of five hundred pound I gesse,
 And him beseceth of his gentillesse
 To graunt him daies of the remenaunt,
 And sayde; "Maister, I dare wel make avaunt,
 I failed never of my trouthe as yet.
 For sikerly my dette shal be quit
 Towardes you, how so that ever I fare
 To gon a begging in my kirtle bare:
 But wold ye vouchen sauf upon seurtice
 Two yere or three for to respiten me,
 Than were I wel, for elles mote I sell
 Min heritage, ther is no more to tell."

This philosophere sobrelly answered,
 And said thus, whan he thise wordes herd;
 "Have I not holden covenant to thee?"
 "Yea certes, wel and trewely," quod he.
 "Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liketh?"
 "No, no," quod he, and sorwefully be siketh.
 "What was the cause? tell me if thou can."
 Aurelius his tale anon began,
 And told him all as ye han herd before,
 It nedeth not reberse it any more.
 He sayd, "Arviragus of gentillesse
 Had lever die in sorwe and in distresse,
 Than that his wif were of hire trouthe fals."
 The sorwe of Dorigene he told him als,
 How loth hire was to ben a wicked wif,
 And that she lever had lost that day hire lif;
 And that her trouthe she swore thurgh innocence;
 She never crat hadde herd speke of apparence:
 "That made me han of hire so gret pitee,
 And right as freely as he sent hire to me,
 As freely sent I hire to him again:
 This is all and sum, ther a's no more to saie."
 The philosophere answered; "Love brother,
 Everich of you did gentilly to othar;
 Thou art a squier, and he is a knight,
 But God forbede for his blisful might,
 But if a clerk coud don a gentil dede
 As wel as any of-you, it is no drede.

"Sire, I releas thee thy thousand pound,
 As thou right now were croupe out of the ground,
 Ne never er now ne haddest known me.
 For, sire, I wol not take a peny of thee
 For all my craft, ne nought for my travail:
 Thou hast ypaid wel for my vitaille.
 It is ynough, and farewel, have good day."
 And toke his hors, and forth he goth his way.
 Lordings, this question wold I axen now,
 Which was the moete free, as thinketh you?
 Now telleth me, or that ye further wende.
 I can no more, my tale is at an ende.

THE DOCTOURES PROLOGUE.

"Yea, let that passen," quod our Hoste, "as now.
 "Sire Doctour of Physike, I prey you,
 Tell us a tale of som honest matere."
 "It shal be don, if that ye wol it here,"

Said this Doctour, and his tale began anon.
 " Now, good men," quod he, " herketh everich
 on."

THE DOCTOURES TALE.

There was, as telleth Titus Livius,
 A knight, that cleped was Virginius,
 Fulfilled of honour and worthynesse,
 And strong of frendes, and of gret richesse.

This knight a daughter hadde by his wif:
 No children had he mo in all his lif.
 Faire was this maid in excellent beante
 Aboven every wight that man may see:
 For Nature hath with souverain diligence
 Yformed hire in so gret excellence,
 As though she wolde sayn, " Lo, I Nature,
 Thus can I forme and peint a creature,
 What that me list; who can me contrefete?
 Pigmalion? not, though he ay forge and bete,
 Or grave, or peinte: for I dare wel sein,
 Apelles, Keuxis, shulden werche in vain,
 Oþer to grave, or peinte, or forge, or bete,
 If they persumed me to contrefete.
 For he that is the former principal,
 Hath makid me his vicairie general
 To forme and peinten erþly creatures
 Right as me list, and eche thing in my cure is
 Under the Moone, that may wan and waxe.
 And for my werk right nothing wol I axe;
 My lord and I ben ful of on accord.
 I made hire to the worship of my lord;
 So do I all min other creatures,
 What colour that they han, or what figures."
 Thus semeth me that Nature wolde say.

This maid of age twelf yere was and tway,
 In which that Nature hadde swiche delit.
 For right as she can peint a lily whit
 And red a rose, right with swiche peinture
 She peinted hath this noble creature
 Er she was borne, upon hire limmes free,
 Whereas by right swiche colours shulden be:
 And Phebus died hath hire tresses grete,
 Like to the stremes of his burned hete,
 And if that excellent were hire beautee,
 A thousand fold more vertuous was she.
 In hire ne lacked no condition,
 That is to praise, as by discretion,
 As wel in gost as body, chast was she;
 For which she flourid in virginitee,
 With all humilitee and abstinence,
 With all attemptance and patience,
 With mesure eke, of bering and array.
 Discrete she was in answering alway.
 Though she were wise as Pallas, dare I sein,
 Hire facounde eke ful womanly and plain,
 No contrefeted termes hadde she
 To semen wise; but after hire degree
 She spake, and all hire wordes more and lesse
 Sonning in vertue and in gentillesse.
 Shamefast she was in maidens shamefastnesse,
 Constant in herte, and ever in businessse
 To drive hire out of idel slogardie:
 Bacchus had of hire mouth right no maintrie.
 For wise and youthe don Venus excrete,
 As men in fire wol casten oile and grece,
 And of hire owen vertue unconstrained,
 She hath hireself ful often sike yfained,

For that she wolde fleeen the compaignie,
 Where likely was to trefen of folie,
 As is at festes, at revels, and at dances,
 That ben occasions of diliances.
 Swiche thinges maken childrea for to be
 To some ripe and bold, as men may see,
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore;
 For al to some may she lerne lore
 Of boldnesse, when she woken is a wif.

And ye maistresses in your olde lif,
 That lordes daughters han in governance,
 Ne taketh of my wordes displeasance:
 Thinketh that ye ben set in governours
 Of lordes daughters, only for two thinges
 Oþer for ye han kept your honestee,
 Or elles for ye han fallen in freetee,
 And knownen wel yough the olde dance,
 And han forsaken fully swiche meschaunce
 For evermo: therfore for Cristes sake
 To teche ham vertue luke that ye ne slake.

A thief of venison, that hath forlauft,
 His likerounnesse, and all his olde craft,
 Can kepe a forest best of any man:
 Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol ye can.
 Loke wel, that ye unto no vice assent,
 Lest ye be damned for your wikke entent,
 For who so doth, a traytour is certain:
 And taketh kepe of that I shall you sein;
 Of alle tresoun souveraine pestilence
 Is, when a wight betrayeth innocence.

Ye fathers, and ye mothers eke also,
 Though ye han children, be it on or mo,
 Your is the charge of all hir surveiance,
 While that they ben under your governance.
 Both ware, that by ensample of your living,
 Or by your negligence in chastising,
 That they ne perish: for I dare wel saye,
 If that they doo, ye shul it dere abeye.
 Under a shepherd soft and negligent,
 The wolf hath many a shepe and lamb to-cent.
 Sufficeth this ensample now as here,
 For I mote turne agen to my matere.

This maid, of which I tell my tale expresse,
 She kept hireself, hire neded no maistresse;
 For in hire living maidens mighten rede,
 As in a book, every good word and dede,
 That longeth to a maiden vertuous:
 She was so prudent and so bountuous.
 For which the fame out sprong on every side
 Both of hire beautee and hire bountee wide;
 That thurgh the lord they praised hire ech oon,
 That loved vertue, sans envie alone,
 That sory is of other mannes wele,
 And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele.
 The Doctour maketh this descriptioun.

This maiden on a day went in the toon
 Toward a temple, with hire mother dere,
 As is of yonge maidens the manere.
 Now was ther than a justice in that toon,
 That governour was of that regoun:
 And so befell, this juge his eyen cast
 Upon this maid, avisng hire ful fast,
 As she came forth by ther this juge stood:
 Anon his herte changed and his mood,
 So was he caught with beautee of this maid,
 And to himself ful prively he said,
 " This maiden shal be min for any man."

Anon the fend into his herte ran,
 And taught him sodely, that he by sleight
 This maiden to his purpos winnen might.

For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
 Him thought he was not able for to spede;
 For she was strong of frendes, and eke she
 Understode was in swiche sovaine boundes,
 That wel he wist he might hire never winne,
 As for to make hire with hire body sinne.
 For which with gret deliberacioun
 He sent after a cherl was in the toun,
 The which he knew for sotil and for bold.
 This jage unto this cherl his tale hath told
 In secree wise, and made him to ensue,
 He sholde tell it to no creature,
 And if he did, he sholde lese his bedde.
 And when answered was this cursed rede,
 God was the jage, and maketh him gret chere,
 And gaf him yestes precious and dere.

Was shapen was all hir conspiracie
 To point to point, how that his lecherie
 Performed sholde be ful sotilly,
 As ye shal here it after openly,
 Thus goth this cherl, that highte Claudius,
 This false jage, that highte Appius,
 So was his name, for it is no fable,
 But knowne for an historical thing notable;
 The sentence of it woth is out of doute)
 This false jage goth now fast aboute
 He listen his delit all that he may.
 And so befell, some after on a day
 This false jage, as telleth us the storie,
 As he was went, sat in his consistorie,
 And gaf his domes upon sondry cas;
 This false cherl came forth a ful gret pas,
 And saide; "Lord, if that it be your will,
 Do deth me right upon this pitous bill,
 In which I plaine upon Virginieus.
 And if that he wol sayn it is not thus,
 I wol it prove, and finden good witnessse,
 That woth is that my bille wol expresse."
 The jage answered, "Of this in his absence
 I may not yeve defaultif sentence.
 But den him call, and I wol gladly here;
 Thus shalt have right, and no wrong as now here."

Virginieus came to wete the juges will,
 And right anon was red this cursed bill;
 The sentence of it was as ye shal here.
 "To you, my lord sire Appius so dere,
 Beweth your poore servant Claudius,
 How that a knight called Virginieus,
 Again the lawe, again all equitee,
 Holdeth, expresse again the will of me,
 My servant, which that is my thral by right,
 Which from min hous was stolen on a night.
 Whiche that she was ful yong, I wol it prove
 By witnessse, lord, so that it you not greve;
 She is his daughter nought, what so he may.
 Wherefore to you, my lord the juges, I pray;
 Wode me my thral, if that it be your will."
 So, this was all the sentence of his bill.

Virginieus gas upon the cherl behold;
 But hastily, er he his tale told,
 And wold han proved it, as sholde a knight,
 And eke by witnessse of many a wight,
 That all was false, that said his adversary,
 This cursed jage wode nothing tary,
 He bare a word more of Virginieus,
 But yave his judgement, and saide thus.

"I deme anon this cherl his servant have;
 Thou shalt no leger in this hous hire save.
 Go bring hire forth, and put hire in our ward.
 The cherl shal have his thral; this I award."

And when this worthy knight Virginieus,
 Thurgh sentence of this justice Appius,
 Muste by force his dere daughter yeven
 Unto the jage, in lecherie to liven,
 He goth him home, and set him in his hall,
 And let anon his dere daughter call:
 And with a face ded as ashen cold,
 Upon hire humble face he gan behold,
 With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his herte,
 Al wold he from his purpos not convertre.
 "Doughter," quod he, "Virginieus by thy name,
 Ther ben two waies, other deth or shame,
 That thou must suffre, alas that I was bore!
 For never thou deservodest wherefore
 To dien with a sword or with a knif.
 O dere doughter, ender of my lif,
 Which I have fostred up with swiche plesance,
 That thou were never out of my remembrance;
 O doughter, which that art my laste wo,
 And in my lif my laste joye also,
 O gemme of chastitee, in patience
 Take thou thy deth, for this is my sentence;
 For love and not for hate thou must be ded,
 My pitous hond must smiten of thin hed.
 Alas that ever Appius thee say!
 Thus hath he falsely juged thee to-day."
 And told hire all the cas, as ye before
 Han herd, it nedeth not to tell it more.

"O mercy, dere father," quod this maid,
 And with that word she both hire armes laid
 About his necke, as she was wont to do,
 (The teres brast out of hire eyeen two),
 And said, "O goode father, shal I die?
 Is ther no grace? is ther no remedie?"
 "No certes, dere doughter min," quod he,
 "Than yeve me leiser, father min," quod she,
 "My deth for to complaine a litel space."
 For parde Jepts yave his doughter grace
 For to complaine, or he hire slow, alas!
 And God it wot, nothing was hire trespass,
 But for she ran hire father first to see,
 To welcome him with gret solemnittee."
 And with that word she fell aswoun anon,
 And after, when hire swouning was agon,
 She riseth up, and to hire father said:
 "Blessed be God, that I shall die a maid.
 Yeve me my deth, or that I have a shame.
 Doth with your child your wille a goddes name."
 And with that word she praised him ful oft,
 That with his sword he wode smite hire soft;
 And with that word, aswoun again she fell,
 Hire father, with ful sorowful herte and will,
 Hire hed of smote, and by the top it hent,
 And to the jage he gan it to present,
 As he sat yet in dome in consistorie.

And when the jage it saw, as saith the storie,
 He had to take him, and anhung him fast.
 But right anon a thousand peple in thraut
 To save the knight, for routh and for pitee,
 For knowen was the false iniquitee.

The peple anon had suspect in this thing
 By maner of the cherles chalenging,
 That it was by the assent of Appius;
 They wisten wel that he was lecherous,
 For which unto this Appius they gon,
 And caste him in a prison right anon,
 Whereas he slow himself: and Claudius,
 That servant was unto this Appius,
 Was demed for to bange upon a tree;
 But that Virginieus of his pitee

That may go thurgh the gullet soft and soke :
Of spicerie, of leef, of barkes, and rote,
Shal ben his sauce ymaked by delit
To make him yet a newer appetit.
But certes he, that haunted swiche delices,
Is ded, while that he liveth in the vices.

A lecherous thing is wine, and drookenesse
Is ful of striving and of wretchednesse.
O drunken man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breth, foul art thou to embrace:
And thurgh thy drunken nose semeth the soom,
As though thou saigest ay, "Sampson, Sampson:"
And yet, go wot, Sampson drook never no wine.

Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swine :
Thy tonge is lost, and all thin honest cure,
For drookenesse is veray sepulture
Of mannes wit, and his discretioun.
In whom that drink hath domination,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe you fro the white and fro the rode,
And namely fro the white wine of Lepe,
That is to sell in Fishstrete and in Chepe.
This wine of Spaigne crepeth subtilly
In other wines growing faste by,
Of which ther riseth swiche fumosites,
That whan a man hath drooken draughtes three,
And weneth that he be at home in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the town of Lepe,
Not at the Rochell, ne at Burdeux town;
And thanne wol he say, "Sampson, Sampson."

But herkeneth, lordings, o word, I you pray,
That all the sovaine actes, dare I say,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,
Thurgh veray God, that is omnipotent,
Were don in abstinence and in prayer:
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye mow it here.

Loke Attila, the gret conquerour,
Died in his slepe, with shame and dishonour,
Bleding ay at his nose in drookenesse:
A capitaine shuld live in sobrenesse.

And over all this, avisech you right wel,
What was commanded unto Lameul;
Not Samuel, but Lameul say I.
Redeth the Bible, and find it expressly
Of wine yering to hem that have justice.
No more of this, for it may wel suffice.

And now that I have spoke of glotonic,
Now wol I you defenden hasardrie.
Hasard is veray moder of leinges,
And of deceite, and cursed forweringes:
Blapheming of Crist, manslaughter, and wast also
Of catel, and of time; and forthermo
It is repreve, and contrary of honour,
For to ben bold a common hasardour.
And ever the higher he is of estat,
The more he is holden desolat.
If that a prince useth hasardrie,
In alle governance and policie
He is, as by common opinion,
Yhold the lesse in reputation.

Stilbon, that was a wise embasadour,
Was sent to Corinth with ful gret honour
Fro Calidone, to maken hem alliance:
And whan he came, it happed him par chance,
That all the grettest that were of that lond
Yplaying atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as some as that it mighte be,
He stak him home agein in his contree,
And sayde ther, "I wol not lese my name,
Ne wol not take on me so gret defame,

You for to allie unto non hasardours.
Sendeth soon other wise embasadours.
For by my trouthe, me were lever die,
Than I you shuld to hasardours allie.
For ye, that ben so glorious in honours,
Shal not allie you to non hasardours,
As by my wille, ne as by my trectou."
This wise philosophere thus sayd he.

Loke eke how to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book sayth us,
Sent him a pair of dis of gold in scowes,
For he had used hasard therbefore:
For which he held his glory and his renown
At no value or reputatioun.

Lordes may fouden other maner play
Honest ynough to drive the day away.
Now wol I speke of others false and gret
A word or two, as olde bookes trecte.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The highe God forbad swering at al,
Witness on Mathew: but in special
Of swering sayth the holy Jeremie,
Thou shalt swere soth thin othes, and not lie;
And swere in dome, and eke in rightwisnesse;
But idel swering is a cursednesse.

Behold and see that in the firste table
Of highe Goddes bestes honourable,
How that the second best of him is this,
Take not the name in idel or amis.
Lo, rather he forbedeth swiche swering,
Than homicide, or many an other thing.
I say that as by ordre thus it stoundeth;
This knoweth he that his bestes understandeth,
How that the second best of God is that.
And forthermore, I wol thee tell all plat,
That vengeance shal not parten from his houn,
That of his othes is outrageous.

"By Goddes precious herte, and by his milke,
And by the blood of Crist, that is in Haile,
Seven is my chance, and thin is cink and trett;
By Goddes armes, if thou falsely pleye,
This dagger shal thurghout thin herte go."
This fruit cometh of the biccheol boves two,
Forswering, ire, falsenesse, and homicide.

Now for the love of Crist that for us dide,
Leteth your othes, bothe gret and smale.
But, sires, now wol I tell you forth my tale.

These riotours three, of which I tell,
Long erst or prime rong of any bell,
Were set hem in a taverns for to drinke:
And as they sat, they herd a belle clynke
Before a corps was caried to his grave:
That on of hem gan callen to his knave,
"Go bet," quod he, "and axe redily,
What corps is this, that passeth here forth by?
And loke that thou report his name wel."

"Sire," quod this boy, "it nedeth never a del
It was me told or ye came here two houres;
He was parde an old felaw of yours,
And sodenly he was yslein to-night,
Fordronke as he sat on his benche upright,
Ther came a privee theef, men clepen Deth,
That in this contree all the peple sleth,
And with his spere he smote his herte atwo,
And went his way withouten vordes mo.
He hath a thousand slain this pestilence:
And, maister, or he come in his prentice,
Me thinketh that it were ful necessarie,
For to beware of swiche an adversarie:

Lett redy for to mete him evermore.
 The nighte me my dame, I say no more."
 "By Sainte Marie," sayd this tavernere,
 "The child sayth soth, for he hath slain this yere
 has over a mile, within a gret village,
 both man and woman, child, and hyne, and page;
 I knowe his habitacion be there:
 He has arised gret wisdoms it were,
 That he did a man a dishonour."
 "Ye, Goddes armes," quod this riotour,
 "It is swiche peril with him for to mete?
 Shal him sake by wife and eke by strote,
 make a vow by Goddes digne bones.
 Betwene, schelawes, we three ben all ones:
 Of eche of us hold up his hond to other,
 and eche of us becomen others brother,
 and we wol stein this false traitour Deth;
 he shal be slain, he that so many sleth,
 by Goddes dignitee, or it be night."
 "Togedur han this three hir trothes plight
 Ewe and dian eche of hem for other,
 though he were his owen hores brother,
 and up they start al drunken in this rage,
 and forth they gon towards that village,
 and forth they gon towards that village,
 in which the taverner had spoke beforen,
 and may a grisly oth than have they sworn,
 and Cristes blomed body they to-rent;
 both shal be ded, if that we may him bent."
 When they has gon not fully half a mile,
 but as they wold han troden over a stile,
 an olde man and a pouere with hem mette.
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
 and sayde thus: "Now, lordes, God you see."
 The proudest of thisse riotours three
 answered age; "What? cherl, with sory grace,
 what art thou all forwrapped save thy face?
 why livest thou so longe in so gret age?"
 This olde man gan loken in his visage,
 and sayde thus: "For I ne cannot finde
 none, though that I walked into Inde,
 nor in citee, ne in no village,
 that wolde change his youthe for min age;
 therefore wote I han min age still
 as longe time as it is Goddes will.
 Deth, alas! ne will not han my lif.
 I wolte I like a restoles castrif,
 lay on the ground, which is my padres gate,
 and eke with my staf, erch and late,
 and say to hire, 'Leve mother, let me in.
 Now I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin,
 when shal my bones be as restes?'
 Now, with you wold I changen my cheste,
 and in my chambre longe time hath be,
 for as heren cloute to wrap in me."
 And put to me she wol not don that grace,
 which ful pale and welked is my face.
 "Nay, sires, to you it is no curtesie
 to take unto an olde man vilanie,
 he trespass in word or elles in dede.
 My writ ye mouen yourselfen rode;
 for an olde man, here upon his hede,
 shal arise: therefore I yve you rode,
 and wote an olde man non harm now,
 more than that ye wold a man did you
 do, if that ye may no long abide.
 And be with you, wher ye go or ride.
 And go thider as I have to go."
 "Nay, olde cherl, by God thou shalt not so,"
 sayde this other hardour amon;
 and thus partest not so lightly by Saint John.
 VOL. I.

Thou spake right now of thiske traitour Deth,
 That in this cotee of all our frendes sleth;
 Have here my trouthe as thou art his espie;
 Tell wher he is, or thou shalt it abide,
 By God and by the holy sacrament;
 For sothly thou art on of his assent
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false thefe."
 "Now, sires," quod he, "if it be you so lefe
 To finden Deth, tounse up this croked way,
 For in that grove I left him by my fay
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abide;
 Ne for your host he wol him nothing hide.
 Se ye that oke? right ther ye shuln him find.
 God save you, that bought agen mankind,
 And you amende;" thus sayd this olde man.
 And everich of thisse riotours ran,
 Til they came to the tree, and ther they found
 Of fereins fine of gold yocound round,
 Wel igh an eighte busheis, as hem thought.
 No longer as than after Dethes they sought,
 But eche of hem so glad was of the sight,
 For that the fereins ben so faire and bright,
 That doue they sette hem by the precious bord.
 The werte of hem be spake the firste word. [say;
 "Brethren," quod he, "take kepe what I shal
 My wit is gret, though that I boure and play,
 This tresour hath fortune onto us yeres
 In mirth and jolitee our lif to liven,
 And lightly as it cometh, so wol we spend.
 Ey, Goddes precious dignitee, who wend
 To-day, that we shuld han so faire a grace!
 But might this gold be caried fro this place
 Home to myn hous, or elles unto yours,
 (For wel I wote that all this gold is ours)
 Then were we in high felicitee.
 But trowely by day it may not be;
 Men wolde say that we were thewes strong,
 And for our owen tresour don us hong.
 This tresour must yearied be by night
 As wisely and as sleightly as it might.
 Wherefore I rede, that cut among us alle
 We drawe, and let see wher the cut wol falle:
 And he that hath the cut, with herte blith,
 Shal recoun to the toon, and that ful swith,
 And bring us bred and win ful prively:
 And two of us shal kepen subtilly
 This tresour wel: and if he wol not tarie,
 When it is night, we wol this tresour carien
 By on assent, wher as us thinkoth best."
 That on of hem the cut brought in his fist,
 And had hem drawe and loken wher it wold falle
 And it fell on the yougest of hem alle:
 And forth toward the toon he went anon.
 And al so sone as that he was agon,
 That on of hem spake thus unto that other;
 "Thou wotest wel thou art my sworn brother,
 Thy profite wol I tell thee right anon.
 Thou wotest wel that our felaw is agon,
 And here is gold, and that ful gret plente,
 That shal departed ben among us three.
 But natheles, if I can shewe it so,
 That it departed were among us two,
 Had I not don a frendes turn to thee?"
 That other answered, "I n'ot how that may be:
 He wote well that the gold is with us tweye.
 What shuln we don? what shaln we to him seye?"
 "Shal it be conseil?" sayd the firste shirwe;
 "And I shal tellen thee in wordes fewe
 What we shul don, and bring it wel aboute."
 "I graunte," quod that other, "out of doute,
 H

"That by my trouth I wol thee not bewraie." [twice,

"Now," quod the first, "thou wost wel we ben
And tweie of us shal stronger be than on.
Loke, whan that he is set, thou right anon
Arise, as though thou woldest with him play;
And I shal rive him thurgh the sides tway,
While that thou stroggest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger loke thou do the same;
And than shal all this folk departed be,
My dere frend, betwixen thee and me:
Than moun we bothe our luster al fulfillen,
And play at dis right at our owen wille."
And thus accorded ben thise shrewes tweye,
To slen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This youngest, which that wente to the town,
Ful oft in herte he rolleth up and down
The beames of thise foreins newe and bright.
"O Lord," quod he, "if so were that I might
Have all this tresour to myself alone,
Ther n'is no man that liveth under the trowe
Of God, that shulde live so mery as I."

And at the last the fend our enemy
Putte in his thought, that he shuld poison beye,
With which he mighte slen his felaws tweye.
For why, the fend fond him in swiche living,
That he had leve to sorwe him to bring.
For this was outrelly his ful entente
To alen hem both, and never to repente.

And forth he goth, no lenger wold he tary,
Into the town unto a potecary,
And praied him that he him wolde sell
Som poison, that be might his ratouns quell.
And eke ther was a polkat in his hawe,
That, as he sayd, his capons had ysawe:
And fayn he wolde him wrekken, if he might,
Of vermine, that destroyed hem by night.

The potecary answerd, "Thou shalt have
A thing, as wisely God my soule save,
In all this world ther n'is no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confecture,
Not but the mounceance of a corne of whete,
That be ne shal his lif anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lesse while,
Than thou wolt gon a pas not but a mile:
This poison is so strong and violent."

This cursed man hath in his hond yhent
This poison in a box, and swithe he ran
Into the nexte strete unto a man,
And borwed of him large botelles thre; and
And in the two the poison poured he;
The thridde he kept elene for his drinke,
For all the night he shope him for to swinke
In caryng of the gold out of that place.

And whan this riotour, with sory grace,
Hath filled with win his grete botelles thre,
To his felawes agen repairerth he.

What nedeth it therof to sermon more?
For right as they had cast his deth before,
Right so they han him slain, and that anon.
And whan that this was don, thus spake that on;
"Now let us sit and drinke, and make us mery,
And afterward we wiln his body bury."
And with that word it bapped him *par ces*,
To take the botelle, ther the poison was,
And dronke, and yave his felaw drinke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two.

But certes I suppose that Avicenne
Wrote never in no canon, ne in no fenne,
Mo wonder signes of empoisoning,
Than had thise wretches two or his ending.

Thus ended ben thise homicides two,
And eke the false empoisoner also.

O cursednesse of alle cursednesse!
O traitours homicide! O wickednesse!
O glotonie, Incurie, and haasardrie!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vilanie,
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!
Alas! mankinde, how may it betide,
That to thy creatour, which that thee wrought,
And with his precious herte-blood thee bought,
Thou art so false and so unkind, alas!

Now, good men, God foryeve you your trespass,
And ware you fro the sin of avarice.
Min holy pardon may youn all wrice,
So that ye offre nobles or starlinges,
Or elles silver broches, spones, rings,
Boweth your had under this holy bulle.
Cometh up ye wives, and offreth of your wold;
Your names I entre here in my roll soon;
Into the blisse of Heven shal ye gon:
I you assouly by min high powere,
You that winn offre, as clene and eke as clere
As ye were borne. Lo, sires, thus I preche,
And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So graunte you his pardon to receive;
For that is best, I wol you not deceive.

But, sires, o word forgate I in my tale:
I have relikes and pardou in my make,
As faire as any man in Engleland,
Which were me yeven by the Popes hand.
If any of you wol of devotion
Offren, and han min absolution,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth here adoun,
And mekely receiveth my pardoun.
Or elles taketh pardon, as ye wende,
Al newe and freshe at every townes ende,
So that ye offren alway newe and newe,
Nobles or pena, which that ben good and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is here,
That ye moun have a suffisant pardonere
To assoulen you in contree as ye ride,
For adventures, which that moun betide.
Paraventure ther may falle on, or two,
Down of his hors, and breke his necke stou.
Loke, which a seurtee is it to you alle,
That I am in your felawship yfalle.

That may assouly you bothe more and less,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body pass.
I rede that our Hoste shal beginne,
For he is most enveloped in sinne.
Come forth, sire Hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the relikes everich on,
Ye for a grette; unbokel anon thy purse.

"Nay nay," quod he, "thou have I Cristen
Let be," quod he, "it shal not be, so the ich.
Thou woldest make me kisse thin olde brech,
And swere it were a relike of a seint,
Though it were with thy foundement depeint.
But by the crois, which that Seint Helene fund,
I wolde I had thin colours in min hond,
Insteede of relikes, or of scintuarie.
Let out hem of, I wol thee help hem carie;
They shul be shrined in an bogges tord."

This Pardoner answerd not a word;
So wroth he was, no word he wolde he say.
"Now," quod our Hoste, "I wol no lenger p
With thee, ne with non other angry man."

But right anon the worthy knight began,
(Whan that he saw that all the peple loob)
"No more of this for it is right yough."

hir Pardoner, be mery and glad of chere;
 And ye, sire Hoste, that ben to me so dere,
 I pray you that ye kisse the Pardoner;
 And, Pardoner, I pray thee draw thee ner,
 And as we diden, let us laugh and play."
 And they kised, and riden forth hir way.

THE SHIPMANNES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoste upon his stirrope stode anon,
 And saide; "Good men, herkeneth everich on,
 This was a thrifty tale for the noon.
 Hir parish preest," quod he, "for Goddes bones,
 Tell us a tale, as was thy forward yore:
 For wel that ye larned men in love
 Be moche good, by Goddes dignitee."
 The Person him answerd, "*Benedicite!*
 That citheth the man, so simfully to swere?"
 Our Hoste answerd, "O Jankin, be ye there?
 Ye, good men," quod our Hoste, "herkeneth to
 I smell a koller in the wind," quod he. [ma.
 "Weth for Goddes dignitee passion,
 We shal haan a predication:
 For koller here wol prechen us somewhat."
 "Nay by my fathers soole, that shal he nat,"
 Saide the Shipman, "here shal he nat preche,
 He shal so gospel gloosen here ne teche.
 He leved all in the gret God," quod he.
 The wolde sownen soon difficulte,
 He sprongen oockle in our elene corse.
 And therefore, hoste, I warne thee beforne,
 My joy body shal a tale telle,
 And I shal chiken you so mery a belle,
 And I shal waken all this compaignie:
 And it shal not ben of philosophie,
 Of phyysike, ne termes quainte of lawe;
 For it is but litel Latin in my mawe."

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

There was a marchant dwelled at Seint Denise,
 That riche was, for which men held him wise.
 He had of excellent beautee,
 And compaignable, and revelous was she,
 Which is a thing that cometh more dispence,
 For worth is all the chere and reverence,
 As was ben don at festes and at dances.
 The salutations and countenances
 Was, as doth a shadow upon a wall:
 For who is kin that payen mote for all.
 His lady husband algate he mote pay,
 For mote in clothe and he mote us array
 For his own worship richely:
 Which array we dancen jolly.
 If that he may not paraventure,
 He shal not eriche dispence endure,
 Which thinketh it is wasted and ylost,
 For mote another payen for our cost,
 For gold, and that is perikous.
 This noble marchant held a worthy hous,
 Which he had all day so gret repaire
 For his largesse, and for his wif was faire,
 And wonder is: but herkeneth to my tale,
 For changes all these gentes gret and small,
 For was a monk, a faire man and a bold,
 And a thirty winter he was old,

That ever in on was drawing to that place.
 This yonge monk, that was so faire of face,
 Acquainted was so with this goode man,
 Sithen that hir firste knowlege began,
 That in his hous as familiar was he,
 As it possible is any frend to be.
 And for as moche as this goode man
 And eke this Monk, of which that I began,
 Were bothe two yborne in o village,
 The monk him claimeth, as for cosinage,
 And he again him sayd not ones nay,
 But was as glad therof, as foule of day;
 For to his herte it was a gret plesance.

Thus ben they knit with eterne alliance,
 And eche of hem gan other for to ensure
 Of brotherhed, while that hir lif may dure,
 Free was Dan John, and namely of dispence
 As in that hous, and ful of diligence
 To don plesance, and also gret oostage:
 He not forgate to yeve the leste page
 In all that hous; but, after hir degre,
 He yave the lord, and sithen his meinee,
 When that he came, som maner honest thing;
 For which they were as glad of his coming
 As foule is fayn, when that the Sonne up riseth.
 No more of this as now, for it sufficeth.

But so befell, this marchant on a day
 Shope him to maken redy his array
 Toward the town of Brugges for to fare,
 To byen ther a portion of ware:
 For which he hath to Paris sent anon
 A messenger, and praid hath Dan John
 That he shuld come to Seint Denise, and pleie
 With him, and with his wif, a day or tweie,
 Or he to Brugges went, in alle wise.

This noble monk, of which I you devise,
 Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
 (Because he was a man of high prudence,
 And eke an officer out for to ride,
 To seen hir granges, and hir berne wide)
 And unto Seint Denise he cometh anon.

Who was so welcome as my lord Dan John,
 Our dere cousin, ful of cortisie?
 With him he brought a jubbe of Malvesie,
 And eke another ful of fine Vernage,
 And volatile, as ay was his usage:
 And thus I let hem etc, and drinke, and pleye,
 This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.

The thridde day this marchant up ariseth,
 And on his nedes sadly him aviseth:
 And up into his countour hous goth he,
 To reken with himselfen, wel may be,
 Of thilke yere, how that it with him stood,
 And how that he dispended had his good,
 And if that he encresed were or non.
 His bookes and his bagges many on
 He layth befor him on his counting bord.
 Ful riche was his tresour and his bord;
 For which ful fast his countour dore he shet;
 And eke he n'olde no man shuld him let
 Of his accountes for the mene time:
 And thus he sit, til it was passed prime.

Dan John was risen in the morwe also,
 And in the gardin walketh to and fro,
 And hath his thinges sayd ful curteisly.

This goode wif came walking prively
 Into the gardin ther he walketh soft,
 And him saketh, as she hath don oft:
 A maiden child came in hire compaignie,
 Which as hire lust she may governe and gie,

For yet under the yerde was the maide.

"O dere cosin min Dan John," she saide,

"What aileth you so rathe for to arise?"

"Nece," quod he, "it ought ynough suffise

Five houres for to slepe upon a night:

But it were for an olde appalled wight,

As ben this wedded men, that lie and dare,

As in a fourme sitteth a very hare,

Were al forstraught with houndes gret and smaile.

But, dere nece, why be ye so pole?

I trowe certes, that our goode man

Hath you laboured, sith this night began,

That you were neded to reaten hastily."

And with that word he lough ful merily,

And of his owen thought he wene all red.

This faire wif gan for to shake hire bed,

And saide thus; "Ye, God wote all," quod she.

"Nay, cosin min, it stant not so with me.

For by that God, that yave me soule and lif,

In all the reame of Fraunce is ther no wif,

That lasse lust hath to that sory play;

For I may singe alas and wala wa

That I was borne, but to no wight" (quod she)

"Dare I not tell how that it start with me.

Wherfore I thinke out of this lond to wende

Or elles of myself to make an ende,

So full am I of drede and eke of care."

This monk began upon this wif to stene,

And says, "Alas! my nece, God forbede,

That ye for any sorwe, or any drede,

Fordo yourself: but telleth me your grete,

Paraventure I may in your mischeffe

Consele or helpe: and therefore telleth me

All your adoo, for that I shal ben secrete.

For on my portos here I make an oth,

That never in my lif, for lefe ne loth,

Ne shal I of no conseil you bewray."

"The same agen to you," quod she, "I say.

By God and by this portos I you swere,

Though men me wolden all in peeces tere,

Ne shal I never, for to goo to Helle,

Bewrey o word of thing that ye me tell,

Nought for no cosinage, ne alliance,

But veraily for love and affiance."

Thus ben they swome, and hereupon they kiste,

And eche of hem told other what hem liste.

"Cosin," quod she, "if that I had a space,

As I have non and namely in this place,

Than wold I tell a legend of my lif,

What I have suffred sith I was a wif

With min husbond, al he be your cosin."

"Nay," quod this monk, "by God and Seint

He n'is no more cosin unto me, [Martin,

Than is the leef that hangeth on the tree:

I clepe him so by Seint Denis of France

To han the more cause of acquaintance

Of you, which I have loved specially

Aboven alle woman sikerly.

This swere I you on my profession:

Telleth your grete, lest that he come adoun,

And hasteth you, and goth away anon."

"My dere love," quod she, "o my Dan John,

Ful lefe were me this conseil for to hide,

But out it mote, I may no lenger abide.

"Myn husbond is to me the werste man,

That ever was sith that the world began:

But sith I am a wif, it sith not me

To tellen no wight of our privetee,

Neither in bed, ne in non other place;

God shilde I shukke it tellen for his grace;

A wif ne shal not sayn of hire husbond

But all honour, as I can understand;

Save unto you thus much I tellen shal:

As helpe me God; he is sought worth at all,

In no degree, the value of a flec.

But yet me greveth most his nigardie:

And wel ye wot, that women naturally

Desiren thinges sixe, as wel as I.

They wolden that hir husbondes shulden be

Hardy, and wise, and riche, and therto free,

And buxome to his wif, and fresh a-bedde.

But by that ilke Lord that for us bledde,

For his honour myselve for to array,

A Souday next I muste nedes pay

An hundred franka, or elles am I lorne.

Yet were me lever that I were unborne,

Than me were don a selandro or vilanie.

And if min husbond eke might it espie,

I n'ere but lant; and therefore I you prey

Lene me this summe, or elles mote I dey.

Dan Jobe, I say, lene me this hundred franka;

Parde I wol not faille you my thanke,

If that you list to do that I you pray.

For at a certain day I wol you pay,

And do to you what plesance and service

That I may don, right as you list devise:

And bot I do, God take on me vengeance,

As foule as ever had Genecon of France."

This gentill monk answered in this manere;

"Now trowely min owen lady dere,

I have," quod he, "on you so grete a southe,

That I you swere, and plights you my trouthe,

That when your husbond is to Flaunders fare,

I wol deliver you out of this care.

For I wol bringen you an hundred franka."

And with that word he caught hire by the fast,

And hire embraced hard, and kiste hire oft.

"Go now your way," quod he, "al stille and so"

And let us dine as sone as that ye may,

For by my kalender it is prime of day:

Goth now, and beth as trowe as I shal be."

"Now elles God forbede, sire," quod she;

And forth she goth, as joly as a pie,

And bad the cokes that they shuld hem ke.

So that men mighten dine, and that anon.

Up to hire husbond is this wif ygon,

And knocketh at his countour boldly.

"*Qui est la?*" quod he. "Peter, it am I,"

Quod she. "What, sire, how longe wol ye be?"

How longe time wol ye reken and cast

Your summes, and your bookes, and your the

The devil have part of all swiche rekenings.

Ye han ynough parde of Goddes soude.

Come down to-day, and let your bagges stonde

Ne be ye not ashamed, that Dan John

Shal fasting all this day elenge gon?

What? let us here a masse, and go we dine."

"Wif," quod this man, "litel canst thou"

The curious besinesse that we have:

For of us chapmen, all so God me save,

And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ives,

Scarsly amonges twenty ten shul thrive

Continnelly, lasting unto oure age.

We moun wel maken chere and good visage,

And driven forth the world as it may be,

And kepen our estat in privtee,

Til we be ded, or elles that we play

A pilgrimage, or gon out of the way.

And therfore have I gret necessitee

Upon this queinte world to arisen me.

For evermore mote we stond in drede
 Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.
 "To Flandres wol I go to-morwe at day,
 And come agin as soon as ever I may:
 For which, my dere wif, I thee beseke
 As be to every wight buxom and meke,
 And for to kepe our good be curious,
 And hoornly governe wel our hous.
 Tho best ynough, in every rouner wise,
 That to a thrifty household may suffice.
 Tho heketh non array, ne no vitaille;
 Of silver in thy purse shalt thou not faille."
 And with that word his countour dore he shette,
 And down he goth; no lenger wold he lette;
 And hastily a meane was ther saide,
 And spedily the tables were ylaide,
 And to the diner feste they hem spedde,
 And richely this monk the chapman fedde.
 And after diner Dan John soberly
 This chapman toke apart, and prively
 He said him thus: "Cousin, it stondeth so,
 That, wel I see, to Brugges ye wol go,
 God and Saint Austin spede you and gide.
 I pray you, cousin, wisely that ye ride;
 Governeth you also of your dette
 Strenpely, and namely in this hete.
 Betwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
 Farewel, cousin, God shilde you fro care.
 If any thing ther be by day or night,
 If it be in my power and my might,
 That ye me wol command in any wise,
 I shall be doon, right as ye wol devise.
 "But o thing or ye go, if it may be,
 I wold prayen you for to lene me
 An hundred frankes for a weke or tweye,
 For certain bestes that I muste beye,
 To stoven with a place that is oures:
 (God helpe me so, I wold that it were youres)
 I shall not faille surely of my day,
 Not for a thousand frankes, a mile way.
 But let this thing be secree, I you prey;
 In yet to-night these bestes mote I beye.
 And fare now wel, myn owen cousin dere,
 Grant mercy of your cost and of your chere."
 This noble marchant gentilly anon
 Answerd and said, "O cousin min Dan John,
 How likerly this is a smal requeste:
 My gold is youres, whan that it you leste,
 And not only my gold, but my chaffare:
 Take what you list, God shilde that ye spare.
 But o thing is, ye know it wel ynough
 Of chapman, that his money is hir plough.
 We moun cressen while we han a name,
 But goodles for to bea it is no game.
 Pay a gage, whan it lith in your ese;
 After my might ful sayn wold I you ples."
 Thus hundred frankes set he forth anon,
 And prively he toke hem to Dan John:
 So right in al this world wist of this lone,
 Lovyng this marchant, and Dan John alone.
 They drinke, and speke, and come a while and pleye,
 Til that Dan John rideth to his abbeye.
 The morwe came, and forth this marchant rideth
 To Flandres wand, his prentis wel him gideth,
 Til he come in to Brugges merly.
 Now goth this marchant faste and heuly
 About his nedes, and bieth, and cresseneth;
 He neither playeth at the dis, ne danceth
 But as a marchant, shortly for to tall,
 He letech his wif, and ther I let him dwell.

The Sunday next the marchant was agon,
 To Saint Denis yoomon is Dan John,
 With croune and berde all fresh and newe yshave.
 In all the hous ther n'as so litel a knave,
 Ne no wight elles, that he n'as ful fain,
 For that my lord Dan John was come again.
 And shortly to the point right for to gon,
 This faire wif acordeth with Dan John,
 That for thise hundred frankes he shuld all night
 Haven hire in his armes bolt-upright:
 And this accord parfumed was in dede.
 In mirth all night a booy lif they lede
 Til it was day, that Dan John yede his way,
 And bad the meine farewel, have good day.
 For non of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
 Hath of Dan John right non suspicioun;
 And forth he rideth home to his abbey,
 Or wher him liste, no more of him I sey.

This marchant, whan that ended was the fair,
 To Saint Denis he gan for to repaire,
 And with his wif he maketh feste and chere,
 And telleth hire that chaffare is so dere,
 That nedes muste he make a chevisaunce,
 For he was bonde in a recognouance,
 To payen twenty thousand sheldes anon.
 For which this marchant is to Paris gon
 To borwe of certain frendes that he hadde
 A certain frankes, and som with him he ladde.
 And whan that he was come in to the toun,
 For gret chiertee and gret affectioun
 Unto Dan John he goth him first to pleye;
 Not for to aze or borwe of him moneye,
 But for to wote and seen of his welfare,
 And for to tellen him of his chaffare,
 As frendes doon, whan they beu mette in fere.

Dan John him maketh feste and merry chere;
 And he him tolde agen ful specially,
 How he had wel ybought and graciously
 (Thanked be God) all hole his marchandise:
 Save that he must in alle manere wise
 Make a chevisaunce, as for his beste:
 And than he shulde ben in joye and reste.
 Dan John answered, "Certes I am fain,
 That ye in helpe be comen home again:
 And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
 Of twenty thousand sheldes shuld ye no misse,
 For ye so kindly this other day
 Lente me gold, and as I can and may
 I thanke you, by God god by Saint Jame.
 But natheles I toke unto our dame,
 Your wif at home, the same gold again
 Upon your benche, she wote it wel certain,
 By certain tokens that I can hire tell.
 Now by your leve, I may no lenger dwell;
 Our abbot wol out of this toun anon,
 And in his compaignie I muste gon.
 Grete wel our dame, myn owen secce swete,
 And farewel, dere cousin, til we mete."

This marchant, which that was ful ware and wise,
 Cressenad hath, and paide eke in Paris
 To certain Lombardes redy in hir bond
 The summe of gold, and gage of hem his bond,
 And home he goth, mery as a popingay.
 For wel he knew he stood in swiche array,
 That nedes muste he wiane in that riage
 A thousand frankes, above all his costage.
 His wif ful redy motte him at the gate,
 As she was wout of old usage algate:
 And all that night in mirth they ben sette,
 For he was riche, and clerely out of dette.

When it was day, this marchant gan embrace
His wif all newe, and kiste hire in hire face,
And up he goth, and maketh it ful tough.
"No more," quod she, "by God ye have ynoogh:"
And wantonly agen with him she plaide,
Til at the last this merchant to hire saide.

"By God," quod he, "I am a litel wrothe
With you, my wif, although it be me lothe
And wote ye why? by God, as that I gesse,
That ye han made a manere strangeness
Betwixen me and my cosin Dan John.
Ye shuld have warned me, or I had gon,
That he you had an hundred frankes paide
By redy token: and held him evil spaide,
For that I to him spake of chevrisance:
(Me semed so as by his contenance)
But natheles by God our Heven king,
I thoughte not to axe of him no thing.
I pray thee, wif, ne do thou no more so.
Tell me alway, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in min absence
Ypaide thee, lest thurgh thy negligence
I might him axe a thing that he hath paide."

This wif was not aferde ne affraide,
But boldely she saide, and that anon;
"Mary I defie that false monk Dan John,
I kepe not of his tokens never a del:
He toke me certain gold, I wote it wel.
What? evil thedome on his monkes snoute!
For, God it wote, I wend withouten doute,
That he had yve it me, because of you,
To don therwith min honour and my prow,
For cosinage, and eke for *belle chere*,
That he hath had ful often times here.
But sith I see I stonde in swiche dispoint,
I wot answer you shortly to the point.

"Ye have no slakke dettours than am I:
For I wol pay you wel and redily
Fro day to day, and if so he I faille,
I am your wif, soore it upon my taile,
And I shal pay as soon as ever I may.
For by my trooth, I have on min array,
And not in waste, bestowid it every del.
And for I have bestowid it so wel
For your honour, for Goddes sake I say,
As beth not wroth, but let us laugh and play.
Ye shal my joly body han to wedde:
By God I will not pay you but a-bedde:
Foryeve it me, min owen spouse dere;
Turne hitherward and maketh better chere."

This marchant saw ther was no remedy:
And for to chide, it n'ere but a foly,
Sith that the thing may not amended be.
"Now, wif," he said, "and I foryewe it thee;
But by thy lif ne be no more so large;
Kepe bet my good, this yve I thee in charge."
Thus endeth now my tale, and God us sende
Taling ynoogh, unto our lives ende.

THE PRIORESSES PROLOGUE.

"Wol said by *corpus Domini*," quod our Host,
"Now longe mote thou sailen by the cooste,
Thou gentil maister, gentil mariner,
God give the monke a thousand last quod yere.
A ha, felawes, beth ware of swiche a jape.
The monke put in the mannes hode an ape,

And in his wifes eke, by *Saint Austin*.

Draweth no monkes more into your in.

"But now pause over, and let us seke about,
Who shal now tellen first of all this route
Another tale:" and with that word he said,
As curteisly as it had ben a maid,

"My lady Prioress, by your leve,
So that I wist I shold you not greve,
I wolde demen, that ye tellen shold
A tale next, if so were that ye wold.
Now wol ye rouschessauf, my lady dere?"

"Gladly," quod she, and saide as ye shal be

THE PRIORESSES TALE

"O Lord our Lord, thy name how merveilous
Is in this large world ysprad!" (quod she)
"For not al only thy laude precios
Performed is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Performed is, for on the great souking
Somtime shewen they thin beryng."

"Wherefore in laude, as I can best and may,
Of thee and of the white lily flour,
Which that thee bare, and is a maide alway,
To tell a sturie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encreasen hire honow,
For she hireselven is honour and rote
Of bountee, next hire sone, and soules bote."

"O mother maide, o maide and mother fre,
O bushe unbreat, brenning in *Moyse's* sight,
That ravishedest down fro the destee,
Thurgh thin humblesse, the goot that in thee
Of whos vertue, when he this herte light,
Conceivd was the fathers sapience:
Helpe me to tell it in thy reverence."

"Lady thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertue and thy gret humilitee,
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science:
For sometime, lady, or men pray to thee,
Thou goot beforen of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, of thy pryere,
To giden us unto thy sone so dere."

"My conning is so weke, o blisful queene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I ne may the weighte not sustene;
But as a child of twelf moneth old or lesse,
That can unsefthes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therefore I you pray,
Gideth my song, that I shal of you say."

Ther was in *Asie*, in a gret citee,
Amonges Cristen folk a *Jewerie*,
Sustened by a lord of that contree,
For foule usure, and lucre of vilanie,
Hateful to Crist, and to his compaignie:
And thurgh the strete men mighten ride and
For it was free, and open at eyther ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doum at the farther ende, in which ther were
Children as hepe comen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yere by yere,
Swiche manere doctrine as men used there:
This is to say, to singen and to rede,
As smaals children don in hir childhede.

Among these children was a widewe some,
A litel clerkis, sevens yere of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eke also, whereas he sey the image
Of Cristes moder, had he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun, and say
As *Marie*, as he goth by the way.

Thus hath this widewe hire litel some ytaught
Our blisful Lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worship ay, and he forgate it naught:
For seyl childe wol alway some here.
But ay, when I remember on this matere,
Saint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so young to Crist did reverence.

This litel childe his litel book lerning,
As he sits in the scole at his primere,
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde sing,
As children leerd hir antiphonere:
And as he dorst, he drew him nere and nere,
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Knight wist he what this Latin was to say,
For he so yonge and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he pray
To expositen him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage:
This prayde he him to construe and declare,
For often time upon his knees bare.

His schaw, which that elder was than he,
Lowrd him thus: "This song, I have herd say,
Was makid of our blisful Lady fre,
Hir to make, and eke hire for to prey
To ben our help, and socour when we dey.
I can no more expound in this matere:
I leve song, I can but smal grammere."

"And is this song makid in reverence
Of Cristes moder?" said this innocent;
For certes I wol don my diligence
To come it all, or Cristemasse he went,
Though that I for my primar shall be shent,
And shal be beten thries in an houre,
I wol it come, our Ladie for to honoure."

He schaw taught him homeward prively
For day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldly
For word to word according with the note:
Twas a day it passid thurgh his throte,
To scolward and homeward when he wente:
On Cristes moder set was his entente.

As I have said, thurghout the Jewerie
This litel child as he came to and fro,
For mery than wold he sing and ote,
O *Alma Redemptoris*, ever so:
The sweetnesse hath his herte persed so
Of Cristes moder, that to hire to pray
He cannot stin of singing by the way.

Our firste kn, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspen nest,
For seyle and said, "O Ebraike peple, alas!
Is this to you a thing that is honest,
That swiche a boy shal walken as him leste
In your despit, and sing of swiche reverence?
Which a gain our lawes reverence?"

From thenceforth the Jewes han conspired
This innocent out of this world to chace:
An homicide therto han they hired,
That in an aleys had a prives place,
And as the child gan forthby for to pace,
This curped Jew him hent, and held him fast,
And cut his throte, and in a pit him cast.

I say that in a wardrope they him threwe,
Wher as thise Jewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk, of Herodes alle newe,
What may your evil entente you availle?
Mordre wol out, certain it wol not faille,
And namely ther the honour of God shal sprede:
The blood out crieth on your cursed dede.

O martyr soudeid in virginitee,
Now maist thou singe, and folwen ever in on
The white lamb celestial, quod she,
Of which the gret Evangelist Seint John
In Pathmos wrote, which sayth that they that go
Before this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never fleshy woman they ne knewe.

This poure widewe awaiteth al that night
After hire litel childe, and he came nought:
For which as soon as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and besy thought,
She hath at scole and elleswer him sought,
Til finally she gan so fer aspise,
That he last seen was in the Jewerie.

With modres pitee in hire brest enclosed
She goth, as she were half out of hire minde,
To every place, wher she hath supposed
By likelihed hire litel child to finde:
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cried, and at the laste thus she wrought,
Among the cursed Jewes she him sought.

She freyneth, and she praileth pitously
To every Jew that dwelled in thilke place,
To telle hire, if hire child went ought forthby:
They sayden, Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Yave in hire thought, within a litel space,
That in that place after hire come she cried,
Ther he was casten in a pit beside.

O grette God, that performest thy laude
By mouth of innocentes, lo hert thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eke of martirdome the rubie bright,
Ther he with throte yoorven lay upright,
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to singe
So loudle, that all the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In comen, for to wondre upon this thing:
And hastily they for the provost sente.
He came anon withouten taryng,
And herieth Crist, that is of Heven king,
And eke his moder, honour of mankind,
And after that the Jewes let he binde.

This child with pitous lamentation
Was taken up, singing his song alway:
And with honour and gret procession,
They carien him unto the next abbey.
His moder swouning by the bere lay;
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringen fro his bere,

With turment, and with shameful deth eche on
 This provost doth thise Jewes for to starve,
 That of this morder wiste, and that anon:
 He n'old no swiche cursednesse observe:
 Evil shal he have, that evil wol deserve.
 Therefore with wilde hors he did hem drawe,
 And after that he hong hem by the lawe.

Upon his bere ay lith this innocent
 Before the auter while the masse last:
 And after that, the abbot with his covent
 Had spedde hem for to berie him ful fast:
 And when they holy water on him cast,
 Yet spake this child, when spreit was the holy water,
 And sang, o *Alma Redemptoris Mater*.

This abbot, which that was an holy man,
 As monkes ben, or elles ought to be,
 This younge child to conjure he began,
 And said; "O dere child, I halae thee
 In vertus of the holy Trinitee,
 Tell me what is thy cause for to sing,
 Sith that thy throte is cut to my seeing."

"My throte is cut unto my nekke-bon,"
 Seide this child, "and as by way of kinde
 I shuld have deyde, ye longe time agoon:
 But Jesu Crist, as ye in bookes finde,
 Wol that his glory last and be in minde,
 And for the worship of his moder dere,
 Yet may I sing o *Alma* loude and clere.

"This welle of mercie, Cristes moder swete,
 I loved alway, as after my coming;
 And when that I my lif shulde forsete,
 To me she came, and bad me for to sing
 This antem verisly in my dying,
 As ye han herde, and, when that I had songe,
 Me thought she laid a grain upon my tonge.

"Wherefore I sing, and sing I mote certain
 In honour of that blisful maiden free,
 Til fro my tonge of taken is the grain.
 And after that thus seide she to me;
 "My litel child, than wol I fetchen thee,
 When that the grain is fro thy tong ytake:
 Be not agaste, I wol thee not forsake."

This holy monk, this abbot him meene I,
 His tonge out caught, and toke away the grain;
 And he yave up the gost ful softly.
 And when this abbot had this wonder seen,
 His salte tees trifled adoun as reyne:
 And groff he fell al platte upon the ground,
 And still he lay, as he had ben ybound.

The covent lay eke upon the pavement
 Weping and heryng Cristes moder dere.
 And after that they risen, and forth ben went,
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marble stones clere
 Encloosen they his litel body swete:
 Ther he is now, God lene us for to mete.

O younge Hew of Lincoln, slain also
 With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
 For it n'is but a litel while ago,
 Pray eke for us, we sinful folk unstable,
 That of his mercy God so merciable
 On us his grete mercie multiplie,
 For reverence of his moder Marie.

PROLOGUE TO SIRE THOPAS

WHAN said was this miracle, every man
 As sober was, that wonder was to see,
 Til that our Hoste to jopen he began,
 And than at erst he loked upon me,
 And seide thus; "What man art thou?" quod I
 "Thou lokest, as thou woldest finde an hart,
 For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.

"Approche nere, and loke up merrily.
 Now warrs you, sires, and let this man have pla
 He in the waste is shapen as wel as I:
 This were a popet in an arme to embrace
 For any woman, smal and faire of face.
 He semeth elvish by his contenance,
 For unto no wight doth he daliance.

"Say now somewhat, sin other folk han said;
 Tell us a tale of mirthe and that anon."
 "Hoste," quod I, "we be not evil spaid,
 For other tale oertes can I now,
 But of a rime I lerned yore agoon."
 "Ye, that is good," quod he, "we shulden here
 Some deintee thing, me thinketh by thy cheer."

THE RIME OF SIRE THOPAS

LIERAUN, lordinges, in good contree,
 And I wol tell you oremew
 Of mirthe and of soles,
 Al of a knight was faire and gent
 In bataille and in tournament,
 His name was sire Thopas.

Yborne he was in fer contree,
 In Flandres, al beyonde the see,
 At Popering in the place,
 His father was a man ful free,
 And lord he was of that contree,
 As it was Goddes grace.

Sire Thopas was a doughty swain,
 White was his face as paindemaine
 His lippes red as rose,
 His ruddle is like scarlet in grain,
 And I you tell in good certain
 He had a semely nose.

His here, his berde, was like mafroon,
 That to his girdle raught adoun,
 His shoon of contereane;
 Of Brugges were his boson broun;
 His robe was of ciclatoun,
 That coste many Fijane.

He coode hunt at the wilde dere,
 And ride on hauking for the rivere
 With grey gosbank on honde:
 Ther to he was a good arbore,
 Of wrastling was ther non his pere,
 Ther any ram shuld stoole.

Ful many a maide bright in hour
 They mourned for him per amour,
 When hem were bet to slepe;
 But he was chaaste and no lechour,
 And swete as is the bramble floore,
 That bereth the red bepe.

And so it fell upon a day,
Forsoth, as I you talen may,
Sire Thopas wold out ride;
He worth upon his stede gray,
And in his bond a launcegey,
A long sword by his side.

He prikeþ thurgh a faire forest,
Ther is many a wilde best,
Ye bothe bock and hare,
And as he priked north and est,
I telle it you, him had almeite
Besidde a stovy care.

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The licoris and the setewale,
And many a clove gilofre,
And notynunge to put in ale,
Whether it be moist or stale,
Or for to lain in cofre.

The briddes singen, it is no may,
The sperbank and the poppingay,
That joye it was to here,
The throstel ook made eke his lay,
The wode dove upon the spray
He sang ful loude and clere.

Sire Thopas fell in love-longing
Al whan he herd the throstel sing,
And priked as he were wood;
His faire stede in his priking
So swatte, that men might him wring,
His ailes were al blood.

Sire Thopas eke so wery was
For priking on the softe gras,
So fern was his courage,
That down he laid him in that place
To maken his stede soon solace,
And yaf him good forage.

"A Sainte Mary, *broedreite*,
What alleth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
He dremed all this night parde,
An elf-queene shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.

"An elf-queene wold I love ywis,
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make || in toune,—
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-queene I me take
By dale and eke by doun."

hoo his saddle be clombe anon,
And priked over stille and ston
An elf-queene for to espie,
Til he so long had ridden and gon,
That he fond in a privet wone
The contree of Faerie.

Wheris he soughte north and south,
And oft he spied with his mouth
In many a forest wilde,
For in that contree n'as ther non,
That to him dorst ride or gon,
Neither wif ne childre.

Til that ther came a gret geaunt,
His name was sire Oliphaupt,
A perilous man of dede,
He sayde, "Child, by Termagaunt,
But if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee thy stede || with maice—
Here is the queene of Faerie.
With harpe, and pipe, and simphonie,
Dwelling in this place."

The child sayd, "Al so mote I the,
To morwe wold I meten thee,
Whan I have min armoure,
And yet I hope *par ma fay*,
That thou shalt with this launcegey
Absen it ful soure; || thy mawe—
shal I perce, if I may,
Or it be fully prime of the day,
For here thou shalt be slay."

Sire Thopas drow abak ful fast;
This geaunt at him stoncs cast
Out of a fel staffe sling:
But faire escaped child Thopas.
And all it was thurgh Goddes grace,
And thurgh his faire bering.

Yet listeneth, lordings, to my tale,
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wold you roune,
How sire Thopas with sides smale,
Priking over hill and dale,
Is comen agein to toune.

His mery men commendeth he,
To maken him bothe game and gle,
For nedes must he fighte.
With a geaunt with bedes three,
For paramour and jolitee
Of on that shoue ful brighte.

"Do come," he sayd, "my minstres
And gestours for to talen tales
Anon in min arming,
Of romaunces that ben reales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eke of love-lunging."

They fet him first the swete win,
And mede eke in a masselin,
And real spicerie,
Of ginger-bred that was ful fin,
And licoris and eke comin,
With suger that is trie.

He didde next his white lere
Of cloth of lake fin and clere
A breche and eke a sherte,
And next his shert an haketou,
And over that an habergeon,
For percing of his berte,

And over that a fin hauberik,
Was all ywrought of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate,
And over that his cote-armoure,
As white as is the lily soure,
In which he wold debate.

His sheld was all of gold so red,
And therein was a bores bed,
A charboucle beside;
And ther he swore on ale and bred
How that the geaunt shuld be ded,
Betide what so betide.

His jamboux were of cuirbouly,
His swerdes sbeth of ivory,
His helme of latoun bright,
His sadel was of rewel bone,
His bridel as the sonne-ახობე,
Or as the mone-light.

His spere was of fin cypres,
That bodeth werre, and nothing pees,
The hed ful sharpe yground.
His stede was all dappile gray,
It goth an aumble in the way
Ful softly and round || in londe—
Lo, lordes mine, here is a fit;
If ye wol ovy more of it,
To telle it wol I fond.

Now hold your mouth *pour charite*,
Bothe knight and lady fre,
And herkeneth to my spell,
Of bataille and of chevalrie,
Of ladies love and druoric,
Anon I wol you tell.

Men speken of romaunces of pris,
Of Hornchild, and of Ipotis,
Of Bevis, and sire Guy,
Of sire Libeux, and Pleindamour,
But sire Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of real chevalrie.

His goode stede he al bestrode,
And furth upon his way he gode,
As sparele out of honde;
Upon his crest he bare a tour,
And therein stiked a lily flour,
God shilde his corps fro shonde.

And for he was a knight amtrous,
He n'olde slepen in non hous,
But ligen in his hood,
His brighte helm was his wanger,
And by him baited his destror
Of berbes fin and good.

Himself drank water of the well,
As did the knight sire Percivell
So worthy uoder wade,
Til on a day—

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

"No more of this for Goddes dignitee,"
Quodoure Hoste, "for thou makest me
So very of thy veray lewednesse,
That al so wily God my soule blame,
Min eres aken of thy draffy speche.
Now swiche a rime the devil I betoche;
This may wel be rime dogerel," quod he.
"Why so?" quod I, "why wolst thou letten me

More of my tal; than an other man,
Sin that it is the beste rime I can?"
"By God," quod he, "for plainly at a word,
Thy draffy riming is not worth a toord:
Thou dost nought elles but dispendest time.
Sire, at a word, thou shalt no longer rime,
Let see wher thou canst tellen ought in geste,
Or tallen in prose somewhat at the leste,
In which ther be som mirthe or som doctrine."
"Gladly," quod I, "by Goddes swete pine
I wol you tell a litel thing in prose,
That oughte liken you, as I suppose,
Or elles certes ye be to dangerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous,
Al be it told somtime in sondry wise
Of sondry folk, as I shal you devise.
"As thus, ye wote that every Evangelist,
That telleth us the peins of Jesu Crist,
Ne saith not alle thing as his felaw doth:
But natheles hir sentence is al soth,
And alle accorden as in hir sentence,
Al be ther in hir telling difference:
For som of hem say more, and som say lesse,
Whan they his pitous passion expresse;
I mene of Mark and Mathew, Luke and Job,
But douteles hir sentence is all on.
Therefore, lordinges all, I you beseeche,
If that ye thinke I vary in my speche,
As thus, though that I telle som del more
Of proverbes, than ye han herde before
Comprehended in this litel tretise here,
To enforcen with the effect of my matere,
And though I not the same wordes say
As ye han herde, yet to you alle I pray
Blameth me not, for, as in my sentence,
Shul ye nowher finden no difference
Fro the sentence of thilke tretise lite,
After the which this mery tale I write.
And therefore herkeneth what I shal say,
And let me tellen all my tale I pray."

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

A rower man called Melibeus, mighty and riche,
begate upon his wif, that called was Prudence, a
daughter, which that called was Sophie.

Upon a day befell, that he for his disport is went
into the felde him to playe. His wif and eke his
daughter hath he left within his hous, of which the
doves weren fast yshette. Foure of his olde knas
han it espied, and setten ladders to the walle of
his hous, and by the window ben entred, and
beten his wif, and wounded his daughter with five
mortal woundes, in five sondry places; this is to
say, in hire feet, in hire hondes, in hire eres, in
hire nose, and in hire mouth; and letten hire for
dede, and wenten away.

Whan Melibeus returned was into his house, and
sey at this meschief, he, like a mad man, renting
his clothes, gan to wepe and crie.

Prudence his wif, as fer forth as she dorste, be-
sought him of his weping for to stint: but not forthy
be gan to crie and wepen ever lenger the more.

This noble wif Prudence remembered hire upon
the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is
the Remedie of Love, wheras he saith; "He is a fool
that distourbeth the moder to wepe, in the deeth of
hire child, til she have wept hire fille, as for a

certain time: and than shal a man don his diligence with amiable wordes hire to reconforte and preyre hire of hire weping for to stinte.' For which reason this noble wif Prudence suffred hire housbond for to wepe and crye, as for a certain space: and when she saw hire time, she sayde to him in this wise. "Alas! my lord," quod she, "why make ye yourself for to be like a fool? Forsothe it appertyneth not to a wise man, to maken swiche a sorwe. Youre daughter, with the grace of God, shal warish and escape. And al were it so that she right now were dede, ye ne ought not as for hire deth yourself to destroye. Senek saith; 'The wise man shal not take to gret discomfort for the deth of his children, but certes he shulde sufferen it in patience, as wel as he shideth the deth of his own propre persone.'"

This Melibeus answered anon and saide, "What man" (quod he) "shulde of his weping stinte, that hath so gret a cause for to wepe? Jesu Crist, our Lord, himself wepte for the deth of Lazarus his frend." Prudence answered, "Certes wel I wote, attempre weping is nothing defended, to him that is sorwful is, among folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The Apostle Poole unto the Romaines writeth; 'Man shal rejoyce with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swiche folk as wepen.' But though attempre weping be ygraunted, outrageous weping certes is defended. Mesure of weping shulde be considered, after the lore that teacheth us Senek. 'When that thy frend is dede (quod he) let not thin eye to moiste ben of teeres, ne to moche drie: although the teeres comen to thin eye, let hem not falle. And when thou hast thy frend, do diligence to get agin another frend: and this is more wisdom than for to wepe for thy frend, which that thou hast lorne, for therein is no hope.' And therefore if ye governe you by seipence, put away sorwe out of youre herte. Remembreth you that Jesu Sirak saith; 'A man that is joyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth flourishing in his age: but sorkly a sorwful herte maketh his bones drie.' He saith eke thus, that 'sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man.' Salomon saith, that 'right as mothes in the shepes fleese smeten to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoieth sorwe to the herte of man.' Wherefore we ought as wel in the deth of oure children, as in the losse of oure goodes temporel, have patience.

"Remembre you upon the patient Job, when he hadde lost his children and his temporel substance, and in his body endured and received ful many a grevous tribulation, yet sayde he thus: 'Our Lord hath yeve it to me, oure Lord hath benold it me; right as oure Lord hath wold, right so is it doo; yblessed be the name of oure Lord.' To thise foresaide things answered Melibeus unto his wif Prudence: "All thy wordes" (quod he) "ben trewe, and therto profitable, but trewely my herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevously, that I not what to doo."—"Let calle" (quod Prudence) "thyn trewe frendes alle, and thy lineage, which that ben wise, and tellet to hem your cas, and herkeneth what they saye in consailing, and governe you after hir sentence. Salomon saith, 'Write alle thinges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente.'"

Then, by conseil of his wif Prudence, this Melibeus let callen a gret congregation of folk, as sur-

giens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and soon of his olde enemies reconciled (as by hir semblant) to his love and to his grace: and therewithal ther comen some of his neighbores, that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it hap-peth oft. Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers, and wise advocats lerned in the lawe.

And when thise folk togeder assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorwful wise shewed hem his cas, and by the manere of his speche, it semed that in herte he bare a cruel ire, redy to don vengeance upon his foes, and avelidly desired that the werre shulde beginne, but natheles yet axed he his conseil upon this matere. A surgieon, by licence and assent of swiche as waren wise, up rose, and unto Melibeus sayde, as ye moun here.

"Sire," (quod he) "as to us surgiens appertyneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher as we ben withholden, and to our patient that we do no damage: wherfore it hap-peth many time and ofte, that when tway men han everich wounded other, o same surgien helet hem both, wherfore unto our art it is not pertinent to notice werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to the warishing of youre daughter, al be it so that perillously she be wounded, we shuin do no ententif businesse fro day to night, that with the grace of God, she shal be hole and sound, as soon as is possible." Almost right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that they maid a fewe wordes more: that right as maladies ben cured by hir cootraries, right so shal man warish werre. His neighbores ful of envie, his feined frendes that semed reconciled, and his flaterers, maden semblant of weping, and emperid and agreedd muchel of this matere, in preysing gretly Melibeus of might, of power, of riches, and of frendes, despising the power of his adversaries: and maiden outrelly, that he soon shulde wroken him on his foes, and begynnen werre.

Up rose than an advocat that was wise, by love and by conseil of other that were wise, and sayde: "Lordinges, the rede for the which we ben assembled in this place, is a ful hevie thing, and an heigh matere, because of the wrong and of the wickednesse that hath be don, and eke by reson of the grette damages, that in time comyng ben possible to fallen for the same cause, and eke by reson of the gret riches and power of the parties bothe, for the which reasons, it were a ful gret peril to erren in this matere. Wherefore, Melibeus, this is oure sentence; we conseilte you, aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in keeping of thy propre persone, in swiche a wise that thou ne want non espis ne watche, thy body for to save. And after that, we conseilte that in thin hous thou sette sufficient garnison, so that they moun as wel thy body as thy hous defende. But certes for to meeven werre, ne avelidly for to do vengeance, we moun not deme in so litel time that it were profitable. Wherefore we axen leiser and space to have deliberation in this cas so deme; for the comune proverbe saith thus; 'be that some demeth, soon shal repente.' And eke men saith, that thilke jugis is wise, that some understandeth a matere, and jugeth by leiser. For al be it so, that al taryng be anouful, algates it is not to repreve in yeving of judgement, ne in vengeance taking, when it is sufficient and resonable. And that shewed our Lord Jesu Crist by ensample, for when that the woman

that was taken in aduourie, was brought in his presence to knowen what shuld be don with hire persone, al be it that he wist wel himself what that he wolde answer, yet he wolde he not answer suddenly, but he wolde have deliberation, and in the ground he wrote twies; and by these causes we azen deliberation: and we shuln than by the grace of God counseile the thing that shal be profitable."

Up sterte than the yonge folk at ones, and the most partie of that compaignie han scorned this olde wise man, and begonnen to make noise and raide; "Right so as while that iren is hot men sholde smite, right so men shuln do wretches hir wronges, while that they ben freshe and newe;" and with loudre voyes they criden "werre, werre." Up rose tho on of these olde wise, and with his hand made countenance that men shuld holde hem stille, and yeve him audience. "Lordinges," (quod he) "ther is ful many a man that crieth werre, werre, that wote ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his beginning bath so gret an entreng and so large, that every wight may enter when him liketh, and lightly find werre: bet certes what end that shal befall, it is not light to know. For sothly when that werre is ones begonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his moder, that shal sterve yong, by cause of thilke werre, other elles live in sorwe, and dieu in wretchednesse: and therefore or that any werre be begonne, men must have gret conseil and gret deliberation." And when this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by reasons, wel nie alle at ones begonne they to rise, for to breken his tale, and hiddeu him ful oft his wordes for to abregge. For sothly he that precheth to hem that liston not heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoeth. For Jesus Sirak sayth, that musike in weping is a noisous thing. This is to sayn, as muche availleth to speke before folk to which his speche anoeth, as to singe before him that wepeth. And when this wise man saw that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him down again. For Salomon saith: 'Ther as thou ne mayst have nou audience, enforce thes not to speke.' "I see wel," (quod this wise man) "that the commune proverbe is soth, that good conseil wanteth, when it is most neede."

Yet had this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that prively in his ere counseilled him certain thing, and counseilled him the contrary in general audience. When Melibeus had herd that the grettest partie of his conseil were accorded that he shulde make werre, anon he consented to hir counselling, and fully affirmed hir sentence. Than dame Prudence, when that she saw how that hire husbande shope him for to wreke him on his foes, and to beginne werre, she in ful humble wise, when she saw hire time, sayde him these wordes: "My lord," (quod she) "I you beseeche as hertly as I dare and can, ne baste you not to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeve me audience. For Piers Alphonse sayth; 'Who so that doth to thes outhur good or harme, haste thee not to quite it, for in this wise thy frend wot abide, and thin eneme shal the longer live in drede.' The proverbe sayth; 'he hasteth wel that wisely can abide: and in wikked hart is no profite.'"

This Meliben answered unto his wif Prudence: "I purpose not" (quod he) "to werken by thy conseil, for many causes and reasons: for certes every wight wold hold me than a fool; this is to

sayn, if I for thy counselling wolde change thiught, that ben ordeined and affirmed by so many wise men. Secondly, I say, that all women ben wicke, and nou god of hem all. 'For of a thousand men,' saith Salomon, 'I found a good man: but certes of alle women good woman found I never.' And also certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it shulde seme that I had yere thes over me the maistris: and God forbeide that it so were. For Jesus Sirak sayth, that 'if the wif have the maistris, she is contraryous to hire husband.' And Salomon sayth; 'Never in thy lif to thy wif, ne to thy childe, ne to thy frend, ne yeve no power over thyself: for better it were that thy children axe of thes things that hem nedeth, than thou see thy self in the handes of thy children.' And also if I wot werche by thy counselling, certes it must be sometime secrete, til it were time that it be knowen: and this ne may not be, if I shulde be counseilled by thes. [For it is writen; 'The janglerie of women o can no thing hide, save that which they wote not.' After the philosophe saith; 'In wikked conseil women venquishen men:' and for this reason I see not to be counseilled by thes."]

When dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with gret patience, had herd all that hire husbande liked for to say, than axed she of him license for to speke, and sayde in this wise. "My lord," (quod she) "as to your first reson, it may lightly ben answered: for I say that it is no folie to change conseil when the thing is changed, or elles when the thing semeth otherwise than it semed afore. And moreover I say, though that ye have sworn and beight to performe your emprise, and overthelk ye weve to performe thilke same emprise by just cause, men shuld not say therefore ye were a fyse, ne forworn: for the book sayth, that 'the wise man maketh no leing, when he turneth his courage for the better.' And al be it that your emprise be established and ordeined by gret multitude of folk, yet that you not accomplish thilke ordinance bot you liketh: for the trouthe of thinges, and the the profit, ben rather founden in fewe folk than ben wise and ful of reson, than by gret multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth and clatteroth what him liketh: sothly swiche multitude is not honest. As to the second reson, whereas ye say, that alle women ben wicke: save your grace, certes ye despise alle women in this wise, and 'he that all despiseth,' as saith the book, 'all displeaseth.' And Senek saith, that 'who so wol have sapience, shal no man dispreise, but he shal gladly teche the sciences that he can, without presumption or pride: and swiche thinges as he thought can, he shal not be ashamed to lere ben, and to esquire of leese folk than himself.' And, sire, that ther hath ben ful many a good woman, may lightly be proved: for certes, sire, our Lord Jesu Crist n'olde never ben descended to be borne of a woman, if all women had be wicked. And after that, for the gret bountee that is in women, our Lord Jesu Crist, whas he was risen from deth to lif, appered rather to a woman than to his Apostles. And though that Salomon sayde, he found never no good woman, it followeth not therefore, that all women be wicked: for though that he ne found no good woman, certes many another man hath founde many a woman ful good and trewe. Or elles peraventure the intent of Salomon was this, that in sovaine bountee he found no woman; this is to say, that ther is an

right that hath sovaine bountee, save God alone, as he himself recordeth in his Evangelies. For ther is no creature so good, that him ne wanteth somewhat of the perfection of God that is his maker. Youre thirde reason is this; ye say that if that ye governe you by my conseil, it shulde seme that ye had yewe me the maistrie and the lordship of your person. Sir, save your grace, it is not so; for if so were that no man shulde be conseilid but only of hem that han lordship and maistrie of his person, men n'olde not be conseilid so often: for stilly thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath be free chois whether he wol werke after that conseil or nou. And as to your fourth reason, ther as ye sein that the janglerie of women can hide thinges that they wot not; as who so sayth, that a woman can not hide that she wote; sire, this wordes ben understode of women that ben jugleresses and wicked; of which women men sein that three thinges driven a man out of his hous, that is to say, smokke, dropping of raine, and wicked wives. And of swiche women Salomon sayth, that 'a man were better dwell in desert, than with a woman that is riotous.' And, sire, by your leve, that am not I; for ye have ful often assaid my gret silence and my gret patience, and do how wel that I can hide and helle thinges, that you oughte secretly to hidden. And notly as to your fifthe reason, wheras ye say, that in wicked conseil women venquishen men; God wote that thilke reason stemm here in no stede: for understode now, ye azen conseil for to do wickednesse; and if ye wol werken wickednesse, and your wil restraimeth thilke wicked purpos, and overcometh you by reason and by good conseil, cotes your wif ought rather to be praised than to be blamed. Thus shulde ye understode the philosophie that sayth, 'In wicked conseil women venquishen hir husbandes.' And ther as ye blamen all women and hir reasons, I shal shewe you by many ensamples, that many women have ben ful good, and yet ben, and hir conseil wholesome and profitable. Eke som men han sayd, that 'the conseil of women is either to dere, or elles to lited of pris.' But al be it so that ful many a woman be bad, and hire conseil vile and nought worth, yet han men founden ful many a good woman, and discrete and wise in conselling. Lo, Jacob, thurgh the good conseil of his mother Rebecke, wan the bestoun of his father, and the lordship over all his brethren. Judith, by hire good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelt, out of the hande of Holoferne, that had he beseged, and wolde it all destroye. Abigail delivered Nabal hire husband from David the king, that wolde han slain him, and appeasid the ire of the king by hire wit, and by hire good conselling. Hester by hire conseil enhaunced gretly the peple of God, in the regne of Assuerus the King. And the same bountee in good conselling of many a good woman moun men rede and tell. And further more, whan that our Lord had created Adam oure forme father, he sayd in this wise; 'It is not good to be a man alone: make we to him an helpe semblable to himself.' Here moun ye see that if women weren not good, and hir conseil good and profitable, oure Lord God of Heven wolde neither han wrought hem, ne called hem helpe of man, but rather confusion of man. And ther sayd a clerk ones in two vers; 'What is better than gold? Jaspre.—What is

better than jaspre? Wisdom.—And what is better than wisdom? Woman.—And what is better than a good woman? Nothing.' And, sire, by many other reasons moun ye seem, that many women ben good, and hir conseil good and profitable. And therefore, sire, if ye wol trote to my conseil, I shal restore you your daughter hole and sound; and I wol don to you so muche, that ye shuln have honour in this cas.'

Whan Melibee had herd the wordes of his wif Prudence, he sayd thus: "I se wel that the word of Salomon is soth; for he sayth, that 'wordes, that ben spoken discretly by ordinaunce, ben holicoombes, for they yeven swetenesse to the soule, and holocounesse to the body.' And, wif, because of thy swete wordes, and eke for I have proved and assaid thy grette sapience and thy grette trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thing."

"Now, sire," (quod dame Prudence) "and sin that ye vouchesafe to be governed by my conseil, I wol enforce you how that ye shuln governe yourself, in chusing of youre conseilours. Ye shuln first in alle your werkes mekely besochen to the heigh God, that he wol be your conseilour: and shapeth you to swiche entente that he yewe you conseil and comforte, as taught Tobie his sone; 'At alle times thou shalt blesse God, and praise him to dresse thy wayes; and loke that alle thy counsels ben in him for evermore.' Seint James eke sayth; 'if any of you have neede of sapience, axe it of God.' And afterwarde, than shulken ye take conseil in yourself, and examine wel your own thoughtes, of swicha thinges as you thinketh that ben best for your profit. And than shuln ye drive fro your herte three thinges that ben contrarious to good conseil; that is to sayn, ire, covetise, and hastinesse.

"First, he that axeth conseil of himself, certes he must be withouten ire, for many causes. The first is this: he that hath gret ire and wrath in himself, he wenech alway that he may do thing that he may not do. And secondly, he that is irous and wroth, he may not wel deme: and he that may not wel deme, may not wel conseilie. The thirde is this; 'he that is irous and wroth,' as sayth Senek, 'ne may not speke but blameful thinges, and with his vicious wordes he stirreth other folk to anger and to ire.' And eke, sire, ye must drive covetise out of your herte. For the apostle sayth, that 'covetise is the rote of alle harmes.' And trusteth wel, that a covetous man ne can not deme ne thinke, but only to fultille the ende of his covetise; and certes that no may never ben accomplished; for ever the more haboundance that he hath of richesse, the more he desreth. And, sire, ye must also drive out of youre herte hastinesse: for certes ye ne moun not deme for the beste a soden thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye must advise you on it ful ofte: for as ye have herde herebefore, the commune proverbe is this; 'He that sone demeth, sone repenteth.'

"Sire, ye ne be not alway in like disposition, for certes som thing that sometime semeth to you that it is good for to do, another time it semeth to you the contrarie.

"And whan ye han taken conseil in yourself, and han demed by good deliberation swiche thing as you semeth beste, than rede I you that ye kepe it secree. Bewerreye not your conseil to no persone, but if so be that ye wenen sikely, that thurgh

your beweying your condition shal be to you more profitable. For Jesus Sirak saith: 'Neither to thy foe ne to thy frend discover not thy secree, ne thy folie: for they wold yere you audience and loking, and supportation in youre presence, and soorne you in youre absence.' Another clerk saith, that 'scarily shal thou finden any persone that may kepe thy conseil secretly. The book saith; 'While that thou kepest thy conseil in this herte, thou kepest it in thy prison: and when thou bewreyest thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his snare.' And therefore you is better to hide your conseil in your herte, than to preye him to whom ye han bewreyed your conseil, that he wol kepe it close and stille. For Seneca saith: 'If so be that thou ne mayst not thin owen conseil hide, how darest thou preyen any other wight thy conseil secretly to kepe?' But natheles, if thou wene sikerly that thy beweying of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condition to stonden in the better plight, than shalt thou telle him thy conseil in this wise. First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that; ne shewe him not thy will ne thin entente: for trowe wel that comunly these conseilours be flaterers, namely the conseilours of grete lordes, for they enforcen hem alway rather to speken pleasant wordes enclining to the lordes lust, than wordes that ben trewe or profitable: and therefore men saith, that 'the riche man hath selde good conseil, but if he have it of himself.' And after that thou shalt consider thy frendes and thin enemies. And as touching thy frendes, thou shalt consider which of hem ben most faithful and most wise, and eldest and most approved in counselling: and of hem shalt thou axe thy conseil, as the cas requireth.

"I say, that first ye shul clepe to youre conseil youre frendes that ben trewe. For Salomon saith: that 'right as the herte of a man deliteth in savour that is swete, right so the conseil of trewe frendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule.' He saith also, 'Ther may nothing be likened to the trewe frend: for certes gold ne silver ben not so muche worth as the good will of a trewe frend.' And eke he saith, that 'a trewe frend is a strong defence; who so that it findeth, certes he findeth a gret tresor.' Than shuln ye eke consider if that your trewe frender be discrete and wise: for the book saith, 'Axe alway thy conseil of hem that ben wise.' And by this same reson shuln ye clepen to youre conseil youre frendes that be of age, swiche as han seyn and ben expert in many thinges, and ben approved in counsellinges. For the book saith, 'In olde men is al the sapience, and in longe time the prudence.' And Tullius saith, that 'grete thinges ne ben not ay accomplished by strengthe, ne by deliverance of body, but by good conseil, by autoritee of persones, and by science: the which three thinges ne ben not feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encreasen day by day.' And than shuln ye kepe this for a general rule. First ye shuln clepe to youre conseil a fewe of youre frendes that ben especial. For Salomon saith; 'Many frendes have thou, but among a thousand chese thee on to be thy conseilour.' For al be it so, that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayest afterwarde tell it to mo folk, if it be neded. But loke alway that thy conseilours have thilke three conditions that I have sayd before; that is to say, that they be trewe, wise, and of olde experience. And

werke not alway in every ned by on conseilour alone: for sometime behoveth it to be counselled by many. For Salomon saith; 'Salvation of thinges is wher as ther ben many conseilours.'

"Now sith that I have told you of which folk ye shulde be counselled: now wol I telle you which conseil ye ought to eschue. First ye shuln eschue the counselling of foolis; for Salomon saith, 'Take no conseil of a fool: for he ne can conseil but after his owen lust and his affection.' The book saith, 'The propretee of a fool is this: he troweth lightly harme of every man, and lightly troweth all bountee in himself.' Thou shalt eke eschue the counselling of all flaterers, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preisen youre persone by flaterie, than for to tell you the sothfastnesse of thinges.

"Wherefore Tullius saith, 'Among alle the petulencies that ben in frendship, the grettest is flaterie.' And therefore it is more neded that thou eschue and drede flaterers, than any other peple. The book saith, 'Thou shalt rather drede and see fro the swete wordes of flaterers/preisers, than for the egre wordes of thy frend that saith thee nothes.' Salomon saith, that 'the wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacchon innocents.' He saith also, 'He that spekech to his frend wordes of swetenesse and of plesaunce, he setteth a net before his feet to cacchon him.' And therefore saith Tullius, 'Eschue not thin eres to flaterers, ne take no conseil of wordes of flaterie.' And Caton saith, 'Avyne the wel, and eschue wordes of swetenesse and of plesaunce.' And eke thou shalt eschue the counselling of thin olde enemies that ben reconciled. The book saith, that 'no wight retourneth safely into the grace of his olde enemy.' And Ysaie saith, 'Ne trust not to hem, to which thou hast sometime had werre or enmittee, ne telle hem not thy conseil.' And Senek telleth the cause why. 'It may not be,' saith he, 'ther as gret fire hath long time endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warrenesse.' And therefore saith Salomon, 'In thin olde foe trow thou never.' For sikerly, though thin enemy be reconciled, and maketh thee chere of humiltee, and loveth to thee with his hand, as trow him never: for certes he maketh thilke feised humiltee more for his profite, than for any love of thy persone; because that he deemeth to have victorie over thy persone by swiche feined constance, the which victorie he might not have by strif of werre. And Peter Alphonse saith; 'Make no felawship with thin olde enemies, for if thou do hem bountee, they wolden perverten it to wickednesse.' And eke thou must eschue the counselling of hem that ben thy servaunts, and beren thee gret reverence: for paraventure they feyn it more for drede than for love. And therefore saith a philosopre in this wise: 'Ther is no wight partly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth.' And Tullius saith, 'Ther n'is no might so gret of any emperour that longe may endure, but if he have more love of the peple than drede.' Thou shalt also eschue the counselling of folk that ben dronkelewe, for they ne can no conseil hide. For Salomon saith, 'Ther n'is no privete ther as regneth dronkenesse.' Ye shuln also have in suspect the counselling of swiche folk as conseilou you o thing prively, and conseilou you the contrarie openly. For Cassiodore saith, that 'it is a manere sleighte to hinder his enemy when he sheweth to don a thing openly, and writeth prively the contrary.' Thou shalt also have in

respet the conseilung of wicked folk, for hir conseil is alway ful of fraude. And David sayth; 'Blisful is that man that hath not folwed the conseilung of strerres.' Thou shalt also eschue the conseilung of yonge folk, for hir conseilung is not ripe, as Solomon saith.

"Now, sire, sith I have shewed you of which folk ye shullen take youre conseil, and of which folk ye shullen eschue the conseil, now wol I teche you how ye shuln examine your conseil after the doctrine of Tullius. In examining than of your conseilours, ye shuln considre many thinges. Alder first thou shalt considre that in thike thing that thou purpouse, and upon what thing that thou wot have conseil, that veray trouthe be said and conserved; this is to say, telle trewely thy tale: for be that sayth false, may not wei be conselled in that cas, of which he lieth. And after this, thou shalt considre the thinges that accorden to that thou purpouse for to do by thy conseilours, if reson acord therin, and eke if thy might may atteine therin, and if the more part and the better part of this conseilours accorden therin or no. Than shalt thou considre what thing shal folwe of that conseilung; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profit, or damage, and many other thinges: and in alle thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weire alle other thinges. Than shalt thou considre of what roote is engendred the matere of thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceive and engendre. Thou shalt eke considre alle the causes, from whences they ben sprongen. And when thou hast examined thy conseil, as I have said, and which partie is the better and more profitable, and hast appered it by many wise folk and olde, than shalt thou considre, if thou mayst performe it and maken of it a good ende. For certes reson wol not that any man shulde begyne a thing, but if he mighte performe it as him ought: ne no wight shulde take upon him so hevye a charge, that he might not beren it. For the proverbe sayth; 'He that to mauche embraceth disbetweeth litel.' And Caton saith; 'Assay to do wiche thinges as thou hast power to don, lest the charge oppresse thee so sore, that thee behoveth to weire thing that thou hast begonne.' And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst performe a thing or non, chese rather to suffre than to begyne.' And Peter Alphonse sayth; 'If thou hast might to don a thing, of which thou must repente, it is better may than ya.' This is to sayn, that thee is better to holde thy tonge stille than for to speke. Than mayst thou understonde by stronger reasons, that if thou hast power to performe a werk, of which thou shalt repente, than is thee better that thou suffre than beginne. Wel sain they that defenden every wight to assaye a thing of which he is in doute, whether he may performe it or non. And after when ye han examined youre conseil, as I have said before, and knowen wel that ye moun performe your emprise, confirme it than sadly til it be at an ende.

"Now is it reson and time that I shewe you whan, and wherefore, that ye moun change your conseil, and without reprove. Sothly, a man may change his purpos and his conseil, if the cause ceseth, or whan a newe cas betideth. For the Jawe saith, that 'upon thinges that newly betiden, behoveth newe conseil.' And Seneca sayth; 'If thy conseil is comen to the ende of thin enemies, change thy conseil.' Thou mayst also change thy conseil, if so be that thou

find that by error, or by other cause, harme or damage may betide. Also if thy conseil be dishoneste, other elies come of dishoneste cause, change thy conseil: for the lawes sain, that 'all behestes that ben dishoneste ben of no value:' and eke, if so be that it be impossible, or may not goodly be performed or kept.

"And take this for a general rule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly, that it may not be chaunged for no condition that may betide, I say that thilke conseil is wicked."

This Melibeus, when he had herd the doctrine of his wif dame Prudence, answered in this wise.

"Dame," quod he, "as yet unto this time ye han wel and covenably taught me, as in general, how I shal governe me in the chesing and in the with-holding of my conseilours; but now wold I fain that ye wold condescend in especial, and telle me how liketh you, or what semeth you by oure conseilours that we han chosen in our present nede."

"My lord," quod she, "I beseeche you in alle humblesse, that ye wol not willfully repleie again my reson, ne distempe your herte, though I speke thing that you displese; for God wote that, as in min entente, I speke it for your beste, for youre honour and for youre profit eke, and sothly I hope that youre benignitee wol taken it in patience. And trusteth me wel," quod she, "that youre conseil as in this cas ne shulde not (as to speke proprely) be called a conseilung, but a motio or a moving of folke, in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wise.

"First and forward, ye han erred in the assembling of youre conseilours; for ye sholde first han cleped a fewe folk to youre conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde be nede. But certes ye han sodeinly cleped to your conseil a gret multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anyous for to here. Also ye han erred, for ther as ye shulde han only cleped to youre conseil youre trewe frendes, olde and wise, ye han cleped strange folk, yonge folk, false flaterers, and enemies reconciled, and folk that don you reverence withouten love. And eke ye han erred, for ye han brought with you to youre conseil ire, covetise, and hastifness, the which three thinges ben contrary to every conseil honest and profitable: the which three thinges ye ne han not ariemised or destroyed, neither in youreself ne in youre conseilours, as you ought. Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to youre conseilours youre talent and youre affections to make werre anon, and for to do vengeance, and they han espyed by youre wordes to what thing ye ben enclined: and therefore han they conselled you rather to youre talent, than to youre profit. Ye han erred also, for it semeth that you sufficeth to han ben conselled by these conseilours only, and with litel avis, whereas in so high and so gret a nede, it had ben necessarie mo conseilours, and more deliberation to performe your emprise. Ye han erred also, for ye han not examined your conseil in the foresaid manere, ne in due manere, as the cas requireth. Ye han erred also, for ye han makid no division betwix youre conseilours; this is to sayn, betwix youre trewe frendes and youre feined conseilours: ne ye han not knowe the wille of your frendes, olde and wise, but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hocchepot, and enclined your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre, and ther be ye condescended; and sith ye wot wel that

men shuln alway finde a greter nombre of fooles than of wise men, and therefore the conseilings that ben at congregacions and multitude of folk, ther as men take more regard to the nombre, than to the sapience of perones, ye seem wel, that in swiche conseilings fooles han the maistrie." Melibeus answered and said agein: "I graunte wel that I have erred; but ther as thou hast told me herebefore, that he n'is not to blame that chaungeth his conseil in certain cas, and for certain and just causes, I am al redy to change my conseil right as thou wilt devise. The proverbe sayth; 'for to don sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere long in sinne is werke of the divel.'"

To this sentence answered anon dame Prudence, and saide; "Examineth" (quod she) "wel your conseil, and let us see which of hem han spoken most reasonably, and taught you best conseil. And for as much as the examination is necessarie, let us beginne at the surgens and at the physicians, that first spaken in this mater. I say that physicians and surgens han sayde you in youre conseil discretly, as hem oughte: and in hir speche seiden ful wisely, that to the office of hem appertemeth to don to every wight honour and profite, and no wight to anoie, and after hir craft to don grete diligence unto the cure of hem which that they han in hir governance. And, sire, right as they han answered wisely and discretly, right so rede I that they be highly and soverainly guerdoned for hir noble speche, and eke for they shulden do the more ententif besinne in the curacion of thy dere daughter. For al be it so that they ben your frendes, therefore shullen ye not suffren, that they serve you for nought, but ye oughte the rather guerdone hem, and shewe hem youre largesse. And as touching the proposition, which the physicians entreden in this cas, this it to sein, that in maladies, that a contrarie is warshed by another contrarie: I wold fain knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is youre sentence," "Certes," quod Melibeus, "I understode it in this wise; that right as they han don me a contrarie, right so shulde I don hem another; for right as they han venged hem upon me and don me wrong, right so shall I venge me upon hem, and don hem wrong, and than have I cured a contrarie by another."

"Lo, lo," quod dame Prudence, "how lightly is every man inclined to his own desire and his own plesance! Certes" (quod she) "the wordes of the physicians ne shulden not han ben understonden in that wise; for certes wickednesse is not contrarie to wickednesse, ne vengeance to vengeance, ne wrong to wrong, but they ben semblable: and therefore a vengeance is not warshed by another vengeance, ne a wrong by another wrong, but everich of hem encreseth and aggreggeth other. But certes the wordes of the physicians shulden ben understode in this wise; for good and wickednesse ben two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeance and suffraunce, discord and accord, and many other thinges: but certes, wickednesse shal be warshed by goodness, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of other thinges. And hereto accordeth seint Poule the apostic in many places: he saith, 'Ne yelde not harme for harme, ne wicked speche for wicked speche, but do wel to him that doth to thee harme, and blesse him that saith to thee harme.' And in many other places he amonesteth pees and accord. But now wol I speke to you of the conseil,

which that was yeven to you by the men of late, and the wise folk, and old folke, that sayden alle by on accord as ye han herd before, that over alle thinges ye shuln do youre diligence to kepe youre persone, and to warrestore your house: and seiden also, that in this cas you oughte for to werchen ful avisely and with grete deliberacion. And, sire, as to the first point, that toucheth the keeping of youre persone, ye shuln understand, that he that hath werre, shal ever more devoutly and mekely preise before alle thinges, that Jesu Crist of his mercie wol han him in his protection, and ben his soverain helping at his nede: for certes in this world ther is no wight that may be consailed ne kept sufficiently, withoute the keeping of oure lord Jesu Crist. To this sentence accordeth the prophete David that sayth: 'If God ne kepe the citee, in idel waketh he that kepeth it.' Now, sire, than shuln ye comitte the keeping of youre persone to youre trows frendes, that ben appoved and yknowe, and of hem shuln ye axen helpe, youre persone for to kepe. For Calan saith: 'If thou have nede of helpe, axe it of thy frendes, for ther n'is non so good a physicien as thy trowe friend.' And after this than shuln ye kepe you fro alle straunge folk, and fro lieres, and have alway in suspect hir compaignie. For Piers Alphonse sayth: 'Ne take no compaignie by the way of a strange man, but if so be that thou have knowen him of lenger time: and if so be that he falle into thy compaignie paraventours withouten thin assent, enquire than, as subtilly as thou maist, of his conversation, and of his lif before, and feine thy way, saying thou wolt go thider as thou wolt not go: and if he bere a spere, hold thee on the right side, and if he here a sword, hold thee on his left side.' And after this than shuln ye kepe you wisely from all swiche manere pepic as I have sayed before, and hem and hir conseil eschue. And after this than shuln ye kepe you in swiche manere, that for any presumption of youre strengthe, that ye ne despise not, ne account not the might of your adversary so lite, that ye let the keeping of youre persone for your presumption; for every wise man dredeth his enemy. And Salomon sayth; 'Weful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes he that though the hardnesse of his herte, and through the hardnesse of himself, hath to grete presumption, him shal evil betide.' Than shuln ye evermo countrewaite emboysements, and alle espialle. For Senek sayth, that 'the wise man that dredeth harme, eschuet harme; ne he ne falleth into perils, that perils eschuet.' And al be it so, that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shalt thou alway do thy diligence in keeping of thy persone; this is to sayn, ne be not negligent to kepe thin persone, not only for thy gretest enemy, but also for thy leste enemy. Senek sayth; 'A man that is wel avisid, he dredeth his leste enemy.' Ovide sayth, that 'the litel weel wol siee the grete holl and the wilde hart.' And the book sayth; 'A litel thorne may prike a king ful sore, and a litel hound wol hold the wilde bore.' But natheles, I may not thou shalt be so coward, that thou doute wher as is no drede. The book saith, 'that som men [han taught hir deceivour, for they han to muche dreded] to be deceived.' Yet shalt thou drede to be empoyoned; and [therefore shalt thou] kepe thee fro the compaignie of scorers: for the book sayth, 'With scorers ne make no compaignie, but see hir wordes as venins.'

"Now as to the second point, wheras youre wise counsellours counselled you to warnestore your hous with gret diligence, I wolde fain knowe how that ye woldestonde thilke wordes, and what is your sentence."

Melbens answered and saide; "Certes I understode it in this wise, that I shal warnestore min hou with toures, swiche as han castelles and other manere edifices, and armours, and artelies, by which thinges I may my persone and myn hous so luge and defenden, that min enemies shuln ben in drede min hous for to approche."

To this sentence answered anon Prudence. "Warnestoring" (quod she) "of heighe toures and of grette edifices, is with grette costages and with gret travaille; and when that they ben accomplished, yet ben they not worth a stre, but if they ben defended by trewe frendes, that ben olde and wise. And understode wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garrison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as his goodes, is, that be beloved with his subgets, and with his neighbores. For thus sayth Tullius, that 'ther is a maner garrison, that no man may venquish ne discomfite, and that is a lord to be beloved of his citizens, and of his peple.'

"Now, sire, as to the thridde point, wheras youre olde and wise counsellours sayden, that you ne coult not sodeinly ne hastily proceden in this matere, but that you oughte purveyen and appareiln you in this cas, with gret diligence and gret deliberacion; trewely, I trowe, that they sayden right wisely and right soth. For Tullius sayth: 'In every sode or thou begynne it, appareile thee with gret diligence.' Than say I, that in vengeanceuce thing, is werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring er this begynne, I rede that thou appareile thee therto, and do it with gret deliberacion. For Tullius sayth, that 'longe appareilnng tofore the bataille, maketh short victorie.' And Cassiodorus sayth: 'The garrison is stronger, when it is longe time advised.'

"But now let us speken of the conseil that was accorded by youre neighbores, swiche as don you reverence withouten love; youre olde enemies reverence; your flaterers, that consilled you certayne thinges prively, and openly consilled you the contrary; the yonge folk also, that consilled you to wage you, and to make werre anon. Certes, sire, as I have sayde before ye han gretly erred to this ende, whiche maner folk to youre conseil, which counsellours ben ynough reproved by the maner aforesaid. But natheles, let us now descende to the special. Ye shal first proceden after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes the trouthe of this doctrine or of this conseil nedeth not diligently to enquire, for it is wel wist, which they ben that han don to you this trepas and vilanie, and how many they be; and in what manere they han don to you all this wrong, and all this vilanie. And after this, than shuln ye examine the second condition, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. For Tullius putteth a thing, which that he clepeth concerning: this is to sayn, who ben they, and which ben they, and how many, that consenten to your conseil: is thy wilfulness, to don hastif vengeance. And let us considere also who ben they, and how many ben they, and which ben they, that consenten to youre adversaries. As to the first point, it is wel known which folk they be that consenten to youre wilfulness. For trewely, all tho

that consilleden you to maken sodein werre, ne ben not youre frendes. Let us now considere which ben they that ye holden so gredly youre frendes, as to youre persone: for al be it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne hen but allone: for certes ye ne han no child but a daughter, ne ye ne han no brethren, ne cousins germalus, ne non other nigh kinrede, wherfore that youre enemies for drede shulde stinte to plede with you, or to destroye youre persone. Ye knowen also, that your riches moten ben dispended in diverse parties; and when that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel regard to venge youre deth. But thin enemies ben throe, and they han many brethren, children, cousins, and other nigh kinrede: and though so were, that thou haddest slain of hem two or three, yet dwellen they ynow to wreken hir deth, and to sleen thy persone. And though so be that youre kinrede be more stedfast and siker than the kin of your adversaries, yet natheles youre kinrede is but a fer kinrede; they ben but litel sibbe to you, and the kin of youre enemies ben nigh sibbe to hem. And certes as in that, hir condition is better than yours. Than let us considere also of the conselling of hem that consilled you to take sodein vengeance, whether it accorde to reson: and certes, ye knowe wel, nay; for as by right and reson, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the juge that hath the jurisdiction of it, when it is ygraunted him to take thilke vengeance hastily, or attemptely, as the lawe requireth. And yet moreover of thilke word that Tullius clepeth consenting, thou shalt considere, if thy might and thy power may consente and suffice to thy wilfulness, and to thy counsellours: and certes, thou mayest wel say, that nay; for sikerly, as far to speke proprely, we moun do nothing but ooly swiche thing as we moun don rightfully: and certes rightfully ye ne mowe take no vengeance, as of your propre auctoritee. Than mowe ye sen that your power ne consenteth not, ne accordeth not to your wilfulness. Now let us examine the thridde point, that Tullius clepeth consequent. Thou shalt understonde, that the vengeance that thou purposeth for to take, is the consequent, and therof folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre, and other damages withouten nombre, of which we ben not ware, as at this time. And as touching the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth engendring, thou shalt consider, that this wrong which that is don to thee, is engendred of the hate of thin enemies, and of the vengeance taking upon that wold engender another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wasting of riches, as I sayde erc.

"Now, sire, as to the point, that Tullius clepeth causes, which that is the last point, thou shalt understonde, that the wrong that thou hast received, hath certayne causes, which that clerkes clepen *origens*, and *efforus*, and *causa longinqua*, and *causa propinqua*, this is to sayn, the fer cause, and the nigh cause. The fer cause is almighty God, that is cause of alle thinges: the ner cause, is thin tres enemies; the cause accidental was hate; the cause material, ben the five woundes of thy daughter; the cause formal, is the maner of hir werking, that broughten ladders, and clomben in at thy windowes; the cause final was for to see thy daughter; it letted not in as muche as is hem wa. But for to speke of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally betide of hem in this cas,

ne can I not deme, but by conjecting and supposing: for we shuln suppose, that they shuln come to a wicked ende, because that the book of Decrees sayth: 'Selden or with gret peine ben causes ybrought to a good ende, whan they ben badly begonne.'

"Now, sire, if men wold axen me, why that God suffred men to do you this vilanie, certes I can not wel answer, as for no sothfastnesse. For the Apostle sayth, that 'the sciences, and the jugements of oure Lord God Almighty ben ful depe; ther may no man comprehend ne serche hem sufficiently.' Natheles, by certain presumptions and conjectings, I hold and belere, that God, which that is ful of justice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffered this betide, by just cause reasonable.

"Thy name is Melibee, this is to sayn, a man that drinketh hony. Thou hast drokke so muche hony of swete temporel riches, and delices, and honours of this world, that thou art drocken, and hast forgotten Jesu Crist thy creatour: thou ne hast not don to him swiche honour and reverence as thee ought, ne thou ne hast wel ytaken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that sayth: 'Under the honey of the goodes of thy body is hid the vesime that sleth the soule.' And Salomon sayth: 'If thou hast founden hony, etc of it that sufficeth; for if thou etc of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe, and be nedy and poore.' And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath tourped away from thee his face, and his eres of misericorde; and also he hath suffred, that thou hast ben punished in the manere that thou hast ytrespassed. Thou hast don sinne again oure Lord Crist, for certes the three enemies of mankind, that is to sayn, the flesh, the feod, and the world, thou hast suffred hem entre into thin herte wilfully, by the windowes of thy body, and hast not defended thyself sufficiently again hir assautes, and hir temptacions, so that they han wounded thy soule in five places, this is to sayn the dedly sinnes that ben entred into thy herte by thy five wittes: and in the same manere oure Lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemies ben entred into thy houn by the windowes, and han ywounded thy daughter in the foresayd manere."

"Certes," quod Melibee, "I see wel that ye enforce you muchel by wordes to overcome me, in swiche manere, that I shal not venge me on mine enemies, shewing me the perils and the evils that mighten falle of this vengeance: but who so wolde considere in alle vengeance the perils and evils that mighten sue of vengeance taking, a man wold never take vengeance, and that were harme: for by the vengeance taking ben the wicked men diservered from the gooder men. And they that han will to do wickednesse, restrainen hir wicked purpos, whan they sen the punishing and the chastising of the trespassours." [To this answered dame Prudence: "Certes," quod she, "I graunte you that of vengeance taking cometh muche evil and muche good; but vengeance taking appertaineth not to everich on, but only to juges, and to hem that han the jurisdiction over the trespassours;] and yet say I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in taking vengeance of another man, right so sinneth the juge, if he do no vengeance of hem that it han deserved. For Senek sayth thus: 'That maister' (he sayth) 'is good, that preveth shrewes.' And Cassiodore sayth: 'A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he wot and knoweth, that it displeth to the

juges and souveraines.' And another sayth: 'The juge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes.' And Seint Poule the Apostle sayth in his Epistle, whan he writeth unto the Romaines, that 'the juges beren not the spere withouten cause, but they beren it to punishe the shrewes and misdoers, and for to defende the gooder men.' If ye wuln than take vengeance of youre enemies, ye shuln retourne or have your recours to the juge, that hath the jurisdiction upon hem, and he shal punishe hem, as the lawe axeth and requireth."

"A," sayd Melibee, "this vengeance liketh me nothing. I bethink me now, and take hede how that fortune hath nourished me from my childhode, and hath holpen me to passe many a stronge pas: now wol I assayen hire, trowing, with Goddes helpe, that she shal helpe me my shame for to venge."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shuln not assaye fortune by no way: ne ye ne shuln not lene or bowe unto hire, after the wordes of Senek; for thinges that ben folly don, and tho that ben don in hope of fortune, shuln never come to good ende. And as the same Senek sayth: 'The more clere and the more shining that fortune is, the more brotel and the sooner broke she is.' Trusteth not in hire, for she n'is not stedfast ne stable: for whan thou trowest to be most siker and seure of hire helpe, she wol faille and deceive thee. And wheras ye sayn, that fortune hath nourished you from youre childhode, I say that in so muchel ye shuln the less truste in hire, and in hire vil. For Senek sayth: 'What man that is nourished by fortune, she maketh him a gret fool.' Now thus sin ye desire and axe vengeance, and the vengeance, that is don after the lawe and before the juge, ne liketh you not, and the vengeance, that is don in hope of fortune, is perilous and uncertain, than have ye non other remedie, but for to have your recours unto the souveraine juge, that vengeth alle vilanies, and wronges; and he shal venge you, after that himself witnesseth, wheras he sayth: 'Leveth the vengeance to me, and I shal do it.'"

Melibee answered: "If I ne venge me of the vilanie that men han don to me, I sompne or wane hem, that han don to me vilanie, and alle othe, to do me another vilanie. For it is written; 'If thou take no vengeance of an olde vilany, thou sompnest thin adversaries to do thee a newe vilanie:' and also for my suffraunce, men wolden do me so muche vilanie, that I might neither bere it ne sustene; and so shulde I ben put and holden over lowe. For som mensein, 'In muchel suffering shul many things falle unto thee, which thou shalt not mowe suffre.'"

"Certes," quod Prudence, "I graunte you wel, that overmuchel suffraunce is not good, but yet as fothwel it is not therof, that every persone to whom men don vilanie, shuld take of it vengeance: for that appertaineth and longeth all only to the juges; for they shul venge the vilanies and injuries: and therefore tho two auctoritees, that ye han sayd above, ben only understanden in the juges: for whan they suffren overmuchel the wronges and vilanies to be don, withouten punishing, they sompne not a mas all only for to do newe wronges, but they commaunden it: al so as a wise mansayth, that 'the juge that correcteth not the sinner, commaundeth and biddeth him do sinne.' And the juges and souveraines mighten in hir load so muche suffre of the shrewes and misdoers, that they shulden by swiche

influence, by proces of tyme, wexen of swiche power and might, that they shuld putte out the juges and the coveraieses from hir places, and so late maken hem lese hir lordshippes.

"But now let us putte, that ye have love to venge you: I say ye be not of might and power, as now ye venge you: for if ye wol maken comparison unto the might of youre adversaries, ye shuld finde in many thinges, that I have shewed you or this, that hir condition is better than yours, and therefore say I, that it is good as now, that ye suffre and be patient.

"Forthermore ye knowen wel, that after the comune law, it is a woodnesse, a man to strive with a stronger, or a more mighty man than he is himself: and for to strive with a man of even strengthe, that is to say, with as strong a man as he is, it is peril; and for to strive with a weaker man, it is late; and therefore shulde a man flee striving, as much as he mighte. For Salomon sayth: 'It is a gret wardship to a man to kepe him fro noise and melle.' And if it so happe, that a man of gretter mighte and strengthe than thou art, do thee grevance: studie and besse thee rather to stille the same grevance, than for to venge thee. For Senek sayth, that 'he pretteth him in a gret peril, that stryth with a gretter man than he is himself.' And Cato sayth; 'If a man of higher estat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee shoye or grevance, suffre him: for he that ones hath greved thee, may another tyme releve thee and helpe thee.' Yet sette I say, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge you, I say that ther beon ful many thinges that shuld restraine you of vengeaunce taking, and make you for to encline to suffre, and for to have patience in the wronges that han ben don to you.

First and forward, if ye wol considere the defaults that ben in youre owen persone, for which defaultes God hath suffred you have this tribulacion, as I have sayd to you herebefore. For the pater sayth, that 'we oughten patiently taken the tribulacions that comes to us, when that we thinke and consideren, that we han deserved to have hem.' And Saint Gregorie sayth, that 'whan a man considereth wel the nombre of his defaultes and of his synes, the peines and the tribulacions that he suffreth, seemen the lesse unto him.' And in as muche as him thinketh his synes more hevye and grevous, in so muche seemeth his peine the lighter and the euer unto him. Also ye owen to encline and bowe youre herte, to take the patience of our lord Jesu Crist, as sayth Saint Peter in his epistles.

'Jesu Crist' (he sayth) 'hath suffred for us, and yeven example to every man to folwe and sue him, for he did never synne, ne never came ther a synful word out of his mouth. Whan men cursed him, he cursed hem nougth; and whan men beten him, he smacked hem nougth.' Also the gret patience, which seintes, that ben in Paradis, han had in tribulacions that they han suffred, withouten be desert or gilt, oughte muchel stirre you to patience. Forthermore, ye shulde enforce you to have patience, considering that the tribulacions of this world be litel while endure, and some passed to us and gon, and the joye that a man seketh to han by patience in tribulacions is perdurable; after that the apostle sayth in his epistle; 'The joye of God,' he sayth, 'is perdurable,' that is to sayn, everlasting. Also troweth and belevech stedfastly, that he n'is not wel yworshid as we ytaught, that

cannot have patience, or wol not receive patience. For Salomon sayth, that 'the doctrine and wit of a man is knowen by patience.' And in another place he sayeth, that 'he that is patient, governeth him by gret prudence.' And the same Salomon seith: 'The angry and wrathful man maketh noises, and the patient man attempteth and stilleth hem.' He seith also, 'It is more worth to be patient than for to be right strong.' And he that may have the lordshipe of his owen herte, is more to praise, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh gret ciites. And therefore sayth Saint James in his epistle, that 'patience is a gret vertue of perfection'."

"Certes," quod Melibe, "I graunte you, dame Prudence, that patience is a gret vertue of perfection, but every man may not have the perfection that ye seken, ne I am not of the nombre of the right perfit men: for min herte may never be in peas, unto the tyme it be venged. And al be it so, that it was gret peril to min enemies to do me a vilanie in taking vengeaunce upon me, yet token they non hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wicked will and hir covage: and therefore me thinketh men oughten not reprove me, though I put me in a litel peril for to venge me, and though I do a gret excess, that is to sayn, that I venge on outrage by another."

"A," quod dame Prudence, "ye sayn your will and as ye liketh; but in no cas of the world a man shulde not dou outrage ne excess, for to venge him. For Cassidore sayth, that 'as evil doth he that vengeth him by outrage, so he that doth the outrage.' And therefore ye shuld venge you after the ordre of right, that is to sayn, by the lawe, and not by excess, ne by outrage. And also if you would venge you of the outrage of youre adversaries, in other manere than right commaundeth, ye synen. And therefore sayth Senek, that 'a man shal never venge shrewednesse by shrewednesse.' And if ye say that right axeth a man to defende violence by violence, and fighting by fighting: certes ye say soth, when the defence is don withouten intervale, or withouten tarrying or delay, for to defende him, and not for to venge. And it behoveth, that a man putte swiche attemptaunce in his defence, that men have no cause ne reason to reprove him, that defendeth him, of outrage and excess, for elles were it againe reason. Parde ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now, for to defende you, but for to venge you: and so sheweth it, that ye han no will to do youre dede attemptrely: and therefore me thinketh that patience is good. For Salomon sayth, that 'he that is not patient, shal have gret harme.'"

"Certes," quod Melibe, "I graunte you, that whan a man is impatient and wrothe, of that that toucheth him not, and that apperteineth not unto him, though it harme him it is no wonder. For the lawe sayth, that 'he is culpable that extremeth or medleth with swiche thing, as apperteineth not unto him.' And Salomon sayth, that 'he that extremeth of the noise or strif of another man, is like to him that taketh a strange hound by the eres: for right as he that taketh a strange hound by the eres is otherwhile bitten with the hound, right in the same wise, it is reason that he have harme, that by his impatience medleth him of the noise of another man, whereas it apperteineth not unto him.' But ye knowe wel, that this dede, that is to sayn, my greof and my disce, toucheth me

right wight. And therefore though I be wroth and impatient, it is no mervaille; and (saving your grace) I cannot see that it might greatly harme me, though I took vengeance, for I am richer and more mighty than min enemies ben; and wel knowe ye, that by money and by having grete possessions, ben alle thinges of this world governed. And Salomon sayth, that 'alle thinges obeye to money.'

When Prudence had hard hire husband avaunte him of his riches and of his mooney, dispreising the power of his adversaries, she spake and sayd in this wise: "Certes, dere sire, I graunte you that ye ben riche and mighty, and that riches ben good to hem that han wel ygeten hem, and that wel come usen hem. For right as the body of a man may not liven withouten soul, no more may it liven withouten temporel goodes, and by riches may a man gete him grete frendes. And therefore sayth Pamphilus: 'If a netherdes daughter' (he sayth) 'be riche, she may chese of a thousand men, which she wol take to hire husband: for of a thousand men on wol not forsaken hire ne refusen hire.' And this Pamphilus saith also: 'If thou be right happy, that is to sayn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt finde a grete nombre of felawes and frendes; and if thy fortune chaunge, that thou waxe poure, farewell frendshipe and felawshipe, for thou shalt be al alone withouten any compaignie, but if it be the compaignie of poure folk.' And yet sayth this Pamphilus moreover, that 'they that ben bond and thralle of linage, shuln be made worth and noble by riches.' And right so as by riches ther comen many goodes, right so by poverté come ther many harmes and eviles: for grete poverté constraineth a man to do many eviles. And therefore clepeth Castidore poverté the moder of ruine, that is to sayn, the moder of overthrowing or falling down. And therefore sayth Piers Alphonse: 'On of the gretest adversities of this world, is whan a free man by kinde, or of birthe, is constrained by poverté to eten the almese of his enemy.' And the same sayth Innocent in on of his bookes: he sayth, that 'sorrowful and mishappy is the condition of a poure begger, for if he axe not his mete, he dieth for hunger, and if he axe, he dieth for shame: and algate necessitee constraineth him to axe.' And therefore sayth Salomon, that 'better it is to die, than for to have swiche poverté.' And as the same Salomon sayth: 'better is it to die of bitter deth, than for to liven in swiche wise.' By these reasons that I have said unto you, and by many other reasons that I coude saye, I graunte you that riches ben good to hem that wel geten hem, and to hem that wel usen the riches: and therefore wol I shewe how yeshuln behave you in gadering of youre riches, and in what manere ye shuln usen hem.

"First, ye shuln geten hem withouten grete desir, by good leizer, sokingly, and not over hastily, for a man that is to desiring to gete riches, abandoneth him first to thefte and alle other eviles. And therefore sayth Salomon: 'He that hasteth him to besily to waxe riche, he shal be non innocent.' He sayth also, that 'the riches that hastily cometh to a man, come and lightly goeth and passeth from a man, but that riches that cometh litel and litel, waxeth alway and multiplieth.' And, sire, ye shuln gete riches by youre wit and by youre

travaille, unto youre profits, and that withouten wrong or harme doing to any other persone. For the lawe sayth: 'Ther maketh no man himselfe riche, if he do harme to another wight;' this is to say, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man maketh himselfe riche, unto the harme of another persone. And Tullius sayth, that 'so sorwe, ne no drede of deth, ne nothing that may falle unto a man, is so muchel agens nature, as a man to encrease his owen profits, to harme of another man.' And though the grete men and the mighty men geten riches more lightly than thou, yet shalt thou not ben idel ne slowe to do thy profite, for thou shalt in alle wise flee idelnesse. For Salomon sayth, that 'idelnesse teineth a man to do many eviles.' And the same Salomon sayth, that 'he that travaileth and bezieh him to tillen his lond, shal ete bred: but he that is idel, and casteth him to no besinesse ne occupation, shal falle into poverté, and die for hunger.' And he that is idel and slow, can never find covenable time for to do his profits. For ther is a versifour sayth, that 'the idel man excuseth him in winter, because of the grete cold, and in summer by encheson of the hete.' For these causes, sayth Caton, 'wateh and enclinethe you not over muchel to slepe, for over muchel reste noriseth and causeth many vices.' And therefore sayth Saint Jerome: 'Both som good dedes, that the devil, which is our enemy, ne finde you not unoccupied, for the devil ne taketh not lightly unto his working swiche as he findeth occupied in goode werkes.'

"Than thus in getting riches ye musten flee idelnesse. And afterward ye shuln usen the riches, which ye han geten by youre wit and by youre travaille, in swiche manere, that men holde you not to scarce ne to sparing, ne fool-large, that is to say, over large a spender: for right as men blamen an avaricious man, because of his covous and chinerie, in the same wise is he to blame, that spendeth over largely. And therefore saith Cantou: 'Use,' (sayth he) 'the riches that thou hast ygeten in swiche manere, that men have so matere ne cause to calle the other wretche ne chinche: for it is a grete shame to a man to have a poure herte and a riche purse.' He sayth also: 'The goodes that thou hast ygeten, use hem by mesure, that is to sayn, spende measurably; for they that folly wasten and dispenden the goodes that they han, whan they han no more propre of hir owen, than they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man.' I say than that ye shuln flee avarice, using youre riches in swiche manere, that men sayn not that your riches ben yberied, but that ye have them in youre might, and in youre welding. For a wise man repreveh the avaricious man, and sayth thus in two vers. 'Wherto and why berieh a man his goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel, that nedes must he die, for deth is the end of every man, as in this present lif?' and for what cause or encheson joineh he him, or knitteth he him so fast unto his goodes, that alle his wittes moun not discein him, or departen him from his goodes, and knoweth wel, or ought to knowe, that whan he is ded, he shal nothing bere with him out of this world?' And therefore sayth Saint Augustine, that 'the avaricious man is likned unto Helle, that the more it swalweth, the more desire it hath to swalwe and devour.' And as wel as ye wolden eschue to be called an avaricious man

« thiche, as wel shuld ye kepe you and governe you in swiche a wise, that men calle you not fool-hardy. Therefore saith Tullius: 'The goodes of thin losse ne shuld not ben hid ne kept so close, but that they might ben opened by pitee and debonairetee;' that is to sayn, to yere hem part that han gret aile; 'no thy goodes shulden not ben so open, to be every mannes goodes.' Afterward, in geting of youre richesces, and in using of hem, ye shuln alway have three thinges in youre herte, that is to say, oure Lord God, conscience, and good name. First, ye shuln have God in youre herte, and for no richesce ye shuln do no thing, which may in any manere displese God that is your creatour and maker. For after the word of Salomon, 'It is better to have a litel good with love of God, than to have muchel good, and lese the love of his Lord God.' And the prophete sayth, that 'better it is to be a good man, and have litel good and tresor, than to be holden a shrewde, and have gret richesces.' And yet I say forthemore, that ye shulden alway do youre businesse to gete you richesces, so that ye gete hem with good conscience. And the apostle sayth, that 'ther n'is thing in this world of which we shulden have so gret joye, as whan our conscience berth us good witness.' And the wise man sayth, 'The substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is wt in mannes conscience.' Afterward, in geting of youre richesces, and in using of hem, ye must have gret businesse and gret diligence, that youre good name be alway kept and conserved. For Salomon sayth, that 'beter it is, and more it smilith a man to have a good name, than for to have gret richesces;' and therefore he sayth in another place: 'Do grete diligence' (sayth Salomon) 'in keping of thy frendes, and of thy good name, for it shal lenger abide with thee, than any tresor, for it never so precious.' And certes, he shulde not be called a gentilman, that after God and good conscience, alle thinges left, use doth his diligence and businesse, to kepen his good name. And Cassiodore sayth, that 'it is a signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desireth to have a good name.' And therefore sayth Saint Augustine, that 'ther ben two thinges that are right necessarie and useful; and that is good conscience, and good los;' that is to sayn, good conscience to thin owen persone inward, and good los for thy neighbour outward. And he that trusteth him so muchel in his good conscience, that he despiseth and setteth at naught his good name or los, and recketh not though he kepe not his good name, n'is but a cruel chert.

« Now, now have I shewed you ye shulden do in geting richesces, and how ye shuln use hem: and I see wel that for the trust that ye han in youre richesces, ye will move werre and bataille. I counseile you that ye begonne no bataille ne werre, in trust of youre richesces, for they ne sufficien not werre to mainteine. And therefore sayth a pbhosophre: 'that man that desireth and wol algates han werre, shal never have suffisance: for the richer that he is, the greter dispences must he make, if he wol have worship and victorie.' And Salomon sayth, that 'the greter richesces that a man hath, the mo dependours he hath.' And, dere sire, al be it so, that for your richesces ye wounn have muchel folk, yet behoveth it not, ne it is not good to begonne werre, wheras ye wounn in other manere have pees, unto youre worship and profite: for the

victorie of batailles that ben in this world, lith not in gret nombre or multitude of peple, ne in the vertue of man, but it lith in the will and in the hood of oure Lord God Almighty. And therefore Judas Machabeus, which was Goddes knight, whan he shuld fight again his adversarie, that hadde a greter nombre and a greter multitude of folk, and stronger than was the peple of this Machabee, yet he reconforted his litel compaignie, and sayd right in this wise: 'Al so lightly' (sayd he) 'may our Lord God Almighty yere victorie to a fewe folk, as to many folk; for the victorie of a bataille cometh not by the gret nombre of peple, but it cometh from oure Lord God of Heven.' And, dere sire, for as muchel as ther is no man certaine, if it be worthy that God yere him victorie or not, after that Salomon sayth, 'Therefore every man shulde gretly drede werre to beginne: and because that in batailles fallen many perils, and it happeth other while, that as soon is the gret man slain, as the litel man;' and, as it is ywritten in the second book of Kinges, 'The dedes of batailles ben aventureous, and nothing certain, for as lightly is on hurt with a spere as another;' and for ther is gret peril in werre; therefore shulde a man flee and eschue werre in as muchel as a man may goodly. For Salomon sayth: 'He that loveth peril, shal falle in peril.'

After that dame Prudence had spoken in this manere, Melibee answerd and saide: "I see wel, dame Prudence, that by youre faire wordes and by youre reasons, that ye han shewed me, that the werre liketh you nothing: but I have not yet herd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede."

"Certes," quod she, "I counseile you that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye have pees with hem. For Saint James sayth in his epistle, that 'by concord and pees, the smale richesces waxen grete, and by debat and discord grete richesces fallen down.' And ye knowen wel, that on of the gretest and moste sovraine thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. And therefore sayde oure Lord Jesu Crist to his apostles in this wise: 'Wel happy and blessed ben they that loven and purchasen pees, for they ben called the children of God.'" "A," quod Melibee, "now see I wel, that ye loven not min honour, ne my worship. Ye knowen wel that min adversaries han begonne this debat and brige by hir outrage, and ye see wel, that they ne requeren ne prayen me not of pees, ne they axen not to be reconciled; wol ye than that I go and meke me, and obeye me to hem, and crien hem mercie? Forsoth that were not my worship: for right as men sayn, that over-gret humilitee engendreth dispreising, so fareth it by to gret humilitee or mekenesse."

Than began dame Prudence to make semblaunt of wrathe, and sayde: "Certes, Sire, (sauf your grace) I love youre honour and yours profite, as I do min owen, and ever have dou; ye, non other seyn never the contrary: and if I had sayde, that ye shulda han purchasid the pees and the reconciliation, I ne hadde not muchel mistake me, ne sayde amis. For the wise man sayth: 'The disension beginneth by another man, and the reconciling beginneth by thyself.' And the prophete sayth: 'Flee shrewdnesse and do goodnesse; seke pees and folwe it, in as muchel as in thee is.' Yet say I not, that ye shuln rather pursue to your adversaries for pees, than they shuln to you: for {

know wel that ye ben so hard-berted; that ye wol do nothing for me; and Salomon sayth: 'He that hath over hard an herte, atte laste he shal misshappe and mistide.'

When Melibee had herd dame Prudence make semblaunt of wrath, he sayde in this wise. "Dame, I pray you that ye be not displeyd of thinges that I say, for I know wel that I am angry and wroth, and that is no wonder; and they that ben wroth, wolen not wel what they don, ne what they sayn. Therefore the prophete sayth, that 'troubled eyen han no clere sighte.' But sayth and conseilleteh me as you liketh, for I am redy to do right as ye wol desire. And if ye repreve me of my folie, I am the more holden to love you and to prouise you. For Salomon saith, that 'he that repreveth him that doth folie, he shal find greter grace, than he that deceiveth him by swete wordes.'

Than sayde dame Prudence: "I make no semblaunt of wrath ne of anger, but for youre grete profite. For Salomon saith: 'He is more worth, that repreveth or chideth a fool for his folie, shewing him semblaunt of wrath, than he that supporteth him and preiseth him in his misdoing, and laugheth at his folie.' And this same Salomon saith afterward, that 'by the sorweful visage of a man,' that is to sayn, by the sory and hevyn countenance of a man, 'the fool correcteth and amendeth himselfe.'

Than said Melibee: "I shal not come answer to so many faire reasons as ye putten to me and shewen: sayth shortly youre will and youre conseil, and I am al redy to performe and fulfille it."

Than dame Prudence discovered all hire will unto him and saide: "I conseillete you," quod she, "above alle thinges that ye make pees betwene God and you, and be reconciled unto him and to his grace, for as I have sayde you herebeforen, God hath suffered you to have this tribulation and disce for youre sounes: and if ye do as I say you, God wol scnde youre adversaries unto you, and make hem falle at youre feet, redy to do youre will and youre commandements. For Salomon sayth; 'When the conditioun of man is pleasaunt and liking to God, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries and constraineth hem to beseechen him of pees and of grace.' And I pray you let me speke with your adversaries in privee place, for they shuld not knowe that it be of youre will or youre assent; and than, when I knowe hir will and hir entente, I may conseillete you the more seurely."

"Dame," quod Melibee, "doth youre will and youre liking, for I putte me holly in youre disposicion and ordinaunce."

Than dame Prudence, when she sey the godd will of hire husband, delibered unto hire, and toke avis in hire self, thinking how she might bring this ned to goodde ende. And when she sey hire time, she sent for thise adversaries to come unto hire in to a privee place, and shewed wisely unto hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that ben in werre; and saide to hem, in a goodly manere, how that hem ought have gret repentance of the injuries and wronges, that they hadden don to Melibee hire lord, and unto hire and to hire daughter.

And when they herden the goodly wordes of dame Prudence, they weren so surprised and ravisid, and hadden so gret joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. "A, lady," quod they, "ye have

shewed unto us the blessing of swetepece, after the saying of David the prophete; for the reconciling, which we be not worthy to have in no manere, but we oughten requeren it with grete contritioun and humilitee, ye of youre grete goodnesse have presented unto us. Now see we wel, that the science and conning of Salomon is ful true; for he saith, that 'swete wordes multiplicen and encreesen frendes, and maken shrewes to be debouais and smeke.'

"Certes," quod they, "we putten oure dede, and all oure matere and cause, al holly in youre good will, and ben redy to obeye unto the speche and commaundement of my lord Melibee. And therefore, dere and benigwe lady, we praye you and beseeche you as mekely as we conne and moun, that it like unto youre grete goodnesse to fulfille in dede youre goodly wordes. For we consideren and knowlecheth, that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure, so fer forth, that we ben not of power to maken him amendes; and therfore we oblige and binde us and oure frendes, for to do all his will and his commaundements: but peraventure he hath swiche hevynesse and swiche wrath to us ward, because of oure offence, that he wol enjoynen us swiche a peine, as we moun not here ne susteine; and therfore, noble lady, we beseeche to sayn, by youre womanly pittee to take swiche avisenment in this ned, that we, ne oure frendes, be not dherited and destroyed, thurgh oure folie."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "it is an hard thing and right perilous, that a man putte him all outrey in the arbitration and judgement, and in the might and power of his enemy; for Salomon sayth: 'Leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shall say: to thy soun, to thy wif, to thy frend, ne to thy brother, ne yeveth thou never might ne maistro owe thy body, while thou livest.'—Now, with be defendeth that a man shulde not yeveth to his brother, ne to his frend, the might of his body, by a stronger reson he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeveth himself to his enemy. And natheles, I conseillete you that ye mistruste not my lord: for I wol wel and know veraily, that he is debouais and meke, large, curteis, and nothing desirous ne covetous of good ne richesse: for ther is nothing in this world that he desirath, save only worshippe and honour. Furthermore I know wel, and am right sure, that he shal nothing do in this ned withouten my conseil; and I shal so werken in this cas, that by the grace of oure Lord God ye shuld be reconciled unto us."

Than saiden they with o vois: "Worshipful lady, we putten us and oure goodes al fully in youre will and disposicion, and ben redy to come, what dey that it like unto youre noblesse to limite us or assigne us, for to make oure obligation and bond, as strong as it liketh unto youre goodnesse, that we moun fulfille the will of you and of my lord Melibee."

When dame Prudence had herd the answer of thise men, she bad hem go again privee, and she returned to hire lord Melibee, and told him how she found his adversaries ful repentant, knowlecheth ful lowly hir sounes and trespass, and how they weren redy to suffer all peine, requering and praying him of mercy and pittee.

Than saide Melibee: "He is wel worthy to have pardon and foryevnesse of his sinne, that excuseth not his sinne, but knowlecheth, and repenteth him,

ving indulgence. For Senek saith: 'Ther is the remission and foryewenness, wher as the confession is; for confession is neighbeour to innocence.' And therefore I assente and confirme me to have pes, but it is good that we do nought withouten the assent and will of our frendes."

Than was Prudence right glad and joyeful, and said: "Certes, sire, ye han wel and goodly answered: for right as by the conseil, assent, and helpe of your frendes, ye han be stired to venge you and make werre, right so withouten hir conseil shal ye not accord you, ne have pes with youre adversaries. For the lawe saith: 'Ther is nothing so good by way of kinde, as a thing to be unbounde by him that it was ybounde.'"

And than dame Prudence, withouten delay or trying, sent anon hire messengers for hir kin and for hir olde frendes, which that were trewe and wis: and told hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, all the matere, as it is above expressed and declared; and peried hem that they wold yve hir avis and conseil, what were best to do in this nede. And whan Melibeeus frendes hadden taken hir avis and deliberation of the foresaid matere, and hadden examined it by gret besinesse and gret diligence, they ywene ful conseil for to have pes and reste, and that Melibee shulde receive with good herte his adversaries to foryewenness and mercy.

And whan dame Prudence had herd the assent of hire lord Melibee, and the conseil of his frendes, accord with hire will and hire entencion, she was wonder glad in hire herte, and sayde: "Ther is an olde Proverbe," quod she, "sayth, that the gooddeme that thou maist do this day, do it, and abide ther, ne delay it not til to morwe: and therefore I counseil, that ye sende youre messengers, swiche as ben discrete and wise, unto youre adversaries, telling hem on youre behalf, that if they wol trette of pes and of accord, that they shupe hem, withouten delay or tarying, to come unto us." Which thing perforumed was indede. And whan thise trespassours and repenting folk of hir folies, that is trespassours and repenting folk of hir folies, that is to sayn, the adversaries of Melibee, hadden herd that thise messengers sayden unto hem, they were right glade and joyeful, and answered ful wechely and benignely, yelding graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee, and to all his compaignie: and shopen hem withouten delay to go with the messengers, and obeye to the commaundement of hir lord Melibee.

And right anon they taken hir way to the court of Melibee, and taken with hem som of hir trewe frendes, to make feith for hem, and for to ben hir borowes. And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he saide hem thise wordes: "It stant thus," quod Melibee, "and soth it is, that ye counseil, and withouten skill and reson, han don grete injuries and wronges to me, and to my wif Prudence, and to my daughter also, for ye had entred into myn hous by violence, and had don grete outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye han deserved the deth: and therefore wol I knowe and wete of you, whether ye wol putte the punishing and chastising, and the vengeunce of this outrage, in the will of me and of my wif, or ye wol not."

Than the wisest of hem three answered for hem alle, and said. "Sire," quod he, "we knowen wel, that we ben unworthy to come to the court of

so gret a lord and so worthy as ye ben, for we han so gretly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swiche wise again youre high lordshipe, that truly we han deserved the deth; but yet for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee, that all the world witnesseth of youre persone, we submitten us to the excellence and benignitee of youre gracious lordshipe, and ben redy to obeye to alle youre commaundements, beseeching you, that of youre merciable pitee ye wol considereoure grete repentance and lowe submission, and graunte us foryewenness ofoure outragious trespass and offence: for wel we knowen, that youre liberal grace and mercienstretchen hem further into goodnesse, than don our outrageous giltes and trespass into wickednesse; al be it that cursedly and dampnably we han agilt again youre highe lordshipe."

Than Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and received hir obligations, and hir bondes, by hir othes upon hir pleges and borwes, and assigned hem a certain day to retourne unto his court for to receive and accept sentence and judgement, that Melibee wolde commande to be don on hem, by the causes aforesaid; which thinges ordeined, every man retourne to his hous.

And whan that dame Prudence saw hire time, she freined and axed hire lord Melibee, what vengeunce he thoughte to taken of his adversaries.

To which Melibee answerd, and said: "Certes," quod he, "I thinke and purpose me fully to disberite hem of all that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exile for ever."

"Certes," quod dame Prudence, "this were a cruel sentence, and muchel again reson. For ye ben riche ynough, and han no nede of other mennes good; and ye might lightly in this wise gete you a covetous name, which is a vicious thing, and oughte to ben eschewed of every good man: for after the sawe of the Apostle, 'Coreitite is rote of alle harnes.' And therefore it were better for you to lese muchel good of your owen, than for to take of hir good in this manere. For better it is to lese good with worship, than to winne good with vilanye and shame. And every man oughte to do his diligence and his besinesse, to gete him a good name. And yet shal he not only besie him in keeping his good name, but he shal also enforce him alway to do som thing, by which he may renouvelle his good name: for it is written, that 'the olde good los, or good name, of a man is soon gone and passed, whan it is not newed.' And as touching that ye sayn, that ye wol exile your adversaries, that thinketh me muchel again reson, and out of mesure, considered the power that they han yeven you upon hemself. And it is written, that 'he is worthy to lese his privilege, that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him.' And I sette cas, ye might enjoinne hem that peine by right and by lawe, (which I trowe ye mowe not do) I say, ye might not putte it to execution paventure, and than it were like to retourne to the werre, as it was before. And therefore if ye wol that men do you obeisaunce, ye must dome more curteisly, that is to sayn, ye must yve more ese sentences and judgements. For it is written: 'He that most curteisly commaundeth, to him men most obeyen.' And therefore I pray you, that in this necesitee and in this nede ye caste you to overcome youre herte. For Senek sayth, that 'he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twis.' And Tullius saith;

There is nothing so commendable in a gret lord, as whan he is debonaire and make, and appeteth him lightly.' And I pray you, that ye wol now forehere to do vengeance, in swiche a manere, that your good name may be kept and conserved, and that men moun have cause and matere to praise you of pitec and of mercy; and that ye have no cause to repente you of thing that ye don. For Seneca saith: 'He overcometh in an evil manere, that repenteth him of his victorie.' Wherefore I pray you let mercy be in youre herte, to the effect and entente, that God Almighty have mercy upon you in his last judgement: for Saint James saith in his Epistle: 'Judgement withoute mercy shal he do to him, that hath no mercy of another wight.'

Whan Malibee had herd the grette skilles and reasons of dame Prudence, and hire wise informations and techinges, his herte gan encline to the will of his wif, considering hire trewe entente, enforced him anon and assented fully to werken after hire conseil, and thanked God, of whom procedeth all goodnesse and all vertue, that him sent a wif of so gret discretion. And whan the day came that his adversaries shulde appere in his presence, he spake to hem ful goodly, and saide in this wise. "Al be it so, that of youre pride and high presumption and folie, and of youre negligence and uncomyng, ye have misborne me, and trespassed unto me, yet for as muchel as I see and behold youre grette humilitee, and that ye ben sory and repentant of youre giltes, it constraineth me to do you grace and mercy: wherefore I receive you into my grace, and foryeve you outrelly alle the offenses, injuries, and wronges, that ye have don agein me and mine, to this effect and to this ende, that God of his endeles mercie wol at the time of oure dying faryve us oure giltes, that we han trespassed to him in this wretched world: for douteles, if we be sory and repentant of the sinnes and giltes, which we han trespassed in the sight of oure Lord God, he is so free and so merciable, that he wol foryeven us oure giltes, and bringen us to the blisse that never hath ende. Amen."

THE MONKES PROLOGUE.

WHAN ended was the tale of Melibee, And of Prudence and hire benignitee, Our Hoste saide; "As I am faithful man, And by the precious *corpus Madrian*, I hadde lever than a barell of ale, That goode lese my wif had herde this tale: For she n'is no thing of swiche patience, As was this Melibeus wif Prudence.

"By Goddes bones, whan I bete my knaves, She bringeth me the grette clobbered staves, And cryeth; 'Slee the dogges everich on, And breke hem bothe bak and every bon.'

"And if that any neighebour of mine Wol not in chirche to my wif encline, Or be so hardy to hire to trespase, Whan she cometh home she rampeth in my face, And cryeth; 'False coward, wreke thy wif: By *corpus Domini*, I wol have thy knif, And thou shalt have my distaf, and go spiume.' Fro day til night right thus she wol begirme.

"'Alas,' she saith, 'that ever I was yshape To wed a milkeop, or a coward ape,

That wol ben overlade with every wight! Thou darst not stonden by thy wives right.'

"This is my lif, but if that I wol fight, And out at dore anon I mote me dight, Or elles I am lost, but if that I Be like a wilde leas, fool-hardy.

"I wote wel she wol do me thee soon day Som neighebour, and thame go my way, For I am perikous with knif in hoode, Al be it that I dare not hire withstonde: For she is bigge in armes by my faith, That shal be finde, that hire midoth or saith. But let us passe away fro this matere.

"My lord the Monk," quod he, "beemery of chere, For ye shul telle a tale trewely.

Lo, Rouchester stondeth here faste by. Ride forth, min owen lord, breke not our game. But by my trouthe I can not telle youre name; Whether shal I call you my lord Dan John, Or Dan Thomas, or elles Dan Albon? Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin? I vow to God, thou hast a ful faire skin; It is a gentil pasture ther thou gost; Thou art not like a pensant or a gost.

"Upon my faith thou art som officer, Som worthy sextein, or som celerer. For by my fadres soule, as to my dome, Thou art a maister, whan thou art at home; No poure cloisterer, ne non novice, But a governour both ware and wise, And therwithal of braunes and of bones A right wel faring persona for the nones. I pray to God yeve him confusion, That first thee brought into religion.

Thou woldest han ben a trede-foul a right, Haddest thou as grette leve, as thou bast might, To parfournie all thy lust in engendrure, Thou haddest begeten many a creature.

Alas! why werest thou so wide a cope? God yeve me sorwe, hut, and I were pope, Not only thou but every mighty man, Though he were shore ful high upon his pas, Shuld have a wif, for al this world is lorn; Religion hath take up all the corn Of treading, and we barel men ben shrinopes: Of fable trees ther comen wretched impes.

This maketh that our heires ben so sclendre And feble, that they moun not wel engendre.

This maketh that our wives wol amaye Religious folk, for they moun better paye Of Venus payementen than mowen we: God wote, no lussbeberges payen ye. But be not wroth, my lord, though that I play; Ful oft in game a sothe have I herd say."

This worthy Monke take all in patience, And saide; "I wol don all my diligence, As fer as souneth into honestee,

To tellen you a tale, or two or thre. And if you list to herken hiderward, I wol you sayn the lif of Saint Edward; Or elles tragedies first I wol telle, Of which I have an hundred in my celle.

"Tragedie is to sayn a certain storie, As olde bookes maken us memorie, Of him that stood in gret prosperitee, And is yfallen out of high degree In to miserie, and cadeth wretchedly. And they ben versified comunly Of six feet, which men clepen *exametro*; In prose the ben endited many on,

And eke in metre, in many a sondry wise.
Lo, this declaring ought ynough suffice.
"Now berkeneth, if you liketh for to herz.
But first I you beseeche in this matere,
Though I by ordre telle not thise thinges,
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men writen finde.
But telle hem soon before and soon behinde,
As it now cometh to my remembrance,
Have me excused of wim ignorance."

THE MONKES TALE.

I wol bewaile in manere of tragedie
The harm of hem, that stode in high degree,
And fellen so, that ther n'as no remedie
To bring hem out of hir adversitee.
For certain whan that fortune list to flee,
Ther may no man of hire the courses withhoide:
Let no man trust on blisde prosperitee;
Beth ware by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were
And not a man, at him I wol beginne.
For though fortune may non angel dere,
From high degree yet fell he for his sune
Down into Helle, wheras he yet is inne.
O Lucifer, brightest of angels alle,
Now art thou Sathanas, that maist not twine
Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damascene
With Goddes owen finger wrought was he,
And not begeten of mannes sperme unclene,
And weite all Paradis saving o tree:
Had never worldly man so high degree
As Adam, til he for misgovernance
Was driven out of his prosperitee
To labour, and to Helle, and to meschance.

SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat
By the angel, long of his nativitee:
And was to God Almighty consecrat,
And stode in noblesse while he mighte see:
Was never swiche another as was he,
To speke of strength, and therto hardinesse:
But to his wives tolde he his secree,
Thorgh which he slow himself for wretchednesse.

Sampson, this noble and mighty champio,
Withouten wepen, save his handes twey,
He slow and all to-rents the leon,
Toward his wedding walking by the way:
His like wife conde him so plesse, and pray,
Til she his conseil knewe; and she untrewa
Dete his fous his conseil gan bewray,
And him forsoke, and toke another newe.

Three hundred foxes toke Sampson for ire,
And all hir tayles he togeder bond;
And set the foxes tayles all on fire,
For he in every tayl had knit a bond.
And they brent all the cornes in that lond,
And all hir oliveres, and vines eke.
A thousand men he slow eke with his bond,
And had no wepen, but an asses cheke.

Whan they were slain, so thursted him, that he
Was wel nie lorne, for which he gan to preyre,
That God wold on his peire han som pitee,
And send him drinke, or elles mozte he deye:
And of this asses cheke, that was so droye,
Out of a wang toth sprang anon a wellle,
Of which he dranke ynough, shortly to seye.
Thus halp him God, as *Judith* can telle.

By veray force at Gaza on a night,
Maugre the Philistins of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,
And on his bak yearied hem hath he
High on an hill, wher as men might hem se.
O noble mighty Sampson, lefe and dere,
Haddest thou not told to women thy secree,
In all this world ne had ther ben thy pere.

This Sampson never sider drank ne wine,
Ne on his hed came ramour non ne shere,
By precept of the messenger divine,
For all his strengthes in his heres were:
And fully twenty winter yere by yere
He hadde of Israel the governance:
But some shal he wepen many a tere,
For women shuld him bringen to meschance.

Unto his lemman Dalida he told,
That in his heres all his strengthe lay,
And falsely to his fomen she him sold;
And sleping in hire barnne upon a day
She made to clip or shere his here away,
And made his fomen all his craft espie;
And whan that they him fond in this array,
They bond him fast, and putten out his eye.

But or his here was clipped or ysHAVE,
Ther was no bond, with which men might him bind,
But now is he in prison in a cave,
Wheras they made him at the querne grinde.
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankind,
O whilom juge in glory and richesse,
Now mayest thou wepen with thine eyen blind,
Sith thou fro wele art falle in wretchednesse.

The ende of this calif was, as I shal seye:
His fomen made a feste upon a day,
And made him as hir fool before hem pleye:
And this was in a temple of gret array.
But at the last he made a foul affray,
For he two pillers shoke, and made hem falle,
And down fell temple and all, and ther it lay,
And slow himself, and eke his fomen alle.

This is to seyn, the princes everich on,
And eke three thousand bodies were ther slain
With falling of the gret temple of ston.
Of Sampson now wol I no more sain:
Beth ware by this ensample old and plain,
That no men tell hir conseil to hir wives
Of swiche thing, as they wold han secree fain,
If that it touch hir limmes or hir lives.

HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovaine conquerour
Singen his werkes laude, and high renoun;
For in his time of strength he was the flour.
He slow and raft the skinned of the leon;
He of Centaures laid the best adoun;
He Harpies slow, the cruel briddes felle;
He golden apples raft fro the dragon;
He drow out Cerberus the hound of Helle.

He slow the cruel thurst Boarous,
 And made his hors to fret him flesh and bon;
 He slow the fry serpent venemous;
 Of Acbelous two hornes brake he on.
 And he slow Cacons in a cave of ston;
 He slow the geaunt Anteus the strong;
 He slow the grisly bore, and that anon;
 And bare the Hevene on his nekke long.

Was never wight sith that the world began,
 That slow so many monstres, as did he;
 Thurghout the wide world his name ran,
 What for his strength, and for his high bountee;
 And every resume went he for to see,
 He was so strong that no man might him let;
 At bothe the worldes endes, saith Trophée,
 In stede of boundes he a piller set.

A lemman had this noble champion,
 That highte Deianire, as fresh as May;
 And as thise clerkes maken mention,
 She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay:
 Alas! this sherte, alas and wala wa!
 Evenimed was acilly withalle,
 That or that he had wered it half a day,
 It made his flesh all from his bones falle.

But natheles som clerkes hire excusen
 By on, that highte Nessus, that it makid;
 Be as may be, I wol hire not accusen;
 But on his bak this sherte he wered el makid,
 Til that his flesh was for the venim bakid:
 And when he saw non other remedie;
 In hote coler he hath himselfes raked,
 For with no venime deigned him to die.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules.
 Lo, who may trust on fortune any thow?
 For him that folweth all this world of pres,
 Or he be ware, in off ylaid ful lowe:
 Ful wise is he, that can himselfes knowe.
 Beth ware, for when that fortune list to glouze,
 Than waiteth she hire man to overthrowe
 By swiche a way, as he wold lest suppose.

NAHUCHODONOSOR.

The mighty troue, the precious tresor,
 The glorious sceptre, and real majestee,
 That hadde the king Nahuchodonosor,
 With tonge unnethes may describde be.
 He twis wan Jerusalem the citee,
 The vessell of the temple he with him ladde;
 At Babiloine was his souverain see,
 In which his glorie and his delit he hadde.

The fayrest children of the blood real
 Of Israel he did do gelde anon,
 And makid eche of hem to ben his thral.
 Amonges other Daniel was on,
 That was the wisest child of everich on;
 For he the dremes of the king expouned,
 Wher as in Caldee clerk ne was ther non,
 That wiste to what sin his dremes souned.

This proude king let make a statue of gold
 Sixty cubites long, and seven in bredde,
 To which image bothe yonge and old
 Commaunded he to loute, and have in drede,
 Or in a fourneis, ful of flames rede,
 He shuld be brened, that wold not obeye:
 But never wold assenten to that dede
 Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This king of kinges proude was and chet;
 He wrod that God, that sit in majestee,
 No might him nat bereve of his estat:
 But sodenly he lost his dignitee,
 And like a best him semed for to be,
 And ete hey as an oxe, and lay theroot:
 In rain with wilde bestes walkid he,
 Til certain time was ycome about.

And like an eagles fethers wax his heres,
 His neyles like a briddes clawes wore,
 Til God releasid him at certain yeres,
 And yaf him wit, and than with many a towe
 He thanked God, and ever his lif in fere
 Was he to don amis, or more trespasser:
 And til that time he laid was on his bere,
 He knew that God was ful of might and grace.

BALTHASAR.

His soue, which that highte Balthasar,
 That held the regne after his faderes day,
 He by his fader coude not beware,
 For proude he was of herte, and of array:
 And eke an ydolaster was he ay,
 His high estat assured him in pride;
 But fortune cast him down (and ther he lay)
 And sodenly his regne gan deuide.

A feste he made unto his lordes alle
 Upon a time, and made hem blithe be,
 And than his officeres gan he calle;
 "Gods, bringeth forth the vessels," quod he,
 "Which that my fader in his prosperitee
 Out of the temple of Jerusalem beraft,
 And to our highe goddes thanke we
 Of honour, that our eldres with us laft."

His wif, his lordes, and his concubines
 Ay dronken, while hir appetites last,
 Out of thise noble vessels sundry wines.
 And on a wall this king his eyen cast,
 And saw an hand armies, that wrote ful fast,
 For fere of whiche he quoke, and sikid agra.
 This hand, that Balthasar so sore agast,
 Wrote *Mene techel phares*, and no moora.

In al that lood magicien was non,
 That coude expounen what this lettre ment,
 But Daniel expounded it anon,
 And said; "O king, God to thy fader lent
 Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, and rent;
 And he was proude, and nothing God ne dradde;
 And therefore God gret wretche upon him sent,
 And him beraft the regne that he hadde.

"He was out cast of mannes compaignie,
 With asses was his habitacion;
 And ete hey, as a best, in wete and drie,
 Til that he knew by grace and by reason,
 That God of Heven hath domination
 Over every regne, and every creature:
 And than had God of him compassion,
 And him restored his regne and his figure.

"Eke thou, that art his soue, art proude also,
 And knowest all thise thinges veraily;
 And art rebel to God, and art his fo.
 Thou dranke eke of his vessels boldely,
 Thy wif eke, and thy wenches sinfully
 Dranke of the same vessels sundry wines,
 And beried false goddes curedly,
 Therefore to thee yschapec ful gret pine is.

"This hand was sent for God, that on the wall
Write *Mans techele paves*, trusteth me;
Thy regne is don, thou wayest nought at all;
Divided is thy regne, and it shal be
To Medes and to Peres yeven," quod he.
And thilke same night this king was slave;
And Darius occopied his degree,
Though he therto had neither right ne lawe.

Lordinges, counsaile herþy moun ye take,
How that in lordship is no sikernesse:
For whan that fortune wol a man forsake,
She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eke his frendes, bothe more and lesse.
For what man that hath frendes through fortune,
Miskap wol make hem enemies, I gesse.
This proverbe is ful soth, and ful comune.

ZENONIA.

Zenobia, of Palmerie the queene,
(As writen Persiens of hire noblesse)
So worthy was in armes, and so kene,
That no wight passed hire in hardinesse,
Ne in knage, no in other gentillesse.
Of kinges blood of Perse is she descended;
I may not that she hadde most fairnesse,
But of hire shape she might not ben amended.

From hire childhode I finde that she fledde
Office of woman, and to wode she went;
And many a wilde hartes blood she shedde
With arrowe brode that she to hem sent;
She was so swift, that she anon hem hent.
And whan that she was elder, she wold kille
Lions, leopards, and beres al to-rent,
And in hire armes weld hem at hire wille.

She durt the wilde bestes demnes seke,
And remen in the mountaignes all the night,
And slepe under the bush; and she coude eke
Wrastle by veray force and veray might
With any young man, were he never so wight;
Ther mighte nothing in hire armes stonde;
She kept hire maidenhode from every wight,
To so man deigned hire for to be bonde.

But at the last hire frendes ben hire married
To Odenate, a prince of that contree;
Al were it so, that she hem long taried,
And ye shul understonden, how that he
Hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she;
But natheles, whan they were knit in fere,
They lived in joye, and in felicitee,
For eche of hem had other lefe and dere.

Swe o thing, that she n'olde never assente,
By no way, that he shulde by hire lie
Not ones, for it was hire plaine entente
To have a childe, the world to multiplie:
And al in some as that she might espie,
That she was not with childe with that dede,
Then wold she suffer him don his fantasie
Throue, and not but ones out of drede.

And if she were with child at thilke cast,
No more shuld he playen thilke game
Till fully forty dayes weren past:
That wold she ones suffre him do the same.
Al were this Odenate wild or tame,
He gate no more of hire, for thus she sayde,
It was to wive lecherie and shame,
In other cas if that men with hem playde.

Two sones by this Odenate had she,
The which she kept in vertes and letrure.
But now unto our tale turne we:
I say, so worshipful a creature,
And wise therwith, and large with mesare,
So penible in the werre, and curteis eke,
Ne more labour might in werre endure,
Was non, though al this world men shulden seke.

Hire riche array ne mighte not be told,
As wel in vessel as in hire clothing:
She was al clad in pierrie and in gold,
And eke she lefte not for non hunting
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that she leiser had, and for to extend
To lerne bookes was all hire liking,
How she in vertes might hire lif dispend.

And shortly of this storie for to trete,
So doughty was hire husband and eke she,
That they conquered many regnes grette
In the orient, with many a faire citee,
Appertenaunt unto the majeste
Of Rome, and with strong hand held hem ful fast
Ne never might hir fomen don hem flece,
Ay while that Odenates dayes last.

Hire batailles, who so list hem for to rede,
Againe Sapor the king, and other mo,
And how that all this processe fell in dede,
Why she conquered, and what title therto,
And after of hire mischefe and hire wo,
How that she was besieged, and ytake,
Let him unto my maister Petrark go,
That writeth youough of this, I undertake.

Whan Odenate was ded, she mightily
The regnes held, and with hire propre hond
Againe hire for she fought so cruelly,
That ther n'as king ne prince in all that lond,
That he n'as glad, if he that grace fode
That she ne woude upon his lond verrey:
With hire they made alliance by bond
To ben in pece, and let hire ride and pleye.

The emperor of Rome Claudius,
Ne, him before, the Romain Galien
Ne dorste never be so courageous,
Ne non Ermin, ne non Egipcion,
Ne Sarrien, ne non Arabien
Within the feld ne dorste with hire fight,
Lest that she wold hem with hire hondes slen,
Or with hire meinie putten hem to flight.

In kinges habite wente hire sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes al,
And Heremanno and Timolao
Hir names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune bath in hire honey galle:
This mighty queene may no while endure,
Fortune out of hire regne made hire falle
To wretchednesse, and to misaventure.

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce
Of Rome came into his hondes twey,
He shope upon this queene to do vengeance,
And with his legions he toke his way
Toward Zenobie, and shortly for to say,
He made hire flece, and atte last hire hent,
And fettered hire, and eke hire children twey,
Ann wan the lond, and home to Rome he went.

To Rome again repaireth Julius
With his triumphal laurest ful his,
But on a time Brutus and Cassius,
That ever had of his high estat envie,
Ful prively had made conspiracie
Ageins this Julius in soill wise:
And cast the place, in which he shulde die
With bodekins, as I shal you devise.

This Julius to the capitole wrote
Upon a day, as he was wont to gon,
And in the capitole anon him hente
This false Brutus, and his other foos,
And stiked him with bodekins anon
With many a wound, and thus they let him lie:
But never greet he at no stroke but on,
Or elles at two, but if his storie lie.

So manly was this Julius of herte,
And so wel loved estate honestee,
That though his dedly woundes sore smerte,
His mantel over his hippes caste he,
For no man shulde seen his privtee:
And as he lay of dying in a trance,
And wiste veraily that ded was he,
Of honestee yet had his remembrance.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
And to Sueton, and Valerie also,
That of this storie writen word and ende:
How that to this gret conquerours two
Fortune was first a friend, and sith a fo.
No man se trust upon hire favour long,
But have hire in await for evermo;
Witness on all this conquerours strong.

CRESUS.

The riche Cresus, whilom king of Lide,
Of whiche Cresus, Cirus sore him dradde,
Yet was he caught amidden all his pride,
And to be brent men to the fire him ladde:
But swiche a rain doon from the welken shadde,
That slow the fire, and made to him escape:
But to beware no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.

When he escaped was, he can not stint
For to begyne a newe werre again:
He wened wel, for that fortune him sent
Swiche hap, that he escaped thurgh the rain,
That of his foos he mighte not be slain;
And eke a sweven upon a night he mette,
Of which he was so proud; and eke so fain,
That in vengeance he all his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was, as that him thought,
Thor Jupiter him washe, both bak and side;
And Phebus eke a faire towail him brought
To drie him with, and therefore wax his pride.
And to his daughter that stood him beside,
Which that he knew in high science habound,
He bad hire tell him what it signified,
And she his dreame began right thus expound.

"The tree" (quod she) "the galwes is to wene,
And Jupiter betokeneth snow and rain,
And Phebus with his towail clere and clewe,
The ben the Sonnes streames, soth to seyn:
Thou shalt unbagged be, fader, certain;
Rain shal thee wash, and Some shal thee drie."
Thus warned him ful plat and eke ful plain
His daughter, which that called was Phanie.

Anhaged was Cresus the proude king,
His real tronns might him not availle:
Tragedie is non other maner thing,
Ne can in singing crien ne bewaile,
But for that fortune all day wol assaille
With unware stroke the regnes that ben proude:
For whan men trusten hire, than wol she faille,
And cover hire bright face with a cloode.

PETER OF SPAIN.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spaine,
Whom fortune held so high in majestes,
Wel oughten usen thy pitous deth complainie.
Out of thy lond thy brother made thee leze,
And after at a sege by sotilles
Thou were betrayed, and lad unto his tent,
Wher as he with his owen hond slow thee,
Succeeding in thy regne and in thy real.

The fold of snow, with th' egre of blaik theris,
Caught with the limerod, coloured as the glede,
He brewed this cursednesse, and all this crime;
The wicked neste was werker of this dede;
Not Charler Oliver, that toke ay hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armoricke
Genifon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
Broughte this worthy king in swiche a brike.

PETRO, KING OF CYPRE.

O worthy Petro king of Cypre also,
That Alexandrie was by high maistris,
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo,
Of which thin owen lieges had envie:
And for no thing but for thy chivalrie,
They in thy bod han slain thee by the norwe;
Thus can fortune hire whole governe and gie,
And out of joye bringen men to sorwe.

BARNABO VISCONTI.

Of Milane grette Barnabe Visconti,
God of delit, and scourge of Lumbardie,
Why shuld I not thin infortune account,
Sith in estat thou clombest were so high?
Thy brothers sone, that was thy double allie,
For he thy never was, and sone in lawe,
Within his prison made he thee to die,
Bot why, ne how, n'ot I that thou were slave.

HUCKLIN OF FINE.

Of the eri Hagelin of Fine the langour
They may no tonge telken for pitee.
But litel out of Fine stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prison yput was he,
And with him ben his litel children three,
The eldest scarcely five yere was of age:
Alas! fortune, it was gret crueltee
Swiche bridles for to put in swiche a cage.

Dampned was he to die in that prison,
For Roger, which that bishop was of Fine,
Had on him made a false suggestion,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him rise,
And put him in prison, in swiche a wise,
As ye han herd; and mete and drinke he had.
So smale, that wel tunethe it may suffice,
And therewithal it was ful poure and bad.

And on a day befell, that in that houre,
Whan that his mete went was to be brought,
The gailer shette the doores of the toure;
He herd it wel, but he spake right nought.
And in his herte anon ther fell a thought,
That they for hunger wolden do him die;
"Alas!" quod he, "alas that I was wrought!"
Therwith the teres fellen fro his eyen.

As yonge some, that three yere was of age,
Unto him said, "Fader, why do ye wepe?"
Whan will the gailer bringen our potage?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry, that I may not slepe.
How wold God that I might slepen ever,
Thun shuld not hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther n'a no thing, sauf bred, that me were lever."

This day by day this childe began to crie,
Til in his fadres barne adoun it lay,
And saide; "Farewel, fader, I mote die;"
And kis his fader, and dide the same day.
And whan the woful fader did it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to bite,
And saide, "Alas! fortune, and wala wa!
Thy false whele may wo all may I wite."

His children wenden, that for hunger it was
That he his armes gnawe, and not for wo,
And sayden: "Fader, do not so, alas!
But rather ete the flesh upon us two.
Our flesh thou yaf us, take our flesh us fro,
And ete ynough;" right thus they to him seide,
And after that, within a day or two,
They laide hem in his lappe adoun, and dide.

Himself dispeired eke for hunger starf,
This ended is this mighty erl of Pise:
From high estat fortune away him carf.
Of this tragedie it ought ynough suffice;
Who so wol here it in a longer wise,
Redeth the grette poete of Itaille,
That highte Dante, for he can it devise
Fro point to point, not o word wol he faille.

THE NONNES PREESTES PROLOGUE.

"Hol!" quod the Knight, "good sire, no more of this:
That ye han said, it right ynough ywis,
And moche more; for litel heviness
Is right ynough to moche folk, I gesse.
I say for me, it is a gret disease,
Wher as men have ben in gret weith and ece,
To heren of hir soden fall, alas!
And on the contrary is joye and gret solas,
As whan a man hath ben in poure estat,
And chaseth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abideth in prosperitee:
Beche thing is gladson, as it thinketh me,
And of swiche thing were goodly for to telle.
"Ye," quod our Hoste, "by Seint Poules belle,
Ye say right soth; this Monk hath clapped loudes:
He spake, how fortune covered with a cloude
I wote not what, and als of a tragedie
Right now ye herd: and parde no remedie
It is for to bewailen, ne complainie
That that is dou, and als it is a paine,

As ye han said, to here of heviness.
Sire Monk, no more of this, so God you blesse;
Your tale anoyeth all this compaignie;
Swiche talking is not worth a boterlic,
For therin is ther no disport ne game:
Therefore, sire Monk, dan Piers by your name,
I pray you hertely, tell us somewhat elles,
For sikerly, n'ere clinking of your belles,
That on your bridel hang on every side,
By Heven king, that for us alle dide,
I shuld er this have fallen down for slepe,
Although the slough had ben never so depe:
Thun hadde your tale all ben tolde in vain.
For certainly, as that this clerkes saun,
Wher as a man may have non audience,
Nought helpeth it to tellen his sentence.
And wel I wote the substance is in me,
If any thing shal wel reported be.

Sire, say somewhat of hunting, I you pray.
"Nay," quod this Monk, "I have no lust to play:
Now let another telle as I have told."

Thun spake our Hoste with rude speche and bold:
And sayd unto the Nonnes Preest anon, [Joba,
"Come nere, thou Preest, come hither, thou sire
Telle us swiche thing, as may our hertes glade.
Be hithe, although thou ride upon a jade.
What though thyn horse be bothe feule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rocke thee not a bene:
Loke that thyn herte be mery evermo."
"Yes, Hoste," quod he, "so mote I ride or go,
But I be mery, ywis I wol be blamed."
And right anon his tale be hath attained:
And thus he seid unto us everich on,
This swete Preest, this goodly man sire John.

THE NONNES PREESTES TALE.

A roons widewe, somdel stoopen in age,
Was whilom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Beside a grove, standing in a dale.
This widewe, which I tell you of my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wif,
In patience led a ful simple lif.
For litel was hire catel and hire rente:
By husbandry of swiche as God hire sente,
She found hireself, and eke hire doughtren two,
Three large sowes had she, and no mo:
Three kine, and eke a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hire boure, and eke hire halle,
In which she ete many a slender mele.
Of pointat sauce ne knew she never a dele.
No deintee morsel passed thurgh hire throte;
Hire diete was accordant to hire cote.
Replecion ne made hire never sike;
Attempre diete was all hire physike,
And exercise, and hertes suffisance.
The goute let hire nothing for to dance,
No apoplexie shente not hire bed.
No win ne dranke she, neyther white ne red:
Hire bord was served most with white and black,
Milk and broun bred, in which she fodd no lack,
Seinde bacon, and somtyme an ey or twey;
For she was as it were a maner dey.
A yerd she had, enclosed all about
With stickes, and a drie diche without,
In which she had a cok highte Chaunteclere,
In all the land of crowing n'as his pere.
His vois was merier than the mery organ,
On masse dauns that in the chirches gon.

" Loke of Egypt the king, dan Pharo,
His baker and his boteler also,
Wheder they ne felten nou effect in dremes.
Who so wol seken actes of wondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.

" Lo Cressa, which that was of Lydie king,
Mette he not that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he shuld anhangen be ?

" Lo hire Andromacha, Hectors wif,
That day that Hector shulde lese his lif,
She dremed on the same night beforen,
How that the lif of Hector shuld be lorne,
If thilke day he went into bataille :

She warned him, but it might not availle ;
He went forth for to fighten atthesles,
And was yslain anon of Achilles.
" But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwelle.
Shortly I say, as for conclusion,
That I shal han of this avision
Adversitee : and I say forthermore,
That I ne tell of laxatives no store,
For they ben venimous, I wot it wel :

I hem deshe, I love hem never a del.

" But let us speke of wirthe, and stinte all this ;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing God hath sent me large grace :

For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet red about your eyen,
It maketh all my drede for to dien,
For, al so siker as *la principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio.

(Madame, the sentence of this Latine is,
Woman is mannes joye and mannes bla.)
For whan I fele a-night your soft side,
Al be it that I may not on you ride,
For that our perche is made so narwe, alas !
I am so ful of joye and of solas,
That I deshe bothe sweten and dreme."

And with that word he flew down for the benne,
For it was day, and eke his hennes alle ;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had found a corn, lay in the yerd.
Real he was, he was so more aferd ;
He feathered Pertelote twenty time,
And trade hire eke as oft er it was prime.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun ;
And on his toes he runeth up and down,
Him deigned not to set his feet to ground :

He chuketh, whan he hath a corn yfound,
And to him ronnen than his wives alle.
Thus real, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chaunteclere in his pasture ;
And after wol I tell his aventure.
Whan that the month in which the world began,
That highte March, whan God first makid man,
Was complete, and ypassed were also,
Sithen March ended, thritty dayes and two,
Besell that Chaunteclere in all his pride,
His seven wives walking him beside,
Cast up his eyes to the brighte Sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde yrome
Twenty degrees and on, and somewhat more :

He knew by kind, and by non other lore,
That it was prime, and crew with blisful steven.
" The Sonne," he said, is clomben up on Heven
Twenty degrees and on and more ywis.
Madame Pertelote, my wordes blis,
Herkenech thise blisful brides how they sing,
And see the freshe floures how they spring ;

Ful is min berte of revel, and solas."

But sodenly him fell a sorweful cas ;
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo :
God wote that worldly joye is some ago :
And if a rethor coude faire endite,
He in a chronicle might it stoufly write,
As for a sovrayne notabilitie.

Now every wise man let him herken me :
This story is al so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot du lake,
That women holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I turne agon to my sentence.

A col fox, ful of sleigh inquitee,
That in the grove had woned yeres thre,
By high imagination forecast,
The same night thurghout the begges brest
Into the yerd, ther Chaunteclere the faire
Was wout, and eke his wives, to repaire :
And in a bodde of wortes stille he lay,
Till it was passed undern of the day,
Waiting his time on Cheunteclere to falle :
As gladly don thise homicides alle,
That in a wait ligen to mordre men.

O false morderour, rocking in thy dea !
O newe Scariot, newe Geneon !
O false dismaulour, o Greek Sinon,
That broughtest Troys al utterly to sorwe !
O Chaunteclere, accused be the morwe,
That thou into thy yerd flew fro the benne :
Thou were ful wel ywarped by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.

But what that God forewote most nedes be,
After the opinion of certain clerkes.
Witness on him, that any parit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercation
In this matere, and gret disputoun,
And hath ben of a hundred thousand men.
But I ne cannot boult it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Angustin,
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardin,
Whether that Goddes worthy foreweting
Streineth me nedly for to don a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee)
Or elles if free chois be granted me
To do that same thing, or to do it nought,
Though God forewot it, or that it was wrought ;
Or if his weting streineth never a del,
But by necessitee condicounel.

I wol not han to don of swiche matere ;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his conseil of his wif with sorwe
To walken in the yerd upon the morwe,
That he had met the dreame, as I you told.
Womennes conseiles ben ful often cold ;
Womannes conseil brought us first to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradis to go,
Ther as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
But for I n'ot, to whom I might displese,
If I conseil of women wolde blame,
Passe over, for I said it in my game.
Rode auctours, wher they tret of swiche matere,
And what they sayn of women ye knowen here,
Thise ben the cokkes wordes, and not mine ;
I can non harme of no woman devise.

Faire in the sood, to bath hire merily,
Lith Pertelote, and all hire sisters by,
Agon the Sonne, and Chaunteclere so free
Sang merier than the mermaid in the see,
For Physiologus sayth sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.

And so befell that as he cast his eye
Among the wortes on a boterflie,
He was ware of this fox that lay ful low.
Nothing he list him thanne for to crow,
But cried anon cok, cok, and up he starte,
As man that was affraid in his herte.
For naturally a beest demeth fleo
For his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst had seen it with his eye.

This Chaunteclere, when he gan him espie,
He wold han fled, but that the fox anon
Said; "Gentil sire, alas! what wol ye don?
Be ye affraid of me that am your frend?
Now certes, I were worse than any fend,
If I to you wold harme or vilanie.

I am not come your counsel to espie.
But trevely the cause of my coming
Was only for to herken how ye sing:
For trevely ye han as mery a steven,
As any engel hath, that is in Heven;
Therwith ye han of musike more felog,
Dan bad Boeca, or any that can sing.
My lord your fader (God his soule blesse)
And eke your moder of hire gentillesse
Han in myn hous yben, to my gret ese:
And certes, sire, ful fain wold I you please.

But for men speke of singing, I wol sey,
So mote I brooken wel min eyen tway,
I have you, as heerd I never man so sing,
As did your fader in the morwening.
Certes it was of herte all that he song,
And for to make his vois the more strong,
He wol so peine him, that with both his eyen
He mouthe winke, so loud he wolde crien,
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And stretchen forth his necke long and smal.

And eke he was of swiche discretoun,
That ther n'as no man in no region,
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in dan Burel the same
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
That, for a preestes sone yave him a knock
Upon his leg, while he was yonge and nice,
He made him for to lese his benefice.

But certain ther is no comparison
Betwix the wisdom and discretoun
Of youre fader, and his subtiltee,
How singeth, sire, for Sainte Charitee,
Hast see, can ye your fader countrefete?"

This Chaunteclere his wings gan to bete,
As man that coude not his tresoun espie,
So was he ravished with his faterie,
Alas! ye lordes, many a false flatour
Is in your court, and many a losengour.
That pleaseth you wel more by my faith,
Than he that sothfastnesse unto you saith.

Redeth Eoc'eisast of faterie,
Both war, ye lordes, of hire trecherie.
This Chaunteclere stood high upon his toes,
Stretching his necke, and held his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowen loude for the nones:
And dan Russel the fox stert up at ones,
And by the garget hente Chaunteclere,
And on his back toward the wood him bere.

For yet he was ther no man that him sued.
O destinee, that maist not ben eschued!
Alas, this Chaunteclere flew fro the beemes!
Alas, his wif no raughte not of dremes!
And on a Friday fell all this mechance.

O Venus that art goddesse of plesance,
Sin that thy servant was this Chaunteclere,
And in thy service did all his powere,
More for delir, than world to multiplie,
Why wolt thou suffre him on thy day to die?
O Gaufride, dere maister soverain,
That, when thy worthy king Richard was slain
With shot, complainedest his deth so sore,
Why ne had I now thy science and thy lore,
The Friday for to chiden, as did ye?
(For on a Friday sothly slain was he)
Than wold I shew you how that I coude plaine,
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his paine.

Certes swiche cry, no lamentation
N'as never of ladies made, when Ilion
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd
When he had hent king Priam by the berd,
And slain him, (as saith us *Eneidor*)
As maaden all the hennes in the cloos,
When they had seen of Chaunteclere the sight.
But soverainly dame Pertelote shrighit,
Ful louder than did Hadruballes wif,
When that hire husband hadde ylost his lif,
And that the Romaines hadden brent Cartage,
She was so ful of turment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fire she starte.
And brent hireselven with a stedfast herte.

O woful hennes, right so criden ye,
As, when that Nero brente the citee
Of Rome, cried the senatoures wives,
For that hir husbandes losten alle hir lives;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slain.
Now wol I turne unto my tale agen.
The sely widewe, and hire doughtren two,
Herden this hennes crie and maken wo,
And out at the dores sterten they anon,
And saw the fox toward the wode is gon,
And bare upon his back the cok away:
They criden, out! "Harow and wala wa!
A ha the fox!" and him they ran,
And eke with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerlond,
And Malkin, with hire distaf in hire hond;
Ran cow and calf, and eke the very hogges
So fered were for berking of the dogges,
And shooting of the men and women eke,
They ronnen so, hem thought hir hertes breke.
They yelleden as fendes don in Helle:
The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle:
The gees for fere flew over the trees,
Out of the hive came the swarme of bees,
So hidous was the noise, a *benedicite*!
Certes he Jakke Straw, and his meinte,
Ne maaden never shoutes half so shrille,
When that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was made upon the fox.
Of bras they brougten beemes and of box,
Of horn and bone, in which they blew and pouped,
And therwithal they shriked and they houped;
It semed, as the Heven shulde falle.

Now, good men, I pray you herkeneth alle;
Lo, how fortune turneth sodenly
The hope and pride eke of hire enemy.
This cok that lay upon the foxes bake,
In all his drede, unto the fox he spake,
And sayde; "Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet woude I sayn, (as wisely God helpe me)
Turneth again, ye proude cherries alle;
A very pestilence upon you falle.
Now am I come unto the wodes side,
Maugre your had, the cok shal here abide;

Sin that thy servant was this Chaunteclere,
And in thy service did all his powere,
More for delir, than world to multiplie,
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Yet woude I sayn, (as wisely God helpe me)
Turneth again, ye proude cherries alle;
A very pestilence upon you falle.
Now am I come unto the wodes side,
Maugre your had, the cok shal here abide;

I wol him etc in faith, and that anon."

The fox answered, "In faith it shal be doue:"

And as he spake the word, al sodenly
The cok brake from his mouth deliverly,
And high upon a tree he flew anon.

And when the fox saw that the cok was gon,

"Alas!" quod he, "o Chaunteclere, alas!

I have" (quod he) "ydon to you trespas,

In as moche as I madek you aferd,

Whan I you hente, and brought out of your yerd;

But, sire, I did it in no wikke entente:

Come down, and I shal tell you what I mente.

I shal say sothe to you, God shrewe me so."

"Nay then," quod he, "I shrewe us bothe two.

And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,

If thou begile me oftener than ones.

Thou shalt no more thurgh thy flaterie

Do me to sing and winken with myn eye.

For he that winketh, whan he shulde see,

Al wilfully, God let him never see." [chance,

"Nay," quod the fox, "but God yeve him mes-

That is so indiscrete of governance,

That jaugtheth, whan that he shuld hold his pen."

Lo, which it is for to be rececheles

And negligent, and trust on flaterie.

But ye that holden this tale a folie,

As of a fox, or of a cok, or hen,

Takeh the moralitee therof, good men.

For Seint Poule sayth, "that all that writen is,

To our doctrine it is ywriten wys

Takeh the fruit, and let the chaf be stille."

Now, goodde God, if that it be thy wille,

As saith my lord, so make us all good men;

And bring us to thy highe blisse. Amen.

"Sire Nonnes Proest," our Hoste sayd anon,

"Yblessed be thy beche and every ston;

This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere.

But by my trouthe, if thou were seculere,

Thou woldest hem a trefeoule a right:

For if thou have courage as thou hast might,

Thee were made of hennes, as I wene,

Ye mo than seven times seventene.

Se, which braunes hath this gentil preest!

So gret a necke, and swiche a large breast!

He loketh as a sparhawk with his eyen;

Him nedeth not his colour for to dien

With Brasil, ne with grain of Portingale.

"But, sire, faire falle you for your tale."

And after that, he with ful mery chere

Sayd to another, as ye shuld here.

THE SECOND NONNES TALE.

For ministre and the norice unto vice,
Which that men clepe in English idelnesse,
That porter at the gate is of delices,
To eschuen, and by hire contrary hire oppresse,
That is to sain, by leful businessse,
Wel oughte we to don al our entente,
Lest that the fend thurgh idelnesse us hente.

For he that with his thousand cordes die
Continuently us waiteth to beclappe,
Whan he may wan in idelnesse espie,
He can so lightly cacche him in a trappe,
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,
He n'is not ware the fend hath him in bond:
Wel ought us werche, and idelnesse withond.

And though men dradden never for to die,
Yet see men wel by reson douteles,
That idelnesse is rote of slogardie,
Of which ther never cometh no good encreas,
And see that slouth holdeth hem in a leas,
Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,
And to devouren all that other swinke.

And for to put us from swiche idelnesse,
That cause is of so gret confusoun,
I have here don my feithful businessse
After the legende in translation
Right of thy glorious lif and passion,
Thou with thy gerlond, wrought of rose and blis,
Thee mene I, maid and martir Seinte Cecillie.

And thou, that arte flour of virgines all,
Of whom that Bernard list so wel to write,
To thee at my beginning first I call,
Thou comfort of us wretches, do me ensite
Thy maidens deth, that wan thurgh hire merite
The eternal lif, and over the fend victorie,
As man may after reden in hire storie.

Thou maide and mother, daughter of thy man,
Thou wel of mercy, sinful soules care,
In whom that God of bountee ches to won;
Thou humble and high over every creature,
Thou nobledost so fer forth our nature,
That no desdaise the maker had of kinde
His son in blood and flesh to clothe and wende.

Within the cloystre blisful of thy sides,
Toke mannes shape the eternal love and pees,
That of the trine compas Lord and gide is,
Whom erthe, and see, and Haven out of releas
Ay herien; and thou, virgine wammeles,
Bare of thy body (and dweltest maiden pure)
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swiche pitee,
That thou, that art the somme of excellente,
Not only helpest hem that praisen thee,
But oftentime of thy benignitee
Ful freely, or that men this helpe beseeche,
Thou goest before, and art hir lives leche.

Now helpe, thou meke and blisful faire maide,
Me fierned wretch, in this desert of galle;
Thinke on the woman Canacee, that saide
That whelpes eten som of the cromes alle
That from hir lordes table ben yfalle;
And though that I, unworthy son of Eve,
Be sinful, yet accepeth my belete.

And for that feith is ded withouten werkes,
So for to werten yeve me wit and space,
That I be quit from theennes that most derke is;
O thou, that art so faire and ful of grace,
Be thou min advocat in that high place,
Ther as withouten ende is songe Ommee,
Thou Cristes mother, daughter dere of Amee.

And of thy light my soule in prison light,
That troubled is by the contagion
Of my body, and also by the wight
Of erthly lust, and false affection:
O haven of refuge, o salvation
Of hem that ben in sorwe and in distress,
Now help, for to my werk, I wol me dress.

Yet pray I you that reden that I write,
 Forye me, that I do no diligence
 The ilke storie subtly to endite.
 For both have I the wordes and sentence
 Of him, that at the seintes reverence
 The storie wrote, and folowed hire legende,
 And pray you that ye wol my werk amende.

Fist wol I you the name of Seinte Cecille
 Epouwe, as men may in hire storie see:
 It is to sayn in English, Hevens lillie,
 For pure chastnesse of virginitee,
 Or for the whiteness had of honestee,
 And grene of conscience, and of good fame
 The wote savour, Lillie was hire name.

Or Cecille is to sayn, the way to blinde,
 For the example was by good teaching;
 Or elles Cecille, as I writen finde,
 Is joined by a manner conjoining
 Of Heven and *Lie*, and here in figuring
 The Heven is set for thought of holynesse,
 And *Lie*, for hire lastyng businessse.

Cecille may also be sayd in this manere,
 Wanting of blindnesse, for hire grete light
 Of sapience, and for hire thewes clere.
 Or elles is, this maidens name bright
 Of Heven and *Leas* cometh, for which by right
 She might hire wel the Heven of people calle,
 Example of good and wise werkis alle:

For *Leas* peple in English is to say;
 And right as men may in the Heven see
 The soules and blisse, and storres every way,
 Right so men gostly, in this maiden free
 Seven of faith the magnanimitie,
 And also the clerenesse hole of sapience,
 And stourey werkis, bright of excellence.

And right so as thise philosophres write,
 That Heven is swift and round, and also brenning,
 Right so was faire Cecille the white
 Ful swift and busy in every good working,
 And round and hole in good persevering,
 And brenning over in charites ful bright:
 How have I you declared what she might.

The maiden bright Cecille, as hire lif saith,
 Was come of Romayne and of noble kind,
 And from hire cradel fostred in the faith
 Of Crist, and here his Gospel in hire mind:
 She never ceased, as I writen finde,
 Of hire prayers, and God to love and drede,
 Bewching him to kepe hire maidenbede.

And when this maiden shold until a man
 Ywedde be, that was ful yonge of age,
 Which that yeloped was Valerian,
 And day was comen of hire marriage,
 The ful devout and humble in hire corage,
 Under hire robe of gold, that set ful faire,
 And next hire flesh yelad hire in an haire,

And while that the organs maden melodie,
 To God alone thus in hire hert song she;
 "O Lord, my soule and also my body gie
 Unceasid, lest that I confounded be."
 And for his love that diid upon the tree,
 Every scond or thridde day she fast,
 By bidding in hire orisons ful fast.

The night came, and to bedde must she gon
 With hire husband, as it is the manere,
 And prively also said to him anon;
 "O swete and wel beloved spouse dere,
 Ther is a conseil, and ye wol it here,
 Which that right fayn I wold unto you saie,
 So that ye swere, ye wol it not bewraie."

Valerian gan fast unto hire swere,
 That for no cas, no thing that mighte be,
 He shulde never to non bewraien here;
 And than at erst thus to him saide she;
 "I have an angel which that loveth me,
 That with grete love wher so I wake or slepe,
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe;

"And if that he me feleth out of drede,
 That ye me touch or love in vilanie,
 He right anon wol sleen you with the dede,
 And in your youthe thus ye shulden die.
 And if that ye in cleas love me gie,
 He wol you love as me, for your clennesse,
 And shew to you his joye and his brightnesse."

This Valerian, corrected as God wold,
 Answerd again, "If I shal trusten thee,
 Let me that angel seen, and him behold;
 And if that it a veray angel be,
 Than wol I don as thou hast prayed me;
 And if thou love as another man forsothe
 Right with this swerd than wol I slea you botha."

Cecille answered anon right in this wise;
 "If that thou list, the angel shoul ye see,
 So that ye trow on Crist, and you baptise;
 Goth forth to *Via Apia*" (quod she)
 "That fro this toun ne stant but miles three,
 And to the poure folkis that ther dwellen
 Say hem right thus, as that I shal you tellen.

"Tell hem, that I Cecille you to hem sent
 To shewen you the good Urban the old,
 For secree nodes, and for good entent;
 And when that ye Seint Urban an behold,
 Tell him the wordes which I to you told;
 And when that he hath purged you fro sinne,
 Than shal ye see that angel er ye twinne."

Valerian is to the place gon,
 And right as he was taught by hire lerning,
 He found this holy old Urban anon
 Among the seintes burials louting:
 And he anon withouten taryng
 Did his message, and when that he it tolde,
 Urban for joye his bondes gan upholde.

The teres from his eye let he falle;
 "Almighty Lord, o Jesu Crist," quod he,
 "Sower of chast conseil, biorde of us alle,
 The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee
 That thou hast now in Cecille, take to thee;
 Lo, like a busy bee withouten gile
 Thee serveth ay thyn owen thral Cecille.

"For thilke spouse, that she toke but newe
 Ful like a fiers lece, she sendeth here
 As meke as ever was any lambe to ewe."
 And with that word anon ther gan apern
 An old man, clad in white clothes clere,
 That had a book with lettres of gold in hond,
 And gan before Valerian to stond.

Valerian, as ded, fell down for drede,
 When he him saw; and up he hent him tho,
 And on his bok right thus he gan to rede;
 "On Lord, on faith, on God withouten mo,
 On Cristendom, and fader of all also
 Aboven all, and over all every wher:"
 Thise wordes all with gold ywriten were.

When this was red, than said this olde man,
 "Levest thou this thing or no? say ye or may."
 "I leve all this thing," quod Valerian,
 "For sother thing than this, I dare wel say,
 Under the Heven no wight thinken may."
 Tho vanished the olde man, he n'iste wher,
 And pope Urban him cristened right ther.

Valerian goth home, and firt Cecilie
 Within his chambre with an angel stonde:
 This angel had of roses and of lilies
 Corones two, the which he bare in honde,
 And first to Cecilie, as I understonde,
 He yaf that on, and after gan he take
 That other to Valerian hire make.

"With body close, and with unwenmed thought
 Kepeth ay wel thise corones two" quod he,
 From Paradis to you I have ben brought,
 Ne never mo ne shal they roten be,
 Ne lese hire swete savour, trusteth me,
 Ne never wight shal seen hem with his eye,
 But he be chaste, and hate vilanie.

"And thou, Valerian, for thou so soon
 Assentest to good conseil, also
 Say what thee list, and thou shalt han thy bone."
 "I have a brother," quod Valerian tho,
 "That in this world I love no man so,
 I pray you that my brother may have grace
 To know the trouthe, as I do in this place."

The angel sayd; "God liketh thy request,
 And bothe with the palme of martirdome
 Ye shullen come unto his blisful rest."
 And with that word, Tiburce his brother come,
 And when that he the savour undernome,
 Which that the roses and the lilies cast,
 Witbin his herte he gan to wonder fast,

And said; "I woder this time of the yere
 Whences that swete savour cometh so
 Of roses and lilies, that I smelle here;
 For though I had hem in min bondes two,
 The savour might in me no deper go:
 The swete smel, that in min herte I find,
 Hath changed me all in another kind."

Valerian saide; "Two corones han we
 Snow-white and rose-red, that shimen clere,
 Which that thin eye can no might to see:
 And as thou smellest hem thurgh my priere,
 So shalt thou seen hem, leve brother dere,
 If it so be thou wolt withouten slothe
 Beleve aright, and know the veray trouthe."

Tiburce answered; "Saith thou this to me
 In sohuene, or in dreme herken I this?"
 "In drems," quod Valerian, "han we be
 Unto this time, brother min, ywis:
 But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is." [wise?]
 "How wost thou this," quod Tiburce, "in what
 Quod Valerian; "That shal I thee devise.

"The angel of God hath me the trouthe ysaught,
 Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wist roney
 The idoles, and be clene, and elles naught.
 [And of the miracle of thise corones twey
 Saint Ambrose in his preface list to sey;
 Solempny this noble doctour dere
 Commendeth it, and saith in this manere.

The palme of martirdome for to receive,
 Seinte Cecilie, fulfilled of Goddes yef,
 The world and eke hir chambre gan she weve;
 Witnesse Tiburce and Cecilie schrif,
 To which God of his boundes wolde shift
 Corones two, of houres wel smelling,
 And made his angel hem the corones bring.

The maid hath brought thise men to blisse above
 The world hath wist what it is worth certain
 Devotion of chastite to love.]
 Tho shewed him Cecilie all open and plain,
 That all idoles ni's but a thing in vain,
 For they ben dome, and thereto they ben dere,
 And charged him with his idoles for to leve.

"Who so that troweth not this, a best he is,"
 Quod this Tiburce, "if that I shall not lie."
 And she gan kisse his brest when she herd this,
 And was ful glad he coude trouthe see:
 "This day I take thee for min allie,"
 Saide this blisful faire maiden dere;
 And after that she said as ye may here.

"Lo, right so as the love of Crist" (quod she)
 "Made me thy brothers wif, right is that wis
 Anon for mine alie here take I thee,
 Sithen that thou wolt thin idoles despise.
 Goth with thy brother now and thee baptise,
 And make the clene, so that thou maist behold
 The angels face, of which thy brother told."

Tiburce answered, and saide; "Brother dere,
 First tell me whether I shal, and to what man.
 To whom?" quod he; "Com forth with godd
 I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban." [clere
 "To Urban? brother min Valerian."
 Quod the Tiburce, "wilt thou me thider lede?
 Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.

"Ne menest thou not Urban" (quod he tho)
 "That is so often dammed to be ded,
 That woth in halles alway to and fro,
 And dare not ones putten for his bed?
 Men shuld him brennen in a fire so red,
 If he were found, or that men might him spie,
 And we also, to bere him compaignie.

"And while we seken thilke divinitee,
 That is yhid in Heven prively,
 Algate ybrent in this world shuld we be."
 To whom Cecilie answered boldly;
 "Men mighten dreden wel and skilffoly
 This life to lese, min owen dere brother,
 If this were living esy and non other.

"But ther is better lif in other place,
 That never shal be lost, ne drede thee sought:
 Which Goddes soue us tolde thurgh his grace,
 That fadren soue which alle thinges wrought;
 And all that wrought is with a skilful thought;
 The gost, that from the fader gan procede,
 Hath soold hem withouten any drede.

"By word and by miracle he Goddes sone,
Whan he was in this world, declared here,
That ther is oþer lif ther men may wone."
To whom enward Tibarce; "O suster dere,
Tha mightest thou right now in this manere,
The n'is but o God, lord in soþfastnesse,
And now of three how mayest thou bere witness?"

"That shal I tell," quod she, "or that I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences three,
Memorie, engine, and intellect also,
So is o being of divinitee
Three persones mowen ther righte wel be."
The que she him ful bestly to preche
Of Cristes soude, and of his peines teche,

And many pointes of his passiõ;
How Goddes sone in this world was withhold
To don mankinde pleine remission,
That was ybroun in sinne and cares cold.
All this thing she unto Tibarce told,
And after this Tibarce in good entent,
With Valerian to pope Urban he went,

That thanked God, and with glad herte and light
He cristened him, and made him in that place
Priest in his learning and Goddes knight.
And after this Tibarce gat swiche grace,
That every day he saw in time and space
The angel of God, and every maner bone
That he God axed, it was sped ful sone.

h were ful hard by ordre for to saie
How many wonders Jesus for hem wrought.
But at the last, to telten short and plain,
The sorowfuls of the town of Rome hem sought,
And hem before Almachus the prefect brought,
Which hem apposed, and knew all hire entent,
And to the image of Jupiter hem sent;

And said; "Who so wol nought do sacrifice,
Swep of his hed, this is my sentence here."
How this martyre, that I you devise,
O Maximus, that was an officers
Of the prefectes, and his corniclerie,
Hem hent, and whan he forth the scintes lad,
Himself he wept for pitee that he had.

Whan Maximus had herd the scintes lore,
He gat him of the turmentours leve,
And lad hem to his hous withouten more;
And with his preaching, or that it were eve,
They gounen fro the turmentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk eche on
The false faith, to trowe in God alone.

Cecile came, whan it was waxen night,
With preestes, that hem cristened all yfere;
And afterward, whan day was waxen light,
Cecile hem said with a ful stedfast obere;
"Now, Cristes owen knightes leve and dere,
Come all away the werkes of darknessene,
And smutch you in armes of brightnesse.

"Ye han swoth ydon a gret bestaille;
Your cours is don, your faith han ye conserved;
Goth to the crowne of lif that may not faille;
The right ful juge, which that ye han served,
Shal yove it you, as ye han it deserved."
And whan this thing was said, as I devise,
Men holde hem forth to don the sacrifice.

But whan they weren to the place ybrought,
To telten shortly the conclusioun,
They n'olde encense, no sacrifice right nought,
But on hir knees they setten hem adoun,
With humble herte and sad devotioun,
And listen bothe hir hodes in the place;
Hir soules wenten to the king of grace.

This Maximus, that saw this thing betide,
With pitous teres told it anon right,
That he hir soules saw to Hoven glide
With angels, ful of clerenesse and of light;
And with his word converted many a wight.
For which Almachius did him to-bete
With whip of led, til he his lif gan lete.

Cecile him toke, and buried him anon
By Tibarce and Valerian softly,
Within hir burying place, under the ston.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bad his ministers fetchen openly
Cecile, so that she might in his presenche
Don sacrifice, and Jupiter encense.

But they converted at hire wise love
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hire word, and crieden more and more;
"Crist, Goddes sone, withouten difference
Is veray God, this is all our sentence,
That hath so good a servant him to serve;
Thus with o vois we trowen though we starve."

Almachius, that herd of this doing,
Bad fetchen Cecile, that he might hire see:
And alderfirst, so, this was his axing;
"What maner woman arte thou?" quod he,
"I am a gentilwoman born," quod she,
"I axe thee," quod he, "though it thee greve,
Of thy religion and of thy beleve."

"Why then began your question folly,"
Quod she, "that woldest thou answers conclude
In o demand? ye axen lowdly."
Almachus answerd to that similitude,
"Of whomes cometh thin answering so rude?"
"Of whomes!" (quod she, whan that she was freined)
"Of conscience, and of good faith unfained."

Almachius said; "Ne takest thou non hede
Of my power?" and she him answerd this;
"Your might" (quod she) "ful lital is to drede;
For every mortal mannes power n'is
But like a bladder full of wind ywis
For with a needles point, whan it is blow,
May all the best of it be laid ful low."

"Ful wrongfully begonnest thou," (quod he)
"And yet in wrong is al thy perseverance:
Wost thou not how our mighty princes free
Have thus commanded and made ordinaunce,
That every cristen wight shal han penance
But if that he his Cristendome withseye,
And gon al quite, if he wol it reneye?"

"Your princeis erren, as your nobley doth,"
Quod the Cecile, "and with a wood sentence
Ye make us guilty, and it is not soth:
For ye that knowen wel our innocence,
For as muche as we don ay reverence
To Crist, and for we here a cristen name,
Ye put on us a crime and eke a blame.

"But we that knowen thilke name so
For vertuous, we may it not withseye."
Almache answered; "Chese on of this twe,
Du sacrifice, or Cristendom reneye,
That thou now now escapen by that way."
At which this holy blisful fayre maid
Gan for to laughe, and to the jage said:

"O jage confuse in thy nicetez,
Woldest thou that I reneye innocence?
To maken me a wicked wight" (quod she)
"Lo, he dissimuleth here in audience,
He stareth and wodeth in his advertence."
To whom Almachius said; "Unselly wretch,
Ne wost thou not how far my might may stretch?"

"Han not our mighty princes to me yeven
Ya bothe power and eke auctoritez
To maken folk to dien or to liven?
Why spekest thou so proudly than to me?"
"I ne speke nought but stedfastly," quod she,
"Not proudly, for I say, as for my side,
We haten dedly thilke vice of pride."

"And if thou drede not a soth for to here,
Than wol I shewe al openly by right,
That thou hast made a ful gret leising here.
Thou maist, thy princes han thee yeven might
Both for to slee and for to quiken a wight,
Thou that ne maist but only lif bereve,
Thou hast now other power ne no leve."

"But thou maist sayn, thy princes han thee makid
Ministre of deth; for if thou speke of mo,
Thou liest; for thy power is ful naked."
"Do way thy boldnesse," said Almachius tho,
"And sacrifice to our goddes, er thou go.
I recke not what wrong that thou me profite,
For I can suffre it as a philosopre."

"But thilke wronges may I not endure,
That thou spekest of our goddes here," quod he.
Cecile answerd; "O nice creature,
Thou saigest no word sin thou spake to me,
That I ne knew therewith thy nicetez,
And that thou were in every maner wise
A lewed officer, a vain justice."

"Ther lacketh nothing to thin utter eyen
That thou n'art blind; for thing that we seen alle
That is a ston, that men may wel espieen,
That ilke ston a god thou wolt it callie.
I rede thee let thin hood upon it falle,
And tast it wel, and ston thou shalt it find,
Sin that thou seest not with thin eyen blind."

"It is a shame that the peple shal
So scornen thee, and laugh at thy folie;
For comunly men wot it wel over al,
That mighty God is in his Hevens hie;
And this images, wel maist thou espie,
To thee ne to hemself may not profite,
For in effect they be not worth a mite."

These and swiche other wordes saide she,
And he wax wroth; and bade men shoulde hire lede
Home til hire house, "and in hire hous" (quod he)
"Brenne hire right in a bath, with flames rede."
And as he bade, right so was don the dede;
For in a bathe they gonne hire faste shetten,
And night and day gret fire they under betten.

The longe night, and eke a day also,
For all the fire, and eke the bathes hete,
She sate al cold, and fast of it no wo,
It made hire not a droppe for to swete:
But in that bath hire lif she muste lete,
For he Almache, with a ful wicke entent,
To sleen hire in the bath his soude sent.

Three strokes in the nekke he smote hire tho
The tormentour, but for no maner chance
He mighte not smite all hire nekke atwo:
And for ther was that time an ordinaunce
That no man shulde don man swiche penaunce,
The fourthe stroke to smiten, soft or sore,
This tormentour ne dorste do no more;

But half ded, with hire nekke yoooven ther
He left hire be, and on his way is went.
The cristen folk, which that aboute hire were,
With shotes han the blood ful faire yent:
Thre dayes lived she in this torment,
And never osted hem the faith to teche,
That she had fostred hem, she gan to preche.

And hem she yaf hire nobles and hire thing,
And to the pope Urban betoke hem tho,
And said; "I axed this of Heven king,
To have respit thre dayes and no mo,
To recomend to you, or that I go,
This soules, &c, and that I might do werche
Here of min hous perpetuellich a obeseche."

Saint Urban, with his dekenes prively
The body fetter, and buried it by night
Among his other seintes honestly:
Hire hous the cherche of Sainte Cecile bright,
Saint Urban halowed it, as he wel might,
In which unto this day in noble wise
Men don to Crist and to his seinte servise.

THE

CHANONES YEMANNES PROLOGUE.

WHAN that tolde was the lif of Sainte Cecile,
Er we had ridden fully five mile,
At Boughton under Blee us gan stake
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
And undermeth he wered a white surpis.
His hakeney, which that was al pomelee gris,
So swatte, that it wonder was to see,
It semed as he had priked miles thre.
The horse eke that his Yeman rode upon,
So swatte, that unneseth might he gon.
About the peytrel stood the fome ful hie,
He was of fome as flecked as a pie.
A male twiefold on his croper lay,
It semed that he caried litel array,
Al light for somner rode this worthy man.
And in my herte woodren I began
What that he was, til that I understode,
How that his cloke was sowed to his hode;
For which when I had long avised me,
I doped him some chanon for to be.
His hat heng at his back down by a las,
For he had ridden more than trot or pas,
He had priked like as he were wode.
A clote-left he had laid under his hode

For swete, and for to kepe his hed fro bote.
 But it was joye for to seyn him swete;
 His ferehed droppod, as a stillatorie
 Were ful of plainstaine or of paritorie.
 And when that he was come, he gan to crie,
 "God save" (quod he) "this joly compaignie.
 Fast have I priked" (quod he) "for your sake,
 Because that I wolde you stakie,
 To ride in this mery compaignie."
 His Yeman was eke ful of curtesie,
 And saide; "Sires, now in the morwe tide
 Out of your hostelrye I saw you ride,
 And vernaed here my lord and soverain,
 Which that to ride with you is ful fain,
 For his disport; he loveth daliance."
 "Frend, for thy warning God yeve thee good chance,"
 Thus said our Hoste; "certain it wolde seme
 Thy lord were wise, and so I may wel deme;
 He is ful jocunde also dare I leve:
 Can he ought telle a mery tale or twee,
 With which he glades may this compaignie?"
 "Who, sire? my lord? Ye, sire, withouten lie,
 He can of mirth and eke of jolitee
 Not but ynough; also, sire, trusteth me,
 And ye him knew al so wel as do I,
 Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily
 He coude werke, and that in sondry wise.
 He hath take on him many a gret emprise,
 Which were ful harde for any that is here
 To bring about, bet they of him it here.
 As homely as he rideth amonges you,
 If ye him knew, it wold be for your prow:
 Ye wolden not forgo his acquaintance
 For sochel good, I dare yai in balance
 All that I have in my possession.
 He is a man of high discrecion,
 I wote you wel, he is a passing man."
 "Wel," quod our Hoste, "I pray thee tell me than,
 Is he a clerk, or non? tell what he is."
 "Nay, he is greter than a clerk ywis,"
 saide this Yeman, "and in wordes fewe,
 Of his craft somwhat I wol you shewe."
 "I say, my lord can swiche a subtiltee,
 (Bet all his craft ye moun not wote of me,
 And somewhat help I yet to his werking)
 That all the ground on which we ben riding
 Til that we come to Canterbury toun,
 He coude al cleve tarmen up so down,
 And pave it all of silver and of gold."
 And when this Yeman had this tale ytolde
 Unto our Hoste, he said; "Benedicite,
 This thing is wonder mervailous to me,
 So that thy lord is of so high proudece,
 Because of which men shoulde him reverence,
 That of his worship reketh he so lite;
 His gretest stoppe it is not worth a mite
 As in effect to him, so mote I go;
 It is all bendy and to-torn also.
 Why is thy lord so stutish I thee praye,
 And is of power better cloth to buye,
 If that his dede accorded with thy speche?
 Telle me that, and that I thee beseeche."
 "Why?" quod this Yeman, "wherto anse ye me?
 God helpe me so, for he shal never be:
 (Bet I wol not avowen that I say,
 And therfore hope it secree I you pray)
 He is to wise in faith, as I beleve.
 Thing that is overdon, it wol not preve
 Bright, as clerkes saie, it is a vice;
 Wherfore in that I hold him lewed and a vice.

For when a man hath overgret a wit,
 Ful oft him happeth to misseuen it:
 So doth my lord, and that me greveth sore.
 God it amende, I can say now no more."
 "Therof no force, good yeman," quod our Hoste,
 "Sin of the counting of thy lord thou wost,
 Telle how he doth, I pray thee hertily,
 Sin that he is so crafty and so sly.
 Wher dwellen ye, if it to talen be?"
 "In the suburben of a toun," quod he,
 "Lurking in herces and in lanes blinde,
 Wheras thise robbours and thise theves by kinde
 Holden hir privee fereful residence,
 As they that dare not shewen hir presence,
 So faren we, if I shal say the sothe."
 "Yet," quod our Hoste, "let me talen to
 the;
 Why art thou so discoloured of thy face?"
 "Peter," quod he, "God yeve it harde grace,
 I am so used the hote fire to blow,
 That it hath changed my colour I trow;
 I can not wont to no mairour to pris,
 But swinke sore, and seme to multiplie.
 We blundren ever, and poren in the fire,
 And for all that we faille of our desire,
 For ever we lacken our conclusion.
 To mochel folk we don illusion,
 And horwe gold, be it a pound or two,
 Or ten or twelve, or many sommes mo,
 And make hem wemen at the beste wey,
 That of a pound we conuen maken twey,
 Yet is it false; and ay we han good hope
 It for to dou, and after it we grope:
 But that science is so for us before,
 We mowen not, although we had it swore,
 It overtake, it slit away so fast;
 It wol us maken beggers at the last."
 While this Yeman was thus in his talking,
 This Chanon drew him nere, and herd all thing
 Which this yeman spak, for suspencion
 Of memnes speche ever had this Chanon:
 For Caton myth, that "he that giltly is,
 Deemeth all thing he spoken of him ywis:"
 That was the cause, he gan so nigh him drawe
 To his Yeman, to herken all his sawe,
 And thus he saide unto his Yeman tho;
 "Hold thou thy pees, and speke no wordes mo:
 For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abio.
 Thou selandrest me here in this compaignie,
 And eke discoverest that thou shouldest hide."
 "Ye," quod our Hoste, "tell on, what so be-
 tide;
 Of all his threunaing reeke not a mite."
 "In faith," quod he, "no more I do but lite."
 And when this Chanon saw it wold not be,
 Bet his Yeman wold tell his privetes,
 He fled away for very sorwe and shame.
 "A," quod the Yeman, "here shal rise a game:
 All that I can anon I wol you telle,
 Sin he is gou; the foule fend him queile;
 For never hereafter wol I with him mete
 For peny ne for pound, I you behete.
 He that me broughte first unto that game,
 Er that he die, sorwe have he and shame.
 For it is earnest to me by my faith;
 That fals I wol, what that any man saith,
 And yet for all my smert, and all my grief,
 For all my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
 I coude never leve it in no wise.
 Now wolde God my wit mighte soffice

To tellen all that longeth to that art ;
 Bot natheles, yet wol I tellen part ;
 Sin that may lord is gose, I wol not spare,
 Swiche thing as that I know, I wol declara."

THE

CHANONES YEMANNES TALE.

With this Chanon I dwelt have seven yere,
 And of his science am I never the nere :
 All that I had, I have ylost therby,
 And God wot, so han many mo than I.
 Ther I was wont to be right fresh and gay
 Of clothing, and of other good array,
 Now may I wene an hose upon min had ;
 And wher my colour was both fresh and red,
 Now is it wan, and of a leden hewe ;
 (Who so it useth, so shal he it rewe)
 And of my swinke yet bleered is min eye ;
 Lo which advantage is to multiple !
 That sliding sciences hath me made so bare,
 That I have no good, wher that ever I fare ;
 And yet I am endotted so therby
 Of gold, that I have borwed trewely,
 That while I live, I shal it quiten never ;
 Let every man be ware by me for ever.
 What maner man that casteth him therto,
 If he continue, I hold his thrift ydo ;
 So help me God, therby shal he nat winne,
 But empte his purse, and make his writtes thinne.
 And whan he, through his madness and folie,
 Hath lost his owen good thurgh jupartie,
 Than he exciteth other folk therto,
 To lese hir good as he himself hath do.
 For unto shrewes joye it is and ese
 To have hir felawes in peime and disese.
 Thus was I once lorned of a clerk ;
 Of that no charge ; I wol speke of our werk.

Whan we be ther as we shuld exercise
 Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wise,
 Our termes ben so clerical and quainte.
 I blow the fire til that myn herte fainte.
 What shuld I tellen eche proportion
 Of thinges, whiche that we werten upon,
 As on five or six unces, may wel be,
 Of silver, or som other quantite ?
 And besie me to tellen you the names,
 As orpiment, brest bones, yren squames,
 That into poudre grounden ben ful smal ?
 And in an erthen pot how put is al,
 And salt ypat in, and also pepere,
 Before these poudres that I speke of here,
 And wel covered with a lampe of glas ?
 And of moche other thing which that ther was ?
 And of the pottes and glasses engulging,
 That of the aire might passen out no thing ?
 And of the esy fire, and sument also,
 Which that was made ? and of the care and wo,
 That we had in our materes subliming,
 And in amalgaming, and calcenig
 Of quiksilver, ycleped mercurie crude ?
 For all our sleightes we can not conclude.
 Our orpiment, and sublimed mercurie,
 Our grounden litarge eke on the porphurie,
 Of eche of thise of unces a certain
 Not helpeth us, our labour is in vain.
 Ne, neyther our spiritres ascention,
 Ne our materes that lien al fix adoun,

Mown in our werking nothing us availle ;
 For lost is all our labour and travaille,
 And all the cost a twenty devil way
 Is lost also, which we upon it lay.

Ther is also ful many another thing,
 That is unto our craft appertaining,
 Though I by ordre hem nat reherren can,
 Because that I am a lewed man,
 Yet wol I telle hem, as they come to minde,
 Though I ne cannot set hem in hir kinde,
 As bole armoniak, verdegrene, boras ;
 And sondry vessels made of orthe and glas,
 Our urinales, and our demasuries,
 Viols, crocettas, and sublimatories,
 Cucurbitas, and alembikes eke,
 And other swiche gere, dere yough a leke,
 What nedeth it for to reherren hem alle ?
 Waters rubifying, and bolles galle,
 Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimston ?
 And herbes coude I tell eke many on,
 As egreinoise, valerian, and lunarie,
 And other swiche, if that me list to tarie ;
 Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,
 To bring about our craft if that we may ;
 Our fournes eke of calcination,
 And of waters albedication,
 Unslekked lime, chalk, and gloire of an ey,
 Poudres divers, ashes, dong, pise, and cley,
 Sered pokettes, sal peter, and vitriole ;
 And divers fires made of wode and cole ;
 Sal tartre, alcaiy, and salt preparat,
 And combust materes, and coagulat ;
 Cley made with hore and mannes hore, and oile
 Of tartre, alous, glas, berme, wort, and arguile,
 Rosalgar, and other materes enbibing ;
 And eke of our materes encorporing,
 And of our silver citrification,
 Our coagulating, and fermentation,
 Our ingottes, testes, and many thinges mo.

I wol you tell as was me taught also
 The foure spiritres, and the bodies severe
 By ordre, as oft I herd my lord hem revere.
 The firste spirit quiksilver cleped is ;
 The second orpiment ; the thridde ywis
 Sal armoniak, and the fourth brimston.

The bodies severe eke, lo hem bere knowe.
 Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe ;
 Mars iren, Mercurie quiksilver we clepe ;
 Saturnus led, and Jupiter is tin,
 And Venus coper, by my fader kin.

This cursed craft who so wol exercise,
 He shal no good have, that him may suffice,
 For all the good he spendoth therabouts
 He lesse shal, therof have I no doute.
 Who so that listeth utren his folie,
 Let him come furth and lerne multiple :
 And every man that hath ought in his cofre,
 Let him appere, and wax a philosophere,
 Asaunce that craft is so light to lere.
 Nay, nay, God wot, al be he monk or frere,
 Preet or chanon, or any other wight,
 Though he sit at his book both day and night
 In lerning of this elvish nice lore,
 All is in vain, and parde moche more
 To lerne a lewed man this subtilite ;
 Fie, speke not therof, for it wol not be.
 And come he letterare, or come he sam,
 As in effect, he shal finde it all on ;
 For bothe two by my salvation
 Concluden in multiplicacion

Ylke wel, when they have all ydo ;
 This is to sin, they fallen bothe two.
 Yet forgate I to maken reberealle
 Of waters corousif, and of limaille,
 And of bodies molification,
 And also of hir induration,
 Oles, ablutions, metal fusible,
 To telen all, wold passen any bible,
 That o wher is ; wherfore as for the best
 Of all thise names now wol I use rest ;
 For as I trow, I have you told ynow
 To reise a fend, al loke he never so row.
 A, nay, let be ; the philosophes ston,
 Hizer cleped, we seken fast eche on,
 For had we him, than were we siker ynow ;
 But unto God of Eleven I make avow,
 For all our craft, whan we han all ydo,
 And all our sleight, he wol not come us to.
 He hath ymade us spenden mochel good,
 For sorwe of which almost we wazen wood,
 But that good hope crepeth in our herte,
 Supposing ever, though we sore smerte,
 To bea relieved of him afterward.
 Seiche supposing and hope is sharpe and hard.
 I waze you wel it is to seken ever.
 That future tēpē hath made men disover,
 In trust thereof, from all that ever they had,
 Yet of that art they come not wazen ad,
 For unto hem it is a bitter swete ;
 So smeth it ; for me had they but a shete
 Which that they might wrappen hem in a-night,
 And a bratt to walken in by day-light,
 They wold hem self, and spend it on this craft ;
 They come not stotēn, til no thing be laft.
 And evermore, wher ever that they go,
 Men may hem kennan by smell of brimston ;
 For all the world they stinken as a gote ;
 Hir savour is so rammish and so hote,
 That though a man a mile from hem be,
 The savour wol enfect him, trustoth me.
 Lo, thus by smelling and thred-bare array,
 If that men list, this folk they knowen may.
 And if a man wol see hem prively,
 Why they be clothed so unthriftily,
 They right anon wol rounen in his ere,
 And wizen, if that they espied were,
 Men wolde hem see, because of hir science :
 Lo, thus thise folk betraien innocence.
 Passo over this, I go my tale unto.
 For that the pot be on the fire ydo
 Of metals with a certain quantitee,
 My lord hem tempereth, and so man but he ;
 (Now he is gon, I dare say boldly)
 For as men sein, he can dnn craftily ;
 Algate I wote wel he hath swiche a name,
 And yet ful oft he remeth in a blame,
 And wete ye how ? ful oft it fallēth so,
 The pot to-broket, and shrewel all is go.
 Thise metales ben of so gret violence,
 One walleis may not make hem resistance,
 Bot if they weren wrought of lime and ston ;
 They perren so, that though the wall they gon ;
 And som of hem smike doun into the ground,
 (Thus have we lost by times many a pound)
 And som are scattered all the shere aboute ;
 Som lepen into the roof withouten doute.
 Though that the fend not in our sight him shewe,
 I trow that he be with us, thilke shrewe,
 In Helle, wher that he is lord and sire,
 Ne is ther no more wo, rancour, ne ire.

Whan that our pot is broke, as I have sayde,
 Every man chit, and bolt him evil apayde.
 Som sayd " it was long on the fire-making ;"
 Som sayd, " nay, it was long on the blowing ;"
 (Than was I ferd, for that was min office)
 " Straw," quod the thriddle, " ye ben lewed and nice,
 It was not tempred as it ought to be."
 " Nay," quod the fourthe, " stint and berken me ;
 Because our fire was not made of boche,
 That is the cause, and other non, so the iche."
 I can not tell wherof it was along,
 But wel I wot gret strif is us among.
 " What ?" quod my lord, " ther n'is no more to don,
 Of thise perils I wol beware eftoon.
 I am right siker, that the pot was crased.
 Be as be may, be ye no thing amased.
 As usage is, let swepe the shere as swithe ;
 Plucke up your hertes and be glad and blithe."
 The mullok on an hepe ysweped was,
 And on the shere ycast a canavas,
 And all this mullok in a sive ythrowe,
 And sifted, and ypickid many a throwe.
 " Parde," quod on, " somwhat of our metall
 Yet is ther here, though that we have not all.
 And though this thing mishapped hath as now,
 Another time it may be wel ynow.
 We mosten put our good in aventure ;
 A marchant parde may not ay endure,
 Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee :
 Somtime his good is dremched in the see,
 And somtime cometh it sauf unto the lede."
 " Pees," quod my lord, " the next time I wol food
 To bring our craft all in another plite,
 And but I do, sines, let me have the wite :
 Ther was default in somwhat, wel I wote."
 Another sayd, " the fire was over hote."
 But be it hote or cold, I dare say this,
 That we conclinden ever more amis :
 We faille alway of that which we wold here,
 And in our madnesse evermore we rave.
 And whan we be together cverich on,
 Every man smeth a Salomon.
 But all thing, which that shineth as the gold,
 Ne is no gold, as I have herd it told ;
 Ne every apple that is faire at eye,
 Ne is not good, what so men clap or erie.
 Right so, lo, fareth it amonges us.
 He that semeth the wisest by Jesus
 Is most fool, whan it cometh to the prefe ;
 And be that semeth trewest, is a thefe.
 That shal ye know, or that I from you weude,
 By that I of my tale have made an ende.
 Ther was a chanon of religour
 Amonges us, wold enfect all a town,
 Though it as gret were as was Niive,
 Roone, Alisandre, Troie, or other thre.
 His sleightes and his infinite falsnesse
 Ther coude no man witen, as I gese,
 Though that he mighte live a thousand yere ;
 In all this world of falsnesse n'is his pere.
 For in his termes he wol him so winde,
 And speke his wordes in so slic a kinde,
 Whan he comen shal with any night,
 That he wol make him doten soon right,
 But it a fend be, as himselfen is.
 Ful many a man hath he begiled er this,
 And wol, if that he may live any while :
 And yet men gon and riden many a mile
 Him for to seke, and have his acquaintance,
 Not knowing of his false governance.

And if you lust to yewe me audience,
I wol it tellen here in your presence.

But, worshipful chanoys religious,
Ne demeth not that I sclander your hous,
Although that my tale of a chanon be.
Of every order som shrew is parde:
And God forbode that all a compaignie
Shauld rewe a singular mannes folie.
To sclander you is no thing sin entent,
But to correcten that is mis I ment.
This tale was not only told for you,
But eke for other mo: ye wote wel how
That among Cristes aposteles twelve
Ther was no traitour but Judas himselfe:
Than why shuld al the remenant have blame,
That giltyte were? by you I say the same.
Save only this, if ye wol herken me,
If any Judas in your covert be,
Remeveth him betimes, I you rede,
If shame or los may causes any drede.
And be no thing displeasid I you pray,
But in this cas herkeneth what I say.

In London was a preest, an annuciere,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yere,
Which was so plesant and so servisable
Unto the wif, ther as he was at table,
That she wold suffer him no thing to pay
For borde or clothing, went he never so gay;
And spending silver had he right ynow:
Therof no force; I wol proceed as now,
And tellen forth my tale of the chanon,
That broughte this preest to confusion.

This false chanon came upon a day
Unto the preestes chambre, ther he lay,
Beseching him to lene him a certain
Of gold, and he wold quite it him again.
"Lene me a marke," quod he, "but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quitea thee.
And if it so be, that thou finde me false,
Another day hang me up by the halse."

This preest him toke a marke, and that as swith,
And this chanon him thanked often sith,
And toke his leve, and wente forth his way:
And at the thridde day brought his money;
And to the preest he toke his gold again,
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fain.

"Certes," quod he, "nothing anoieth me
To lene a man a noble, or two, or three,
Or what thing were in my possession,
Whan he so trewe is of condition,
That in no wise he breken wol his day:
To swiche a man I can never say nay."

"What?" quod this chanon, "shuld I be untrewed?
Nay, that were thing fallen al of the newe.
Trowth is a thing that I wol ever kepe,
Unto the day in which that I shal crepe
Into my grave, and elles God forbode:
Beloveth this as siker as your crede.
God thanks I, and in good time be it sayde,
That ther n'as never man yet evil apayde
For gold ne silver that he to me lent,
Ne never falsabede in, min herte I ment.

"And, sire," (quod he) "now of my privitee,
Sin ye so goodlich have ben unto me,
And kithed to me so gret gentillesse,
Somwhat, to quiten with your kindnesse,
I wol you shewe, and if you lust to lere
I wol you techen plainly the manere,
How I can werken in philosophie.
Taketht good heed, ye shuln wel sen at eye,

That I wol do a maistrie or I go."

"Ye?" quod the preest, "ye, sire, and wol ye
Mary therof I pray you hertily."

"At your comoungement, sire, trewely,
Quod the chanon, "and elles God forbode."
Lo, how this thefe coude his service bede.

Ful soth it is that swiche profered service
Stinkoth, as witnessen thise olde wise;
And that ful some I wol it verifie
In this chanon, robe of all trecherie,
That evermore delight hath and gladnesse
(Swiche fondly thoughtes in his herte emprise)
How Cristes peple he may to meschief bring.
God kepe us from his false dimmuling.
Nought wiste this preest with whom that he del,
No of his harme coming nothing he felt.
O sely preest, o sely innocent,
With covetise anon thou shalt be blent;
O graces, ful blind is thy covetise,
For nothing art thou ware of the disceite,
Which that this fox yshapen hath to thee;
His wily wrenches thou se mayst not see.
Wherfore to go to the conclusion
That referreth to thy confusion,
Uohappy man, anon I wol me bie
To tellen thin unwit and thy folie,
And eke the falsnesse of that other wretch,
As ferforth as that my coming wol stretch.

This chanon was my lord, ye wolden wene;
Sire Hoste, in faith, and by the Heven quene,
It was another chanon, and not he,
That can an hundred part more subtiltee.
He hath betraied folkes many a time;
Of his falsnesse it dulleth me to rime.
Ever whan that I speke of his falsbede
For shame of him my chekes waxen rede;
Algates they begynnen for to glowe,
For rednesse have I non, right wel I knowe,
In my visage, for fumes diverse
Of metals, which ye have herd me reheere,
Consumed han and wasted my rednesse.
Now take hede of this chanoys curednesse.

"Sire," quod the chanon, "let your yeman go
For quiksilver, that we it had anon;
And let him bringen unces two or three;
And whan he cometh, as faste shul ye see
A wonder thing, which ye saw never or this."

"Sire," quod the preest, "it shal be don yris."
He had his servant fetchen him this thing,
And he al redy was at his bidding,
And went him forth, and came anon again
With this quiksilver, shortly for to sein,
And toke this unces three to the chanon;
And he hem laide wel and faire adoun,
And had the servant coles for to bring,
That he anon might go to his werking."

The coles right anon weren yset,
And this chanon toke out a crosselet
Of his boume, and shewed it to the preest.
"This instrument," quod he, "which that thou seest,
Take in thyn hand, and put thyself therin
Of this quiksilver an unce, and here begin
In the name of Crist to wax a philosophre.
Ther be ful fewe, which that I woulde profre
To shewen hem thus muche of any science:
For here shul ye see by experience,
That this quiksilver I wol mortifie,
Right in your sight anon withouten lie,
And make it as good silver and as fine,
As ther is any in your purse or mine,

Or elles wher; and make it malliable;
And elles holdeth me false and nable
Amonges folk for ever to appere.

"I have a pouder here that cost me dere,
Shal make all good, for it is cause of all
My coming, which that I you shewen shall
Yoldeth your man, and let him be therout;
And shet the dore, while we ben about
Our privatee, that no man us esple,
While that we werke in this philosopie."

All, as he bade, fulfilled was in dede.
This ilke servaunt anon right out yede,
And his maister shette the dore anon,
And to his labour speedily they gon.

This preest at this cursed chanons bidding,
Upon the fire anon he set this thing,
And blew the fire, and besied him ful fast.
And this chanon into the crosselet cast
A pouder, w'ot I never wherof it was
Ymade, other of chalk, other of gles,
Or somewhat elles, was not worth a fie,
To blinden with this preest; and bade him his
The coles fir to catchen all above
The crosselet; "for in tokening I thee love,"
(Good this chanon) "thine owen hoodes two
Shal werken all thing which that here is do."

"Great mercy," quod the preest, and was ful glad,
And couched the coles as the chanon bad,
And while he busy was, this fendy wretch,
This false chanon (the foule fend him fetch)
Out of his honours toke a beeben cole,

In which ful subtilly was made an hole,
And therein put was of silver limaille
As unce, and stopped was withouten faille
The hole with wax, to kepe the limaille in.
And understandeth, that this false gin
Was not made ther, but it was made before;

And other thinges I shal tell you more
Hereafterward, which that he with him brought;
Er he came ther, him to begile he thought,
And so he did, or that they went sturin:
Thi he had turned him, could he not blin.
It delieth me, when that I of him speke;
On his falshede fain wold I me awake,
If I wist how, but he is here and ther,
He is so variaunt, he shil no wher.

But taketh hede, sires, now for Goddes love,
He toke his cole, of which I spake above,
And in his hood he bare it prively,
And whiles the preest couched besily
The coles, as I tolde you er this,
This chanon seyde: "Frend, ye don arnis;
This is not couched as it ought to be,
But wote I shal amenden it," quod he.

"Now let me meddle therwith but a while,
For of you have I pittee for Saint Oile.
Ye ben right bot, I see wel how ye swete;
Have here a cloth and wipe away the wote."

And whiles that the preest wiped his face,
This chanon toke his cole, with sory grace,
And laid it above on the midward
Of the crosselet, and blew wel afterward,
Thi that the coles gonnen fast to bren.
"Now yere us drinke," quod this chanon then,
"As swithe all shal be wel, I undertake,
Sits we down, and let us mery make."
And whanne that this chanonnes beeben cole
Was brened, all the limaille out of the hole
Into the crosselet anon fell adoun;
And so it mouste nedes by remoun,

Sin it above so even couched was;
But therof wist the preest nothing, alas!
He demed all the coles ylike good,
For of the sleight he nothing understood.

And when this alkymistre saw his time,
"Riseth up, sire preest," quod he, "and stondeth by
And for I wote wel ingot have ye non, [me];
Goth, walketh forth, and bringeth a chalk ston;
For I wol make it of the same shap,
That is an ingot, if I may have hap.
Bring eke with you a bolle or elles a pumpe
Ful of water, and ye shul wel see thanne
How that our businesse shal thrive and preve,
And yet, for ye shul have no misbeleve
No wrong conceit of me in your absence,
I ne wol not ben out of your presence,
But go with you, and come with you again."

The chambre dore, shortly for to sain,
They opened and shet, and went hir wey,
And forth with hem they caried the key,
And camen again withouten any delay.
What shuld I tarien all the longe day?
He toke the chalk, and shope it in the wiss
Of an ingot, as I shal you derise;
I say, he toke out of his owen sieve
A teine of silver (yvel note he cheve)
Which that he was but a just unce of weight.
And taketh heed now of his cursed sleight;
He shop his ingot, in length and in brede
Of thilke teine, withouten any drede,
So sily, that the preest it not espide;
And in his sieve again he gan it hide;
And from the fire he toke up his matere,
And in the ingot it put with mery chere:
And in the water-vessel he it cast,
When that him list, and had the preest as fast,
"Loke what ther is; put in thin hond and grope;
Thou shalt ther finden silver as I hope.
What, divel of Helle! shuld it elles be?
Shaving of silver, silver is parde."

He put his hood in, and toke up a teine
Of silver fine, and glad in every veine
Was this preest, when he saw that it was so.
"Goddes blessing, and his mothers also,
And alle Halwes, have ye, sire chanon,"
Seyde this preest, "and I hir malison,
But, and ye vouchesauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtilitee,
I wol be your in all that ever I may."

Quod the chanon, "Yet wol I make assay
The second time, that ye now taken hede,
And beu expert of this, and in your mede
Another day assay in min absence
This discipline, and this crafty science.
Let take another unce," quod he tho,
"Of quiksilver, withouten wordes mo,
And do therwith as ye have don er this
With that other, which that now silver is."

The preest him beseth all that ever he can
To don as this chanon, this cursed man,
Commandeth him, and faste blew the fire,
For to come to the effect of his desire.
And this chanon right in the mene while
Al redy was this preest eft to begile,
And for a countenance in his hond bare
An holow stikke, (take kepe and beware)
In the ende of which an unce and no more
Of silver limaille put was, as before
Was in his cole, and stopped with wax wel
For to kepe in his limaille every del.

And while this preest was in his besenese,
This chanon with his stikke gan him dresse
To him anon, and his powder cast in,
As he did erst, (the devil out of his skin
Him torne, I pray to God, for his falschede,
For he was ever false in thought and dede)
And with his stikke, above the cromelet,
That was ordained with that false get,
He stirreth the coles, til releston gan
The wax aguin the fire, as every man,
But he a fool be, wote wel it mote nede.
And all that in the stikke was out yede,
And in the crosset hastily it fell.

Now, goode sires, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preest was thus begiled again,
Supposing nought but trouthe, soth to sein,
He was so glad, that I can not expresse
In no manere his mirth and his gladnesse,
And to the chanon he profereð aftonone
Body and good: "Ye," quod the chanon, "some,
Though poore I be, crafty thou shalt me finde:
I warne thee wel, yet is ther more behinde.

"Is ther any coper here within?" said he.
"Ye, sire," quod the preest, "I trow ther be."
"Eles go beise us soon, and that as swithe."

Now, goode sires, go furth thy way and his the."
He went his way, and with the coper he came,
And this chanon it in his hondes name,
And of that coper weyed out an unce.
To simple is my tonge to pronounce,
As minister of my wit, the doolhensene
Of this chanon, rote of all curdednesse.
He seemed frendly, to beem that knew him nought,
But he was fendly, both in werk and thought.
It werieth me to tell of his falsconme;
And mathides yet wol I it expresse,
To that entent men may beware therby,
And for non other cause trewely.

He put this coper into the crosset,
And on the fire as swithe he hath it set,
And cast in powder, and made the preest to blow,
And in his werking for to stoupen low,
As he did erst, and all n'as but a jape;
Right as him list the preest he made his ape.
And afterward in the motte he it cast,
And in the panne put it at the last
Of water, and in he put his owen bond;
And in his sieve, as ye beforen bond
Herde me tell, he had a silver teime;
He sily toke it out, this cursed beime,
(Unweting this preest of his false craft)
And in the pannes botome he it left.
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder prively toke up also
The coper teime, (not knowing thilke preest)
And hid it, and him hente by the brest,
And to him spake, and thus said in his game;
"Stonpeth adoun; by God ye be to blame;
Helpeth me now, as I did you whilere;
Put in your bond, and loketh what is there."

The preest toke up this silver teime anon;
And thanne said the chanon, "Let us gon
With thise three teimes which that we han wrought,
To som goldsmith, and wete if they ben ought:
For by my faith I n'olde for my hood
But if they weren silver fine and good,
And that as swithe wel proved shal it be."

Unto the goldsmith with thise teimes three
They went anon, and put hem in assay
To fire and hammer: might no man say nay,

But that they weren as beem ought to be.

This soted preest, who was gladder than he?
Was never brid gladder agains the day,
Ne nightgale in the season of May
Was never non, that list better to sing,
Ne lady luster in carolling,
Or for to speke of love and womanhede,
Ne knight in armes don a hardy dede
To stonden in grace of his lady dore,
Than hadde this preest this craft for to lere;
And to the chanon thus he spake and seid;
"For the love of God, that for us alle deid,
And as I may deserve it unto you,
What shal this receit cost? telleth me now."

"By our lady," quod this chanon, "it is detre.
I warne you wel, that, save I and a frere,
In Engleond ther can no man it make."

"No force," quod he; "now, sire, for Goddes
sake,

What shall I pay? telleth me, I you pray."

"Ywis," quod he, "it is ful dere I say.
Sire, at o word, if that you list it have,
Ye shal pay forty pound, so God me save;
And n're the frendship that ye did er this
To me, ye shulden payen more ywis."

This preest the sum of forty pound anon
Of nobles fet, and toke hem everich on
To this chanon, for this ilke receit.
All his werking n'as but fraud and deceit.

"Sire preest," he said, "I keep for to have no loof
Of my craft, for I wold it were kept clous;
And as ye love me, kepeth it secree:
For if men knewen all my subtiltee,
By God they wolden have no gret cavie
To me, because of my philosoophie,
I shuld be ded, ther were non other way."

"God it forbede," quod the preest, "what yessay.
Yet had I lever spenden all the good
Which that I have, (and elles were I woud)
Than that ye shuld fallen in swiche manebefe."

"For your good will, sire, have ye right good
prufe,"

Quod the chanon, "and farewell, *grand mercy*."
He went his way, and never the preest him sey
After that day: and whan that this preest shold
Maken assay, at swiche time as he wold,
Of this receit, farewell, it n'olde not be.
Lo, thus bejaped and begiled was he:
Thus maketh he his introduction
To bringen folk to hir destruction.

Considereth, sires, how that in eche estat
Betwixen men and gold ther is debat,
So ferforth that unnethe is ther non.
This multiplying so blint many on,
That in good faith I trowe that it be
The cause grettest of swiche avaritise.
Thise philosophours speke so mistily
In this craft, that men cannot come therby,
For any wit that men have now adaya.

They mow wel chateren, as don thise jayes,
And in hir brestes set hir lust and peine,
But to hir purpos shul they never attein.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have ought,
To multiple, and bring his good to ought.
Lo, swiche a lacre is in this lusty game;
A mannes mirth it wol turne al to game,
And emptien also gret and hevry purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen curses
Of beem, that han therio hir good ylost.
O, fy for shame, they that han ha brest,

Alas! can they not see the fires hete?
 Ye that it use, I rede that ye it lete,
 Let ye lese all; for bet than never is late:
 Never to thriuen, were to long a date.
 Though ye prouke ay, ye shul it never find:
 Ye ben as bold as is Bayard the blind,
 That blondereth furth, and peril casteth non:
 He is as bold to renne agains a ston,
 As for to go besides in the way:
 So faren ye that multiplies, I say.

If that your eyen cannot seen aright,
 Loketh that youre mind lacke not his sight.
 For though ye loke never so brode and stare,
 Ye shul not win a mite on that chaffare.
 But waken all that ye may rape and renne.
 Withdraw the fire, lest it to faste brenne;
 Melleth no more with that art, I mene;
 For if ye don, your thrif is gon ful clem.
 And right as swithe I wol you tellen here
 What philosophes sein in this matere.

Lo, thus saith Arnolde of the newe toun,
 As his Rosarie maketh mentioun,
 He saith right thus, withouten any lie;
 Ther may no man Mercurie mortifie,
 But it be with his brothers knowleching.

Lo, how that he, whiche firste said this thing,
 Of philosophes father was, Hermes:
 He saith, how that the dragon douteles
 Ne dieth not, but if that he be slain
 With his brother. And this is for to sein,
 By the dragon Mercury, and non other,
 He understood, and brimstone by his brother,
 That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe.

And therefore, said he, "Take heed to my sawe.
 Let no man beise him this art to seche,
 But if that he the extention and speche
 Of philosophes understonden can;
 And if he do, he is a lewed man.

"For this science and this conning" (quod he)
 "is of the secretes of secretes parde."

Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
 That on a time said his maister to,
 As his booke Senior wol here witnessen,
 And this was his demand in sochtfastnesse:

"Telle me the name of thilke priues ston."

And Plato answerd unto him anon;

"Take the ston that Titance men name."

"Which is that?" quod he. "Magnesia is the same."

Saide Plato. "Ye, sire, and is it thus?"

This is ignotum per ignotum.

What is magnetia, good sire, I pray?"

"It is a water that is made, I say,

Of the elementes foure," quod Plato.

"Tell me the rote, good sire," quod he tho,

"Of that water, if that it be your will."

"Nay, nay," quod Plato, "certain that I n'lll.

The philosophes were sworne everich on,

That they ne shuld discover it unto non,

Ne in no booke it write in no manere;

For unto God it is so lofe and dere,
 That he wol not that it discovered be,
 But wher it liketh to his deitee

Man for to eschape, and eke for to defende

Whosa that him liketh; lo, this is the ende."

Than thus concludeth I, sin that God of Heven

Ke wol not that the philosophes nevern,

How that a man shal come unto this ston,

I rede as for the best to let it gon.

For who so seeketh God his adversary,

As for to werken any thing in contrary

Of his will, certes never shal he thrive,
 Though that he multiply terme of his live.
 And ther a point; for ended is my tale.
 God send every good man bote of his bale.

THE MANCIPILES PROLOGUE.

Werra ye not wher stondeth a lital toun,
 Which that cycleped is Bob up and down,
 Under the Bloo, in Canterbury way?
 Ther gon our Hoste to jape and to play,
 And sayde; "Sires, what? Dan is in the mire.
 Is ther no man for priasere ne for hire,
 That wol awaken our folaw behind?"

A thefe him might ful lightly rob and braid.
 See how he nappeth, see, for cockes bones,
 As he wold fallen from his hore atones.

Is that a coke of London, with meschance?
 Do him come forth, he knoweth his penance;

For he shal tell a tale by my fey,
 Although it be not worth a botel hey.
 Awake, thou Coke," quod he, "God gave thee sorwe,
 What sileth thee to slepen by the morwe?

Hast thou had fleen al night, or art thou dronke?
 Or hast thou with som queene al night ywonne,
 So that thou mayst not holden up thin heed?"

This Coke, that was ful pale and nothing red,
 Seyd to our Hoste; "So God my soule blesse,
 As ther is falle on me swiche hevynesse,
 N'ot I nat why, that me were lever to slepe,
 Than the best galkon wine that is in Chepe."

"Wel," quod the Manciple, "if it may don esse
 To thee, sire Coke, and to no wight displese,
 Which that here rideth in this compaignie,
 And that our Hoste wol of his curtesie,

I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;

For in good faith thy visage is ful pale:

This eyen dremen, sothly as me thinketh,

And wel I wot, thy breth ful soore stinketh,

That sheweth wel thou art not wel disposed:

Of me certain thou shalt not ben yglowed.

See how he galepeth, lo, this drunken wight,
 As though he wold us swalow anon right.

Hold close thy mouth, man, by thy father kin:

The devil of Helle set his foot therin!

Thy cursed breth infecten woll us alle:

Fy, stinking swine, fy, foul mote thee befall.

A, taketh heed, sires, of this lusty man.

Now, swete sire, wol ye just at the fan?

Therto, me thinketh, ye be wel yshape.

I trow that ye have dronken win of ape,

And that is whan men playen with a straw."

And with this speche the Coke waxed all wraue,

And on the Manciple he gan nod fast

For lacke of speche; and down his hore him cast,

Wher as he lay, til that men him up toke.

This was a faire chirachee of a coke:

Alas that he ne had hold him by his ladel!

And er that he agen were in the sadel,
 Ther was gret shoving bothe to and fro

To lift him up, and mochel care and wo,

So unwelky was this sely palled goot:

And to the Manciple than spake our Host.

"Because that drinks hath domination

Upon this man, by my salvation

I trow he lewedly wol tell his tale.

For were it win, or old or moisty ale,

That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
 And smeseth fast, and eke he bath the pose.
 He also hath to doo more than ynough
 To kepe him on his capel out of the slough:
 And if he falle from of his capel eftsoone,
 Than shul we alle have ynough to done
 In lifting up his hery dronken cove.
 Tell on thy tale, of him make I no force.
 "But yet, Manciple, in faith thou art to nice,
 Thus openly to reprove him of his vice:
 Another day he wol paraventure
 Reclimen thee, and bring thee to the lure:
 I mene, he spoken wol of smale thinges,
 As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
 That were not honest, if it came to prefe."

Quod the Manciple, "That were a gret meschafe:
 So might he lightly bring me in the snare.
 Yet had I lever payen for the mare,
 Which he rit on, than he shuld with me strive.
 I wol not wrathen him, so mote I thrive;
 That that I spake, I sayd it in my boord.
 And wete ye what? I have here in my gourd
 A draught of win, ye of a ripe grape,
 And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
 This Coke shal drinke therof, if that I may;
 Up peine of my lif he wol not say nay."

And certainly, to tellen as it was,
 Of this vessel the Coke dranke fast, (alas!
 What nedeth it? he dranke ynough beforene)
 And whan he hadde pouped in his horse,
 To the Manciple he toke the gourd again.
 And of that drinke the Coke was wouder fain,
 And thonked him in swiche wise as he coude.

Than gan our Hoste to laughen wouder loude,
 And sayd; "I see wel it is necessary
 Wher that we gon good drinke with us to cary;
 For that wol turnen rancour and disease
 To accord and love, and many a wrong awepe."

"O Bacchus, Bacchus, blessed be thy name,
 That so canst turnen earnest into game;
 Worship and thonke be to thy deitee,
 Of that matere ye get no more of me.
 Tell on thy tale, Manciple, I thee pray."

"Wel, sire," quod he, "now harkeneth what I may."

THE MANCIPLES TALE.

WHAN Phebus dwelled here in Erth adoun,
 As olde bookes maken mention,
 He was the mooste lusty bachelor
 Of all this world, and eke the best archer.
 He slow Phiton the serpent, as he lay
 Sleeping agains the some upon a day;
 And many another noble worthy dede
 He with his bow wrought, as men mowen rede.

Playen he coude on every minstrelcie,
 And singen, that it was a melodie
 To heren of his clere vois the noun.
 Certes the king of Thebes, Amphion,
 That with his singing walled the citee,
 Coude never singen half so wel as he.
 Therto he was the semelieste man,
 That is or was, sithen the world began;
 What nedeth it his feture to describe?
 For in this world n'is non so faire on live,
 He was therwith fulfilled of gentilnesse,
 Of honour, and of parsite worthinesse.

This Phebus, that was flour of bachelorie,
 As wel in freedom, as in chivalrie,
 For his disport, in signe eke of victorie
 Of Phiton, so as telleth us the storie,
 Was went to heren in his bond a bowe.
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe,
 Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
 And taught it speken, as men teche a jay.
 Whit was this crowe, as is a snow-whit swae,
 And contrefete the speche of every man
 He coude, whan he shulde tell a tale.
 Therwith in all this world no nightingale
 Ne coude by an hundred thousand del
 Singen so wouder merily and wel.
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a wif,
 Which that he loved more than his lif,
 And night and day did ever his diligence
 Hire for to please, and don hire reverence:
 Save only, if that I the soth shal sain,
 Jelous he was, and wold have kept hire fain,
 For him were loth yjaped for to be;
 And so is every wight in swiche degree;
 But all for nougth, for it availoth nougth.
 A good wif, that is clewe of werk and thought,
 Shuld not be kept in man await certain:
 And trewely the labour is in vain
 To kepe a shrew, for it wol not be.
 This hold I for a veray nicete,
 To spillen labour for to kepen wifes;
 Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lives.

But now to purpos, as I first began.
 This worthy Phebus doth all that he can
 To plesen hire, wening thurgh swiche plesance,
 And for his manhood and his governance,
 That no man shulde put him from hire grace:
 But God it wote, ther may no man embrace
 As to destreine a thing, which that nature
 Hath naturally set in a creature.

Take any brid, and put it in a cage,
 And do all thin entente, and thy corage,
 To foster it tenderly with mete and drinke
 Of alle deintees that thou canst bethinke,
 And kepe it al so clenely as thou may;
 Although the cage of gold be never so gay,
 Yet had this brid, by twenty thousand fold,
 Lever in a forest, that is wilde and cold,
 Gon eten wormen, and swiche wretchedbeste.
 For ever this brid will don his businesse
 To escape out of his cage whan that he may:
 His libertee the brid desireth ay.

Let take a cat, and foster hire with milke
 And tendre flesh, and make hire couche of silke,
 And let hire see a moos go by the wall,
 Anon she weiveth milke and flesh, and all,
 And every deintee that is in that hous,
 Swiche appetit hath she to ete the moos,
 Lo, here hath kind hire domination,
 And appetit fleemeth discretion.

A she-wolf hath also a vilains kind;
 The lewedeste wolf that she may find,
 Or less of reputation, wol she take
 In time whan hire lust to have a make.

All this examples speke I by thise tres
 That ben untrew, and nothing by women.
 For men have ever a likerous appetit
 On lower thing to performe hir delit
 Than on hir wifes, be they never so faire,
 Ne never so trefe, ne so debonaire.
 Flesh is so newefangle, with meschance,
 That we ne con in nothing have plesance.

That cometh unto vertue any while.
 This Phebus, which that thought upon no gyle,
 Discerid was for all his jolitee:
 For under him another hadde she,
 A man of litel reputation,
 Thought worth to Phebus in comparison:
 The more harme is; it happeth often so;
 Of which ther cometh mochel harme and wo.
 And so befell, whan Phebus was absent,
 His wif anon hath for hire lemman sent.
 Hire lemman? certes that is a knavish speche.
 Forere it me, and that I you beseeche.
 The wise Plato sayth, as ye now rede,
 The word must nedes accorden with the dede,
 If men shul tellen properly a thing,
 The word must cosin be to the working.
 I am a boistous man, right thus say I;
 Ther is no difference trewely
 Betwix a wif that is of high degree,
 (If of hire body dishonest she be)
 And any poure wenche, other than this,
 (If it so be they werken both amis)
 But, for the gentil is in estat above,
 She shal be cleped his lady and his love;
 And, for that other is a poure woman,
 She shal be cleped his wenche and his lemman:
 And God it wote, man owen dare brother,
 Men lay as low that on as lith that other.
 Right so betwix a titleles tyraunt
 And an outlawe, or elles a thefe erraunt,
 The same I say, ther is no difference,
 (To Alexander told was this sentence)
 But, for the tyrant is of greter might
 By force of meinie for to sle down right,
 And wremen bouis and home, and make all plain,
 La, therfore is he cleped a capitain;
 And, for the outlawe hath but smale meinie,
 And may not do so gret an harme as he,
 He bring a contree to so gret meschiefe,
 Men clepen him an outlawe or a thefe.
 But, for I am a man not textuel,
 I wol not tell of tentes never a del;
 I wil go to my tale, as I began.
 Whan Phebus wif had sent for hire lemman,
 Anon they wroughten all hir lust volage.
 This white crosse, that heng ay in the cage,
 Sheld hir werke, and sayde never a word:
 And whan that hounse was come Phebus the lord,
 This crowe song, "Cockow, cockow, cuckow."
 "What? brid," quod Phebus, "what singest thou
 We were thou wost so meynly to sing, [now?]
 That to my herte it was a rejoycing
 We here thy vois? alas! what song is this?"
 "By God," quod he, "I singe not amis."
 "Phebus," (quod he) "for all thy worthinesse,
 For all thy beautee, and all thy gentillesse,
 For all thy song, and all thy ministracie,
 For all thy waiting, biered is thin eye,
 For on of litel reputation,
 Not worth to thee as in comparison
 The meunsaunce of a gnat, so mote I thrive;
 For on thy bedde thy wif I saw him swive."
 What wol you more? the crowe anon him told,
 By make tokenes, and by wordes bold,
 Now that his wif had don hire lecherie
 Him to gret shame, and to gret vilanie;
 And told him oft, he sawe it with his eyen.
 This Phebus gan awayward for to wrien;
 Men thought his woful herte brast atwo.
 His bowe he bent, and set therin a flo;

And in his ire he hath his wif yslain:
 This is the effect, ther is no more to sain.
 For sorwe of which he brake his ministracie,
 Both harpe and lute, giterne, and sautrie;
 And eke he brake his arwes, and his bowe;
 And after that thus spake he to the crowe.
 "Traitor," quod he, "with tonge of scorpion,
 "Thou hast me brought to my confusion:
 Alas that I was wrought! why n'ere I dede!"
 "O dere wif, o gemme of lustyhede,
 That were to me so sode, and eke so trewe,
 Now liest thou ded, with face pale of hewe,
 Ful gilteles, that durst I swere ywis.
 "O rakel hond, to do so foule a mia
 O troubled wit, o ire receheles,
 That unavised smitest gilteles.
 O wantrust, ful of false suspicion,
 Wher was thy wit and thy discretion?
 "O, every man beware of rakelesse,
 Ne trowe no thing withouten strong witness.
 Smite not to sone, er that ye weten why,
 And both avised wel and aikerly,
 Or ye do any execution
 Upon your ire for suspicion.
 Alas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
 Fully fordon, and brought hem in the mire.
 Alas! for sorwe I wol myselfen sle."
 And to the crowe, "O false thefe," said he,
 I wol thee quite anon thy false tale.
 Thou song whitom, like any nightingale,
 Now shalt thou, false thefe, thy song forgoon,
 And eke thy white fethers everich on,
 Ne never in all thy lif ne shalt thou speke;
 Thus shul men on a traitour ben awreke.
 Thou and thin offspring ever shul be blake,
 Ne never swete noise shul ye make,
 But ever crie ageins tempest and rain,
 In token, that thurgh thee my wif is slain."
 And to the crowe he stert, and that anon,
 And pulled his white fethers everich on,
 And made him blak; and raft him all his song
 And eke his speche, and out at dore him flog
 Unto the devil, which I him betake;
 And for this cause ben alle crows blake.
 Lordings, by this ensample, I you pray,
 Beth ware, and taketh kepe what that ye say;
 Ne telleth never man in all your lif,
 How that another man hath dight his wif;
 He wol you haten mortally certain.
 Dan Salomon, as wise clerkes saie,
 Teceeth a man to kepe his tonge wel;
 But as I sayd, I am not textuel.
 But natheles thus taughte me my dame;
 "My sone, thinke on the crowe a Goddes name.
 My sone, kepe wel thy tonge, and kepe thy frend;
 A wicked tonge is worse than a fend:
 My sone, from a fende men may hem blesse.
 My sone, God of his endlesse goodness
 Walled a tonge with teeth, and lippes eke,
 For man shuld him avisen what he speke.
 My sone, ful often for to mochel speche
 Hath many a man ben split, as clerkes teche;
 But for a litel speche avisidly
 Is no man shent, to spoken generally.
 My sone, thy tonge shulddest thou restraine
 At alle time, but whan thou dost thy peine
 To speke of God in honour and prayere.
 The firste vertue, sone, if thou wolt lere,
 Is to restraine, and kepen wel thy tonge;
 Thus leren children, whan that they be yonge.

My sone, of mochel speking evil avised,
 Ther lease speking had ynough suffised, [taught;
 Cometh mochel harme; thus was me told and
 In mochel speche sinne wanteth naught.
 Wost thou wherof a rakel tonge serveth?
 Right as a swerd forcutteth and forkerveth
 An arme atwo, my dere sone, right so
 A tonge cutteth frendship all atwo.
 A jangler is to God abhominable.
 Rede Salomon, so wise and honourable,
 Rede David in his Psalmes, rede Senek.
 My sone, speke not, but with thyn hed thou beek,
 Dissimule as thou were defa, if that thou here
 A jangler speke of perikous matere.
 The Flemyng sayth, and lerne if that thee lest,
 That 'litel jangling causeth mochel rest.'
 My sone, if thou no wicked word hast said,
 Thee thar not dreden for to be hestraid;
 But he that bath missaid, I dare wel gain,
 He may by no way clepe his word again.
 Thing that is sayd is sayd, and forth it goth,
 Though him repent, or be him never so loth,
 He is his thral, to whom that he hath mayd
 A tale, of which he is now evil apaid.
 My sone, beware, and be now suetour newe
 Of tidings, whether they ben false or trewe;
 Wher so thou come, amonges high or lowe,
 Kepe wel thy touge, and thinke upon the crowe."

THE PERSONES PROLOGUE.

By that the Manciple had his tale ended,
 The Sonne fro the south line was descended
 So lowe, that it ne was not to my sight
 Degreea nine and twenty as of height.
 Foure of the klok it was tho, as I gesse,
 For enleven foot, a litel more or lesse,
 My shadow was at thilke time, as there,
 Of swiche feet as my lengthe parted were
 In six feet equal of proportion.
 Therwith the Monce exaltation,
 In mene Libra, alway gan ascende,
 As we were entring at the thorpes ende.
 For which our Hoste, as he was wont to gie,
 As in this cas, our jolly compaignie,
 Said in this wise; "Lordings, everich on,
 Now lacketh us no tales mo than on.
 Fulfilled is my sentence and my decree;
 I trowe that we han herd of eche degree.
 Almost fulfilled is myn ordinance;
 I pray to God so yere him right good chance,
 That tellet us this tale lustily."

"Sire preest," quod he, "art thou a weny?
 Or art thou a Person? say soth by thy fay.
 Be what thou be, ne breke thou not our play;
 For every man save thou, hath told his tale.
 Unboked, and shew us what is in thy male.
 For trewely me thinketh by thy chere,
 Thou shuldest knitte up wel a gret matere.
 Tell us a fable anon, for cockes bones."

This Person him answered al at ones;
 "Thou getest fable non yold for me,
 For Poule, that writeth unto Timothe,
 Reprereth hem that weiven sothfastnesse,
 And tellen fables, and swiche wretchednesse.
 Why shuld I sownen draf out of my fist,
 Whan I may sownen whete, if that me list?"

For which I say, if that you list to here
 Moralitee, and vertuous matere,
 And than that ye wol yere me audience,
 I wold ful fain at Cristes reverence
 Dou you plesance leful, as I can.
 But trusteth wel, I am a sotherne man,
 I cannot geste, rom, ram, ruf, by my letter,
 And, God wote, rime hold I but litel better.
 And therefore if you list, I wol not glose,
 I wol you tell a litel tale in prose,
 To knitte up all this ferte, and make an ende:
 And Jesu for his grace wit me sende
 To shewen you the way in this viage
 Of thilke parif glorious pilgrimage,
 That hight Jerusalem celestial.
 And if ye vouchemanf, anon I shal
 Beginne upon my tale, for which I pray
 Tell your avis, I can no better say.

"But natheles this meditation
 I put it ay under correction
 Of clerkes, for I am not textuel;
 I take but the sentence, trusteth me wel.
 Therefore I make a protestation,
 That I wol standen to correction."

Upon this word we han assented sone:
 For, as us semed, it was for to don,
 To enden in som vertuous sentence,
 And for to yere him space and audience;
 And bade our Hoste he shulde to him say,
 That alle we to tell his tale him pray.

Our Hoste bad the wordes for us alle:
 "Sire preest," quod he, "now faire you befaie;
 Say what you list, and we shul gladly here."
 And with that word he said in this manere;
 "Tellet us," quod he, "your meditacion,
 But hasteth you, the Sonne wol adoun.
 Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
 And to do wel God sende you his grace."

THE PERSONES TALE.

Ous swete Lord God of Heaven, that no man w
 perish, but wol that we comen all to the knowed
 ing of him, and to the blisful lif that is pardurable
 amonnesteth us by the prophet Jeremie, that sayt
 in this wise: Standeth upon the wayes, and set
 and azeth of the olde pathes; that is to say, of
 oldesentences; which is the good way: and walke
 in that way, and ye shul finde refreshing for yo
 soules. Many ben the wayes spiritual that lek
 folk to our Lord Jesu Crist, and to the regn
 glory: of which wayes, ther is a ful noble way, w
 wel covenable, which may not faille to man or
 woman, that thurgh sinne hath misgoun for the rig
 way of Jerusalem celestial; and this way is clep
 penance; of which man shuld gladly herken w
 enqueren with all his herte, to wete, what is penan
 ce and whences it is cleped penance, and how man
 maneres ben of actions or werkings of penance, w
 how many spices ther ben of penance, and whi
 thinges appertainen and behoven to penance, w
 which thinges distroublen penance.

Seint Ambrose sayth, that penance is d
 plaining of man for the gilt that he hath don, w
 no more to do any thing for which him ought
 plaine. And som doctour sayth: Penance
 the waymenting of man that sorweth for his sin
 and peineth himself, for he hath misdon. Penan

with certain circumstances, is veray repentance of man, that holdeth himself in sorwe and other peine for his giltes: and for he shal be veray penitent, he shal first bewailen the synnes that he hath don, and mediantly purposing in his herte to have shrift of mouth, and to don satisfaction, and never to don thing, for which him ought more to bewaile or complayne, and to continue in good werkes: or elles his repentance may not availe. For as Seint Isidor sayth: He is a japer and a gabber, and not veray repentant, that effraunes doth thing, for which him owt to repent. Weeping, and not for to stint to do same, may not availe. But natheles, men shuld hope, that at every time that man falleth, be it never so oft, that he may arise thurgh penance, if he have grace: but certain, it is greth doute. For as sayth Seint Gregorie: Unnethes ariseth he out of synne, that is charged with the charge of evil usage. And therefore repentant folk, that stint for synne, and forlete synne or that synne forlete hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker of hir salvation. And he that sinneth, and verayly repenteth him in his last day, holy chirche yett hopeth his salvation, by the grete mercy of our Lord Jesu Crist, for his repentance; but take ye the siker and certain way.

And now sith I have declared you, what thing is penance, now ye shul understand, that ther ben three actions of penance. The first is, that a man be baptised after that he hath sinned. Seint Augustine sayth: But he be penitent for his old synne, he may not begiune the newe clese lif: for certes, if he be baptised without penitence of his old synne, he receiveth the marke of baptisme, but not the grace, ne the remission of his synnes, til he have veray repentance. Another defaulte is, that men don dedly synne after that they have received newe don dedly synne after that they have received baptisme. The thridde defaulte is, that men fall in veray synnes after hir baptisme, fro day to day. Therof sayth Seint Augustine, that penance of good and humble folk is the penance of every day.

The spices of penance ben thre. That on of hem is solemne, another is commune, and the thridde privee. Thilke penance, that is solemne, is in two maneres; as to be put out of holy chirche in leston, for slaughter of children, and swiche othre thing. Another is when a man hath sinned openly, of which synne the fame is openly spoken in the cortree: and than holy chirche by jugement distreyneth for to do open penance. Commun penance is, that preestes enjoynen men in certain cas: as for to go paraventure naked on pilgrimage, or bare foot. Privee penance is thilke, that men don all day for privee synnes, of which we shrive us prively, and receive privee penance.

Now shalt thou understand what is behoveful and necessary to every parfit penance: and this stont us three thinges; contrition of herte, confession of mouth, and satisfaction. For which sayth Seint John Chrisostome: Penance distreyneth a man to accept benignely every peine, that him is enjoined, with contrition of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaction, and werking of all maner humilitee. And this is fruitful penance ayenst the three thinges, in which we wrathen our Lord Jesu Crist: this is to be defit in thinking, by rechelesnesse in speaking, and by wicked sinful werking. And ayenst these wicked giltes is penance, that may be likened unto a tree.

The rote of this tree is contrition, that hideth

him in the herte of him that is veray repentant, right as the rote of the tree hideth him in the erthe. Of this rote of contrition springeth a stalke, that bereth branches and lever of confession, and fruit of satisfaction. Of which Crist sayth in his gospel: Doth ye digne fruit of penitence; for by this fruit mow men understonde and knowe this tree, and not by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by the branches, ne the leves of confession. And therefore our Lord Jesu Crist sayth thus: By the fruit of hem shal ye knowe hem. Of this rote also springeth a seed of grace, which seed is moder of sikernes, and this seed is eger and hote. The grace of this seed springeth of God, thurgh remembrance on the day of dome, and on the peines of Helle. Of this matere sayth Salomon, that in the drede of God man foretetteth his synne. The herte of this sode is the love of God, and the desiring of the joye perdurable. This herte draweth the herte of man to God, and doth him hate his synne. For sothly, ther is nothing that savoureth so sote to a child, as the milke of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than that milke, when it is medled with othre matere. Right so the sinful man that loveth his synne, him semeth, that it is to him most swete of any thing; but fro that time that he loveth sadly our Lord Jesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther is to him nothing more abhominable. For sothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which David the prophet sayth: I have loved thy lawe, and hated wickednesse: he that loveth God, kepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saw the prophet Daniel in spirit, upon the vision of Nabuchodonosor, when he counselled him to do penance. Penance is the tree of lif, to hem that it receiven: and he that holdeth him in veray penance, is blisful, after the sentence of Salomon.

In this penance or contrition man shal understand foure thinges; that is to say, what is contrition; and which ben the causes that moven a man to contrition; and how he shuld be contrite; and what contrition availeth to the soule. Than is it thus, that contrition is the veray sorwe that a man receiveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to shrive him, and to do penance, and never more to don synne. And this sorwe shal be in this maner, as sayth Seint Bernard: It shal ben hevvy and grevous, and ful sharpe and pointant in herte; first, for a man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour; and more sharpe and pointant, for he hath agilted his father celestial; and yett more sharpe and pointant, for he hath wrathed and agilted him that boughte him, that with his precious blod hath delivered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the crueltee of the devil, and fro the peines of Helle.

The causes that ought to move a man to contrition ben sixe. First, a man shal remembre him of his synnes. But loke that that remembrance ne be to him no delit, by no way, but grete shame and sorwe for his synnes. For Job sayth: Sinful men don werkes worthy of confusoun. And, therefore sayth Ezachiel: I wol remembre me all the yeres of my lif, in the bitternesse of my herte. And God sayth, in the Apocalypse: Remembre you fro whom that ye ben fall, fro before the time that ye sinned, ye weren children of God, and inmates of the regne of God; but for your synne ye ben waxen thral and foule; membres of the fende; hate of angels; sclauder of holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of the fire of

Helle; and yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespassen so oft times, as doth the bound thet forth again to ete his owen spewing; and yet fouler, for your long continuing in sinne, and your sinful usage, for which ye be roten in your sinnes, as a beest in his donge." Swiche manere thoughten make a man to have shame of his sinne, and no delit; as God saith, by the prophet Ezechiel: Ye shul remembre you of your wayes, and they shul displese you. Sothly, sinnes ben the wayes that lede folk to Hell.

The second cause that ought to make a man to have disdeigne of sinne is this, that, as saith Seint Peter, Who so doth sinne, is thral to sinne, and sinne putteth a man in gret thraldom. And, therefore, sayth the prophet Ezechiel: I went sorreful, and had disdeigne of myself. Certes, we ought a man have disdeigne of sinne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldom and vilany. And lo, what sayth Senek in this mater. He saith thus: Though I wist, that neither God ne man shuld never know it, yet wold I have disdeigne for to do sinne. And the same Senek also sayth: I am borne to greter thinges, than to be thral to my body, or for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man, ne woman, make of his body, than for to yeve his body to sinne. Al were it the foulest chorle, or the foulest woman that liveth, and leest of value, yet is he than more foule, and more in servitude. Ever fro the higher degree that man falleth, the more is he thral, and more to God and to the world vile and abhominable. O good God, we ought a man have disdeigne of sinne, sith that though sinne, ther he was free, he is made bond. And therefore sayth Seint Augustine: If thou hast disdeigne of thy servant, if he offend or sinne, have thou than disdeigne, that thou thy self shuldest do sinne. Take reward of this owen value, that thou be to foule to thyself. Alas! we oughten they than have disdeigne to be servants and thralls to sinne, and sore to be ashamed of himself, that God of his goodnesse hath sette in high estat, or yeve hem witte, strength of body, hele, beautee, or prosperitee, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that they so unkindly againe his gentillesse, quiten him so villainly to slaughter of hir owen soles. O good God! ye women that ben of gret beautee, remembreth you on the proverbe of Salomon, that likeneth a faire woman, that is a fool of hire body, to a ring of gold that is worne in the graine of a sowe: for right as a sowe wrotheth in every ordure, so wrotheth she hire beautee in stinking ordure of sinne.

The thridde cause, that ought to move a man to contrition, is drede of the day of dome, and of the horrible peyne of Helle. For as seint Jerome sayth: At every tyme that we remembreth of the day of dome, I quake: for when I ete or drinke, or do what so I do, ever semeth me that the trompe wrotheth in min eres: wisteth ye up that ben dead, and cometh to the judgement. O good God! moche ought a man to drede swiche a judgement, ther as we shul be alle, as seint Paule sayth, before the streng judgement of oure Lord Jesu Crist; whereas he shal make a general congregation, whereas no man may be absent; for certes ther availleth non excusacion ne non excusacion; and not only, that our defaultes shal be juged, but eke that all our werkes shal openly be known. And, as sayth Seint Bernard, "ther ne shal no pleting availle, ne no alight:

we shal yave reckoning of everich idle word. Ther shal we have a juge that may not be deceived or corrupt; and why? for certes, all our thoughtes ben discovered, as to him: ne for prayer, ne for mede, he wil not be corrupt. And therefore saith Salomon: The wrath of God ne wol not spare us wight, for prayer ne for yest. And therefore at the day of dome ther is non hope to escape. Wherefore, as sayth Seint Anselme: Ful gret anguish shal the sinful folk have at that time: ther shal be the sterns and wroth juge sitting above, and under him the horrible pitte of Helle open, to destroy him that wolde not beknowen his sinnes, which sinnes shullen openly be shewed before God and before every creature: and on the left side, the Divel than any herte may thinke, for to hary and draw the sinful soules to the pitte of Helle: and within the hertes of folk shal be the biting conscience, and without forth shal be the world all brenning. Whether than shal the wretched soules fleo to hide him? Certes he may not hide him, he must come forth and shewe him. For certes, as saith Seint Jerome: The erth shal cast him out of it, and the see, and also the aire, that shal be ful of thonder clappes and lightnings. Now sothly, who so wil remembre him of these thinges, I gesse that his sinnes shal not torne him to delit, but to gret sorwe, for drede of the peyne of Helle. And therefore saith Job to God: Suffer, Lord, that I may a while bewaile and beweepe, or I go without returning to the derke londe, ycovered with the derkenesse of deth; to the londe of misere and of derkenesse, whereas is the shadowe of deth; whereas is non orde ne ordinance, but grisly drede that ever shal last. Lo, here may ye see, that Job prayed respite a while, to beweepe and waile his trespass: for sothly on day of respite is better than all the tresour of this world. And for as moche as a man may acquite himself before God by penitence in this world, and not by tresour, therefore shuld he pray to God to yeve him respite a while, to beweepe and bewaile his trespass: for certes, all the sorwe that a man might make fro the beginning of the world, n'is but a litei thing, at regard of the sorwe of Helle. The cause why that Job clepeth Helle the londe of derkenesse; understondeth, that he clepeth it londe of erth, for it is stable and never shal faile; and derke, for he that is in Helle hath defaulte of light nature; for certes the derke light, that shal come out of the fire that ever shal breme, shall torne hem all to peine that be in Helle, for it sheweth hem the horrible divels that hem tormenten. Covered with the derkenesse of deth; that is to say, that he that is in Helle, shal have defaulte of the sight of God; for certes the sight of God is the lif perdurable. The derkenesse of deth, ben the sinnes that the wretched man hath don, which that distroublen him to see the face of God, right as a derke cloud betwene us and the Sonne. It is londe of misere, because that ther ben three maner of defaultes ayenst three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lif; that is to say, honoures, delites, and richesmen. Ayenst honoure have they in Helle shame and confusion: for wol ye wote, that men clepen honoure the reverence that man doth to man; but in Helle is non honoure ne reverence; for certes no more reverence shal be don ther to a king, than a knave. For which God sayth by the prophet Jeremie: The folk, that we despise, shal be in despise. Honour is also cleped gret lordeship. Ther shal no wight

serues other, but of harme and turment. Honour is also cleped gret dignitee and highnesse; but in Helle that they be alle frofrodde of diuels. As God saith: The horrible diuels shal gon and comen upon the hedes of dampned folk: and this is, for as muche as the higher that they were in this present lif, the more shal they be abated and defouled in Helle. Aynst the riches of this world shal they haue mosse of povertie, and this povertie shal be in foure thinges: in defaute of tresour; of which David saith: The riche folk that embrocoden and smolen all hir herte to tresour of this world, shal sleepe in the sleping of deeth, and nothing so shal they find in hir handes of all hir tresour. And moreover, the meases of Helle shal be in defaute of mete and drink. For God saith thus by Moyses: They shal be wasted with hunger, and the bridles of Helle shal deuoure hem with bitter deeth, and the gill of the dragon shal haue hir drinke, and the wynde of the dragon hir morsels. And further, over hir myssees shal be in defaute of clothing, for they shal be naked in body, as of clothing, save the fire in which they brenne, and other sithes; and wher shal they be in soule, of all manner vertues, which this is the clothing of the soule. Wher ben then the gay robes, and softe shetes, and the fyn shertes? Lo, what saith God of Heven by the prophet Basie, that under hem shal be strewed moles, and hir covertures shal ben of wormes of Helle. And further, over hir myssees shal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not poure that hath god frendes; but ther is no frend; for neither God, as no good creature shal be frend to hem, and as much of hem shal hate other with dedly hate. The sonnes and the daughters shal rebel aynst father and mother, and kindred aynst kindred, and sithes, and despise eche other, both day and night, as God saith by the prophet Michens. As the loving children, that whilom loveden so fleshly, everich of hem wold eten other if they might. For how shold they love togeder in the peines of Helle, when they hated eche other in the prosperitee of this lif? For truste wel, hir fleshly love was dedly hate. As saith the prophet David: Who so that loveth wickednesse, he hateth his own soule, and who so hateth his own soule, certes he may love non other wight in no manere: and therefore in Helle is no solace ne no frendship, but ever the more kindredes that ben in Helle, the more cursing, the more chading, and the more dedly hate ther is among hem. And further over ther they shal have defaute of all manner delites, for certes delites be after the appetites of the five wittes; as sight, hearing, smelling, savouring, and touching. But in Helle hir sight shall be ful of dertenesse and of smoke, and hir eyen ful of teres; and hir hearing ful of waimenting and grunting of teeth, as saith Jesu Crist: hir nosethirles shal be ful of stinking; and, as saith Esay the prophet, hir savouring shal be ful of bitter galle; and touching of all hir body, shal be covered with fire that never shal quenche, and with wormes that never shal die, as God saith by the mouth of Esay. And for as muche as they shal not wene that they now dien for peine, and by deeth flee peine, that now they understande in the word of Job, that sayth; ther is the shadow of deeth. Certes a shadow hath likeness of the thing of which it is shadowed, but shadowe is not the same thing of which it is shadowed: right so saith the peine of Helle; it is like

deeth, for the horrible anguish; and why? for it peineth hem ever as though they shuld die among; but certes they shal not dien. For as saith Seint Gregory: To wretched cattifes shal be deeth withouten deeth, and esde withouten ende, and defaute withouten failing; for hir deeth shal alway live, and hir ende shal ever more beginne, and hir defaute shal never faile. And therefore saith Seint John the Evangelist: They shal folow deeth, and they shal not finde him, and they shal desire to die, and deeth shal flee from hem. And eke Job saith, that in Helle is non ordre of rule. And as be it so, that God hath create all thing in right ordre, and nothing withouten ordre, but all thinges ben ordred and nombred, yet natheles they that ben dampned ben nothing in ordre, ne hold non ordre. For the erth shal bere hem no fruite; (for, as the prophet David sayeth, God shal destroy the fruite of the erth, as fro hem) ne water shal yere hem no moisture, ne the aire no refreshing, ne the fire no light. For as saith seint Basil: The brenning of the fire of this world shal God yere in Helle to hem that ben dampned, but the light and the clerenesse shal be yere in Heven to his children; right as the good man yereth flesh to his children, and bones to his boundes. And for they shal have non hope to escape, with Job at last, that ther shal horror and griely drede dwellen withouten ende. Horror is alway drede of harme that is to come, and this drede shal alway dwell in the hertes of hem that ben dampned. And therefore han they forse all hir hope for seven causes. First, for God that is hir jugeshal bear withouten mercie to hem: and they may not please him; ne non of his halwes; ne they may yere nothing for hir ransom; ne they have no vois to speke to him; ne they may not flee fro peine; ne they have no goodnesse in hem that they may shew to deliver hem fro peine. And therefore saith Salomon; The wicked man dieth, and when he is ded, he shal have non hope to escape fro peine. Who so than wold wel understonde these peines, and be-thinke him wel that he hath deserved these peines for his sinnes, certes he shulde have more talent to sighten and to wepe, than for to singe and playe. For as saith Salomon: Who so that had the science to know the peines that ben established and ordeined for sinne, he wold formake sinne. That science, saith seint Austin, maketh a man to waimenten in his herte.

The fourth point, that oughte make a man have contrition, is the sorrowful remembrance of the good dedes that he hath left to don here in erthe, and also the good that he hath lorne. Sothly the good werkes that he hath left, either they be the good werkes that he wrought or he fell into dedly sinne, or elles the good werkes that he wrought while he lay in sinne. Sothly the good werkes that he did before that he fell in dedly sinne, hen all mortified, astoned, and dalled by the eft sinning; the other werkes that be wrought while he lay in sinne, they ben utterly ded, as to the lif perdurable in Heven. Than thilke good werkes that ben mortified by eft sinning, which he did while he was in charitee, moun never quicken ayen without vray penitence. And therof saith God by the mouth of Ezechiel: If the rightful man retourne again fro his rightwisnesse and do wickednesse, shal he liven? nay; for all the good werkes that he hath wrought, shal never be in remembrance, for he shall die in his

sinne. And upon thilke chapitre sayth Seint Gregorie thus; that we shal understonde this principally, that when we don dedly sinne, it is for nought than to remembre or drawe into memorie the good werkes that we have wrought before: for certes in the werking of dedly sinne, ther is no trust in no good werk that we have don before; that is to say, as for to have thereby the lif perdurable in Heven. But natheles, the good werkes quicken again and comen again, and helpe and availle to have the lif perdurable in Heven, when we have contrition: but sothly the good werkes that men don while they ben in dedly sinne, for as moche as they were don in dedly sinne, they may never quicken: for certes, thing that never had lif, may never quicken: and natheles, all be it so that they availen not to have the lif perdurable, yet availen they to abreggen the peine of Helle, or elles to get temporal richesses, or elles that God wol the rather enlumine or light the berthe of the sinful man to have repentance; and eke they availen for to use a man to do good werkes, that the feude have the lesse power of his soule. And thus the curteis Lord Jesu Crist ne woll that no good werk that men don be loste, for in somewhat it shal availle. But for as moche as the good werkes that men don while they ben in good lif, ben all amortised by sinne following, and eke sith all the good werkes that men don while they ben in dedly sinne, ben utterly ded, as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man, that no good werk ne doth, sing thilke newe Frenshe song, *J'ay tout perdu mon temps, et mon labour*. For certes sinne bereveth a man both goodnesse of nature, and eke the goodnesse of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy gost fareth like fire that may not ben idle; for fire faileth anon as it forletteth his werking, and right so grace faileth anon as it forletteth his werking. Than leseth the sinful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is hight to good men that labouren and werken wel. Wel may he be sorry than, that oweth all his lif to God, as long as he hath lived, and also as long as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paie with his dette to God, to whom he oweth all his lif: for trust wel he shal yeve accomptes, as sayth Seint Bernard, of all the goodes that han ben yeven him in this present lif, and how he hath hem dispendid, in so moche that ther shal not perishe an here of his hed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal not perishe of his time, that he ne shal yeve therof a rekening.

The fifte thing, that ought to move a man to contrition, is remembrance of the passion that our Lord Jesu Crist suffered for our sinnes. For as sayth Seint Bernard: While that I live, I shal have remembrance of the travailles that our Lord Jesu Crist suffered in preaching, his werinesse in traveling, his temptations when he fasted, his long wakings when he prayed, his teres when he wept for pitee of good peple: the wo and the shame, and the filthe that men sayden to him: of the foule spitting that men spitten in his face, of the buffettes that men yave him: of the foule mouthes and of the foule reprevs that men assiden to him: of the nayles with which he was nailed to the crosse; and of all the remenant of his passion, that he suffered for mannes sinne, and nothing for his gilte. And here ye shal understand that in mannes sinne is every maner order, or ordinance, tourned up so doum. For it is soth, that God and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man, ben ordained, that

everich of these foure thinges shuld have lordship over that other: as thus; God shuld have lordship over reson, and reson over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. But sothly when man sinneth, all this ordre, or ordinance, is turned up so doum; and therefore than, for as moche as reson of man ne wol not be subget ne obeisant to God, that is his lord by right, therefore leseth it the lordship that it shuld have over sensualitee, and also over the body of man; and why? for sensualitee rebelleth than ayenst reson: and by that way leseth reson the lordship over sensualitee, and over the body. For right as reson is rebel to God, right so is sensualitee rebel to reson, and the body also. And certes this discordance, and this rebellion, our Lord Jesu Crist abought upon his precious body ful dere: and herkeneth in which wise. For as moche as reson is rebel to God, therefore is man worthy to have sorwe, and to be ded. This suffred our Lord Jesu Crist for man, after that he had be betrayed of his disciple, and distreined and bounde, so that his blood brast out at every nail of his handes, as sayth Seint Augustin. And furthermore, for as moche as reson of man wol not daunt sensualitee when it may, therefore is man worthy to have shame; and this suffred our Lord Jesu Crist for man, when they spitten in his visage. And furthermore, for as moche as the caritif body of man is rebel both to reson and to sensualitee, therefore it is worthy the deth: and this suffred our Lord Jesu Crist upon the crosse, whereas ther was no part of his body free, without grete peine and bitter passion. And all this suffred our Lord Jesu Crist that never forfaitid; and thus sayd he: To moche am I peined, for thinges that I never deserved: and to moche defouled for shendship that man is worthy to have. And therefore may the sinful man wel say, as sayth Seint Bernard: Accused be the bitterness of my sinne, for whicher ther must be suffered so moche bitterness. For certes, after the divers discordance of our wickednesse was the passion of Jesu Crist ordeined in divers thinges; as thus. Certes sinful mannes soule is betrayed of the devel, by covetise of temporal prosperitee; and scorred by disceite, when he cheesth fleshy delites; and yet it is turmented by impatience of adversitee, and beset by servage and subjection of sinne; and at the last it is slain finally. For this discordance of sinful man, was Jesu Crist first betrayed; and after that was he bounde, that came fur to unbinde us of sinne and of peine. Than was he becornd, that only shuld have ben honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges. Than was his visage, that ought to desired to be seen of all mankind (in which visage angels desiren to loke) villainously beset. Than was he acourged that nothing had trespassed; and finally, than was he crucified and slain. Than were accomplished the wordes of Esai: He was wounded for our misdodes, and defouled for our felonies. Now sith that Jesu Crist toke on himself the peine of all our wickednesse, moche ought sinful man to wepe and to bewaile, that for his sinnes Goddes sons of Heven shuld all this peene endure.

The sixte thing, that shuld move a man to contrition, is the hope of three thinges, that is to say, foryevnesse of sinne, and the yeff of grace fur to do wel, and the glorie of Heven, with which God shal gverdon man for his good dedes. And for as moche as Jesu Crist yeveth us these yeffes of his

honestie, and of his soveraine bountee, therefore is he cleped, *Jesus Nazareus Rex Judaeorum*. Jesus is for to say, saviour or salvation, on whom men shal hope to have foryevenesse of sinnes, which that is properly salvation of sinnes. And therefore sayd the angel to Joseph: Thou shalt clepe his name Jesus, that shal saven his peple of hir sinnes. And herof saith Seint Peter: Ther is non other name under Heven, that is yeven to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Jesus. Nazareus is as moche for to say, as flourishing, in which a man shal hope, that he, that yeveth him remission of sinnes, shal yeve him also grace wel for to do: for in the flour is hope of fruit in time coming, and in foryevenesse of sinnes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of this herte, sayth Jesu, and cleped for to enter. He that openeth to me, shal have foryevenesse of his sinnes, and I wil enter into him by my grace, and soupe with him by the good werkes that he shal don, which werkes ben the food of God, and he shal soupe with us by the gret joye that I shal yeve him. Thus shal man hope, that for his werkes of penance God shal yeve him his regne, as he behight him in the gospel.

Now shal man understande, in which maner shal be his contrition. I say, that it shal be universal and total; this is to say, a man shal be veray repentant for all his sinnes, that he hath don in delite of his thought, for delite is perillous. For ther ben two maner of consenting; that ou of hem is cleped consenting of affection, when a man is moved in do sinne, and than deliteth him longe for to dwelle on that sinne, and his reason apperoveth it wel, that it is sinne ayenst the lawe of God, and yet his reason refraineth not his foule delite or talent, though he see wel apertly, that it is ayenst the reverence of God; although his reason consent not to do that sinne indede, yet sayn som doctours, that swiche delite that dwelleth longe is ful perillous, al be it never so lite. And also a man shuld sorow, namely for all that ever he hath desired ayenst the love of God, with parfite consenting of his reason, for therof is no doute, that it is dedly sinne in consenting: for certes ther is no dedly sinne, but that it is first in mannes thought, and after that in his delite, and so forth into consenting, and into dede. Wherefore I say, that many men be repent hem never of swiche thoughtes and delites, ne never shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of gret sinnes outward: wherefore I say, that swiche wicked delites ben subtil begylers of hem that shul be dampned. Moreover man ought to sorwen for his wicked wordes, as wel as for his wicked dedes: for certes repentance of a singular sinne, and not repentant of all his other sinnes; or elles repenting him of all his other sinnes, and not of a singular sinne, may not availle. For certes God Almighty is all good; and therefore, either be foryeveth all, or elles right nought. And therefore sayth Seint Augustin: I wote certainly, that God is enemy to every sinner: and how than? he that observeth on sinne, shal he have foryevenesse of the remenant of his other sinnes? Nay. And furthermore contrition shuld be wonder sorrowful and anguious: and therefore yeveth him God plainly his mercie: and therefore when my soule was anguious, and sorrowful within me, than had I remembrance of God, that my prair might come to him. Furthermore contrition muste be continual, and that man have stedfast purpose to shryve

him, and to amend him of his lif. For sothly, while contrition lasteth, man may ever hope to have foryevenesse. And of this cometh hate of sinne, that destroyeth sinne bothe in himself, and eke in other folk at his power. For which anyth David: They that love God, hate wickednesse: for to love God, is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The last thing that men shull understand in contrition is this, wherof availleth contrition. I say, that contrition somtime delivereth man fro sinne: of which David saith: I say, (quod David) I purposed fermely to shryve me, and thou Lord reledest my sinne. And right so as contrition availleth not without sad purpos of shrift and satisfaction, right so litel worth is shrift or satisfaction withouten contrition. And moreover contrition destroyeth the prison of Helle, and maketh welre and feble all the strengthes of the devils, and restreth the yettes of the holy gost, and of all good vertues, and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth it fro the peine of Helle, and fro the compaignie of the devil, and fro the servage of sinne, and restreth it to all goodes spiritual, and to the compaignie and comunion of holy chirche. And furthermore it maketh him, that whilom was sore of ire, to be the soone of grace: and all these thinges ben proved by holy writ. And therefore he that wold set his entent to these thinges, he were ful wise: for sothly he ne shuld have than in all his lif corage to sinne, but yeve his herte and body to the service of Jesu Crist, and therof do him homage. For certes our Lord Jesu Crist hath spared us so benignely in our folies, that if he ne had pitce ou mannes soule, a sory song might we alle singe.

Explicit prima pars penitentie; et incipit pars secunda.

The second part of penitence is confession, and that is signe of contrition. Now shul ye understande what is confession; and whether it ought nedes to be don or non: and which thinges ben covenable to veray confession.

First shalt thou understande, that confession is veray shewing of sinnes to the preest; this is to saie veray, for he must confesse him of all the conditions that belongen to his sinne, as ferforth as he can: all must be sayd, and nothing excused, ne hid, ne forwrapped: and not avaunt him of his good werkes. Also it is necessarie to understande whennes that sinnes springen, and how they encrease, and which they ben.

Of springing of sinnes saith Seint Poule in this wise: that right as by on man sinne entred first into this world, and thurgh sinne deth, right so deth entreth into alle men that sinnen: and this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred into this world, when he brake the commandement of God. And therefore he that first was so mighty, that he ne shuld have died, became swiche on that he must nedes die, whether he wold or no; and all his progenie in this world, that in thiike maner sinnen dien. Loke that in the estat of innocence, when Adam and Eve weren naked in Paradise, and no thing ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was most wily of all other bestes that God had made, sayd to the woman: Why commanded God you, that ye shuld not este of every tree in Paradise? The woman answered: Of the fruit, sayd she, of the trees of Paradise

we feden us, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of Paradise God forbode us for to eten, ne to touche it, lest we shuld die. The serpent sayil to the woman: Nay, nay, ye shul not dien of deth; for soth God wote, that what day that ye ete therof your eyen shul open, and ye shul be as guidis, knowing good and harme. The woman saw that the tree was good to feding, and faire to the eyen, and delectable to the sight; she toke of the fruit of the tree and did ete, and yave to hire husband, and he ete; and anon the eyen of hem both opened; and when they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of a fig-tree leves in maner of breeches, to hiden hir members. Here now yeseen, that dedly sinne hath first suggestion of the fende, as sheweth here by the adder; and afterward the delit of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve; and after that the consenting of reson, as sheweth by Adam. For trust wel, though so it were, that the fende tempted Eve, that is to say, the flesh, and the flesh had delit in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes til that reson, that is to say, Adam, consented to the eting of the fruit, yet stode he in the state of innocence. Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original; from him fleshly descended be we all, and engendred of vile and corrupt mater: and when the soule is put in our bodies, right anon is contract original sinne; and that, that was erst but only peine of concupiscence, is afterward both peine and sinne: and therefore we ben all yborne sones of wrath, and of dampnation perdurable, if ne were baptisme that we receive, which benimeth us the colpe: but forsoth the peine dwelleth with us as to temptation, which peine hight concupiscence. This concupiscence, when it is wrongfully disposed or ordeined in man, it maketh him covetis, by covetise of flesh, fleshly sinne by sight of his eyen, as to erthly thinges, and also covetise of highnesse by pride of herte.

Now as to speke of the first covetise, that is concupiscence, after the lawe of our membres, that were lawfully ymaked, and by rightful judgement of God, I say, for as moche as a man is not obeisant to God, that is his Lord, therefore is his herte to him disobeyant thurgh concupiscence, which is called nourishing of sinne, and occasion of sinne. Therefore, all the while that a man hath within him the peine of concupiscence, it is impossible, but he be tempted somtime, and moved in his flesh to sinne. And this thing may not faile, as long as he liveth. It may wel waxe feble by vertue of baptisme, and by the grace of God thurgh penitence; but fully ne shal it never quenche, that he ne shal somtime be moved in himselfe, but if he were refrained by sickness, or malice of sorcerie, or cold drinks. For lo, what sayth Seint Poule: The flesh coveteth ayenst the spirit, and the spirit ayenst the flesh: they ben so contrarie and so striven, that a man may not alway do as he wold. The same Seint Poule, after his gret penance, in water and in lond: in water by night and by day, in gret peril, and in gret peine; in lond, in gret famine and thurst, cold and clothes, and ones stoned almost to deth; yet sayd he, Alas! I caistif man, who shal deliver me fro the prison of my caistif body? And Seint Jerom, when he long tyme had dwelled in desert, wheras he had no compaignie but of wilde bestes; wher as he had no mete but herbes, and water to his drinke, ne no hed but the naked erth, wherefore his flesh was black, as an Ethiopian, for herte, and

nie destroyed for cold: yet sayd he, that the brenning of lecherie boiled in all his body. Wherefore I wot wel sikerly that they be deceived that say, they be not tempted in hir bodies. Witness Seint James that sein, that every wight is tempted in his owen conscience; that is to say, that eche of us hath mater and occasion to be tempted of the nourishing of sinne, that is in his body. And therefore sayth Seint John the Evangelist: If we say that we ben without sinne, we deceive ourself, and truth is not in us.

Now shul ye understonde, in what maner sinne wexeth and encreseth in man. The first thing is that nourishing of sinne, of which I spake, that is concupiscence: and after that cometh suggestion of the devil, this is to say, the devils befove, with which he bloweth in man the fire of concupiscence: and after that a man bethinketh him, whether he wol do or no that thing to which he is tempted. And than if a man withstood and weire the first enclaving of his flesh, and of the fend, than it is no sinne: and if so be he do not, than feleth he anon a shame of delit, and than it is good to beware and kepe him wel, or elles he wol fall anon to consenting of sinne, and than wol he do it, if he may have tyme and place. And of this mater sayth Moyses by the devil, in this maner: The fend sayth, I wol chace and pursue man by wicked suggestion, and I wol hent him by moving and stirring of sinne, and I wol depart my pris, or my prey, by deliberation, and my lust shal be accomplished in delit; I wol draw my sword in consenting: (for certes, right as a sword departeth a thing in two peeces, right as consenting departeth God fro man) and than wol I sle him with my bond in dede of sinne. Thus sayth the fend; for certes, than is a man al ded in soule; and thus is sinne accomplished, by temptation, by delit, and by consenting: and than is the sinne actual.

Forsoth sinne is in two maners, either it is venial, or dedly sinne. Sothly, when a man loveth any creature more than Jesu Crist our creator, than it is dedly sinne: and venial sinne it is, if a man love Jesu Crist lesse than him ought. Forsoth the dede of this venial sinne is ful periculus, for it amenuseth the love that man shuld have to God, more and more. And therefore if a man cherge himself with many swiche venial sinnes, certes, but if so be that he sometime discharge him of hem by shrift, they may wel lightly amenuse in him all the love that he hath to Jesu Crist: and in this wise skippeeth venial sinne into dedly sinne. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial sinnes, the more he is enclined to fall into dedly sinne. And therefore let us not be negligent to discharge us of venial sinnes. For the proverbe sayth, that many smal maken a gret. And berken this ensample: A gret wave of the see cometh somtime with so gret a violence, that it drencheth the ship: and the same harme do somtime the smal dropes of water, that enteren thurgh a litel crevis in the thurrok, and in the botom of the ship, if men ben so negligent, that they discharge hem not by tyme. And therefore although ther be difference betwix these two causes of drenching, sigates the ship is dreint. Right so fareth it somtime of dedly sinne, and of anovous venial sinnes, when they multiplie in man so gretly, that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh which he sinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or ure: and

therefore the love of every thing that is not beset in God, ne don principally for Goddes sake, although that a man love it lesse than God, yet is it venial sinne; and dedly sinne is, when the love of any thing weigheth in the herte of man, as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly sinne, as sayth Seint Augustine, is, when a man tourneth his herte fro God, whiche that is veray soveraine bountee, that may not change, and yeveth his herte to thing that may change and flitte: and certes, that is every thing save God of Heven. For such is, that if a man yeve his love, which that he oweth to God with all his herte, unto a creature, as moche as moche of his love as he yeveth to the same creature, so moche he bereveth fro God, and therefore doth he sinne; for he, that is dettoer to God, ne yeldeth not to God all his dette, that is to sayn, all the love of his herte.

Now such man understandeth generally, which is venial sinne, than is it covenable to tell specially of sinnes, whiche that many a man peraventure demeth lesse no sinnes, and shriveth him not of the same, and yet natheles they be sinnes sothly, as these clerics wryte; this is to say, at every tyme that man eateth and drinketh more than sufficeth to the sustenance of his body, in certain he doth sinne; as when he speketh more than it nedeth, he doth sinne; as when he herkeneth not benignely the complaint of the poore; as when he is in bele of body, and wol not fast when other folk fast, without cause reasonable; as when he slepeth more than nedeth, or when he cometh by that encheson to hit to chirche, or to other werkes of charitee; as when he useth his wif withouten soveraine desire of weddura, to the honour of God, or for the intent to yeld his wif his dette of his body; as when he wol not visite the sike, or the prisoner, if he may; as if he love wif or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoon requireth; as when he flatter or blaspeme more than him ought for any necessitee; as when he be ameneuse or withdraws the almesse of the poore; as when he apparail his mete more deliciously than nedeth is, or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse; as when he talke vanitees in the chirche, or at Golden service, or that he be a taler of idle wordes of foly or vilanie, for he shal yeld accountes of it at the day of dome; as when he behighteth or sweareth to don things that he may not performe; as when that he by lightnesse of foly misayeth or scowreth his neighbour; as when he hath ony wicked suspicion of thing, ther he ne wote of it no justitice; these things and mo withouten number be sinnes, as sayth Seint Augustine. Now shal ye understode, that al be it so that non erthly man may eschewe al venial sinnes, yet may he refreine him, by the brenning love that he hath to our Lord Jesu Crist, and by prayer and confession, and other good werkes, so that it shal but litle greve. For as sayth Seint Augustine: If a man love God in swiche manner, that all that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God veraily, for he brenneth in the love of God, like how moche that a droppe of water, which falleth into a fournes full of fire, smoketh or greveth the brenning of the fire, in like maner smoketh or greveth a venial sinne unto that man, which is stedfast and parfit in the love of our Saviour Jesu Crist. Furthermore, men may also refreine and put away venial sinne, by receiving sothly the precious body of Jesu Crist; by receiving also of holy water; by almes dede; by ge-

neral confession of *Confiteor* at masse, and at prime and at complin, and by blessing of bishoppen and prestes, and by other good werkes.

De septem peccatis mortalibus.

Now it is behovey to tellen whiche ben dedly sinnes, that is to say, chiefetaines of sinnes; for as moche as all they ren in o leet, but in divers maners. Now ben they cleped chiefetaines, for as moche as they be chiefe, and of hem springen all other sinnes. The rote of these sinnes than is pride, the general rote of all harmes. For of this rote springen certain braunches: as ire, envie, accidie or slouth, avaricie or covetise, (to common understanding) glotonie, and lecherie; and ech of these chief sinnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as shal be declared in hir chapitres following.

De imperbia.

And though so be, that no man knoweth utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harmes that comen of pride, yet wol I shew a partie of hem, as ye shal understand. Ther is inobedience, avaunting, ipocrisie, despit, arrogance, impudence, swelling of herte, insolence, elation, impatience, strif, contumacie, presumption, irreverence, pertinacie, vaine glorie, and many other twigges that I cannot declare. Inobedient is he that disobeyeth for despit to the commandments of God, and to his soveraines, and to his gostly fader. Avantour, is he that boasteth of the harme or of the bountee that he hath don. Ipocrite, is he that hideth to shew him swiche as he is, and sheweth him to seme swiche as he is not. Despitous, is he that hath disdain of his neighebour, that is to sayn, of his even Cristen, or hath despit to do that him ought to do. Arrogant, is he that thinketh that he hath three bountees in him, that he hath not, or weneeth that he shulde have hem by his deserving, or elles that demeth that he be that he is not. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of his sinnes. Swelling of herte, is when man rejoyceth hiro of harme that he hath don. Insolent, is he that despiseth in his judgement all other folk, as in regarde of his value, of his coming, of his speaking, and of his bering. Elation, is when he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impotent, is he that wol not be taught, ne undercome of his vice, and by strif werrieth truth wetingly, and defendeth his foly. Contumax, is he that thurgh his indignation is ayenst every auctoritee or power of hem that ben his soveraines. Presumption, is when a man undertaketh an emprise that him ought not to do, or elles that he may not do, and this is called squidrie. Irreverence, is when man doth not honour ther as him ought to do, and waiteth to be revered. Pertinacie, is when man defendeth his foly, and trusteth to moche in his owen wit. Vaine glorie, is for to have pompe, and delit in his temporal highnesse, and glorye him in his worldly estate. Jangling, is when man speketh to moche befoore folk, and clappeth as a mille, and taketh no kepe what he sayth.

And yet ther is a privee spice of pride, that waiteth first to be sawed, or he wol sawe, all be he lesse worthy then that other is; and eke he waiteth to sit, or to go above him in the way, or kisse the pax, or bea excused, or gon to offering befoore his neighebour, and swiche semblable thinges, ayenst his doctee peraventure, but that he hath his

herte and his entente, in swiche a proude desire, to be magnified and honoured beforn the peple.

Now ben ther two maner of prides; that on of hem is within the herte of a man, and that other is without. Of swiche sothly this foresayd thinges, and mo than I have sayd, apperteynen to pride, that is within the herte of man; and ther be other spices of pride that ben withouten: but natheles, that on of thise spices of pride is signe of that other, right as the gay lewesell at the tavernne is signe of the win that is in the celler. And this is in many thinges: as in speche and countenance, and outrageous array of clothing: for certes, if ther had ben no sinne in clothing, Crist wol not so soon have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke rich man in the gospel. And, as Seint Gregory sayth, that precious clothing is culpable for the derthe of it, and for his softnesse, and for his strangenesse and disguising, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinate scantnesse of it, alas! may not a man see as in our daies, the sinneful costlewe array of clothing, and namely into moche superfluitee, or elles into disordinate scantnesse?

As to the firste sinne in superfluitee of clothing, whiche that maketh it so dere, to the harme of the peple, not only the coste of the embrouding, the disguising, indenting or barring, ounning, palling, winding, or bending, and semblable wast of cloth in vanitee; but ther is also the costlewe furring in hir gounes, so moche pouning of chesel to maken holes, so moche dagging of sheres, with the superfluitee in length of the foresaide gounes, trailing in the dong and in the myre, on hors and eke on foot, as wel of man as of woman, that all thilke trailing is veraily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, thredbare, and rotten with dong, rather than it is yeven to the poure, to gret damage of the foresayd poure folk, and that in sondry wise: this is to sayn, the more that cloth is wasted, the more must it cost to the poure peple for the scarcenesse; and furthermore, if so be that they wolden yere swiche pouning and dagged clothing to the poure peple, it is not convenient to were for hir estate, ne sufficient to bote hir necessitee, to kepe hem fro the distemperance of the firmament. Upon that other side, to speke of the horrible disordinate scantnesse of clothing, as ben thise cutted eloppes or hanselines, that thurgh hir shortnesse cover not the shameful membres of man, to wicked entente; alas! som of hem shewen the bosse and the shape of the horrible swollen membres, that seemen like to the maladie of hernia, in the wrapping of hir hosen, and eke the buttockes of hem behinde, that faren as it were the hinder part of a she ape in the ful of the moon. And moreover the wretched swollen membres that they shew thurgh disguising, in departing of hir hosen in white and rede, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres were flaine. And if so be that they departe hir hosen in other colours, as is white and blew, or white and blake, or blake and rede, and so forth; than semeth it, as by variances of colour, that the half part of hir privee membres ben corrupt by the fire of Seint Antonis, or by cancre, or other swiche mischance. Of the hinder part of hir buttockes it is ful horrible for to see, for certes in that partie of hir body ther as they purgen hir stinking ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudly in despite of honestee, whiche honestee that Jesu Crist and his freundes

observed to shewe in hir lif. Now as to the outrageous array of women, God wote, that though the visages of som of hem seemen ful chaste and debonaire, yet notiffen they, in hir array of attire, likerounesce and pride. I say not that honestee in clothing of man or woman is uncoovenable, but certes the superfluitee or disordinate scarcitee of clothing is reprevable. Also the sinne of ornament, or of appailla, is in thinges that apperteyne to riding, as into many delicat hors, that ben holden for delit, that ben so faire, fatte, and costlewe; and also in many a vicious knave, that is sustained because of hem; in curious harnais, as in saddes, cropers, peitrais, and bridles, covered with precious cloth and rich, barred and plated of gold and silver. For which God sayth by Zacharie the prophet, I wol confounde the riders of swiche hors. These folke taken litel regard of the riding of Goddes some of Heven, and of his harnais, when he rode upon the aase, and had non other harnais but the poure clothes of his disciples, ne we rode not that ever he rode on any other beste. I speke this for the sinne of superfluitee, and not for honestee whan reason it requireth. And moreover, certes pride is gretly notified in holding of gret meinie, whan they ben of litel profite or of right no profite, and namely whan that meinie is felonous and damagous to the peple by hardinesse of high lordship, or by way of office; for certes, swiche lordes sell than hir lordship to the devil of Helle, whan they susteine the wickednesse of hir meinie. Or elles, whan thise folk of low degree, as they that holden hosterries, susteine thefte of hir hostellers, and that is in many maner of deceites: thilke maner of folk ben the flies that folowen the bouy, or elles the boundes that folowen the carraie. Swiche fornyde folk strangen spiritually hir lordshipes; for which thus saith David the prophet: Wicked deth mot come unto thilke lordshipes, and God yere that they mote descend into Helle, all down; for in hir houses is iniquitee and shrewednesse, and not God of Heven. And certes, but if they don amendement, right as God yave his bezison to Laban by the service of Jacob, and to Pharo by the service of Joseph, right so God wol yere his malison to swiche lordshipes as susteine the wickednesse of hir servants, but they come to amendement. Pride of the table aperreth eke ful oft; for certes riche men be cleped to festes, and poure folk be put away and rebuked; and also in excesse of divers metes and drinkes, and namely swiche maner bake metes and dishe metes brenning of wilde fire, and pointed and cancelled with paper, and semblable wast, so that it is abusion to thinke. And eke in to gret preciousnesse of vessel, and curioositee of ministracie, by which a man is stirred more to the delites of luxurie, if so be that he sette his herte the lesse upon our Lord Jesu Crist, it is a sinne; and certainly the delites might ben so gret in this cas, that a man might lightly fall by hem into dedly sinne. The spices that sourden of pride, sothly whan they sourden of malice imagined, avised, and forecaste, or elles of usage, ben dedly sinnes, it is no doute. And whan they sourden by freeltee unavised sodenly, and sodenly withdraw again; al be they grevous sinne, I gese that they be not dedly. Now might men aske, wherof that pride sourdeth and springeth. I say that sometime it springeth of the goodes of nature, sometime of the goodes of fortune, and

sometime of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden only in the goodes of the body, or of the soule. Certes, the goodes of the body les hele of body, strength, deliuerance, beautes, gentrie, franchise; the goodes of nature of the soule ben good wit, sharpe understanding, subtil engine, vertes naturel, good memorie: goodes of fortune ben riches, high degrees of lordshipes, and preiunges of the peple: goodes of grace ben science, power to suffre spiritual traivale, benignitee, vertuous contemplation, withstanding of temptation, and semblable thinges: of which foresayd goodes, certes it is a gret folie, a man to priden him in ony of hem all. Now as for to speke of goodes of nature, God wote that sometime we have ben in nature as moche to our damage as to our profite. As for to speke of hele of body, trevely it passeth ful lightly, and also it is ful ofte mecheson of sikenesse of the soule: for God wote, the flesh is a gret enemy to the soule: and therefore the more that the body is hole, the more be we in peril to falle. Eke for to priden him in his strength of body, it is a gret folie: for certes the flesh coveteth ayenst the sprite: and ever the more strong that the flesh is, the sorer may the soule be: and over all, this strength of body, and worldly hardinesse, causeth ful oft to many man peril and meschance. Also to have pride of gentrie is right gret folie: for oft tyme the gentrie of the body becometh the gentrie of the soule: and also we ben all of o fader and of o moder: and all we ben of o nature rotten and corrupt, both riche and poure. Forsoth o maner gentrie is for to praise, that apparelleth names courage with vertes and moralites, and maketh him Cristes child; for trusteth wel, that ever what man that sinne hath maistrie, he is a very cherl to sinne.

Now ben ther general signes of gentilnesse; as chawing of vice and ribaudrie, and servage of sinne, in word, and in werk and countenance, and wing vertue, as courtesie, and clemensse, and to be liberal; that is to say, large by mesure; for folk that passeth mesure, is folie and sinne. Another is to remember him of bountee, that he of other folk hath received. Another is to be benign to his subgettes; wherfore saith Seneca: Ther is nothing more covensable to a man of high estate, than debonaitee and pitee: and therefore this fies that men clepen bees, when they make hir king, they chesen on that that hath no pricke, wherwith he may sting. Another is, man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to attaine to high vertuous thinges. Now certes, a man to priden him in the goodes of grace, is eke an outrageous folie: for thilke yeftes of grace that shuld have turned him to goodnesse, and to medicine, tourneth him to venime and confusion, as sayth Saint Gregorie. Certes also, who so prideth him in the goodnesse of fortune, he is a gret fool: for sometime is a man a gret lord by the morwe, that is a carke and a wretch or it be night: and sometime the richesse of a man is cause of his deth: and sometime the delites of a man ben cause of grevous maladie, thurgh which he dieth. Certes, the commendation of the peple is ful false and brotel for to trust; this day they praise, to-morwe they blame. God wote, desire to have commendation of the peple hath caused deth to many a besy man.

Remedium superbie.

Now sith that so is, that ye have understand what is pride, and which be the spices of it, and how mennes pride sourdeth and springeth; now ye shul understand which is the remedie ayenst it. Humilitee or mekenesse is the remedie ayenst pride; that is a vertue, thurgh which a man hath very knowledge of himself, and holdeth of himself no deintee, ne no pris, as in regard of his desertes, considering ever his freltee. Now ben ther three maner of humilitees; as humilitee in herte, and another in the mouth, and the thridde in werke. The humilitee in herte is in foure maner: that on is, when a man holdeth himself as nought worth before God of Heven: the second is when he despiseth non other man: the thridde is, when he ne rocketh nat though men holde him nought worth; and the fourth is, when he is not sory of his humiliation. Also the humilitee of mouth is in foure thinges; in attemperat speche; in humilitee of speche; and when he confesseth with his own mouth, that he is swiche as he thinketh that he is in his herte: another is, when he preiseth the bountee of another man and nothing therof amenuseth. Humilitee eke in werkes is in foure maner. The first is, when he putteth other men before him; the second is, to chese the lowest place of all; the thridde is, gladly to assent to good counsel; the fourth is, to stand gladly to the award of his soveraigne, or of him that his higher in degree; certain this is a gret werk of humilitee.

De invidia.

After pride wol I speke of the foule sinne of envie, which that is, after the word of the philosopher, sorwe of other mennes prosperitee; and after the word of Saint Augustine, it is sorwe of other mennes wele, and joye of other mennes harme. This foule sinne is pally ayenst the Holy Gost. Al be it so, that every sinne is ayenst the Holy Gost, yet natheles, for as moche as bountee apperteineth proprely to the Holy Gost, and envie cometh proprely of malice, therefore it is proprely ayenst the bountee of the Holy Gost. Now hath malice two spices, that is to say, hardinesse of herte in wickednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blind, that he considereth not that he is in sinne, or rocketh not that he is in sinne; which is the hardinesse of the divel. That other spice of envie is, when that a man werrieth truth, when he wot that it is truth, and also when he werrieth the grace of God that God hath yeve to his neighbour; and all this is by envie. Certes than is envie the worst sinne that is; for sothly all other sinnes be sometime only ayenst on special vertue: but certes envie is ayenst al maner vertues and alle goodnesse; for it is sory of all bountee of his neighbour: and in this maner it is divers from all other sinnes; for wel unnethe is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delit in himself, save oly envie, that ever hath in himself anguish and sorwe. The spices of envie ben these. Ther is first sorwe of other mennes goodnesse and of hir prosperitee; and prosperitee ought to be kindly mater of joye; than is envie a sinne ayenst kinde. The seconde spice of envie is joye of other mennes harme; and that is proprely like to the divel, that ever rejoyseth him of mennes harme. Of thisse two spices cometh backbiting; and this sinne of back-

biting or detracting hath certain spices, as thus: soon man preieth his neighbour by a wicked entente, for he maketh alway a wicked knotte at the herte ende: alwey he maketh a *bat* at the last ende, that is digue of more blame, than is worth all the praising. The second spice is, that if a man be good, or doth or sayth a thing to good entente, the backbiter wol turce all that goodnesse up so down to his shrewde entente. The thirde is to smeuse the bountes of his neighbour. The fourthe spice of backbiting is this, that if men speke goodnesse of a man, than wol the backbiter say; parfay swiche a man is yet better than he; in dispreising of him that men preise. The fifth spice is this, for to consent gladly to berken the harme that men speke of other folk. This sinne is ful gret, and ay encreseth after the wicked entente of the backbiter. After backbiting cometh grutching or murmurance, and somtime it springeth of impatience ayenst God, and somtime ayenst man. Ayenst God it is when a man grutcheth ayenst the peine of Helle, or ayenst poverté, or losse of catel, or ayenst rain or tempest, or elles grutcheth that shrewes have prosperitee, or elles that good men have adversitee: and all thiese thinges shuld men suffre patiently, for they couter by the rightful judgement and ordinance of God. Somtime cometh grutching of avarice, as Judas grutcheth ayenst the Magdeleine, whan she anointed the hed of our Lord Jesu Crist with hire precious oynement. This maner murmuring is swiche as whan man grutcheth of goodnesse that himself doth, or that other folk dou of hir owen catel. Somtime cometh murmur of pride, as whan Simon the Pharisee grutcheth ayenst the Magdeleine, whan she approached to Jesu Crist and wept at his feet for hire sinnes: and somtime it soundeth of envie, whan men discover a mannes harme that was privee, or bereth him on hound thing that is false. Murmur also is oft among servants, that grutchen whan hir soveraines bidden hem do leful thinges; and for as moche as they dare not openly withray the commaundement of hir soveraines, yet wol they may harme and grutche and murmure prively for vray despit; which wordes they call the divels *Pater noster*, though so be that the divel had never *Pater noster* but that lewed folke yeven it swiche a name. Somtime it cometh of ire or privee hate, that nourisbeth rancour in the herte, as afterward I shal declare. Than cometh eke bitternesse of herte, thurgh which bitternesse every good dede of his neighbour semeth to him bitter and unsavory. Than cometh discord that unbindeth all maner of friendship. Than cometh scorning of his neighbour, al do be never so wel. Than cometh accusing, as whan a man seketh occasion to annoyen his neighbour, which is like the craft of the divel, that waiteth both day and night to accusen us all. Than cometh malignitee, thurgh which a man annoieth his neighbour prively if he may, and if he may not, algate his wicked will shal not let, as for to breene his hous prively, or enpoison him, or sle his bestes, and semblable thinges.

Remedium invidie.

Now wol I speke of the remedie ayenst this foule sinne of envie. Firste is the love of God principally, and loving of his neighbour as himself: for sothly that on us may not be without that other. And trust wel, that in the name of thy neighbour

thou shalt understande the name of thy brother; for certes all we have on fader fleshy, and on moder: that is to say, Adam and Eve; and also on fader spirituel, that is to say, God of Heven. Thy neighbour art thou bounde to love, and will him all goodnesse, and therefore sayth God: Love thy neighbour as thyself; that is to say, to salvation both of lif and soules. And moreover thou shalt love him in word, and in benigwe amonesting and chastising, and comfort him in his annoyes, and praye for him with all thy herte. And in dede thou shalt love him in swiche wise that thou shalt do to him in charitee, as thou woldest that it were don to thin owen persoun: and therefore thou ne shalt do him no damage in wicked word, ne harme in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soules by outeing of wicked ensample. Thou shalt not desire his wif, ne non of his thinges. Understonde eke that in the name of neighbour is comprehended his enemy: certes man shal love his enemy for the commaundment of God, and sothly thy frend thou shalt love in God. I say thin enemy shalt thou love for Goddes sake, by his commaundment: for if it were reson that man shulde hate his enemy, forsoth God n'olde not receive us to his love that ben his enemies. Ayenst thre maner of wronges, that his enemy doth to him, he shal do thre thinges, as thus: ayenst hate and rancour of herte, he shal love him in herte: ayenst chiding and wicked wordes, he shal pray for his enemy: ayenst the wicked dede of his enemy he shal do him bountes. For Crist sayth: Love your enemies, and prayeth for hem that speke you harme, and for hem that chasen and pursuen you: and do bountes to hem that hateu you. Lo, thus commaundeth us our Lord Jesu Crist to do to our enemies: forsoth nature driveth us to love our frendes, and parfay our enemies have more neede of love than our frendes, and they that more neede have, certes to hem shal men do goodnesse. And certes in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jesu Crist that died for his enemies: and in as moche as thilke love is more grevous to performe, so moche is more gret the merite, and therefore the loving of our enemy hath confounded the venize of the divel. For right as the divel is confounded by humilitee, right so is he wounded to the deeth by the love of our enemy: certes than is love the medicine that casteth out the venime of envie fro mannes herte.

De ira.

After envy wol I declare of the sinne of ire: for sothly who so hath envy upon his neighbour, anon comunly wol finde him mater of wrath in word or in dede ayenst him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envie, for sothly he that is proude or envious is lightly wroth.

This sinne of ire, after the discribing of Seint Augustin, is wicked will to be avenged by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosophe, is the foremost blode of man yquickened in his herte, thurgh which he wold harme to him that he bateth: for certes the herte of man by enchaunting and moving of his blood waxeth so troubled, that it is out of all maner judgement of reson. But ye shul understande that ire is in two maners, that on of hem is good, and that other is wicked. The good ire is by jalousie of goodnesse, thurgh the which man is wroth with wickednesse, and again wickednesse.

And therefore sayth the wise man, that ire is better than play. This ire is with debonairete, and it is wrothe without bitterness: not wrothe ayenst the man, but wrothe with the misdeede of the man: as with the prophet David: *Transgessi, et solitis genero*. Now understood that wicked ire is in two maners, that is to say, soden ire or hasty ire without avinement and consenting of reason; the meaning and the sense of this is, that the reason of a man ne consenteth not to that soden ire, and then it is venial. Another ire is that is ful wicked, that cometh of felonie of herte, avised and cast before, with wicked will to do vengeance, and therfo his reason consenteth: and sothly this is dedly synne. This ire is so displeasnt to God, that it troubleth his hous, and chaseth the Holy Gost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth that likeness of God, that is to say, the vertue that is in mannes soule, and putteth in him the likeness of the devil, and benimeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is ful gret pleasure to the devil, for it is the devils fornaie that he enchaufeth with the fire of Helle. For certes right so as fire is more mighty to destroye earthly thinges, than any other element, right so ire is mighty to destroye all spiritual thinges. Loke how that fire of smal glodes, that ben almost ded under ashen, wol quicken ayeen when they ben touched with brimstone, right so ire wol evermore quicken ayeen, when it is touched with pride that is covered in mannes herte. For certes fire ne may not come out of no thing, but if it were first in the same thing naturally: as fire is drawne out of kites with steele. And right so as pride is many times mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and lepe of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as sayth Seint Isidore, that whan men make a fire of the saide tree, and cover the coles of it with ashen, sothly the fire therof wol last all a yere or more: and right so farreth it of rancour, whan it is ones covered in the herte of som men, certes it wol lasten poverteure from on Easterne day until another Easterne day, or more. But certes the same man is ful fer from the mercie of God all thikke while.

In this fornaid devils fornaie ther forgen three strewes; pride, that ay bloweth and encreaseth the fire by chiding and wicked wordes: than stoudeh curie, and holdeth the hot yreu upon the herte of man, with a pair of longe tonges of longe rancour: and than stoudeh the stinc of contumelie or strif and chese, and battereth and forgeth by vilains reprevings. Certes this cursed synne annoyeth both to the man himself, and eke his neighbour. For sothly almost all the harme or damage that oer man doth in his neighbour cometh of wrath: for certes, outrageous wrathe doth all that ever the fele fende willeth or commaundeth him; for he ne speaketh nyther for our Lord Jesu Crist, ne his swete moder; and in his outrageous anger and ire, alas! alas! ful many on at that time, feleth in his herte ful wickedly, both of Crist, and also of all his halwes. Is not this a cursed vice? Yes certes. Alas! it benimeth fro man his witte and his reason, and all his debonaire lif spiritual, that shuld kepe his soule. Certes it benimeth also Goddes due lordship (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his neighbours: that striveth also all day ayenst truth; it reveth him the quiet of his herte, and subverteth his soule.

Of ire comen these stinking engendures; first,

hate, that is olde wrath; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde frend that he hath loved ful long; and than cometh werre, and every maner of wrong that a man doth to his neighbour in body or in catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eke manslaughter. And understoodeth wel that homicide (that is manslaughter) is in divers wise. Som maner of homicide is spiritual, and soon is bodily. Spiritual manslaughter is in six thinges. First, by hate, as sayth St. John: He that hateth his brother, is an homicide. Homicide is also by backbiting; of which backbitoure sayth Salomon, that they have two swerdes, with which they slay hir neighbours: for sothly as wicked it is to becomie of him his good name as his lif. Homicide is also in yaving of wicked counsell by fraude, as for to yave counsell to aress wrongful customes and talages; of which sayth Salomon: A lion roring, and a bere hungrie, ben libe to cruel lordes, in withholding or abvegging of the hire or of the wages of servantes, or elles in usurie, or in withdrawing of the almshouse of poure folk. For which the wise man sayth: Fedeth him that almost dieth for hunger; for sothly but if thou fede him thou sleest him. And all these ben dedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is whan thou sleest him with thy tonge in other maner, as whan thou commaundest to sle a man, or elles yveest counsell to sle a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maners. That on is by lawe, right as a justice dampneth him that is culpable to the deth: but let the justice beware that he do it rightfully, and that he do it not for delit to spill blood, but for keeping of right-wisenesse. Another homicide is don for necessitee, as whan a man sleeth another in his defence, and that he ne may non other wise escapen fro his owen deth: but certain, and he may escape withouten slaughter of his adversarie, he doth synne, and he shal bere penance as for dedly synne. Also if a man by cas or aventure shote an arrowe or cast a stone, with which he sleeth a man, he is an homicide. And if a woman by negligenc overiyeth hire child in hire slepe, it is homicide and dedly synne. Also whan a man disturbeth conception of a childe, and maketh a woman barsein by drinke of venomous herbes, thurgh which she may not conceive, or sleeth hire child by drinke, or elles putteth certain material thing in hire secret place to sle hire child, or elles doth unkinde synne, by which man, or woman, shodeth his nature in place ther as a childe may not be conceived; or elles if a woman hath conceived, and hurteth herself, and by that mishappe the childe is slaine, yet is it homicide. What say we eke of women that murderon hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, it is an horrible homicide. Eke if a man approche to a woman by desir of lecherie, thurgh which the childe is perished; or elles smiteth a woman westingly, thurgh which she leseth hire child; all these ben homicides, and horrible dedly synnes. Yet comen ther of ire many mo synnes, as wel in worde, as in thought and in dede; as he that arreteth upon God, or blameth God of the thing of which he is himself guilty; or despiseth God and all his halwes, as don these cursed hardours in divers countres. This cursed synne dan they, whan they feien in hire herte ful wickedly of God and of his halwes: also whan they treten un-reverently the sacrament of the auter, thikke synne it so gret, that unweith it may be releasid, but that

the mercy of God. passeth all his werkes, it is so gret, and he so bemaigre. Than cometh also of ire stry anger, when a man is sharply amonsted in his shrift to leve his sinne, than wol he be angry, and answere boherly and angurly, to defend or excuse his sinne by nastidfastnesse of his flesche; or elles he did it for to hold compaignie with his felowes; or elles he sayth the fend enticed him; or elles he did it for his youthe; or elles his complexion is so corageous that he may not forbere; or elles it is his destinee, he sayth, unto a certain age; or elles he sayth it cometh him of gentilnesse of his ancestres, and semblable things. All thisse manner of folke so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, that they ne wol not deliver hemself; for sothly, no wight that excuseth himself wilfully of his sinne, may not be delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely beknoweth his sinne. After this than cometh swearing, that is expresse ayenst the commandement of God: and that befallith often of anger and of ire. God sayth: Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in idel. Also our Lord Jesu Crist sayth by the word of Saint Mathew: Ne shal ye not swere in all manere, neyther by Heven, for it is Goddes troue: ne by arthe, for it is the benche of his feet: ne by Jerusalem, for it is the citee of a gret king: ne by this hed, for thou ne mayst not make an here white ne black: but he sayth, be your word, ye, ye, nay, nay; and what that is more, it is of evil. Thus sayth Crist. For Cristes sake swere not so sinnefully, in dismembryng of Crist, by soule, herte, bones, and body: for certes it semeth, that ye thinke that the cursed Jewes dismembred him not ynough, but ye dismembred him more. And if so be that the lawe compell you to swere, than releeth you after the lawe of God in your swearing, as sayth Jeremie: Thou shalt kepe three conditions; thou shalt swere in trouth, in dome, and in rightwisenesse. This is to say, thou shalt swere soth; for every lesing is ayenst Crist; for Crist is veray trouth: and thinke wel this, that every gret swerer, not compelled lawfully to swere, the plage shal not depart fro his hous, while he useth unfeul swearing. Thou shalt swere also in dome, when thou art constrained by the domesman to witness a trouth. Also thou shalt not swere for envie, neyther for favour, ne for mode, but only for rightwisenesse, and for declaring of trouthe to the honour and worship of God, and to the aiding and helping of this even Cristen. And therefore every man that taketh Goddes name in idel, or falsely swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Crist to be called a Cristen man, and liveth ayenst Cristes living and his teaching: all they take Goddes name in idel. Loke also what sayth Saint Peter; *Actuum iv. Non est aliud nomen sub celo*, &c. Ther is non other name (sayth Saint Peter) under Heven yeven to men, in which they may be saved; that is to say, but the name of Jesu Crist. Take kepe eke how precious is the name of Jesu Crist, as sayth Saint Poule, *ad Philippenses ii. In nomine Jesu*, &c. that in the name of Jesu every knee of heavenly creature, or erthly, or of Helle, shuld bowen; for it is so high and so worshipful, that the cursed fend in Helle shuld tremble for to here it named. Than semeth it, that men that swere so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise it more boldely than did

the cursed Jewes, or elles the devel, that tumbelth when he hereth his name.

Now certes sith that swearing (but if it be lawfully don) is so highly defended, moche worse is for to swere falsely, and eke needles.

What say we eke of hem that deliten hem in swearing, and hold it a genterie or manly dede to swere gret othe? And what of hem that of very usage ne cese not to swere gret othe, al be the cause not worth a straw? Certes this is horrible sinne. Swearing sodenly without aviseiment is also a gret sinne. But let us go now to that horrible swearing of adjuration and conjuration, as don this false enchanconours and nigromancers in basin ful of water, or in a bright sword, in a circle, or in a fire, or in a sholder bone of a shepe: I cannot sayn, but that they do cursedly and daumably ayenst Crist, and all the feith of holy chirche.

What say we of hem that beleven on divinalis, as by flight or by nois of briddes or of bestes, or by sorte of geomancia, by dremes, by chirking of doves, or craking of houses, by gnawing of ratte, and swiche maner wretchednesse? Certes, all thisse thinges ben defended by God and holy chirche, for which they ben accoured, til they come to amendement, that on swiche sitht set hir beleve. Charms for woundes, or for maladies of men or of bestes, if they take any effect, it may be paraventure that God suffreth it, for folk shuld yere the more feith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speke of lesinges, which generally is false significance of word, in entent to deceiv his even Cristen. Som lesing is, of which ther cometh non advantage to no wight; and som lesing turneth to the profite and ece of a man, and to the damage of another man. Another lesing is, for to save his lif or his catel. Another lesing cometh of delit for to lie, in which delit, they wol forge a long tale, and peint it with all circumstances, wher all the ground of the tale is false. Some lesing cometh, for he wol sustein his word: and som lesing cometh of recchelesnesse withouten aviseiment, and semblable thinges.

Let us now touche the vice of flaterie, which is cometh not gladly, but for drede, or for covetise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preising. Flaterers ben the devils nourices, that nourish his children with milke of losengerie. Forsoth Salomon sayth, that flaterie is worse than detraction: for sometime detraction maketh an hautein man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraction, but certes flaterie maketh a man to enhance his herte and his contenance. Flaterers ben the devils enchanconours, for they maken a man to wene himself be like that he is not like. They be like to Judas, that betrayed God; and this flaterers betrayen man to selle him to his enemy, that is the devil. Flaterers ben the devils chapeleines, that ever singen *Placido*. I reken flaterie in the vice of ire: for oft time if a man be wroth with another, than wol he flater som wight, to susteine him in his quarrel.

Speke we now of swiche cursing as cometh of irous herte. Malison generally may be said every maner power of harme: swiche cursing bereth man the regne of God, as sayth Saint Poule. And oft time swiche cursing wrongfully retourneth again to him that curseth, as a bird retourneth again to his owen nest. And over all thing men ought

schew to curse hir children, and to yewe to the devil hir engendrure, as fer forth as in hem is: certes it is a gret peril and a grette sinne.

Let us than speke of chiding and repreving, which ben ful grette woundes in mannes herte, for they unsway the seamers of frendship in mannes herte: for certes, unnethe may a man be plainly scowded with him, that he hath openly reviled, repreved, and disclaundred: this is a full gretful sinne, as Crist sayth in the Gospel. And take ye kepe now, that be that repreveth his neighbour, either he repreveth him by some harme of peine, that he bath upon his bodie, as, mesel, crooked harlot; or by some sinne that he doth. Now if he repreve him by harme of peine, than cometh the repreve to Jesu Crist: for peine is sent by the rightwis sode of God, and by his suffrance, he it meserie, or maime, or malsadie: and if he repreve him uncharitably of sinne, as thou honour, thou frowdelepe harlot, and so forth; than appertinemeth that to the rejoicing of the devil, which ever hath joye that men don sinne. And certes, chiding may not come but out of a vilains herte, for after the lamboundance of the herte spekketh the mouth ful of. And ye shul understoode, that loke by any way, when any man chastiseth another, that he beware fro chiding or repreving: for trewely, but he beware, he may ful lightly quicken the fire of anger and of wrath, which he shuld quench: and perverture sleth him, that he might chastise with benygntee. For, as sayth Salomon, the amiable tonge is the tree of lif; that is to say, of lif spirital. And sothly, a disolute tonge sleth the spirit of him that repreveth, and also of him which is repreved. Lo, what sayth Seint Augustine: Ther is nothing so like the devils child, as he which oft chideth. A servant of God behoveth not to chide. And though that chiding be a vilains thing betwix all maner folk, yet it is certes most uncomvenable all betwene a man and his wif, for ther is never rest. And therefore sayth Salomon; An hous that is uncovered in rayn and dropping, and a chiding wif, ben like. A man, which is in a dropping hous in many places, though he schew the dropping in a place, it droppeth on him in another place: so fleth it by a chiding wif; if she chide him not in a place, the wol chide him in another: and therefore, better is a morsel of bred with joye, than an hous filled ful of delices with chiding, sayth Salomon. And Seint Poule sayth: O ye women, be ye subgettes to your husbande, as you be loveth in God; and, ye men, loveth your wifes.

Afterward speke we of scornung, which is a wicked, sinne and namely, when he scorneth a man for his good werkes: for certes, swiche scornors smel like the foule tode, may not endure to smell the swete savour of the vine, when it flourisheth. These scornors ben parting felawes with the devil, for they have joye when the devil winneth, and greve if he loseth. They ben adversaries to Jesu Crist, for they hate that he loveth; that is to say, salvation of soule.

Speke we now of wicked conseil, for he that wicked conseil yeveth is a traitour, for he deceiveth him that trusteth in him. But natheles, yet is wicked conseil first ayenst himself: for, as sayth the wise man, every false living hath this propertee in himself, that he that wol annoy another man, he annoyeth first himself. And men shul understoode, that man shal not take his conseil of false

folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loveth specially hir owen profit, ne of to moche worldly folk, namely, in counselling of mannes soule.

Now cometh the sinne of hem that maken discord among folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth utterly; and no wonder is; for he died for to make concord. And more shams don they to Crist, than did they that him crucified: for God loveth better, that frendship be amonges folk, than he did his owen body, which that he gave for untee. Therefore ben they likened to the devil, that ever is about to make discord.

Now cometh the sinne of double tynge, swiche as speke faire before folk, and wickedly behind; or elles they make semblaunt as though they speke of good entencion, or elles in game and play, and yet they speken of wicked entente.

Now cometh bewreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed: certes unnethe may be restore the damage. Now cometh manace, that is an open folie; for he that oft manaceth, he threteth more than he may performe ful oft time. Now comen idel wordes, that be without profite of him that spekketh the wordes and eke of him that berkeneth the wordes: or elles idel wordes ben tho that ben nedelees, or without extents of natural profit. And al be it that idel wordes be somtyme venial sinne, yet shuld men doute hem, for we shul yewe rekenyng of hem before God. Now cometh jangling, that may not come withouten sinne: and as sayth Salomon, it is a signe of apert folle. And therefore a philosopere sayd, when a man axed him how that he shuld please the peple, he answered; "Do many good werkes, and speke few jangleinges." After this cometh the sinne of japeres, that ben the devils apes, for they make folk to laugh at hir japerie, as folk don at the gaudes of an ape: swiche japer defendeth Seint Poule. Loke how that vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist, right so comforten the vilains words, and the knakkes of japeres, hem that travaillen in the service of the devil. These ben the signes of the tonge, that comen of ire, and other sinnes many mo.

Remediun ira.

The remedie ayenst ire, is a vertue that cleped is mansuetude, that is debonaitee; and eke another vertue, that men clopen patience or sufferance.

Debonaitee withdraweth and refraineth the stirrings and movings of mannes corage in his herte, in swich maner, that they ne skip not out by anger ne ira. Sufferance suffereth swetely all the annoyence and the wrong that is don to man outward. Seint Jerome sayth this of debonaitee, that it doth no harme to no wight, ne sayth; ne for no harme that men do be say, he ne chafeth not ayenst reson. This vertue somtyme cometh of nature; for, as sayth the philosopere, A man is a quick thing, by nature debonaire, and treftable to goodnesse: but when debonaitee is enformed of grace, than it is the more worth.

Patience is another remedie ayenst ire, and is a vertue that suffereth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is not wroth for non harme that is don to him. The philosopere sayth, that patience is the vertue that suffereth debonairely al the outrage of adversitee, and every wicked word. This vertue

maketh a man like to God, and maketh him Goddes owen childe: as sayth Crist. This vertue discourseth thin enemies. And therefore sayth the wise man: If thou wolt vanquish thin enemy, see thou be patient. And thou shalt understand, that a man suffieth foure maner of grevances in outward thinges, ayenst the which foure he must have foure maner of patience.

The first grevance is of wicked wordes. Thilke grevance suffred Jesu Crist, without grutching, ful patiently, when the Jewes despised him and reproved him ful oft. Suffre thou therefore patiently, for the wise man saith: If thou strive with a foole, though the foole be wroth, or though he laugh, sigate thou shalt have no reste. That other grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther ayenst suffred Crist ful patiently, when he was despoiled of al that he had in this lif, and that a's but his clothes. The thridde grevance is a man to have harme in his body. That suffred Crist ful patiently in all his passion. The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes: wherefor I say, that folk that make hir servants to travaile to grevously, ou out of time, as in holy dayes, sothly they do gret sinne. Here ayenst suffred Crist ful patiently, and taught us patience, when he bare upon his blessed sholders the crose, upon which he shuld suffer despitous deeth. Here may men lerne to be patient; for certes, not only cristen men be patient for love of Jesu Crist, and for gerdoun of the blisful lif that is perdurable, but certes the old Payenes, that never were cristen, commendeden and useden the vertue of patience.

A philosophe upon a time, that wold have beten his disciple for his gret trespass, for which he was gretly moved, and brought a yerde to bete the childe, and when this childe sawe the yerde, he said to his maister: "What thinke ye to do?" "I wol bete thee," said the maister, "for thy correction." "Forsooth," said the childe, "ye ought first correct yourself, that have lost all your patience for the offence of a child." "Forsooth," said the maister all weping, "thou sayest soth: have thou the yerde, my dere sone, and correct me for min impatience." Of patience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to all hem to which he ought to be obedient in Crist. And understand wel, that obedience is parfite, when that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good herte entirely, all that he shuld do. Obedience generally, is to performe hastily the doctrine of God, and of his souveraines, to which him ought to be obeisant in all rightwisenesse.

De accidia.

After the sinne of wrath, now wol I speke of the sinne of accidie, or slouth: for envie blindeth the herte of a man, and ire troubleth a man, and accidie maketh him hevly, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envie and ire maken bitterness in herte, which bitterness is mother of accidia, and benimeth him the love of alle goodnesse; than is accidie the anguish of a trouble herte. And Seint Augustine sayth: It is annoye of goodnesse and annoye of harme. Certes this is a damnable sinne, for it doth wrong to Jesu Crist, in as moche as it benimeth the service that men shulde do to Crist with alle diligence, as sayth Salomon: but accidia doth nou swiche diligence. He doth all thing with

annoys, and with wrawnesse, daknesse, and ex-carnation, with idelnesse and unlost. For which the book sayth: Accused be he that doth the service of God negligently. Than is accidie enemy to every estate of man. For certes the estate of man is in three maners: either it is the estate of innocense, as was the estate of Adam, before that he fell into sinne, in which estate he was holden to werk, as in heryng and adoring of God. Another estate is the estate of sinful men: in which estate men ben holden to labour in praying to God, for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wold graunt hem to rise out of hir sinnes. Another estate is the estate of grace, in which estate he is holden to werkes of penitence: and certes, to all these thinges is accidie enemy and contrary, for he loveth no beynesse at all. Now certes, this foule sinne of accidie is eke a ful gret enemy to the livelode of the body; for it ne hath no purveance ayenst temporel necessite; for it forsleutheth, forslyggeth, and destroyeth all goodes temporel by recchelesnesse.

The fourth thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peine of Helle, because of hir slouth and of hir hevynesse: for they that be damped, ben so bound, that they may neyther do wel ne think wel. Of accidie cometh first, that a man is annoied and accombred to do any goodnesse, and that maketh that God hath abhominacion of swiche accidia, as sayth Seint John.

Now cometh slouth, that wol not suffre no hardnesse ne no penaunce; for sothly, slouth is so tendre and so delicate, as sayth Salomon, that he wol suffre non hardnesse ne penaunce, and therefore he sheddeth all that he doth. Ayenst this roten sinne of accidie and slouth the shuld men exercise hemself, and use hemself to do good werkes, and manly and vertuously catchen courage wel to do, thinking that our Lord Jesu Crist quitheth every good deed, be it never so lite. Usage of labour is a gret thing: for it maketh, as sayth Seint Bernard, the labourer to have strong armes and hard sinewes: and slouth maketh hem feble and tendre. Than cometh drede for to beginne to werke any good werkes: for certes, he that enclineth to sinne, him thinketh it is to gret an emprise for to undertake the werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte, that the circumstances of goodnesse ben so grevous and so chargeant for to suffre, that he dare not undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as sayth Seint Gregorie.

Now cometh wanhope, that is, despire of the mercy of God, that cometh somtime of to moche outrageous sorwe, and somtime of to moche drede, imagining that he hath do so moche sinne, that it wolde not availe him, though he wolde repent him, and forsake sinne: thurgh which despire or drede, he abandoneth all his herte so every maner sinne, as sayth Seint Augustine. Which dampnable sime, if it continue unto his end, it is cleped the sinne of the Holy Gost. This horrible sin is so perillous, that he that is despaired, ther n'is no felonie, ne no sinne, that he douteth for to do, as shewed wel by Judas. Certes, aboven all sinnes than is this sinne most displeasnt and most adversarie to Crist. Sothly, he that despireth him, is like to the coward champion recreant, that fleeth withouten nede. Alas! alas! nedeles is he recreant, and nedeles despaired. Certes, the mercy of God is ever redy to the penitent person, and is

above all his werkes. Alas! cannot a man be-
thinke him on the Gospel of Saint Luke, chap. xv.
where Crist sayeth, that as wel shal ther be joye
in Heven upon a sinful man that doth penitence,
as upon niesty and nine rightfull men that neede
no penitence? Luke further, in the same Gospel,
doe joye and the state of the good man that had
lost his soone, when his soone was recovered with re-
pentance to his fader. Can they not remember
how also, (as sayth Saint Luke, chap. xiii.) how
that the theefe that was hougged beside Jesu Crist,
sayd, Lord remember on me, when thou comest
in thy regne? Forsooth, said Crist, I say to thee,
to-day shalt thou be with me in paradis. Cer-
tes, ther is non so horrible synne of man, that
may in his life be destroyed by penitence,
though vertue of the passion and of the deeth of
Crist. Alas! what needeth man than to be de-
syrd, eith that his mercy is so redy and large?
He and have. Than cometh sompence, that
is, duggy slumbering, which maketh a man hevy,
and dulle in body and in soule, and this synne cometh
of slothe: and certes, the time that by way of
sleepe man shalld not slepe, is by the morwe, but if
the were cause reasonable. For sochly in the morwe
tis most convenable to a man to say his prayers,
and to think on God, and to honour God, and
to yere himself to the poure that comen first in
the name of Jesu Crist. Lo, what sayth Salomon?
Who to wol by the morwe awake to seke me, he
shalld me. Than cometh negligencie or recheles-
nesse that recketh of nothing. And though that
ignorance be nother of all harmes, certes, negli-
gencie is the nother. Negligencie ne doth no force,
whan he shalld do a thing, whether he do it wel or
badly.

The remedie of this two synnes is, as sayth the
wise man, that he that dredeth God, spareth not
to do that him ought to do; and he that loveth
God, he wol do diligence to please God by his werkes,
and abandon himself, with all his might, wel for
to do. Than cometh idelnesse, that is the yate of
all harmes. An idel man is like to a place that
hath no walles; theras devils may enter on every
side, or shoot at him at discoverte by temptation
in every side. This idelnesse is the thurrok of all
vicious and vilains thoughts, and of all jangeles,
sins, and all ordoure. Certes Heven is yeven to
them that will labour, and not to idel folk. Also
David sayth, they ne be not in the labour of men,
he they shalld not ben whipped with men, that is to
say, a purgatorie. Certes than semeth it they
shalld ben tormented with the Devil in Helle, but if
they do penance.

Than cometh the synne that men clepen *tarditas*,
as whan a man is latered, or taryed or he wol tourne
to God: and certes, that is a gret folie. He is like
him that falleth in the dicke, and wol not arise.
That is vice cometh of false hope, that thinketh
that he shalld live long, but that hope failleth ful
ofte.

Than cometh lachesse, that is, he that whan he
beginneth any good werk, anon he wol forelete it
and sint, as don they that have any wight to
spare, and ne take of him no more kepe, anon
they find any contrary or any annoy. Thus
was the shepe shepherdes, that let hir shepe wet-
tely go ronne to the wolf, that is in the breres,
and do no force of hir owen governance. Of this
cometh povertie and destruction, both of spiritual

and temporal thinges. Than cometh a manner
coldnesse, that freneth all the herte of man. Than
cometh undevotion, though which a man is so
blout, as sayth Saint Bernard, and hath swiche
langour in his soule, that he may neyther rede ne
sing in holy churche, ne here ne think of no devo-
tion, ne travaile with his bondes in no good werk,
that it n'is to him unweary and all spalled. Then
waxeth he sluggish and slombry, and some wol he
be wroth, and some is enclined to hate and to envie.
Than cometh the synne of worldly sorwe swiche as
is cleped *tristitia*, that sleth a man, as sayth Saint
Paula. For certes swiche sorwe werketh to the
deeth of the soule and of the body also, for therof
cometh, that a man is annoyed of his owen lif.
Wherefore swiche sorwe shorteth the life of many a
man, or that his time is come by way of kinde.

Remedios accidie.

Ayent this horrible synne of accidie, and the
braunches of the same, ther is a vertue that is
called *fortitudo* or strenght, that is, an affection,
though which a man despiaeth noyous thinges. This
vertue is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dare
withstand mightily, and wrastle ayenst the assautes
of the Devil, and wisely kepe himself fro periles
that ben wicked; for it onbanseth and enforceth
the soule, right as accidie abateth and maketh it
fible: for this *fortitudo* may endure with long suf-
ferance the travailes that ben covenable.

This vertue hath many spices; the first is cleped
magnanimitas, that is to say, gret corage. For
certes ther behoveth gret corage ayent accidie,
lest that it swallowe the soule by the synne of sorwe,
or destroy it with wanhope. Certes, this vertue
maketh folk to undertake hard and grevous thinges
by hir owen will, wisely and reasonably. And for
as moche as the Devil fighteth ayent man more
by quaintise and sleight than by strenght, therfore
shal a man withstand him by wit, by reson, and by
discretion. Than ben ther the vertues of feith,
and hope in God and in his seintes, to acheven and
accomplice the good werkes, in the which he pur-
poseth firmly to continue. Than cometh seurete
or sikernesse, and that is whan a man ne douteth
no travaile in time coming of the good werkes that
he hath begonne. Than cometh magnificence,
that is to say, whan a man doth and performeth
gret werkes of goodnesse, that he hath begonne,
and that is the sud why that men shulld do good
werkes. For in the accomplishing of good werkes
lieth the gret gerdoun. Than is ther constance,
that is stablesse of corage, and this shulld be in
herte by stedfast feith, and in mouth, and in bering,
in chere, and in dede. Eke ther ben no special
remedies ayent accidie, in divers werkes, and in
consideration of the peines of Helle and of the
joyes of Heven, and in trust of the grace of the
Holy Goet, that will yeve him might to performe
his good entent.

De avaritia.

After accidie wol I speke of avarice, and of
covetices. Of which synne Saint Paula sayth
The rote of all harmes is covetise. For sochly,
whan the herte of man is confounded in itself and
troubled, and that the soule hath lost the comfort
of God, than seketh he an idel solas of worldly
thinges.

Avarice, after the description of Saint Augustyne

is a likerousness in herte to have erthly thinges. Som other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthly thinges, and nothing to yeve to hem that han nede. And understood wel, that avarice standeth not only in land ne catel, but som tyme in science and in glorie, and in every maner outrageous thing is avarice. And the difference betwene avarice and covetise is this: covetise is for to covet swiche thinges as thou hast not; and avarice is to withholden and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, without rightful nede. Sothly, this avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable, for all holy writ curseth it, and apaketh ayenst it, for it doth wroght to Jesu Crist; for it bereveth him the love that men to him owen, and tourneth it backward ayenst all reason, and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Jesu Crist, and doth more observance in keeping of his treasure, than he doth in the service of Jesu Crist. And therefore myght Seint Poul, that an avaricious man is the thralldome of idolatrie.

What difference is ther betwix an idolastre, and an avaricious man? But that an idolastre peraventure ne hath bot but o maunet or two, and the avaricious man hath many: for certes, every florein in his coffre is his maunet. And certes, the synne of maunetrie is the first that God defended in the ten commandments, as bereth witnesse, Exod. Chap. xx. Thou shalt have no false goddes before me, ne thou shalt make to thee no graven thing. Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his treasure before God, an idolastre. And thurgh this cursed synne of avarice and covetise cometh thise hard lordships, thurgh which men ben distreined by tallages, customes, and carriages, more than hir dutee or respous: and eke take they of hir bondmen amerce-mentes, which might more reasonably be called extor-tions than amerce-mentes. Of which amerce-mentes, or ransoming of bondmen, som lordes stewardes say, that it is rightful, for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing, that it ne is his lordes, as they say. But certes, thise lordshippes don wroght, that bereven hir bondmen thinges that they never yave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei, Libro ix.* Soth is, that the condition of thralldom and the first cause of thralldom was for synne. *Genesis v.*

Thus may ye see, that the gilt deserved thralldom, but not nature. Wherefore thise lordes ne shuld not to moche glorie hem in hir lordshippes, sith that they by naturel condition ben not lordes of hir thralles, but that thralldom came first by the deserte of synne. And furthermore, ther as the lawe sayth, that temporel goodes of bondfolk ben the goodes of hir lord: ye, that is for to understand, the goodes of the emperour, to defend hem in hir right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem. Therefore sayth Seneca: The prudent shuld live benignely with the thral. Tho that thou clepest thy thralles, ben Goddes people: for humble folk ben Cristes frendes; they ben contubernial with the Lord thy king.

Thinke also, that of swiche seed as cherles springen of swiche seed springen lordes: as wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deth that taketh the cherl, swiche deth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thy cherl as thou woldest that thy lord did with thee, if thou were in his plight. Every sinful man is a cherl to synne: I rede thee, thou lord, that thou reule thee

in swiche wise, that thy cherles rather love the than drede thee. I wote wel, that ther is degre above degre, as reason is, and skill is, that men do hir devoir, ther as it is due: but certes, extortion, and despit of your underlinges, is dampnable.

And furthermore understood wel, that thise conquerours or tyrantes maken ful oft thralles of hem, that ben borne of as royal blood as ben they that hem conqueren. This name of thralldom was never erst couthe, til that Noe sayd, that his sone Cham shuld be thral to his brethes for his synne. What say we than of hem that pille and don extor-tions to holy chirche? Certes, the swet that men yeven first to a knight whan he is new dubbed, signifyeth, that he shuld defend holy chirche, and not robbe it ne pille it: and who doth is traitour to Crist. As saith Seint Augustine: Tho ben the Devils wolves, that strangle the shepe of Jesu Crist, and don worse than wolves: for sothly, whan the wolf hath full his wombe, he stinteth to strangle shepe: but sothly, the piloures and destroyers of holy chirches goodes ne do so, for they ne stint never to pille. Now as I have sayd, sith so is, that synne was first cause of thralldom, than is it thus, that at the tyme that all this world was in synne, than was all this world in thralldom, and in subjection: but certes, with the tyme of grace came, God ordeined, that som folk shuld be more high in estate and in degre, and som folk more lowe, and that everich shuld be served in his estate and his degre. And therefore in som contres ther as they ben thralles, whan they have tourned hem to the feith, they make hir thralles free out of thralldom: and therefore certes the lord oweth to his man, that the man oweth to the lord. The pope clepeth himself servant of the servants of God. But for as moche as the estate of holy chirche ne might not have ben, ne the common profite might not have been kept, ne peas ne rest in erthe, but if God had ordeined, that som men ben higher degre, and som men lower; therefore wever sovereigne ordeined to kepe, and mainteine, and defend hire underlinges or hire subjectes in rest, as ferforth as it lieth in hire power, and not to destroy hem ne confound. Wherefore I say, that thilke lordes that ben like wolves, that devoure the possessions or the catel of poure folk wrongfully, withouten mercy or mesure, they shul receiv by the same mesure that they have mesured to poure folk the mercy of Jesu Crist, but they it ascende. Now cometh deceit betwix marchant and maner chaunt. And thou shalt understand, that marchandise is in two maners, that on is bodily, and that other is gostly: that on is honest and leful, and that other is dishonest and unkeful. The bodily marchandise, that is leful and honest, is this: that ther as God hath ordeined, that a regon or a con-tree is sufficient to himself, than it is honest and leful, that of the haboundance of this con-tree men helpe another con-tree that is needy: and therefore ther must be marchants to bring fro on con-tree to another hir marchandise. That other marchandise, that men haunten with fraude, and trechery and deceit, with lesinges and false othes, is right cursed and dampnable. Spiritual marchandise: properly simonie, that is, extentif desire to be-thing spiritual, that is, thing which appertaineth to the seintuarie of God, and to the cure of the soule. This desire, if so be that a man do his diligence to performe it, al be it that his desire ne take not

eth, yet it is to him a dedly synne: and if he be ordered, he is irregular. Certes simonie is deped of Simon Magus, that wold have bought for temporel catel the yefte that God had yeven by the holy gort to Saint Peter, and to the apostles: and therefore understood ye, that both he that sellith and he that byeth thinges spiritual ben called Simoniackes, be it by catel, be it by procuring, or by fleschly praier of his frendes fleschly frendes, or spiritual frendes, fleschly in two maners, as by kinred or other frendes: sothly, if they pray for him that is not worthy and able, it is simonie, if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther is non. That other maner is, when man, or woman, prayeth for folk to avancen hem only for wicked fleschly affection which they have unto the person, and that is foule simonie. But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges spiritual unto hir servants, it must be understande, that the service must be honest, or elles not, and also, that it be without bargaining, and that the person be able. For (as sayth Saint Damascen) all the synnes of the world, at regard of this synne, ben as king of night, for it is the greatest synne that may be after the synne of Lucifer and of Anticrist: for by this synne God forleseth the chirobe and the keys, which he bought with his precious blood, by whiche that yeven chirobes to hem that ben not able, for they put in theves, that stele the soules of Jesu Crist, and destroyen his patrimoine. By such unidigne prelates and curates, has lewed men lesse reverence of the sacramentes of holy church: and swiche yevers of chirobes put the children of Crist out, and put into chirobes the Devilowen synes: they sellen the soules that lambes shold leve to the wolf, which strangeth hem: and therfore shall they never have part of the pasture of lambes, that is, in the blisse of Heven. Now cometh hazardrie with his aperteneutes, as tables and rades, of which cometh deceit, false othes, flattery, and all raving, blaspheming, and reneying of God, hate of his neyghbours, wast of goodes, depending of time, and sootime manslaughter. Certes, hazardriours be now not be without grette synne. Of avarice comen eke lesinges, theft, false witness, and false othes: and ye shul understande, that these be grette synnes, and expresse ayenst the commandements of God, as I have sayd. False witness is eke in word, and in dede: in word, as to berreve thy neyghbours good name by thy false witness, or berreve him his catel or his heritage by thy false witness, when thou for ire, or for mode, or for envie, berrest false witness, or excusest thyself falsely. Ware ye ye questmongers and notaries: certes, for false witness, was Susanna in ful grette sorwe and paine, and many another mo. The synne of theft is also expresse ayenst Goddes best, and that in two maners, temporel, and spiritual: the temporel theft is, as for to take thy neyghbours catel ayenst his will, be it by force or by sleight; be it in meting or measure; by stealing; by false enditments upon him; and in borowing of thy neyghbours catel, in default never to pay it ayen, and semblable thinges. Spiritual theft is sacrilege, that is to say, hurting of holy thinges, or of thinges sacred to Crist, in two maners; by reason of the holy place, as chirobes or chirobes hawes; (for every vilaines synne, that he doth in swiche places, may be called sacrilege, as every violence in semblable places) also they

that withdrawe falsely the routes and rightes that longen to holy chirobe; and plainly and generally, sacrilege is to reve holy thing for holy place, of unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

Remedium covitiis.

Now shul ye understand, that relieving of avarice is misericorde and pitee largely taken. And men might axe, why that misericorde and pitee are relieving of avarice; certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man. For he delitheth him in the keeping of his treasure, and not in the rescouing ne relieving of his even Cristen. And therefore speke I first of misericorde. This is misericorde (as sayth the philosophre) a vertue, by which the courage of man is stirred by the misese of him that is miseced. Upon which misericorde foloweth pitee, in performing and fulfilling of charitable werkes of mercie, helping and comforting him that is miseced. And certes, this moveth a man to misericorde of Jesu Crist, that he yave himself for our offence, and suffred deth for misericorde, and forfay us our original synnes, and thereby released us fro the peines of Hell, and amended the peines of purgatory by penitence, and yeven us grace wel to do, and at last the blisse of Heven. The spices of misericorde ben for to lene, and eke for to yave, and for to foryve and release, and for to have pitee in herte, and compassion of the mischefe of his even Cristen, and also to chastise ther as mode is. Another maner of remedy ayenst avarice, is reasonable largesse: but sothly, here behoveth the consideration of the grace of Jesu Crist, and of the temporel goodes, and also of the goodes perdurable that Jesu Crist yave to us, and to have remembrance of the deth which he shal receive, he wote not when: and eke that he shal forgon all that he hath, save only that which he hath depended in good werkes.

But for as moche as som folk ben unmesurable, men oughten for to avoid and eschue fool-largesse, the whiche men clepen waste. Certes, he that is fool-large, he yeveth not his catel, but he leseth his catel. Sothly, what thing that he yeveth for vaine-glory, as to minstrels, and to folk that bere his renome in the world, he hath do synne therof, and non almesse: certes, he leseth foule his good, that he seketh with the yefte of his good nothing but synne. He is like to an hors that seketh rather to drink drovy or troubled water, than for to drink water of the clere well. And for as moche as they yeven ther as they shuld nat yeven, to hem appertineth thilke malison, that Crist shal yave at the day of dome to hem that shul be dampned.

De gula.

After avarice cometh glotonie, which is expresse ayenst the commandement of God. Glotonie is unmesurable appetit to ete or to drinke: or elles to do in ought to the unmesurable appetit and disordered covetise to ete or drinke. This synne corrupted all this world, as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam and of Eve. Like also what sayth Saint Poule of glotonie. Many (sayth he) gon, of which I have ofte said to you, and now I say it weping, that they ben the enemies of the crosse of Crist, of which the end is deth, and of which hir wombe is hir God and hir glorie; in confusion of

been that so serve earthly things. He that is went to this sinne of glotonie, he ne may no sinne withstand, he must be in servage of all vices, for it is the Devils horde, ther he hideth him and resteth. This sinne hath many spices. The first is drunkenness, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes reason: and therefore when a man is dronke, he hath lost his reason: and this is dedly sinne. But sothly, when that a man is not went to strong drinks, and peradventure ne knoweth not the strength of the drinks, or hath febleness in his bod, or hath travailed, through which he drinketh the more, al be he sodenly caught with drinks, it is no dedly sinne, but venial. The second spice of glotonie is, that the spirit of a man wexeth all trouble for drunkenness, and berreveth a man the discretion of his wit. The thridde spice of glotonie is, when a man devoureth his mete, and hath not rightful maner of eting. The fourthe is, when through the gret abundance of his mete, the humours in his body ben distempered. The fiftbe is, forgetfulnessse by to moche drinking, for which sometime a man forgeteth by the morwe, what he did over eve.

In other maner ben distinct the spices of glotonie, after Seint Gregorie. The first is, for to ete before tyme. The second is, when a man geteth him to delicat mete or drinks. The thridde is, when men taken to moche over mesure. The fourthe is curiositee, with gret entent to maken and appareille his mete. The fiftb is, for to ete greedily. These ben the five fingers of the Devils hood, by which he draweth folk to the sinne.

Remedies guls.

Ayent glotonie the remedis is abstinence, as sayth Galien: but that I holde not meritorie, if he do it only for the heile of his body. Seint Augustine wol that abstinence be don for vertue, and with patience. Abstinence (sayth he) is litel worth, but if a man have good will thereto, and but it be enforced by patience and charitee, and that men don it for Goddes sake, and in hope to have the blisse in Heven.

The felawes of abstinence ben attemperance, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges; also shame, that escheweth all dishonestee; suffiance, that seeketh no riche mete as drinks, ne doth no force of non outrageous appareilling of mete; mesure also, that restrineth by reason the unmesurable appetit of eting; soberness also, that restrineth the outrage of drinks; sparing also, that restrineth the delicat ese, to sit long at mete, wherefore som folk stonden of hir oven will when they ete, because they wol ete at lesse leiser.

De luxuria.

After glotonie cometh lecherie, for these two sinnes ben so nigh cosins, that oft tyme they wol not depart. God wote this sinne is ful displemant to God, for he said himself: Do no lecherie. And therefore he putteth gret penes ayent this sinne. For in the old lawe, if a woman thrald were taken in this sinne, she should be beten with staves to the deth: and if she were a gentilwoman, she should be slain with stones: and if she were a bishoppes daughter, she should be brent by Goddes commandment. Moreover, for the sinne of le-

cherie God dreint all the world, and after that he brent five cities with thunder and lightning, and sanke ben down into Hell.

Now let us speke than of the said stinking sinne of lecherie, that men clepen avoutrie, that is of wedded folk, that is to say, if that on of hem be wedded, or elles both. Seint Jobn sayth, that avouterers shal ben in Helle in a stache burning of fire and of brimstone, in fire for hir lecherie, is brimstone for the stenche of hir ordure. Certes the breking of this sacrament is an horrible thing: it was made of God himself in Paradis, and confirmed by Jesu Crist, as witnessed Seint Mathew in the Gospel: a man shal let fader and moder and take him to his wif, and they shal be twe in a flesh. This sacrament betokeneth the knitting together of Crist and holy chirche. And not all that God forbade avoutrie in dede, but also he commanded, that thou shouldest not cover thy neighboures wif. In this beste (sayth Seint Augustine) is forbidden all maner covetise to do lecherie. Lo, what sayth Seint Mathew in the Gospel, that who so seeth a woman, to covetise of his lust, he hath don lecherie with hire in his herte. Here may ye see, that not only the ded of this sinne is forbidden, but eke the desire to do that sinne. This cursed sinne annoyeth grevous hem that it haunt: and first to the soule, for it obligeth it to sune and to peine of deth, which perdurable; and to the body annoyeth it grevous also, for it drieth him and wasteth, and about his and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the flit of Helle: it wasteth eke his catel and his substance. And certes, if it be a foule thing a man to wail his catel on women, yet is it a fouler thing, wif that for swiche ordure women dispenden up men hir catel and hir substance. This sinne, sayth the prophet, berereth man and woman a good fame and all hir honour, and it is ful pleint to the Devil: for therby winneth he the non partie of this wretched world. And right as marchant deliteth him most in that chaffare whi he hath most advantage and profite of, right so deliteth the fend in this ordure.

This is that other hond of the Devil, with f fingers, to cacche the peple to his vilanie. The first fngre is the foole loking of the foole woun and of the foole man, that steth right as the best cok sleth folk by venime of his sight: for the covetise of the eyes foloweth the covetise of the herte. The second fngre is the vilains touch in wicked maner. And therefore sayth Salomon that who so toucheth and handlieth a woman, fareth as the man that handlieth the scorp which stingeth and sodenly steth through his eseniming; or as who so that toucheth warme pit it shendeth his fingers. The thridde is foule word which fareth like fire, which right anon burneth the herte. The fourth fngre is kissing: a trewely he were a gret foole that wold kisse: a mouthe of a burning oven or of a fourcois; a more fooler ben they that kissen in vilanie, that mouth is the mouth of Helle; and namn these olde dotardes holours, which wol kisse, a flicker, and besie herself, though they may none do. Certes they ben like to houndes: for an hound when he cometh by the ruset, or by other beest though so be that he may not pisse, yet wol here up his leg and make a contentance to piss. And for that many man wexeth that he may:

done for no likerousness that he doth with his wif,
 trevely that opinion is false: God wote a man may
 see himself with his owen knif, and make himself
 drunken of his owen tongue. Certes, be it wif, be it
 childe, or any worldly thing, that he loveth before
 God, it is his mannet, and he is an idolastre. A
 man shuld love his wif by discretion, patiently and
 stempedy, and than is she as though it were his
 mater. The fifth finge of the Divels bowd, is the
 sinking dede of lecherie. Trevely the five fingers
 of gletonie the fend putteth in the wombe of a
 man: and with his five fingers of lecherie he grip-
 eth him by the reins, for to throwe him into the
 furnace of Helle, ther as they shal have the fire
 and the wormes that ever shul lasten, and weping
 and wailing, and sharpe hunger and thirst, and
 gnisence of divels, whiche shal all to-trede hem
 withouten respite and withouten ende. Of leche-
 rie, as I sayd, sounden and springen divers spices:
 a fornication, that is betwene man and woman
 which bea not married, and is dedly sinne, and
 grevnt nature. All that is enemy and destruction
 is nature, is aynest nature. Parfay the reason of a
 man etc telleth him wel that it is dedly sinne; for
 in woche as God forbad lecherie. And Seint Poule
 yeveth hem the regule, that n'is dewe to no wight
 but to hem that don dedely sinne. Another sinne
 of lecherie is to berceven a maid of hire maiden-
 hed, for he that so doth, certes he custeth a may-
 den out of the highest degree that is in this pre-
 sent lif, and bereveth hire thilke precious fruit that
 he took clepeth the hundredth fruit. I ne can say
 how otherwise in English, but in Latine it hight
concarum fructus. Certes he that so doth, is the
 cause of many damages and vilanies, mo than any
 man can reken: right as he somtime is cause of
 all damages that bestes do in the feld, that brek-
 eth the hedge of the closure, thurgh which he de-
 stroyeth that may not be restored: for certes no
 maye maye maidenhed be restored, than an arme,
 that is smitten fro the body, may retorne ayn and
 we: she may have mercy, this wote I wel, if
 she have will to do penitence, but never shal
 it be but that she is corrupte. And all be it so
 that I have spoke somewhat of avoutrie, it is good
 to shewe the periles that kongen to avoutrie, for to
 achieve that foule sinne. Avoutrie, in Latine, is
for to saye, approaching of another mannes bedde,
 thurgh whiche the, that somtime were on fleshe,
 shewen hir bodies to other persons. Of this
 sinne, as sayth the wise man, folow many harmes:
 first breking of feith; and certes feith is the key
 of Cristendom, and whas that key is broken and
 lone, sothly Cristendom is lorde, and stont vaine
 and without fruit. This sinne also is theft, for
 first generally is to reve a wight his thinges aynest
 his will. Certes, this is the foulest theft that may
 be, whan that a woman steleth hire body from hire
 husband, and yeveth it to hire holour to defoule
 it: and steleth hire soule fro Crist, and yeveth it
 to the Devil: this is a fouler theft than for to
 breke a chalice and stele away the chalice, for
 first avoutrie broken the temple of God spiritu-
 ally, and stelen the vessell of grace; that is the
 body and the soule: for which Criste shal destroy
 hem, as sayth Seint Poule. Sothly of this theft
 spected grety Joseph, whan that his lordes wif
 payed him of vilanie, whan he sayde: Lo, my
 lady, how my lord hath take to me under my
 warte all that he hath in this world, ne nothing is

out of my power, but only ye that ben his wif:
 and how shuld I than do this wickednesse, and
 sinne so horribly aynest God, and aynest my lord?
 God it forbede. Alas! all to litel is swiche
 trowth now yfounde. The thridd harme is the
 filth, thurgh which they breke the commanndement
 of God, and defoule the suter of matrimonies, that
 is Crist. For certes, in so moche as the sacrament
 of mariage is so noble and so digne, so moche is
 it the greter sinne for to breke it: for God made
 mariage in Paradis in the estate of innocencie, to
 multiplie mankind to the service of God, and
 therefore is the breking therof the more grevous,
 of which breking come false heires oft time, that
 wrongfully occupien folkes heritages: and therefore
 wol Crist put hem out of the regne of Heven, that
 is heritage to good folk. Of this breking cometh
 eke oft time, that folk unware wedde or sinne
 with hir owen kinrede: and namely these harlottes,
 that haunten bordelles of these foule women, that
 may be likened to a commune goag, wheras men
 purge hir ordure. What say we also of putours,
 that live by the horrible sinne of puterie, and
 constreine women to yelde hem a certain rent of hir
 bodily puterie, ye somtime his owen wif or his
 childe, as don these haudes? certes, these ben
 cursed sinnes. Understood also, that avoutrie is
 set in the ten commanndements than theft and
 manslaughter, for it is the gretest theft that may
 be, for it is theft of body and of soule, and it is like
 to homicide, for it kerreth atwo and breketh atwo
 hem that first were made on flesch. And therefore
 by the old lawe of God they shuld be slaine, but
 nathelasse, by the lawe of Jesu Crist, that is the
 lawe of pitee, whan he sayd to the woman that was
 found in avoutrie, and shuld have ben slain with
 stones, after the will of the Jewes, as was hir lawe;
 Go, sayd Jesu Crist, and have no more will to
 do sinne; sothly, the vengeance of avoutrie is
 awarded to the peise of Helle, but if so be that it
 be discombened by penitence. Yet ven ther mo
 spices of this cursed sinne, as whan that on of hem
 is religious, or elles both, or of folk that ben en-
 tred into ordre, as sub-deken, deken, or preest, or
 hospitalers: and ever the higher that he is in ordre,
 the greter is the sinne. The thinges that grety
 agrege hir sinne, is the breking of hir avow
 of chastitee, whan they received the ordre: and
 moreover soth is, that holy ordre is chefe of all the
 tresorie of God, and is a special signe and marks
 of chastitee, to shew that they ben joined to chas-
 titee, which is the moste precious lif that is: and
 this ordered folk ben specially tited to God, and
 of the special meinie of God: for which, whan they
 don dedly sinne, they ben the special traitours of
 God and of his peple, for they live by the peple to
 praye for the peple, and whiles they ben swiche
 traitours hir prayeres availe not to the peple.
 Preestes ben as angels, as by the mysterie of his
 dignitee: but forsoth Seint Poule saith, that Sa-
 thanas transformeth him in an angel of light.
 Sothly, the preest that haunth dedly sinne, he
 may be likened to an angel of light: he seemeth an
 angel of light: he seemeth an angel of light: he
 seemeth an angel of light, but for soth he is an angel of derte-
 nesse. Swiche preestes be the soles of Hely, as is
 shewed in the book of Kinges, that they were the
 soles of Belial, that is, the Divel. Belial is to say,
 withouten juge, and so faren they; hem thinketh
 that they be free, and have no juge, no more than

hath a free boll, that taketh which cow that him liketh in the town. So faren they by women; for right as on free boll is yonough for all a town, right so is a wicked priest corruption yough for all a parish, or for all a countree: thise preestes, as sayth the book, ne cannot minister the mysterie of priesthood to the peple, ne they knowe not God, ne they hold hem not spaied, as saith the book, of sodden flesh that was to hem offred, but they take by force the flesh that is raw. Certes, right so thise shrewes ne hold hem not spaied of roasted flesh and sodden, with which the peple feden hem in gret reverence, but they wol have raw flesh as folkes wives and hir daughters: and certes, thise women that consenten to hir harlotrie, don gret wrong to Crist and to holy chirche, and to all halowes, and to all soules, for they bereven all thise hem that shuld worship Crist and holy chirche, and pray for Cristen soules: and therefore han swiche preestes, and hir lemmans also that consenten to hir lecherie, the malison of the court Cristen, til they come to amendement. The thridde spice of avoutrie is somtime betwix a man and his wif, and that is, when they take no regard in hir assembling but only to hir fleshy delit, as saith Seint Jerome, and ne reoken of nothing but that they ben assembled because they ben married; all is good yough, as thinketh to hem. But in swiche folk hath the Divel power, as said the angel Raphael to Tobie, for in hir assembling, they putten Jesu Crist out of hir herte, and yeven hemself to all ordure. The fourth spice is of hem that assemble with hir kinrede, or with hem that ben of oz affinitee, or elles with hem with which hir fathers or hir kinred have deled in the sinne of lecherie: this sinne maketh hem like to boundes, that taken no kepe of kinrede. And certes, parentele is in two maners: eyther gostly or fleshy: gostly, is for to delen with hir godaibes: for right so as he that engendreth a child, is his fleshy father, right so is his godfather his father spirituel: for which a woman may in no lease sinne assemble with hire godaib, than with hir owen fleshy broder. The fifth spice is that abhominable sinne, of which abhominable sinne no man unneeth ought to speke ne write, natheles it is openly rehersed in holy writ. This cursedheise don men and women in diverse entent and in diverse maner: but though that holy writ speke of horrible sinne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the Sonne that shineth on the myxene. Another sinne apperteineth to lecherie, that cometh in slesping, and this sinne cometh often to hem that ben maidens, and eke to hem that ben corrupt; and this sinne men call pollution, that cometh of foure maners; somtime it cometh of languishing of the body, for the humours ben to ranke and haboundant in the body of man; somtime of infirmitie, for febleneise of the vertue rentif, as phisike maketh mention; somtime of surfet of mete and drinke; and somtime of villains thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe, which may not be withouten sinne; for whiche men must kepe hem wisely, or elles may they sinne ful greuously.

Remedium luxurie.

Now cometh the remedy ayenat lecherie, and that is generally chastitee and continence, that restraineth all disordinate mevings that comen o

fleshy talents: and ever the greter merite shal he have that most restrineth the wicked enchausing or ardure of this sinne; and this is in two maners: that is to say, chastitee in marriage, and chastitee in widewhood. Now shalt thou understonde, that matrimony is keful assembling of man and woman, that receiven by vertue of this sacrament the bonde, thurgh whiche they may not be departed in all hir lif, that is to say, while that they live bothe. This, as saith the book, is a ful gret sacrament; God made it (as I have said) in Paradis, and wold himself be borne in marriage: and for to halowe marriage he was at a wedding, wheras he tourned water into wine, whiche was the first miracle that he wrought in erthe before his disciples. The trewe effect of marriage clenseth fornication, and replenisheth holy chirche of good ligage, for that is the end of marriage, and chaungeth dedly sinne into venial sinne betwene hem that ben wedded, and maketh the hertes all on of hem that ben ywedded, as well as the bodies. This is very marriage that was established by God, er that sinne began, when nature lawe was in his right point in Paradis; and it was ordeined, that o man shuld have but o woman, and o woman but o man, as sayth Seint Augustine, by many reasons.

First for marriage is figured betwix Crist and holy chirche; and another is, for a man is hed of the woman; (algate by ordinance it shuld be so;) for if a woman had mo men than on, than shuld she have mo hedes than on, and that were an horrible thing before God; and also a woman might not plesse many folk at ones: and also ther shuld never be pees ne rest among hem, for everich of hem wold axe his owen right. And furthermore, no man shuld knowe his owen engendrure, ne who shuld have his heritage, and the woman shuld be the lesse beloved for the time that she were conjunct to many men.

Now cometh how that a man shuld bere him with his wif, and namely in two thinges, that is to say, in suffraunce and in reverence, and this shewed Crist whan he firste made woman. For he made hire of the hed of Adam, for she shuld not claime to gret lordshippe; for ther as the woman hath the maistrie, she maketh to moche disarray: ther nee non ensamples of this, the experience that we have day by day ought yough suffice. Also certes, God ne made not woman of the foot of Adam, for she shuld not be holden to lowe, for she cannot patiently suffer: but God made woman of the rib of Adam, for woman shuld be felaw unto man. Man shuld bere him to his wif in feith, in trooth, and in love; as sayth Seint Poule, that a man shuld love his wif, as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he died for it: so shuld a man for his wif, if it were nede.

Now how that a woman shuld be subject to hire husband, that telleth Seint Peter; first in obedieunce. And, eke as sayth the decree, a woman that is a wif, as long as she is a wif, she hath non autoritee to swere ne bere witness, without leve of hir husband, that is hire lord; algate he shuld be so by reson. She shuld also serve him in all honeste, and ben attemptre of hire array. I wete wel that they shuld set hir entent to plesse hir husbands, but not by queintise of hire array. Seint Jerome sayth: wives that ben appareilled in silke and precious purple, ne mow not cloth hem in Jesu Crist. Seint Gregorie sayth also: that no wight seketh pre-

side array, but only for vain glorie to be honoured the more of the peple. It is a gret folie, a woman to have a faire array outward, and herself to be faine inward. A wif should also be measurable in loking, in bering, and in laughing, and discrete in all hire wordes and hire dedes, and above all worldly thinges, she should love hire husboode with all hire herte, and to him be trewe of hire body: so should every husboode eke be trewe to his wif: for sith that all the body is the husboodes, so should hire herte be also, or elles ther is betwix hem two, as it that, no parfit marriage. Than shal men understand, that for three thinges a man and his wif shaly may assemble. The first is, for the extent of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certes that is the cause that of matrimonie. Another cause is, to yelde eche of hem to other the dettes of hir bodies: for neyther of hem hath power of his owen bodie. The thridde is, for to eschew lecherie and vilanie. The fourth is for sothedy sinne. As to the first, it is meritorie: the second also, for, as sayth the decree, she hath merite of chastitee, that yeldeth to hire husboode the dettes of hire body, ye though it be ayenst hire king, and the lust of hire herte. The thridde merite is venial sinne; trewely, scarcely may any of these be without venial sinne, for the corruption and for the delit therof. The fourth manner is for to understand, if they assemble only for amorous lve, and for non of the foresaid causes, but for to accomplish hir bragging delit, they rocke not how et, sothly it is dedly sinne: and yet, with awe, the folk wol peine hem more to do, than to hir appetit suffioeth.

The second manner of chastitee is for to be a dese widow, and eschew the embracing of a man, and desire the embracing of Jesu Crist. This be the that have ben wives, and have forgon hir husboodes, and eke women that have don lecherie, and ben relieved by penance. And certes, if that a wif could kepe hire all chast, by licence of hire husboode, so that she yave no cause no non occasion that he agilted, it were to hire a gret merite. This manner of woman, that observes chastitee, may be cleene in herte as well as in body, and in thought, and measurable in clothing and in countenance, abstinent in eting and drinking, in speaking, and in dede, and than is she the vessel or the boiste of the blessed Magdeleine, that fulfilleth holy churche of good odour. The thridde manner of chastitee is virginitee, and it becometh that she be holy in herte, and cleene of body, than is she the spouse of Jesu Crist, and she is the lif of angels: she is the prising of this world, and she is as thise martir in egalitee: she hath in hire, that tongue may not telle, ne herte thinke. Virginitee bare our Lord Jesu Crist, and virgin was himself.

Another remedie against lecherie is specially to withdraw swiche thinges, as yeven occasion to that vilanie: as ese, eting, and drinking: for certes, when the pot boileth strongly, the best remedie is to withdraw the fire. Sleeping long in gret quiet is also a gret nourice to lecherie.

Another remedie ayenst lecherie is, that a man or a woman eschew the compaignie of hem, by which he douteth to be tempted: for all be it so that the dede be withstanden, yet is ther gret temptation. Sothly a white wall, although it be leane not fully with sticking of a candle, yet is the wall black of the leyte. Ful oft time I rede,

that no man trust in his owen perfection, but he be stronger than Sampson, or holier than David, or wiser than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared you as I can of the seven dedly sinnes, and som of hir branches, and the remedies, sothly, if I coude, I wold tell you the ten commandments, but so high doctrine I lets to divines. Natheles, I hope to God they ben touched in this tretise everich of hem alle.

Now for as moche as the second part of penitence stout in confession of mouth, as I began in the first chapitre, I say Seint Augustine sayth: Sinne is every word and every dede, and all that men co-ritten ayenst the law of Jesu Crist; and this is for to sinne, in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by the five writes, which ben sight, hearing, smelling, tasting or savouring, and feling. Now is it good to understand the circumstances, that agregon moche every sinne. Thou shalt consider what thou art that dost the sinne, whether thou be male or female, yonge or olde, gentil or thrall, free or servant, boie or sike, wedded or single, ordered or unordered, wise or foole, clerke or secular; if she be of thy kiared, bodily or gostly, or non; if any of thy kiared have sinned with hire or no, and many mo thinges.

Another circumstance is this, whether it be don in fornication, or in advoutrie, or no, in manner of homicide or non, a horrible gret sinne or smal, and how long thou hast continued in sinne. The thridde circumstance is the place, ther thou hast don sinne, whether in other mennes houses, or in thine owen, in feld, in churche, or in churchebawe, in churche dedicate, or non. For if the churche be halowed, and man or woman spille his kinde within that place, by way of sinne or by wicked temptation, the churche were enterdited til it were reconciled by the bishop; and if it were a preest that did swiche vilanie, the terme of all his lif he should no more sing masse: and if he did, he should do dedly sinne, at every time that he so song masse. The fourth circumstance is, by which mediatours, as by messagers, or for enticement, or for consentment, to bere compaignie with felawship; for many a wretche, for to bere felawship, wol go to the Divel of Helle. Wherefore, they that eggon or consenten to the sinne, ben partners of the sinne, and of the dampnation of the sinner. The fifth circumstance is, how many times that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how oft he hath fallen. For he that oft falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of God, and encreaseth his sinne, and is unkind to Crist, and he waxeth the more feble to withstand sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, and the later ariseth, and is more slow to shrive him, and namely to him that hath ben his confessor. For which that folk, when they fall ayen to hir old folies, either they forlsten hir old confessor al utterly, or elles they departen hir shrift in divers places: but sothly swiche departed shrift deserveth no mercie of God for hir sinnes. The sixte circumstance is, why that a man sinneth, as by what temptation; and if himself procure thilke temptation, or by exciting of other folk; or if he sinne with a woman by force or by hire owen assent; or if the woman mangre hire hed have ben enforced or non, this shal she tell, and wheder it were for covetise or poverte, and if it were by hire procuring or non, and swiche other thinges. The seventh circumstance is, in what manner he hath don his

sinne, or how that she hath suffered that folk have don to hire. And the same shal the man tell plainly, with all the circumstances, and wheder he hath sinned with common bordel woman or non, or don his sinne in holy times or non, in fasting times or non, or before his shrift, or after his later shrift, and hath paraventure broken therby his penance enjoined, by whos helpe or whos conseil, by sorcerie or craft, all must be told. All these thinges, after that they ben gret or smale, engregen the conscience of man or woman. And eke the preest that is thy juge, may the better be advised of his judgement in yeving of penance, and that shal be after thy contrition. For understood wel, that after the time that a man hath defouled his baptime by sinne, if he wol come to salvation, ther is non other way but by penance, and shrifte, and satisfaction; and namely by the two, if ther be a confessor to whom he may shrive him, and that he first be veray contrite and repentant, and the thridde if he have lif to performe it.

Then shal a man loke and consider, that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confession, ther must be foure conditions. First it must be in sorrowful bitterness of herte, as sayth the king Ezechiel to God; I wol remember all the yerres of my lif in the bitterness of my herte. This condition of bitterness hath five signes; the first is, that confession must be shamesfast, not for to coveren ne hide his sinne, but for he hath agilted his God and defouled his soule. And therof sayth Seint Augustin: The herte travaileth for shame of his sinne, and for he hath gret shamesfastnesse he is digne to have gret mercie of God. Swiche was the confession of the publican, that wold not heve up his eyen to Heven for he had offended God of Heven: for which shamesfastnesse he had anon the mercy of God. And therefore saith Seint Augustin, that swiche shamesfast folk ben next foryewnesse and mercy. Another signe, is humilitee in confessioun: of whiche sayth Seint Peter; Humbleth you under the might of God: the bond of God is mighty in confession, for therby God foryeveth thee thy sinnes, for he alone hath the power. And this humilitee shall be in herte, and in signe outwarde: for right as he hath humilitee to God in his herte, right so shuld he humble his body outward to the preest, that sitteth in Goddes place. For which in no maner, sith that Crist is soveraine, and the preest mene and mediatour betwix Crist and the sinner, and the sinner is last by way of reson, than shuld not the sinner sitte as high as his confessor, but knele before him or at his feet, but if maladic distrouble it: for he shal not take kepe who sitteth ther, but is whos place he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and cometh for to axe mercie and maken his accorde, and setteth him down anon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy so soone for to have remission ne mercy. The thridde signe is, that the shrift shold be ful of teeris, if men mowen wepe, and if they mowe not wepe with hir bodily eyen, then let hem wepe in hir herte. Swiche was the confession of Seint Peter; for after that he had forsake Jezu Crist, he went out and wept ful bitterly. The fourth signe is, that he ne lete not for shame to shrive him and shewe his confession. Swiche was the confession of Magdeleine, that ne spared, for no shame of hem that weren at the feste, to go to our Lord Jezu

Crist and beknewe to him hire sinnes. The fiftte signe is, that a man or a woman be obedient to receive the penance that hem is enjoined. For certes Jezu Crist for the gilt of man was obedient to the deth.

The second condition of veray confessioun is, that it be hastily don: for certes, if a man had a dedly wound, ever the longer that he taried to warishe himself, the more wold it corrupt and haste him to his deth, and also the wound wold be the worse for to hele. And right so fareth sinne, that longe time is in a man unshewed. Certes a man ought hastily to shewe his sinnes for many causes; as for drede of deth, that cometh oft sodenly, and is in no certain what time it shal be, ne in what place; and eke the drenching of o sinne draweth in another: and also the longer that he tarieth, the further is he fro Crist. And if he abide to his last day, scarcely may he shrive him or remembre him of his sinnes, or repent him for the grevous maladic of his deth. And for as moche as he ne hath in his lif herkened Jezu Crist, when he hath spoken unto him, he shal crie unto our Lord at his last day, and scarcely wol he herken him. And understonde that this condition muste have foure thinges. First that the shrift be purveyed afore, and advised, for wicked hast doth not profite; and that a man con shrive him of his sinnes, be it of pride, or envie, and so forth, with the spices and circumstances; and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the gretnesse of his sinnes, and how longe he hath lien in sinne; and eke that he be contrite for his sinnes, and be in stedfast purpose (by the grace of God) never ofte to fall into sinne; and also that he drede and countrewaite himself, that he see the occasions of sinne, to whiche he is inclined. Also thou shalt shrive thee of all thy sinnes to a man, and not parcelmele to a man, and parcelmele to another; that is to understonde, in entent to depart thy confession for shame or drede, for it is but strangling of thy soule. For certes, Jezu Crist is entierly all good, in him is not imperfection, and therefore either he foryeveth all partly, or elles never a dele. I say not that if thou be assigned to thy penitencor for certain sinne, that thou art bounde to shewe him all the remenant of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast ben shriven of thy curat, but if it like thee of thyn humilitee; this is no departing of shrift. Ne I say not, ther as I speke of division of confession, that if thou have licence to shrive thee to a discrete and an honest preest, and wher thee liketh, and by the licence of thy curat, that thou ne mayest wel shrive thee to him of all thy sinnes but lete no blot be behind: lete no sinne be untolde as fer as thou hast remembrance. And when thou shalt be shriven of thy curat, tell him eke all the sinnes that thou hast don sith thou were last shriven. This is no wicked entente of division of shrift.

Also the veray shrift axeth certain conditions. First that thou shrive thee by thy free will, not constrained, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladic, or swiche other thinges: for it is reson, that he that trespasseth by his free will, that by his free will he confesse his trespass; and that non other man telle his sinne but himself: ne he shal not may, ne deuy his sinne, ne wrath him against the preest for admonestng him to lete his sinne. The second condition is, that thy shrift be lawful, that

is to say, that thou that shrivest thee, and eke the priest that heareth thy confession, be verally in the faith of holy chyrche, and that a man ne be not despised of the mercie of Jesu Crist, as Cain and Judas were. And eke a man muste accuse himself of his owen trespass and not another: but he shal blame and wite himselfe of his owen malice and of his sinne, and non other: but natheles, if that another man be encheasor or outicer of his sinne, or the estate of the person he swiche by which his sinne is aggregated, or elles that he may not plainly shrive him but he tell the person with which he hath sinned, then may he tell, so that his entent ne be not to backbite the person, but only to declare his confession.

Thou ne shalt not also make no leasings in thy confession for humilitie, peraventure, to say that thou hast committed and don swiche sinnes, of which that thou ne were never guilty. For Saint Augustine sayth: If that thou, because of thin humilitie, make a leising on thyself, though thou were not in sinne before, yet arte thou than in sinne thurgh thy leising. Thou must also shew thy sinne by thy propre mouth, but thou be done, and not by no letter: for thou that hast don the sinne, thou shalt have the shame of the confession. Thou shalt not eke peint thy confession, with faire and subtil wordes, to cover the more thy sinne: for than begileth thou thyself, and not the priest; thou must tell it plainly, be it never so foule ne so horrible. Thou shalt eke shrive thee to a priest that is discrete to counseile thee: and eke thou shalt not shrive thee for vaine glorie, ne for ypocritie, ne for no cause, but only for the douthe of Jesu Crist, and the hale of thy soule. Thou shalt not eke reene to the priest al soedenly, to tell him lightly thy sinne, as who telleth a jape or a tale, but avisedly and with good devocion; and generally shrive thee ofte: if thou ofte fall, ofte arise by confession. And though thou shrive thee often than ones of sinne which thou hast be shriven of, it is more merite: and, as sayth Saint Augustine, thou shalt have the more lightly releas and grace of God, both of sinne and of peine. And certes ones a yere at the lest way it is lawfull to be houseled, for sothely ones a yere all thinges in the erthe renewen.

Explicit secunda pars penitentia: et sequitur tertia pars.

Now have I told you of veray confession, that is the seconde part of penitence: the thridde part is satisfaction, and that stont most generally in almesse dede and in bodily peine. Now ben ther three manner of almesse: contricion of herte, wher a man offeth himself to God: another is, to have place of the defaults of his neighbour: and the thridde is, in yeving of good conseil, gostly and bodily, wher as men have nede, and namely in sustenance of mannes food. And take kepe that a man hath nede of these thinges generally, he hath nede of food, of clothing, and of herberow, he hath nede of charitable counselling and visiting in prison and in maladie, and sepulture of his ded body. And if thou maigest not visite the nedeful in prison in thy person, visite hem with thy message and thy yelles. This ben generally the almeses and werkes of charitee, of hem that have temporel richesses, or discretion in counselling. Of these yertes shalt thou heren at the day of dome.

This almesse shuldest thou do of thy propre thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou mayest: but natheles, if thou mayest not do it prively, thou shalt not forbere to do almesse, though men see it, so that it be not don for thanke of the world, but only to have thanke of Jesu Crist. For, as witnesseth Saint Mathewe, cap. v. a citee may not be hid that is sette on a mountaine, ne men light not a lantern, to put it under a bushell, but sette it upon a candlestick, to lighten the men in the hous: right so shal your light lighten before men, that they mowe see your good werkes, and glorifie your Feder that is in Heven.

Now as for to speke of bodily peine, it stont in praier, in waking, in fasting, and in vertuous teching. Of orisons ye shal understand, that orisons or praier, is to say, a pitous will of herte, that setteth it in God, and expremeth it by word outward, to remove harmes, and to have thinges spiritual and perdurable, and somtime temporal thinges. Of which orisons, certes in the orison of the *Pateroster* hath Jesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certes it is privileged of three thinges in his dignitee, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer: for that Jesu Crist himself made it: and it is short, for it shal be coude the more lightly, and to hold it the more easie in herte, and helpe himself the offer with this orison, and for a man shal be the lesse verry to say it, and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it, it is so shorte and so easie: and for it comprehendeth in himself all good praier. The exposition of this holy prayer, that is so excellent and so digne, I betake to the maisters of theologie, save thus moche wol I say, that whan thou prayest, that God shuld foryere thee thy gyles as thou foryered ben that have agilted thee, be wel ware that thou be not out of charitee. This holy orison ammeseth eke venial sinne, and therefore it appertemeth specially to penitence.

This prayer must be trewely sayd, and in perfect feith, and that men prayen to God ordinately, discretly, and devoutly: and alway a man shal put his will to be subgette to the will of God. This orison must eke be sayd with gret humbleness and ful pure, and honestly, and not to the annoyance of any man or woman. It must eke be continued with werkes of charitee. It availleth eke ayenst the vices of the soule: for, as sayth Saint Jerome, by fasting ben saved the vices of the flesh, and by prayer the vices of the soule.

After this thou shalt understand, that bodily peine stont in waking. For Jesu Crist sayth: Wake ye and pray ye, that ye ne enter into wicked temptation. Ye shal understand also, that fasting stont in three thinges: in forbering of bodily mete and drinke, in forbering of worldly jolitee, and in forbering of dedly sinne: this is to say, that a man shal kepe him fro dedly sinne with all his might.

And thou shal understande also, that God ordeined fasting, and to fasting appertemeth foure thinges. Largeness to poure folk: gladness of herte spiritual: not to be angry ne annoyed, ne grutch for be fasteth: and also reasonable hoore for to ete by mesure, that is to say, a man shal not ete in untyme, ne sit the longer at the table, for he fasteth.

Than shalt thou understande, that bodily peine stont in discipline, or teching, by word, or by writing, or by example. Also in wering of here or of

stamin, or of habergeons on hir naked flesh for Cristes sake; but ware thee wel that swiche maner penances ne make not thin herte bitter or angry, ne annoied of thyself; for better is it to cast away thin here than to cast away the sweetness of our Lord Jesu Crist. And therefore sayth Seint Poule: clothe you, as they that ben chosen of God in herte, of misericorde, debonairete, suffraunce, and swiche maner of clothing, of whiche Jesu Crist is more pleased than with the heres or habergeons.

Than is discipline eke, in knocking of thy brest, in scourging with yerdes, in kneeling, in tribulation, in suffering patiently wronges that ben don to thee, and eke in patient suffering of maladies, or lesing of worldly catel, or wif, or child, or other frendes.

Than shalt thou understand, which thinges disturben penance, and this is in foure maners; that is drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperation. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penance, ther ayenst is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penance is but short and litel at regard of the peine of Helle, that is so cruel and so longe, that it lasteth withouten ende.

Now ayenst the shame that a man hath to shrive him, and namely thise hypocrites, that wold be holden so parfit, that they have no neede to shrive hem, ayenst that shame shuld a man thinke, that by way of reson, he that hath not ben ashamed to do foule thinges, certes him ought not to be ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessions. A man shuld also thinke, that God seeth and knoweth al his thoughtes, and al his werkes, and to him may nothing be hid ne covered. Men shuld eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome, to hem that ben not penitent in this present lif: for all the creatures in Heven, and in Erthe, and in Helle, shuld see apertly all that they hidden in this world.

Now for to speke of the hope of hem, that ben so negligent and slowe to shrive hem: that stondeth in two maners. That on is, that he hopeth for to live long, and for to purchase moche richesse for his delit, and than he wol shrive him: and, as he seyth, he may, as him semeth, than timely ynough come to shrif: another is, the surquedris that he hath in Cristes mercie. Ayenst the first vice, he shal thinke that our lif is in no sikernesse, and eke that all the richesse in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadowe on a wall; and, as sayth Seint Gregorie, that it appertelneith to the gret rightwisnesse of God, that never shul the peine stinte of hem, that never wold withdrawe hem from sinne, hir thankes, but ever continue in sinne: for thilke perpetual will to don sinne shall they have perpetual peine.

Wanhope is in two maners. The first wanhope is, in the mercie of God: that other is, that they think that they ne might not long persever in goodnesse. The first wanhope cometh of that, he demeth that he hath sinned so gretly and so oft, and so long lven in sinne, that he shal not be saved. Certes ayenst that cursed wanhope shulde he thinke, that the passion of Jesu Crist is more stronge for to unbinde, than sinne is strong for to binde. Ayenst the second wanhope he shal thinke, that as often as he falleth, he may arisen again by penitence: and though he never so longe hath lven

in sinne, the mercie of Crist is alway redy to receive him to mercie. Ayenst that wanhope that he demeth he shuld not long persever in goodnesse, he shal thinke, that the febleness of the Devil may nothing do, but if men wol suffre him: and eke he shal have strength of the helpe of Jesu Crist, and of all his chirche, and of the protection of angels, if him list.

Than shul men understonde, what is the fruit of penance; and after the wordes of Jesu Crist, it is an endles blisse of Heven. ther joye hath no contrariositee of wo ne grevance; ther all harmes ben passed of this present lif; ther as is sikernesse from the peines of Helle; ther as is the blisful compaignie, that rejoycen ham ever mo of others joye; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derke, is more clere than the Sonne; ther as the body that whilom was sike and frosle, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hole, that ther ne may nothing appeire it; ther as is neither hunger ne thirste, ne colde, but every soule replenished with the sight of the parfit knowing of God. This blisful regne mowe men purchase by povertie spiritual, and the glorie by lowliness, the plentes of joye by hunger and thirst, and the rest by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortification of sinne: to which life he us bring, that bought us with his precious blood. Amen.

Now preys I to hem alle that herken this ltel tretise or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken our Lord Jesu Crist, of whom procedeth all witte and all goodnesse; and if ther be any thing that displeaseth hem, I preye hem also that they arreste it to the defaulte of myn unknowing, and not to my wille, that wold fayne have seyde better if I hadde had konning; for oure boke seyth, all that is written is writen for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente. Wherefore I beseeke you mekely for the mercie of God that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercie of me and foryeve me my giltes, [and namely of myn translations and enditinges of worldly vanitees, the which I revoke in my Retractions, as the boke of Troilus, the boke also of Fame, the boke of the five and twenty Ladies, the boke of the Duchesse, the boke of Seint Valentines Day of the Parlement of Briddes, the Tales of Canterbury, thilke that sounen unto sinne, the boke of the Leon, and many an other boke, if they were in my remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, Crist of his grette mercie foryeve me the sinne. But of the translation of Boes of consolation, and other bokes of legendes of Seints, and of omelies, and moralite, and devotion, that thanke I oure Lord Jesu Crist, and his blisful mother, and alle the sentes in Heven, beseking hem that they fro henceforth unto my lyres ende sende me grace to bewaile my giltes, and to studien to the salvation of my soule,] and graunte me grace of verray penance, confession and satisfaction to don in this present lif, thorgh the benigne grace of him, that is king of kinges and preste of all prestes, that bought us with the precious blode of his herte, so that I mote ben on of hem atte the laste day of dome that shullen be saved; *qui cum Deo patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia secula.* Amen.

ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

This book was begun in French verse by William de Lorris, and finished forty years after by John Clopinell, alias John Moone, born at Mewen upon the river of Loyer, not far from Paris, as appeareth by Molinet, the French author, upon the morality of the Romaunt; and afterward translated for the most part into English metre by Geoffrey Chaucer, but not finished. It is entitled, The Romaunt of the Rose; or, The Art of Love: wherein is shewed the helpees and furtherances, as also the lets and impediments that lovers have in their suits. In this book the author hath many glaunces at the hypocrisy of the clergy: whereby he got himself such hatred amongst them, that Gerson, chancelour of Paris, writeth thus of him: saith he, "There was one called Johannes Mejdinensis, who wrote a book called, The Romaunt of the Rose; which book if I only had, and that there were no more in the world, if I might have five hundred pound for the same, I wold rather burne it than take the money." He sayth more, that if he thought the author thereof did not repent him for that book before he dyed, he would vouchsafe to pray for him no more than he wold for Judas that betrayed Christ.

MANY menne sain that in sweeninges,

Where nis but fables and lewinges:

But menne may some sweten scene,

Which hardely that false ne been,

But afterward ben apparant:

This may I drawe to warrant

An author that hight Macrobes,

That halke not dreames false ne lees,

But undoth us the anisious,

That whitom mette king Cipious.

And who so sayth, or weneth it be

A yape, or else nicete

To wece that dreames after fall,

Let who so liste a foole me call.

For this trow I, and say for me,

That dreames signifaunce be

Of good and harme to many wightes,

That dreamen in hir sleep a nightes

Full many thinges covertly,

That fallen after all openly.

Within my twentie yeere of age,

When that loue taketh his courage

Of younge folke, I wente soone

To bed, as I was wont to doone:

And fast I slept, and in sleeping,

Me mette such a sweening,

That liked me wondrous wel,

But in that sweten is neuer a dele

That it nis afterward befall,

Right as this dreame wold tell us all.

Now this dreame wold I rime a right,

To make your hartes gay and light:

For foue it prayeth, and also

Commsundeth me that it be so.

And if there any aske me,

Whether that it be he or she,

Now this booke which is here

Shall highte, that I rede you here:

It is the Romaunt of the Rose,

In which all the art of loue I close.

The matter faire is of to make,

God graunt me in gree that she it take

For whom that it begonnen is,

And that is she, that hath I wis

So mokel prise, and thereto she

So worthie is beloned to be,

That she well ought of prise and right,

Be cleped Rose of euerie wight.

That it was Mey me thoughte tho,

It is flue yere or more ago,

That it was Mey, thus dreamed me,

In tyme of lone and iolite,

That all thing ginneth waxen gay:

For there is neither huske nor hay

In Mey, that it nill shrouded be,

And it with newe leues wrene:

These wooder eke recouren grene,

That drie in winter ben to sene,

And the erth waxeth proud withall,

For swote dewes that on it fall,

And the poore estate forget,

In which that winter had it set:

And than become the ground so proude,

That it wol have a newe shroude,

And maketh so queint his robe and faire,

That it had bewes an hundred paire,

Of grasse and scoures, Inde and Pers,

And many bewes full diners:

That is the robe I mean iwis,

Through which the ground to praisen is.

The birdes, that han left hir song,

While they han suffred cold full strong,

In wethers grille, and derke to sight,

Ben in Mey for the Sunne bright,

So glad, that they shew in singing,

That in hir heart is such liking,

That they mote singen and ben light:
 Than doth the nightingale her might,
 To maken noyse, and singen blith:
 Than is blisfull many a sith,
 The chelaudre, and the popingaye,
 Than younge folke extender aye,
 For to ben gay and amorous,
 The time is then so sauorous.

Harde is his heart that loueth nought
 In Mey, when all this mirth is wrought,
 When he may on these braunches here
 The smalle birdes singen clere
 Her blisfull swete song pitous,
 And in this season delitous:
 When loue asfirmeth all thing,
 Me thought one night, in my sleeping,
 Right in my bed full readyly,
 That it was by the morrow early,
 And up I rose, and gan me clothe,
 Anore I wish mine bondes both,
 A siluer neede forth I drow,
 Out of an aguiker quaint inow,
 And gan this neede thread anone,
 For out of tounse me list to gose,
 The sound of birdes for to heare
 That on the buskes singen cleare,
 In the swete season that lefe is,
 With a thred basting my sleuis,
 Alone I went in my playing,
 The smale foules song hearkenig,
 That payned hem full many a paire,
 To sing on bowes blossomed faire:
 Iolife and gay, full of gladnesse,
 Toward a riuer gan I me dresse,
 That I heard ronne faste by,
 For fairer playen none saw I
 Than playen me by that riuer:
 For from an hill that stood there nere,
 Come doune the stream full stiffe and bold,
 Clere was the water, and as cold
 As any well is, sooth to saine,
 And somedele lasse it was than Seine,
 But it was straiter, welaway,
 And neuer saw I er that day,
 The water that so wele liked me,
 And wonder glad was I to se
 That lusty place, and that riuer:
 And with that water that ran so clere,
 My face I wish, tho saw I wele,
 The bottome ypaused eueridele
 With gravel, full of stones shene,
 The meadows softe, sote, and grene,
 Beet right upon the water side,
 Full clere was than the morowe tide,
 And full attrepe out of drede,
 Tho gan I walken thorow the mede,
 Downward aye in my playing,
 The riters side coasting.

And when I had a while igone,
 I saw a garden right anone,
 Full long and broad, and eueridele
 Enclosed was, and walked wele,
 With his walles embatailed,
 Portrayed without, and well entayled
 With many riche portraiturez,
 And both yet images and peintures,
 Can I beholde besely,
 And I woll tell you rearily,
 Of thiike images the semblance,
 As farre as I haue remembraunce.

Amidde saw I Hate stonde,
 That for her-wrath and yre and onie,
 Seemed to be a mynoremee,
 An agry wight, a chideresse,
 And ful of gile, and fell courage,
 By semblaunt was that ilke image,
 And she was nothing wele araide,
 But like a wode woman afraide,
 Ifronced foule was her visage,
 And grinning for dispitous rage,
 Her nose snorted up for tens,
 Full hidous was she for to seee,
 Full foule and rustie was she this,
 Her head iwriten was iwis
 Full grimly with a great towail.

An image of another estaile,
 A lifts halfe was her fast by,
 Her name abone her head saw I,
 And she was called Felouy.

Another image, that Uillany
 Icleped was, saw I and fonde
 Upon the wall on her right honde.
 Uillany was like somedele
 That other image, and crumeth wele
 She seemed a wicked creature,
 By countenance in portreiture,
 She seemed be full despitous,
 And eke full proude and outrageous.

Well coude he paint I undertake,
 That such an image coude make:
 Full foule and churlish seemed she,
 And eke villainous for to be,
 And litte coulde of nurture,
 To worship any creature.

And next was painted Couetise,
 That eggeth folke in many a gise,
 To take and yere right wrought againe,
 And great treasures up to haue.

And that is she, that for usore
 Leneth to many a creature
 The lasse for the more winning,
 So couetous is her brenning,
 And that is she for pennies fele,
 That teacheth for to robbe and stele
 These theenes, and these smale harlots,
 And that is routha, for by hir throtzen,
 Full many one longeth at the last:
 She maketh folke compass and east
 To taken other folkes thing,
 Through roberie, or misconeting.
 And that is she that maketh treachourz,
 And she maketh false pleadourz,
 That with hir termes and hir domes,
 Done maidens, children, and eke gramoz,
 Her heritage to forgo:
 Full crooked were her hondes two,
 For couetise is euer wood,
 To gripen other folkes good.

Couetise, for her winning,
 Full lefe bath other menes thing.

Another image set saw I,
 Nexte Couetise fast by,
 And she was cleped Auarice,
 Full foule in painting was that vice,
 Full sad and caitife was she eke,
 And also grene as any leke,
 So euil hewed was her colour,
 Her seemed to haue fited in langour,
 She was like thing for hunger dead,
 That lad her life onely by bread

Knoeden with eisell strong and egre,
 And thereto she was leue and megre,
 And she was clad full poorly,
 All in an olde torne courtpy,
 As she were all with dogges torne,
 And both behind and eke before
 Clouted was she beggerly.

A mantle bouge her faste by,
 Upon a benche weake and small,
 A burnette cote boug there withall,
 Furred with no mizeuere,
 But with a furre rough of beere,
 Of lambe skynes heauy and blake,
 It was so old I undertake.

For Auarice to cloath her wela,
 Ne hasteth her neuer a dele,
 For certainly it were her loth
 To wearen of that ilke cloth,
 And if it were forweard, she
 Woulde haue full great nicete
 Of clothing, er she bought her newe,
 all were it bad of wof and bewe.

This Auarice hold in her hand,
 A purse that bouge by a band,
 And that she hid and bond so strong,
 Men must abide wonder long,
 Out of the purse er ther come ought,
 For that ne commeth in her thought,
 It was not certaine her entent,
 That fro that purse a peny went.

And by that image nigh ough,
 Was painted Enue, that neuer lough,
 Nor neuer well in her heart ferde
 But if she either saw or herde
 Some great mischaunce, or great discause,
 Nothing ne may so much her please
 As mischeife and misauenture,
 Or when she seeth discomfiture
 Upon any worthy man fall,
 Than liketh her right well withall.
 She is full glad in hir courage,
 If she see any great linage
 Be brought to naught in shamefull wise:
 And if a man in honour rise,
 Or by his wit, or by his prowesse,
 Of that bath she great beuinesse,
 For trusteth well she goeth nie wood,
 When any chaunce happeth good.

Eny is of such cruelte,
 That fayth ne trowth holdeth she,
 To friend ne fellow, bad or good.
 Ne she hath kinne none of her blood
 That she nis full hir enemie,
 She nolde, I dare seime hardely
 Her owne father fared wele,
 And sore abieth she euerie dele
 Her malice, and her male talent:
 For she is in so great turment
 And hate such, when folke doth good,
 That nye she melteth for pure wood,
 Her hert kerueth and so breaketh
 That God the people well awaketh,

Eny iwis shall neuer let,
 Some blame upon the folke to set.
 I trowe that if Enue iwis,
 Knew the beste man that is,
 On this side or beyond the see,
 Yet somewhat lacken him would she:
 And if he were so hende and wise,
 That she ne might all abate his prise,

Yet would she blame his worthinesse,
 Or by her wordes make it lesse.
 I sawe Envy in that painting,
 Had a wonderfull looking,
 For she ne looked but awrie,
 Or overwhart, all baggingly.
 And she had a foule usage,
 She might looke in no visage
 Of man ne woman, forth right plaine,
 But shette her one eye for disdain,
 So for curie breaned shee
 When she might any man see
 That faire, or worthy were, or wise,
 Or else stood in folkes prise.

Sorow was painted next Enue
 Upon that wall of masonrie:
 But well was seene in her colour
 That she had lived in langour:
 Her seemed to have the jaundice,
 Not halfe so pale was Auarice,
 Ne nothing like of leannesse,
 For sorowe, thought, and great distresse,
 That she had suffred daie and night,
 Made her yellow, and nothing bright:
 Full sad, pale, and megre also,
 Was never wight yet half so wo
 As that her seemed for to be,
 Nor so fulfilled with yre as she,
 I trow that no wight might her please
 Nor doe that thing that might her ease,
 Nor she ne would her sorow slake,
 Nor comfort come unto her take,
 So depe was her wo begonne,
 And eke her heart in anger ronne,
 A sorowfull thing wel seemed she:
 Nor she had nothing slowe be
 For to scratchen all her face
 And for to rent in many place
 Her clothes, and for to teare her swike,
 As she that was fulfilled of yre,
 And all to torne lay eke her beere
 About her shoulders, here and there,
 As she that had it all to rent
 For anger and for male talent.

And eke I tell you certainly
 How that she wept full tenderly:
 In worlde nis wight so hard of heart
 That had seene her sorowes smart
 That nolde have had of her pite,
 So wo begon a thing was she.
 She all to dasht her selfe for wo
 And smote togider her hands two,
 To sorow was she full ententife,
 That wofull retchelouse caitife
 Her wroughte little of playing,
 Or of clipping or kissing;
 For who so sorrowfull is in heart
 Him iuste not to play ne start,
 Nor for to daunces, ne to king,
 Ne may his heart in temper bring
 To make joy on even or morrow,
 For joy is contrarie unto sorrow.

Ekide was painted after this,
 That shorter was a foot iwis
 Than she was wout in her yong hede,
 Unmeth her selfe she might fede,
 So feeble and eke so old was she
 That faded was all her beaute.
 Full slowe was waxen her colour,
 Her head for hore was white as flour,

Iwis great qualme ne were it none,
 Ne sinne, although her life were gone.
 All woxen was her body unwelede
 And drie and dwinded all for elde,
 A foule forwelked thing was she
 That whilom round and soft had be,
 Her heeres shoken fast withall
 As from her hedde they would fall:
 Her face frounced and forpined,
 And both her bondes torne fordwinded:
 So old she was that she ne went
 A foot, but it were by potent.
 The time that passeth night and days,
 And restless traunyleth aye,
 And stealeth from vs so priuily,
 That to vs seemeth sikerly
 That it in one point dwelleth euer,
 And certes it ne resteth neuer,
 But gooth so fast, and passeth aye
 That there nis man that thinke maye
 What time that now present is
 Asketh at these clerkes this,
 For meene thinke it readily
 Three times been passed by
 The time that may not soourne
 But goth, and may neuer retourne,
 As water that down runneth aye
 But neuer droppes retourne may:
 There may nothing as time endure,
 Metall, nor yearthly creature,
 For all thing is frette and shall,
 The time eke that chaangeth all,
 And all doth waxe, and fostred be,
 And all thing destroyeth he.
 The time that eldeth our amercourours
 And eldeth kinges and emperours,
 And that vs all shall ourcommen
 Er that death vs shall haue nommen,
 The time that hath all in welde
 To eiden folke, had made her elde
 So iuly, that to my weting
 She might helpe her selfe nothing,
 But tourned ayen vnto childhede;
 She had nothing her selfe to lede
 Ne wit ne pithe in her hold
 More than a childe of two yere old.

But nathelesse I trow that she
 Was faire sometime, and fresh to see,
 When she was in her rightfull age:
 But she was past all that passage
 And was a doted thing becommen:
 A furred cappe on had she nommen;
 Well had she clad her selfe and warme,
 For cold might els doen her harme,
 These olde folke haue alway cold,
 Hir kind is such, when they been old.

Another thing was doen there write,
 That seemed like an ipocrite,
 And it was cleped Pope holy,
 That ilke is she, that priuily
 Ne spared never a wicked deed,
 When men of her taken none heed,
 And maketh ber outward precious,
 With pale visage and piteous,
 And seemeth a simple creature,
 But ther nis no misadventure,
 That she ne thinketh in courage:
 Full like to her was thilke image,
 That maketh was like her semblaunce,
 She was ful simple of countenaunce.

And she was clothed and eke shod,
 As she were for the loue of God
 Yolden to religion,
 Soch seemed her deuotion.

A pealier held she fast in hond,
 And busily she gan to foud
 To make many a faint prayere,
 To God, and to his saintes dere:
 Ne she was gey, fresh, ne iolife,
 But seemed to be full entente
 To goode workes, and to faire,
 And thereto she had on an haire.

Ne certes she was fatte nothing
 But seemed weric for fasting,
 Of colour pale and dead was she,
 From her the gates aie warned be
 Of Paradise, that blisful place,
 For such folke maken leane hir graco:
 As Christ sayth in his Euangile,
 To get hem prise in tounse a while,
 And for a little glorie vaine,
 They leuen God and eke his raigne.

And alderlast of euerichone,
 Was painted Pouert all alone,
 That not a peny had in hold,
 Although she her clothes sold,
 And though she shuld an honged be,
 For naked as a worme was she,
 And if the weather storme were,
 For cold she shuld haue died there.

She ne had on but a strait old smocke,
 And many a cloute on it there stocke,
 This was her cote, and her mantele,
 No more was there neuer a delo
 To clomb her with; I vndertake,
 Great lesse hadde she to quake:
 And she was put, that I of talke,
 Ferre fro these other, vp in an halke,
 There lurked and there coured she,
 For poore thing, where so it be,
 In shamefast, and despised aie:
 Accused may well be that daie,
 That poore man conceiued is,
 For God wote all to sold iwis
 Is any poore man well ifed,
 Or well arrayed or icled,
 Or well beloued, in such wise,
 In honour that he may arise.

All these thinges well advised,
 As I haue you er this deuised,
 With gold and azure ouer all,
 Depainted were vpon the wall.
 Square was the wall, and high somele.
 Enclosed, and ibarred wele.
 In stead of hedge, was that gardin,
 Come neuer shepherde therein:
 Into that gardin, well iwrought,
 Who so that me coud haue brought,
 By ladders or else by degree,
 It would well haue liked mee,
 For such solace, such joy, and pleie,
 I trow that neuer man ne seie,
 As was in that place delicious:
 The gardin was not daungerous,
 To herborow birdes many one,
 So rich a yere was never none
 Of birdes song, and braunches grene,
 Therein were birdes mo I weene,
 Than been in all the realme of France:
 Full blisfull was the accordaunce,

Of swete pitous song they made,
 For all this worlde it ought glade.
 And I my selfe no merry ferde,
 When I her blisfull songes herde,
 That for an hundred pound would I,
 If that the passage openly
 Had be unto me free
 That I nolde entren for to see
 Thasseemble (God keepe it for care)
 Of birdes, whiche therein ware,
 That songen through hir merry throtes,
 Daunces of loue, and merry notes.

When I thus heard the foules sing,
 I fell fast in a waymenting,
 By which art, or by what engin,
 I might come into that gardin,
 But way I couthe finde none,
 Into that gardin for to gone,
 Ne ought wist I if that there were
 Either hole or place where,
 By which I might have entree,
 Ne there was none to teache me,
 For I was all alone iwis,
 For woe and anguise of this,
 Till at last bethought I me,
 That by no way no might it be,
 That there nas ladder ne way to pace,
 Or hole, into so faire a place.
 The gan I go a full great pass,
 Basiron, euen in compas,
 The closing of the square wall,
 Till that I found a wicket small
 So shette, that I no might in gone,
 And other entree was there none.

Upon this doore I gan to amite
 That was so fetis, and so fite,
 For other waye good I not seke,
 Full longe I shote, and knocked eke,
 And stode full long all herkening
 If that I heard any wight conning:
 Till that the doore of thilke entree
 A maiden carteis opened me:
 Her haire was as yellowe of bewe
 As any bason scoured newe,
 Her seshe tender as is a chicke
 With benke browes, smooth and alicke,
 And by measure large we re
 The opening of her eyen clere:
 Her nose of good proportion,
 Her eyen graie, as is a fanoon,
 With swete breath and well favoured,
 Her face white and well coloured,
 With little mouth, and round to see;
 A close chinne eke had she;
 Her necke was of good fashion
 In length and greatnesse by reason,
 Without bleme, scabbe, or roune;
 Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoins
 Ther nas a fairer necke iwis
 To fele how smooth and soft it is.
 Her throte also white of bewe,
 As snowe on brance snowed newe.
 Of bodie full well wrought was she,
 Men noden not in no countre
 A fairer bodie for to seke:
 And of fine orfrais had she eke
 A chapelet, so semely on,
 Ne neuer wered maide upon
 And faire above that chapelet
 A rose garland had she set;

She had a gale mirrour
 And with a riche gold tresour,
 Her head was tressed quaintly
 Her sleeces sewed fetously.
 And for to keepe her bondes faire
 Of gloues white she had a paire:
 And she had on a coate of grene
 Of cloth of gaunt, withouten weene:
 Well seemed by her appaile
 She was not wont to great traaille.
 For whan stee kempt was fetecously
 And well araied and richly,
 Than had she doen all her iournee,
 For merrye and well begon was she.
 She led a lustie life in May,
 She had no thought, by night ne day
 Of nothing, but if it were oonly
 To grayeth her well and vncoubly.

Whan that this doer had opened me
 This maiden, seemely for to see,
 I thonked her as I best might,
 And asked her how that she hight:
 And what she was, I asked eke,
 And she to me was nought vmeke
 Ne of her answeare daungerous,
 But faire answerde, and sayed thus:

"Lo sir, my name is Idleness
 So clepe men me, more and lesse:
 Full mightie and full rich am I,
 And that of one thinge namely,
 For I entende to nothing
 But to my joye, and my pleying,
 And for to kembe and tresse me:
 Acquainted am I and pruce
 With Mirthe, lord of this gardin,
 That fro the loude of Alexandrin
 Made the trees hitber be fet,
 That in this gardin been iset:
 And when the trees woxen an hight,
 This wall that stant here in thy sight,
 Did Mirthe encloosn all about,
 And these images all without
 He did hem both entaile and paint,
 That neither been jolife ne quaint,
 But they been full of sorowe and wo,
 As thou hast seene a while ago.

And oft times him to solace
 Sir Mirthe commeth into this place,
 And eke with him commeth his meine,
 That liuen in lust and iolite:
 And now is Mirthe therein, to here
 The birdes how they singen clere,
 The maus and the nightingale,
 And other jolly birdes smale:
 And thus he walketh to solace
 Him and his folke, for sweeter place
 To playen in, he may not finde,
 Although he sought one in till inde.
 The aither fairest folke to see
 That in this worlde may found bee
 Hath Mirthe with him in his rout,
 That followen him alwaies about."

When Idleness had told all this,
 And I had herkened well ywis,
 Then said I to dame Idleness,
 "Now also wisely God me blesse,
 Sith Mirthe, that is no faire and fre,
 Is in this yerd with his meine,

Fro thilke assemble, if I may,
 Shall no man werne me to day,
 That I this night ne mote it see,
 For well wene I there with him bee
 A faire and jolie companie -
 Fulfilled of all courtesie :²⁹
 And forth with out wordes mo
 In at the wicked went I tho,
 That Idleness had opened mee,
 Into that garden faire to see.

And whan I was in ywis,
 Mine herte was full glad of this.
 For well wend I full sikerly
 Have been in Paradise earthly,
 So faire it was, that trusteth well,
 It seemed a place espirituell.
 For certes at my devise,
 There is no place in Paradise,
 So good in for to dwell or be,
 As in that garden thoughte me.
 For there was many a bird singing,
 Throughout the yerde all thringing,
 In many places were nightingales,
 Alpes, fitches, and wodwales,
 That in hir swete song delighten
 In thilke places as they habiten.

There mighte men see many flockes
 Of turtoles and lauerockets,
 Chalaundres fole saw I there,
 That very nigh forsongen were.
 And thurttles, teries, and mauise,
 That songen for to win hem prise,
 And eke to sermount in hir song
 That other birdes hem emong
 By note made faire seruisse :
 These birdes, that I you devise,
 They song her song as faire and well,
 As angels doue espirituell,
 And trusteth me, when I hem herde,
 Full lustie and well I ferde :
 For never yet such melodie
 Was heard of man that mighte die.
 Such swete song was hem emong,
 That me thought it no birdes song,
 But it was wonder like to bee
 Song of mermaidens of the see,
 That for hir singen is so clere :
 Though we mermaidens clepe hem here
 In English, as is our vnaunce,
 Men clepe hem seriens in France.

Evermore weren for to sing
 These birdes, that not vnkoning
 Were of hir craft, and a prentise,
 But of song subtil and eke wise :
 And certes, whan I heard hir song,
 And saw the grene place emong,
 In heart I went so wonder gay,
 That I was neuer, ere that day,
 So iolife, nor so well bigo,
 Ne merry in heart, as I was tho :
 And than wist I, and saw full well,
 That Idleness me served well,
 That me put in such iolite,
 Her frend well ought I for to be,
 Sith she the dore of that gardin
 Had opened, and me let in.
 From hencoforth, how that I wrought
 I shall you tell, as me thought :

First whereof Mirthe served there,
 And eke what folke there with him were,
 Without fable I woll discrive,
 And that garden eke as blise ;
 I woll you tellen after this
 The faire fashion all ywis,
 That well wrought was for the noose ;
 I may not tell you all stoces,
 But as I may and can, I shall
 By order tellen you it all.

Full faire seruisse, and eke full swete
 These birdes madeen as they sete :
 Laies of lone, ful well souning
 They songen in hir jargooning,
 Some high, and some eke lowe song
 Upon the braunches greene isproong :
 The sweetnesse of hir melodie
 Made all mine heart in reuelrie.
 And whan that I heard I trowe
 These birdes singing on a rowe,
 Then might I not withholde mee
 That I ne went in for to see
 Sir Mirthe, for my desiring
 Was him to seeue ouer all thing,
 His countenance and his manere :
 That sighte was to me full dere.

Two went I forth on my right hond
 Downe by a litel path I fond
 Of mintes full, and fennel greene,
 As faste by withouten weene
 Sir Mirthe I found, and right anon
 Unto sir Mirthe gan I gone,
 There as he was him to solace,
 And with him in that lustie place,
 So faire folke and so fresh had he,
 That when I saw, I wondred me
 Fro whenes suche folke might come,
 So faire they weren all and some :
 For they weren like, as to my sight,
 To angels, that ben feathered bright.

These folke, of which I tell you so,
 Upon a karole wenten tho :
 A ladie karoled hem, that hight
 Gladnesse, blisfull, and light,
 Well could she sing and lustely
 None halfe so well and seemely :
 And cothe make in song such refraining,
 It sate her wonder well to sing.
 Her voice full clere was and full swete.
 She was not rude ne unmete,
 But couthe ynough for such doing
 As longeth unto karolling :
 For she was wont in every place
 To singen first, folke to solace,
 For singing most she gave her to,
 No craft had she so lese to do.

Two mightest thou karoles seeue,
 And folke daunce and merry beue,
 And made many a faire tourning
 Upon the greene grasse springing.

There mightest thou see these floutours,
 Minstrales, and eke jogelours,
 That well to singe did hir paine :
 Some song songes of Lorraine,

For in Lorraine hir notes be
 Full sweeter than in this countrie.
 There was many a timbrestere,
 And salours, that I dare well swere
 Outbe hir craft full perfetly:
 The timbres up full subtelly
 They cast, and hent full oft
 Upon a finger faire and soft,
 That they failed never mo.
 Full fetis damocles two,
 Right yong, and full of semelyhede
 In kirtles, and none other wede,
 And faire tressed every tresse
 Had Mirthe doen for his noblesse
 Amid the carole for to daunce,
 But hereof lieth no remembrance,
 Now that they daunced quently:
 That one would come all prively
 Ayn that other, and when they were
 Togither almost, they threwe ifere
 Hir mouthes so, that through hir play
 It seemed as they kist alway:
 To daunceen well outh they the guise.
 What should I more to you devise?
 He hode I never thanes go,
 While that I saw hem daunce so,
 Upon the caroll wonder fast,
 I gan beholde, till at last
 A lady gan me for to espie,
 And she was cleped Courtesie,
 The worshipfull, the debonaire,
 I pray to God ever full hir faire:
 Full courtesly she called me,
 "What doe ye there, beau sire?" (quod she)
 "Come, and if it like you
 To daunce, daunce with us now:"
 And I without tarrying
 Went into the carolling,
 I was abashed never a dele,
 But it to me liked right wele,
 That Courtesie me cleped so,
 And hode me on the daunce go:
 As if I had dort, certayne
 I would have carolled right faire
 A man that was to daunce right blithe:
 I gan I looked oft sithe
 He stape, the bodies, and the cheres,
 He countenance and the maneres
 Of alle folke that daunced there,
 And I shall telle what they were.
 Full faire was Mirthe, full long and high,
 Thirer man I never sigh:
 Round as apple was his face,
 All roddie and white in every place:
 His be was and well besey,
 His sweetly mouth and eyen gray,
 His nose by measure wrought full right,
 His nose was his haire, and eke full bright:
 His shouleres of large brede,
 His scallin in the gridlestede:
 He seemed like a purtreiture,
 Noble he was of his stature,
 His haire, so jolly, and so fetise,
 His hounes wrought at point devise
 Ever, smart, and of great might:
 But thou never man so light.
 His hard vaneth had be nothing,
 As it was in the firste spring,
 His yong he was, and merry of thought
 His haire, with birdes wrought,
 POL. I.

And with gold beaten full fetously,
 His bodie was clad full richely:
 Wrought was his robe in straunge gise,
 And all to slittered for quentise
 In many a place, low and his,
 And shode he was with great maistris,
 With shoones decoped, and with lace,
 By drurie, and by solace,
 His leefe a rosen chapelet
 Had made, and on his head it set.
 And wete ye who was his lefe,
 Dame Gladnesse there was him so lefe,
 That sigeth so well with glad courage,
 That from she was twelve year of age,
 She of her love graunt him made:
 Sir Mirthe her by the finger hode
 Dauncing, and she him also,
 Great love was atwixt hem two:
 Both were they faire and bright of hew,
 She seemed like a rose new
 Of colour, and her flesh so tender,
 That with a brere small and tender,
 Men might it cleve, I dare well say:
 Her forehead frounceles all play,
 Bent were her browes two,
 Her eyen gray, and glad also,
 That laughden aye in her semblant,
 First of the mouth by covenant.
 I wot not what of her nose I shall discrive,
 So faire hath no woman alive:
 Her haire was yellow, and clere shining,
 I wote no lady so liking.
 Of offraies fresh was her garland,
 I whiche seeme have a thousand
 Saw never ywis no garland yet,
 So well wrought of silke as it
 And in an over gilt samite
 Clad she was, by great delite,
 Of whiche her leefe a robe werde,
 The merrier she in her heart ferde.
 And next her went, on her other side,
 The god of love, that can divide
 Love, and as him liketh it be,
 But he can cherles daunte, he,
 And many folkes pride fallen,
 And he can well these lordes thralen,
 And ladies put at low degre
 When he way hem too proude see.
 This god of love of his fashion
 Was like no knave, no quistrou:
 His beantie greatly was to prise,
 But of his robe to devise
 I drede encumbered for to be,
 For not yclad in silke was he,
 But all in floures and flourettes,
 I painted all with amorettes,
 And with losenges and scochons,
 With birdes, lirdes, and lions,
 And other beastes wrought full wele;
 His garment was every dele
 Ipurtraied and ywrought with floures,
 By divers medding of colours:
 Floures ther were of many gise
 Iset by compasse in a sise,
 There lacked no floure to my dome,
 Ne not so much as floure of bronze,
 Ne violet, ne eke peruinke,
 Ne floure none, that men can on thinke:
 And many a rose lefe full long
 Was entermeiled there among:
 N

And also on his heed was set
Of roses redde a chapelet.

But nightingales a full great rout
That fien over his heed about,
The leaves felden as they fien,
And he was all with birdes wrien,
With popinjay, with nightingale,
With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with lark, and with archgewell,
He seemed as he were an angell.
That down were comen fro Heaven cleere.

Love had with him a bachelere,
That he made always with him be,
Swete Looking cleped was he:
This batcheler stode beholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes two, full well devised had hee,
That one of hem was of a tree
That beareth a fruit of savour wicke,
Full crooked was that foule stick, e,
And knottie here and there also,
And blacke as berrie, or any slo.

That other bow was of a plant
Without wezme, I dare warrant,
Full even and by proportion,
Trectes and long, of full good fashion,
And it was painted well and thwitten,
And over all diapred and witten
With ladies and with bacheleres,
Full lightsome and glad of cheres:
These bowes two heid Sweet Looking,
That seemed like no gadding:
And ten brode arrowes held he there,
Of which five in his honde were,
But they were shaven well and dight,
Nocked and feathered aight:
And all they were with golde begon,
And stronge pointed everiche,
And sharpe for to kerwen wele,
But yron was there none ne stak:
For all was golde, men might see,
Out take the feathers and the tree.

The swiftest of these arrowes five
Out of a bowe for to drive,
And beste feathered for to fle,
And fairest eke, was cleped Beautie:

That other arrow that hurteth lesse,
Was cleped (as I trow) Simplese:

The thirde cleped was Fraunchise,
That feathered was in noble wise
With valour and with courtesie?

The fourth was clepen Companie,
That heavis for to shooten is,
But who so shooteth right wyis,
May therewith doen great harme and wo:

The fift of these, and last also,
Faire Semblant men that arrow call,
The leste groovous of hem all,
Yet can it make a full great wound,
But he may hope his sores sound
That hurt is with that arrowe wyis,
His wo the bette bestowed is:
For he may sooner have gladnesse,
His langour ought to be the lesse.

Fve arrowes were of other gise,
That been full foule to derise:

For shaft and end, sooth for to tell,
Were al so blacke as fiend in Hell.

The first of hem is called Pri'e,
That other arrow next him beside,
It was cleped Villanie,
That arrow was with fallonie
Envenimed, and with spitous blame:
The third of hem was cleped Shame.
The fourth, Wanhope cleped is,
The fift, the Newe Thought wyis.

These arrowes that I speake of here,
Were all five on one manere,
And all were they resemblable;
To hem was well fitting and able,
The foule crooked bowe bidow,
That knottie was, and all roinous;
That bowe seemed well to shete
The arrowes five, that been unmete
And contrary to that other five:
But though I tell not as blive
Of hir power, ne of hir might,
Hereafter shall I tellen right
The sooth, and eke signifaunce,
As ferre as I have remembrance:
All shall be saied I undertake,
Ere of this booke an end I make.

Now come I to my tale againe:
But alderfirst, I woll you mine
The fashion and the countenaunce
Of all the folke that on the daunce is.
The god of love jollife and light,
Led on his honde a ladie bright,
Of high prisa, and of great degre,
This ladie called was Beaute,
And an arrow, of which I told,
Full well thewed was she hold:
Ne she was derke ne browne, but bright,
And cleare as the moone light:
Againe whom all the starres semen
But small candles, as we demen:
Her flesh was tender as dewe of floure,
Her cheare was simple as bird in boure,
As white as lilly or rose in rise:
Her face gentil and treatise:
Fetis she was, and small to see,
No wintred browes had shee,
Ne popped here, for it needed nought
To winder her, or to paint her ought:
Her tresses yellow, and long straighten,
Unto her heeles downe they raughten:
Her nose, her mouth, and eye and cheke
Well wrought, and all the remnant eke.
A full gret sauour and a smote,
Me thoughts in mine herte rote:
As helpe me God, when I remember,
Of the fashion of eury member,
In world is none so faire a wight:
For yong she was, and hewed bright
Sore pleasant, and fetis with all,
Gent, and in her middle small.

Beside Beauty yede Richesse,
An high ladie of great noblesse,
And great of price in eury place:
But who so durst to her trespase
Or till her folke, in werke or dede,
He were full hardie out of drede:
For both she helpe and hinder may,
And that is not of yesterday
That riche folke haue full great might
To helpe, and eke to greue a wight.

The best and greatest of valour
 Didden Richesse full great honour,
 And heise wene her to serue,
 For that they would her loue deserue;
 They cleped her ladies, gret and small,
 This wide world her dredeth all:
 This world is all in her dangere,
 Her court hath many a loeengere,
 And many a traitour enuies,
 That ben full heise and curious
 For to dispraise, and to blame
 That best deseruen loue and name,
 To forse the folke here to bagilen,
 These loeengours hem praiser and smilen.
 And thus the world with word annoies,
 But afterward they prill and pointen
 The folke, right to the bare bone,
 Behind hir backe whes they ben gone,
 And folk abaten folkes pris.
 Full many a worthy man and wise
 Has hindred, and idoon to die
 These loeengours with hir flatterie,
 And maketh folke full straunge be,
 There as hem ought been pride:
 Wd coul mote they thirue and thee,
 And null armed mote they bee
 These loeengours full of enie.
 No god man loveth hir compaignie.
 Richesse a robe of purple on had,
 He trow not that I lie or read:
 For in this world is none it heise,
 He by a thousand deale so riche,
 He now so faire, for it full wele,
 With offris laiid was every dele,
 And purraid in the ribanings
 Of fikes stories, and of kings,
 And with a bend of gold tassiled,
 And tropes fine of gold amiled:
 About her necke of gentle entaile
 Was set the riche cheuecaile,
 In which there was full greet pleinte
 Of stones clere, and faire to see.
 Richesse a girdle had upon,
 The hokell of it was of ston,
 Of vertue greet, and mokell of might:
 For who so bare the stone so bright,
 Of venis durst him nothing doubt
 While he the stone had him about:
 That stone was greatly for to loue,
 And till a riche mannes behoune
 Woth all the gold in Rome and Frise:
 The mourdant wrought in noble gise
 Was of a stone full precious,
 That was so fine and vertuous,
 That whole a man it couth make
 Of paine, and of tothe ake,
 And yet the stone had such a grace,
 That he was seker in every place,
 All thilke day not blind to beene,
 And fasting might that stone seene:
 The barres were of gold full fine,
 Upon a tissue of satine
 Was beanie, greet, and nothing light,
 In entriche was a besant wight.
 Upon the treasures of richesse
 Was set a circle of noblesse
 Of bronde golde, that full light shone,
 In faire trow I was neuer none:
 But he wene cursing for the nones,
 That could deuise all the stones

That in that circle shewen clere,
 It is a wonder thing to here:
 For no man could praiser or gess
 Of hem the value or richesse:
 Rubies there were, saphira, ragounes,
 And emeraudes, more than two vnces.
 But all before full subtilly
 A fine carbuncle set saw I,
 The stone so clere was and so bright,
 That all so soone as it was night,
 Menne might seeme to go for rede
 A mile or two, in length and brede.
 Such light isprang out of the stone,
 That Richesse wonder bright shone
 Bothe her hedde, and all her face,
 And eke about her all the pace.

Dame Richesse on her lond gan lode
 A yong man full of semelyhede,
 That she best loued of any thing,
 His lust was much in housholding:
 In clothing was he full foise,
 And loved well to haue hors of pris,
 He wene to haue reproved be
 Of theft or murther, if that he
 Had in his stable an hackney,
 And therefore he desired eye
 To beun acquainted with Richesse,
 For all his purpose, as I gosse,
 Was for to maken greet dispence,
 Withouten warning or defence:
 And Richesse might it well susteine,
 And her dispences wole mainteine,
 And him alway such plentie send
 Of gold and siluer for to spend
 Withouten lacking or daungere,
 As it were poude in a gungere.

And after on the daunce went
 Largesse, that set all her entent
 For to beun honorable and free,
 Of Alexanders kinne was shee:
 Her moste joie was ywis,
 When that she yafe, and saied, haue this.
 Not Auarice the foule catiffe
 Was halfe to gripe so ententiffe
 As Largesse is, to yase and spend,
 And God alway ynowe her send,
 So that the more she yase away,
 The more iwis she had alway.
 Great loos hath Largesse, and greet paine,
 For both wise folke and nauise
 Were wholly to her bandon brought,
 So well with yests hath she wrought.

And if she had an enemy,
 I trowe that she couth craftely
 Make him full soope her friend to be,
 So large of yests, and wise was she,
 Therefore she stood in loue and grace
 Of rich and poore in every place.

A full great foole he is ywis,
 That both rich and poore, and niggard is.
 A lord may haue so manner vice,
 That greveth more than avarice.
 For niggard neuer with strength of hand
 May win him great lordship or land:
 For friendes all too few hath he
 To doen his will performed be:
 And who so wolle haue friendes here,
 He may not hold his treasure dere,
 For by ensample tell I this,
 Right as an adamant ywis

Can drawn to him subtelly
The yron that is laied thereby,
So draweth folkes hearts ywis
Silver and gold that yeuen is.

Largesse had on a robe fresh
Of riche purpurs sarliniah:
Well formed was her face and clere,
And opened had she her colere,
For she right there had in present
Unto a lady made present
Of a gold broche, full well wrought,
And certes it misste her nought:
For through her smocks wrought with silke,
The flesh was seene as white as milke:
Largesse, that worthy was and wise,
Held by the hood a knight of prync,
Was sibbe to Arthur of Breteigne,
And that was he that bare the ensigne
Of worship, and the gouscouner:
And yet he is of such renown,
That menne of him say faire things
Before barons, earles, and kings.

This knight was common all newly
Fro tourneying faste by,
There had he done great chivalrie
Through his vertue and his maistrie,
And for the love of his lemman
He cast douce many a doughty man.

And next him daunced dame Franchise,
Arrayed in full noble gise:
She nas not hroune no dunne of bew,
But white as snow ifillen new:
Her nose was wrought at point deuse,
For it was gentil and tretise,
With eyen glad, and browes bent,
Her haire downe to her heles went,
And she was simple as done on tree,
Full debonaire of hert was shee.

She durste neither say no do,
But that, that her lengthe to:
And if a man were in distresse,
And for her love in heauinesse,
Her herte would have full great pitee:
She was so amiable and free:
For were a manne for her bestad,
She woulde ben right sore adrad,
That she d d ouergreat outrage,
But she him hope his harme sawage,
Her thought it all a villany,
And she had on a suckeny,
That not of hempe berdes was,
So faire was none in all Arras,
Lord, it was riddled fetuilly,
There nas not a point truly
That it nas in his right amise,
Full well yclothed was Franchise,
For there nis no cloth rieth bette
On damocell, than doth rokette:
A woman well more feuse is
In rokette, than in cote ywis,
The white rokette riddled faire,
Betokeneth, that full debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.

By her daunced a bachelere,
I cannot tellen what he hight,
But faire he was, and of good height,
All had he ben, I say no more,
The lordes sonne of Windesore.

And next that daunced Courtesie,
That prised was of low and hie,

For neither proud no houle was she:
She for to daunce called me,
I prais God give her good grace,
For when I came first into the place,
She nas not nice, no outrageous,
But wise and ware, and vertuous,
Of faire speech, and faire answer,
Was neuer wight misseid of her:
She bare no rancour to no wight,
Clere hroune she was, and thereto bright.
Of face and body aueneant
I wote no lady so plessaunt,
She weren worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned queene.

And by her went a knight dauncing
That worthy was and well speaking,
And full well ood he done honour:
The knight was faire and stiffe in stour,
And in armure a seemely man,
And well beloued of his lemman,

Faire idleness he saw I,
That alway was me faste by,
Of her haue I withouten faile
Told fro the shape and appaile:
For (as I said) Lo, that was she
That did to me so great boonte.
She the gate of that gardin
Undid, and let me passen in,
And after daunced as I gese.

And she fulfilled of lustinesse,
That nas not yet twelve years of age,
With herte wild, and thought volage.
Nice she was, but she no ment
None harme no sleight in her entent,
But onely lust and lolite.
For yonge folke, well woten ye,
Have little thought but on hir play.
Her lemman was beside away,
In such a gise, that he her kist
At all times that him list,
That all the daunce might it see,
They make no force of prietees:
For who so spake of ben cruill or wele,
They were ashamed neuer adde,
But men might seene hem kisse these,
As it two yonge doues were,
For yonge was thilke bachelere,
Of beauty wot I non his pere,
And he was right of such an age,
As youth his lefe, and such courage.

The lusty folke that daunced there,
And also other that with hem were
That weren all of hir meinesse
Full hende folke, wise, and free,
And folke of faire port truly,
There were all comenly.

Whan I had seene the countenaunce
Of hem that liden thus these daunces,
Than had I will to go and see
The garden that so liked mee,
And loken on these faire laureres,
Or pine trees, cedres, and ormeres,
The daunces than al ended were,
For many of hem that daunced there,
Weren with her lousen went away
Under the trees to haue her play.

A lord, they liued lustely,
A great foule were he sikarly,

That should hold his thanks such life lede:
 This dare I mine out of drede,
 That who so mighte so well fare,
 A better life durst him not care,
 There is so good paradise,
 And here a lone at his devise:
 Of that place went I tho,
 In that garden gan I go,
 Along full meryly.
 The god of loue full hastily
 To him Sweet Looking clept,
 And says would be that she kept
 Some of gold, that shone so bright,
 And him bent anon right,
 The full some sex an end,
 At a braide he gan it bend,
 Toke him of his arrowes flue,
 Sharpe and ready for to drue.
 Now God that sitteth in maieste
 Deadly woundes be keepe me,
 Be that he had me shete,
 If I with his arrow mete,
 And me greened sore ywis,
 I, that nothing wist of this,
 Up and downe full many a way,
 He me followed fast alway,
 So where would I reste me,
 I had in all the garden be.

The garden was by measuring
 A coven and square in compassing,
 Long was as it was large,
 And had every tree his charge,
 It were any hidden tree
 Whiche there were two or thre.
 Here were, and that wote I full wel,
 Pomegranetes a full great dele,
 And a fruit full well to like,
 Seely to folke when they ben sick:
 Trees there were great foison,
 And baren nuts in hir season,
 And as menne nutmegs call,
 And wrote of savour been withall,
 And almandres great plente,
 And many a date tree
 Were weren, if menne had nede,
 Though the gardin in length and brede.
 There was eke waxing many a spice,
 Clove, gilofre, and licorioe,
 Cardamome, and grein de Paris,
 Anell, and setewale of pris,
 And many a spice delitable,
 That eaten when men rise for table.
 And many homely trees there were,
 As peaches, coines, and apples here,
 And plumes, peeres, chesteinis,
 And wise, of whiche many one faire is,
 And also, and bolus,
 And for to seeue it was solas,
 And many high laurer and pine,
 And roged cense all that gardine,
 And cipres, and with oliuieris,
 Of which that nigh no plenty here is.
 There were elmes great and strong,
 And poples, oke, arpes, planes long,
 And oke, poplar, and lodes faire,
 And other trees full many a paire.
 What should I tell you more of it?
 There were so many trees yet,

That I should all encombred be,
 Ere I had reckoned every tree.

These trees were set that I devise,
 One from another in amise
 Five fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
 But they were high and great also:
 And for to keepe out well the Sunne;
 The croppes were so thicke irunne,
 And every braunch in other knitte,
 And full of greene leaues sitte,
 That Sunne might there none descend,
 Least the tender grasses shend.
 There might menne doer and roes isse,
 And of squirrels full great plente,
 From bough to bough alway leping;
 Connis there were also playing;
 That comen out of hir clapers
 Of aundry colours and maners,
 And maden many a tourneyng
 Upon the freshe grassie springing:

In places saw I welles there,
 In whiche there no frogges were,
 And faire in shaddow was every well;
 But I ne can the number tell
 Of streamis small, that by devise
 Mirthe had done come through condies
 Of which the water in renning
 Gan make a noise full liking.

About the brinkes of these welles,
 And by the streames over all els
 Sprang vp the grasse, as thicke iset
 And soft as any feluet.
 On which men might his lemman ley;
 As on a featherbed to play,
 For the earth was full soft and swete:
 Through moisture of the well wete
 Sprong vp the sote grene gras,
 As faire, as thicke, as mister was.
 But much amended it the place,
 That therth was of such a grace
 That it of soures hath plente,
 That both in summer and winter be.

There sprang the violet all new,
 And freshe perunke rich of hew,
 And soures yellow, white, and rede,
 Such plenty grew there neuer in mede:
 Full gay was all the ground and quaint,
 And poudered, as men had it paint,
 With many a fresh and sundry flour,
 That casten vp full good saour.

I woll not long hold you in fable
 Of all this garden delectable,
 I mote my tongue stinten nede,
 For I ne may withouten drede
 Naught telken you the beutie all,
 Ne halfe the boutie therewithall.

I went on right hounde and on left
 About the place, it was not left
 Till I had all the garden bene
 In the esters that men might seeue.

And thus while I went in my playe,
 The god of loue me followed aye.
 Right as an hunter can abide
 The beast, till he seeth his tide
 To shooten at goodnesse to the deere,
 When that him needeth go no neere:

And so befell, I rested mee
 Besides a well vnder a tree,
 Which tree in Frances men call a pite,
 But sith the time of king Pepine

That under clothes warme and soft,
Sithen that day I have chivered oft.

When I was hurte thus in stound,
I fell down plat unto the ground,
Mine herte failed and fainted aye,
And long time in swoone I lay:
But when I came out of swooning,
And had my wit, and my feeling,
I was all mate, and wand full wele
Of blood, have keppe a full great dele,
But certes the arrow that in me stood,
Of me ne drew no drop of blood,
For why I found my wounds all drey.

Than tooke I with mine bowdes tway
The arrow, and full fast it out plight,
And in the pulling sore I sight,
So at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the feathers three,
But yet the hooked head ywis,
The whiche Beauty called is,
Gan so deepe in mine herte pace,
That I it might not arace,
But in mine herte still it stood,
All bled I not a drop of blood:
I was both anguious and trouble,
For the perill that I saw double,
I mist what to say or do,
Ne get a leach my wounds to,
For neither through grasse ne rote,
Ne had I helpe of hope ne bote.
But to the bothum evermo
Mine herte drew, for all my wo,
My thought was in none other thing,
For had it been in my keeping,
It would have brought my life agayne,
For certes evenly, I dare well saine,
The sight only, and the savour,
Alegged much of my languour.

Than gan I for to drawe mee
Toward the bothum faire to see,
And Love had gette him in his throwe
Another arrowe into his bowe,
And for to shote gan him drese,
The arrowes name was Simplese,
And when that love gan nigh me nere,
He drowe it up withouten were,
And shot at me with all his might,
So that this arrow anon right
Throughout eigh as it was found,
Into mine herte hath made a wound.
Than I anon did all my craft
For to drawn out the shaft,
And therewithall I sighed eft,
But in mine herte the head was left,
Which aye increased my desire;
Unto the bothum drow I nere,
And evermo that me was wo
The more desire had I to go
Unto the roser, where that grew
The fresh bothum so bright of hew,
Better me were to have letten be,
But it behoved nede me
To doen right as mine herte had:
For ever the body must be had
After the herte, in wele and wo,
Of force together they must go.
But never this archer would fine
To shote at me with all his pine,
And for to make me to him mete.

The third arrow he gan to shete,

When best his time he might espie,
The which was named Courtesie,
Into mine herte he did avale,
A swoone I fell, both dead and pale,
Long time I lay, and stirred nought,
Till I abraied out of my thought.
And ferte than I avised mee
To drawe out the shaft of tree,
But ever the head was left behind
For ought I couthe pull or wind,
So sore it stiked when I was hit,
That by no craft I might it fit,
But anguious and full of thought,
I felt such wo, my wound aye wrought,
That summoned me alway to go
Toward the rose, that pleased me so,
But I ne durst in no manere
Because the archer was so nere.

For evermore gladly as I rede,
Brent child of fire hath much drede.
And certes yet for all my pain,
Though that I sigh, yet arrowes rein,
And ground quareles sharpe of steele,
Ne for no paine that I might fele,
Yet might I not my selfe withhold
The faire roser to behold,
For Love me yave such hardement
For to fulfill his commaundement
Upon my feet I rose up than
Feeble, as a forwounded man:
And forth to gooe my might I set,
And for the archer nold I let,
Toward the roser fast I drow
But thornes sharpe, wo than ynow
There were, and also thistles thicke,
And berres brimms for to-pricke,
That I ne might get grace
The rough thornes for to pace
To seeue the roses fresh of hew,
I must abide, though it me rew,
The hedge about so thicke was,
That closed the roses in compas.

But o thing liked me right wele,
I was so nigh, I might fele
Of the bothum the swete colour,
And also see the fresh colour,
And that right greatly liked mee,
That I so nere might it see,
Such joy anon thereof had I,
That I forgot my melody,
To seeue I had such delite,
Of sorrow and anger I was all quite,
And of my wounds that I had thore,
For nothing liken me might more,
Than dwellen by the roser aye,
And thence never to passe awaye:
But when a while I had be thare,
The god of love, which all to share
Mine heart with his arrowes kepe,
Casteth him to peve me woundes grece,
He shot at me full heastly
An arrow named Company,
The whiche takell is full able
To make these ladies merciable,
Than I anone gan etaugen hew
For grevance of my wounde new.
That I agayne fell in swooning,
And sighed sore in complaining.

Sore I complained that my sore
On me gan greven more and more,

I had noon hope of allegiaunce,
 So nigh I drew to disperuaunce,
 I roght of death, we of life,
 Whether that love would me drife,
 If me a martir would he make,
 I might his power not forsake:
 And while for anger thus I woke,
 The god of love an arrow toke,
 Full sharpe it was and pugnaut,
 And it was called Faire Semblaunt,
 The which in no wise would consent,
 That any lover him repent
 To serve his love with herte and all,
 For any perill that may befall.
 But thought his arrow was kene ground,
 As any rasour that is found,
 To cut and kerre at the point,
 The god of love it had annoint
 With a precious oymntment,
 Somedele to yere allegement
 Upon the woundes that he made
 Through the body in my heart made,
 To helpe his sores, and to cure,
 And that they may the bette endure:
 But yet this arrow, without more,
 Made in mine heart a large sore,
 That in full greute paine I abode,
 But aye the ointment went abrode
 Throughout my woundes large and wide,
 It sprede about in every side:
 Through whose vertue and whose might,
 Mine herte joyfull was and light.
 I had ben dead and all to sheut
 But for the precious ointment:
 The shaft I drew out of the arrow,
 Boking for wo right wonder narrow,
 But the head, which made me smart,
 Left behinde in mine heart
 With other sower, I dare well say,
 That never will be take away,
 But the ointment helpe me wele,
 And yet such sorrow did I fele,
 That all day I changed hew,
 Of my woundes fresh and new,
 As men might see in my visage,
 The arrowes were so full of rage,
 So variaunt of diversitee,
 That men in everiche might see
 Both great annoy and eke sweetnese,
 And joy meint with bitternese:
 Now were they emie, now were they wood,
 In hem I felt both barme and good,
 Now sore without alleggement,
 Now softing with the ointment,
 It softened here, and priked there,
 Thus ease and anger together were.

The god of love deliverly
 Come lepunde to me hastily,
 And saied to me in great yape,
 "Yield thee, for thou may not escape,
 May no defence availle thee here:
 Therefore I rede make no daungere.
 If thou wold yield thee hastily,
 Thou shalt rather have mercy:
 He is a fool in sikernesse,
 That with daunger or stoutnese
 Rebelth there that he should please,
 Is such folly in little ease.

Be meekte, where thou must needes bowe,
 To strive ayen is not thy prow:
 Come at ones, and have ido,
 For I wold that it be so,
 Then yeld thee here debonairly."
 And I answered full humbly,
 "Gladly sir, at your bidding,
 I wold me yeld in all thing:
 To your service I wold me take,
 For God defend that I should make
 Ayen your bidding resistance.
 I wold not doen so great offence,
 For if I did, it were no skill,
 Ye may doo with me what ye will,
 Save or spill, and also slo,
 Fro you in no wise may I go,
 My life, my death, is in your hond,
 I may not last out of your bond,
 Plaine at your list I yeld me,
 Hoping in heart, that sometime ye
 Comfort and ease shall me send:
 Or els shortly, this is the end,
 Withouten health I mote aye dure,
 But if ye take me to your cure:
 Comfort or health, how should I have,
 Sith ye me hurt, but ye me save?
 The health of love mote be found,
 Whereas they token first hir wound:
 And if ye list of me to make
 Your prisoner, I wold it take
 Of heart and will fully at gree,
 Holy and plaine I yeld me
 Without feining or fentise,
 To be governed by your emprise:
 Of you I heere so much prise,
 I wold been whole at your devise
 For to fulfill your liking
 And repeat for nothing,
 Hoping to have yet in some tide
 Mercy, of that I abide:"
 And with that coveinaunt yeld I mee,
 Anon downe kneeling upon my knee,
 Profering for to kisse his fete,
 But for nothing he would me lete.
 And said, "I love thee both and praise,
 Sens that thine answers doth me ease:
 For thou answered so curteisly,
 For now I wote well utterly,
 That thou art gentle by thy spech:
 For though a man ferre would seech,
 He shuld not finden in certaine,
 No such answers of no villaine:
 For such a worde he might nought
 Issue out of a villaines thought.
 Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche,
 For thy helping wold I eche,
 And eke encreaseen that I may:
 But first I wold that thou obey
 Fully for thine avauntage
 Anone to doe me here homage:
 And sithe kisse thou shalt my mouth,
 Which to no villaine was never outh
 For to approach it, ne for to touch,
 For saufe of cherles I ne vouch
 That they shall never neigh it nere;
 For curteis, and of faire manere,
 Well taught, and full of gentleness
 He must be, that shall me kisse,
 And also of full high Fraunchise,
 That shall attaine to that emprise.

" And first of a thing warne I thee,
That paine and great adversitee
He mote endure, and eke travaile
That shall me serve, without faile,
But there against thee to comfort,
And with thy service to disport,
Thou maigest full glad and joyfull bee
So good a maister to have as mee,
And lord of so high renouee,
I heere of Love the gonfecoune,
Of cortisie the banere,
For I am of the seife manere,
Gentle, courteous, meeke and free,
That who ever ententive bee
Me to honour, doute, and serve,
And also that he him observe
Pro trespassse and fro villanie,
And him governe in courtesie,
With will and entention;
For when he first in my prison
Is caught, then must he utterly,
Pro thenceforth full busily,
Cast him gentle for to be,
If he desire helpe of me."

Anon without more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I become his man anon,
And gave him thanks many a one,
And kneled doune with bondes joint,
And made it in my port full quaint:
The joy went to my herte rote,
When I had kissed his mouth so swote,
I had such mirth and such liking,
It cured me of languishing.
He asked of me than hostages,
" I have," he sayd, " taken fele homages
Of one and other, where I have bene,
Distreined oft, withouten wene,
These felons full of falsite,
Have many sithes beguiled me,
And through hir falsheid hir lust atchieved,
Whereof I repent and am agreed,
And I hem get in my daungere,
Hir falsheid shall they bie full dere,
But for I love thee, I say thee plaine,
I wolle of thee be more certaine,
For thee sore I wolle now binde,
That thou away ne shalt not winde,
For to denien thy coveinaunt,
Or done that is not avenaunt,
That thou were false, it were great ruth,
Sith thou seemest so ful of truth."

" Sir, if thee list to understand,
I marvelle thee asking this demand,
For why or wherefore should ye,
Hostages or borowes aske of me,
Or any other sikernesse,
Sith ye wote in sothfastnesse,
That ye me have surprised so,
And hole mine heart, taken me fro,
That it wolle doe for me nothing,
But if it be at your bidding,
Mine herte is yours, and mine right nought
As it behoveth, in dede and thought,
Ready in all to worke your will,
Whether so tourne to good or ill,
So sure it lusteth you to please,
No man thereof may you disease,
Ye have thereon set such justice,
That it is werrid in many wise,

And if ye doubt it nolle obeie,
Ye may thereof doe make a knie,
And hold it with you for hostage."
" Now certes this is none outrage,"
(Goeth Love) " and fully I accord,
For of the bodie he is full lord
That bath the heart in his treasure,
Outrage it were to asken more."

TRAM of his answer he drough,
A little keie fetise inough,
Which was of gold polished cleve
And sayed to me, " With this keye here,
Thine herte to me now wolle I shete,
For all my joyfull looke and knet,
I binde under this little key,
That no wight may curie away."

This keye is full of great poste,
With which anon he touched me,
Under the side full softly,
That he mine herte sodainely,
Without any had speared,
That yet right nought it bath me deered.
When he had doen his will all out,
And I had put him out of doubt,
" Sir" I sayd, " I have right great will,
Your lust and pleasure to fulfill,
Looke ye my service take at grece,
By thilke fayth ye owe to me,
I say ought for recreaundise,
For I nought doubt of your service."

" But the servaunt travaileth in vaine,
That for to serven doeth his paine
Unto that lord, which in no wise,
Comme him no thanks for his service."

Love sayed, Dismaise thee nought,
Sith thou for succour hast me sought,
In thanks thy service wolle I take,
And high of degree wolle thee make,
If wickednesse ne hinder thee,
But (as I hope) it shall nought bee,
To worship no wight by aventure,
May come, but he paine endure.

" Abide and suffer thy distresse,
That hurteth now, it shall be lesse.
I wote my selfe what may thee save,
What medicine thou wouldest have.
And if thy truth to me thou keepe,
I shall unto thine helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem cleve,
Where so they be-old or grene,
Thou shalt be holpen at wordes few,
For certainly thou shalt well shew,
Where that thou servest with good will,
For to accompanien and fulfill
My commaundements day and night,
Which I to lovers yeve of right."

" Ah sir, for Godes love" (sayd I)
" Er ye passe hence ententively,
Your commaundements to me say,
And I shall keepe hem if I may,
For hem to keeplen is all my thought:
And if so be I wote hem nought,
Than may I unwittingly,
Wherefore I pray you entiorely,

With all mine herte, me to love,
That I trespass in no manere."

The god of love thus charged his
Acol, as ye shall here and see,
Word by word, by right emprise,
As is the Romaunt shall devise.

The maister leeth his time to love,
When the disciple wold not here,
It is but vaine on him to swinke,
That on his learning wold not thynke,
Who so lust love, let him entend,
For now the Romance beginneth to amend.

Now is good to heere in fay,
If any be that can it say,
And point it as the reason is
Set for other gate wise,
It shall nat well in all thing,
Be brought to good understanding,
For a reader that pointeth ill,
A good sentence may oft spill:
The booke is good at the ending,
Made of newe and lustie thing:
For who so wold the ending here,
The craft of love he shall now leere,
If that be wold so long abide,
Till I this Romance unte unhide,
And undoe the significatione
Of this dreame into Romancee,
The soothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shall be hid,
When I undoen have this dreaming,
Wherein no worde is of leasing.

"VILLAINS at the beginning,
I wold," sayd Love, "over all thing
Thou leave, if thou wolt us be
False, and trespass agaynst me;
I curse and blame generally
All hem that loven villanye,
For villanie maketh villone
And by his deede a chorle is sene.

"These villaines arne without pite,
Friendship, love, and all bonitie
I will receive unto my service
Hem that been villainous of emprise.

"But understand in thine entent,
That this is not mine ententment,
To clepe no wight in no ages
Oonly gentle for his kinages:

But who so is vertuous,
And in his port not outrageous,
When such one thou seest thee besone,
Though he be not gentle borne,
Thou maiest well seine this in sooth,
That he is gentle, because he doth
As length to a gentleman:
Of hem none other deme I can,
For certainly withouten drede,
A charie is demed by his deede,
Of hye or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kindred that he beo.

Ne say nought for some wail will,
Thing that is to holden still,
It is no worship to misseie,
Thou mayest consume take of Kale,
That was sometime for misseyng,
Hated both of old and yong,
As fere as Ostweie the worthie,
Was prayed for his courtisie,

Kale was hated, for he was fell,
Of word disputous and cruel;
Wherefore he wise and acquintable,
Goodly of word, and reasonable:
Both to lesse and eke to more,
And when thou comest there man are,
Looke that thou have in custome ay,
First to salve hem if thou may:
And if it fall, that of hem somme
Salve the first, be not downe,
But quite him courteously amoo
Without abiding, ere they goo.

"For nothing eke thy touge applie
To speake word of ribauldrie;
To villaine spech in no degree
Let never thy lippe unbounden be:
For I nought hold him in good faith
Curtis, that foule wordes seith:
And all women seue and praiso,
And to thy power hir honour raiso:
And if that any misseyre
Despise women, that thou maist here,
Blame him, and bid him hold him still,
And set thy might and all thy will
Women and ladies for to please,
And to doo thing that may been ease,
That they ever speake good of thee,
For so thou maist best praised beo.

"Looke fro pride thou keepe thee wele,
For thou maist both perouse and fele,
That pride is both foly and sin,
And he that pride hath him within,
Ne may his herte in no wise,
Meken no couplen to service:
For pride is found in ewerie part,
Contrarie unto Loues art:
And he that loueth trustly,
Should him contene iolily,
Without pride in sundrie wise,
And him disguisen in queintise,
For queint array, without drede,
Is nothing proude, who taketh hede,
For fresh array, as men may see,
Without pride may ofte beo.

"Maintaine thy selfe after thy rest,
Of robe and eke of garmens,
For many eike faire clothing
A man amendeth in much thing.

"And looke alway that they be shape,
(What garmet that thou shalt make)
Of him that can best do,
With all that pertaineth thereto,
Pointes and sleeves be well attend,
Right and straight on the hand,
Of shone and bootes, new and faire,
Looke at the least you have a paire,
And that they sit so fetowly,
That these rude may viterly
Marnale, with that they sit so please,
How they come on or off againe.
Weare straighte gloves with sumers
Of silke: and alway with good chere
Thou yene, if thou have richesse,
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.
Alway be merry, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway;
Have hatte of floures fresh as May,
Chapelet of roes of Witsunday,
For such arrie ne costeth but lite.
Thine bondes wash, thy teeth make whitey

And let no filth upon thee bee,
 Thy nayles blacke, if thou maigest see,
 Uoide it alwaie deliuerly,
 And kembe thine head right iollily :
 Farce not thy visage in no wise,
 For that of loue is nat themprie,
 For loue doth hate, as I finde,
 A beautie that commeth not of kinde :
 Alway in herte I read thee,
 Glad and merry for to be,
 And be as joyfull as thou can,
 Loue hath no ioy of sorrowfull man,
 That euil is full of curtesie,
 That knoweth in his maladie,
 For euer of loue the sickenesse
 Is meint with sweets and bitternesse :
 The sore of loue is marvailous,
 For now the louer is ioyous,
 Now can he plaine, now can he grone,
 Now can he singen, now maken moone,
 To day he plaineth for beauienesse,
 To morrow he plaineth for iolynesse :
 The life of loue is full contrarie,
 Which stoundemesse can oft varie ;
 But if thou canst mirthes make,
 That men in gre wolle gladly take,
 Doe it goodly I command thee,
 For men shoulde, whermoster they be,
 Doe thing that hem fitting is,
 For thereof commeth good loos and pris.
 Wherof that thou be vertuous,
 Ne be nat straunge ne daungerous :
 For if that thou good rider be,
 Pricke gladly that men may see ;
 In armes also if thou come,
 Pursue till thou a name hast wonne :
 And if thy voice be faire and clere,
 Thou shalt maken no great daungere.
 Whan to sing they goodly pray,
 It is thy worship for to obay :
 Also to you it longeth aye,
 To harpe and citterne, dance and plays,
 For if he can well foot and daunce,
 It may him greatly doe auance,
 Among eke for thy lady sake,
 Songes and complaintes that thou make,
 For that memen-in-her hart,
 When they readen of thy smart,
 Looke that no man for scarce thee hold,
 For that may greene thee manifold :
 Reason wolle that a lover be
 In his yeftes more large and free
 Than charles that been not of louing,
 For who thereof can any thing,
 He shall be lefe aie for to yeue,
 In loodes lore who so wolle leue,
 For he that through a sodain sight,
 Or for a kissing anon right,
 Yaue hole his heart, in will and thought,
 And to himselfe keepeth right nought,
 After this swift, it is good reason,
 He yeue his good in abandon.

“ Now wolle I shortly here reherse,
 Of that I haue sayd in verse,
 All the sentence by and by,
 In wordes fewe compendiously,
 That thou the better mayest on hem think,
 Whether so it be thou wake or winke,

For the wordes litle greede,
 A man to keepe, when it is broome.
 “ Who so with Loue wolle gose or ride
 He mote be courteous, and void of pride,
 Merry and full of jollite,
 And of largesse a loos be.
 “ First I joyne thee here in pesaunce,
 That euer without repentance,
 Thou set thy thought in thy louing
 To last without repeating,
 And thinke vpon thy wirtes sweet
 That shall follow after whan ye meet.
 “ And for thou true to love shalt be,
 I will and commande thee,
 That in one place thou set all hole
 Thine herte, without halfeu drole,
 For trecherie and sikernesse,
 For I loued neuer doublenesse :
 To many his herte that wolle depart,
 Euerich shall haue but litte part,
 But of him drede I me right nought,
 That in one place setteth his thought :
 Therefore in o place it set,
 And let it neuer thence set :
 For if thou yuest it in leuing,
 I holde it but wretched thing :
 Therefore yene it whole and quite,
 And thou shalt haue the more merite.
 If it be lent than after soue,
 The bountie and the thankes is doun,
 But in love, free yene thing
 Requireth a great gnerdoung.
 “ Yene it in yefft all quite fully,
 And make thy gift debonaury :
 For men that yefft holde more dere
 That yene is with gladsome chere.
 “ That gifte nought to praynen is
 That man yeurth manere his :
 Whan thou hast yene thine heart (as I
 Haue sayd) thee here openly,
 Than adventures shall thee fall,
 Which hard and heauie been withal :
 For oft when thou bethinkest thee
 Of thy louing, where so thou be,
 Fro folke thou must depart in his,
 That none perceiue thy maladie,
 But hide thine harme thou must alone,
 And go forth sole, and make thy moone :
 Thou shalt no while be in o state,
 But whilom cold and whilom hate,
 Now redde as rose, now yellow and fade,
 Such sorow I trow thee neuer hade :
 Cotidian, ne quartaine,
 It is not so full of peine,
 For often times it shall fall,
 In loos among thy paines all,
 That thou thy selfe all holy,
 Foryeten shalt so utterly,
 That many times thou shalt bee,
 Still as an image of tree,
 Domme as a stone, without stirring
 Of foote or bonde, without speaking.
 “ Than soone after all thy paine,
 To memorie shalt thou come againe,
 A man ashed wouder sore,
 And after sighten more and more :
 For wit thou welle withouten went,
 In such a state full oft haue been,
 That haue the enill of loos assaide,
 Where through thou art so distraide.

" Arise a thought shall take thee on,
That thy loze is too ferre the fro:
Thou shalt say, ' God, what may this be,
That I ne may my ladies see?

Mine heart alone is to her goe,
And I abide all sole in woe,
Departed fro mine owne thought,
And with mine eien so right nought.

" Alas mine eien sense I ne may,
My carefull herte to conuay,
Mine hertes guide, but they be,
I praise nothing what euer they se:

Shull they abide than, nay,
But gone and visien without delay
That mine heart desireth so
For certainly, but if they go.

" A foole my selfe I may well hold,
When I ne se what mine hart wold,
Wherefore I wold gone her to sense,
Or cased shal I neuer bene,
But I have some tokening.

" Then goest thou forth without dwelling,
But oft thou faylest of thy desire,
Er thou mayest come her any nere,
And wastest in vaine thy passage:

Than fastest thou in a new rage,
For want of sight thou ginnest murne,
And homeward penneis thou doest returne:
In great mischiefe than shalt thou bee,

For than againe shall come to thee
Sibes and painetes with new wo,
That so itching pricketh so:
Who wote it nought, he may goe lere,
Of ben that buyen loue so dere.

" Nothing thine heart appeasen may,
That oft thou wolt gone and assay,
If thou maigest seeme by adventure
Thy lyes joy, thine heartes cure,

So that by grace, if thou might
Attaine of her to have a sight,
Than shalt thou done none other deed,
But with that sight thine eyen feed:

That faire fresh when thou mayest see,
Thine herte shall so ravished bee,
That never thou wouldest thy thanks lere
Ne remove, for to see that swete:

The more thou soest in soothfastnesse,
The more thou covetest of that sweetnesse:
The more thine herte brenneth in fire,
The more thine herte is in desire.

For who considereth euerie dele,
It may be likened wonder welle,
The paine of love unto a fere,
For evermore thou neighet nere,

Thought, or who so that it be,
For verie sooth I tell it thee,
The hotter ever shalt thou brenne,
As experience shall thee kenne,

Where so comment in any oost:
Who is next fire he brenneth most:
And yet fornoth for all thine heat,
Though thou for love swelte and sweat,

Ne for no thing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not witen to passe away,
And though thou goe, yet must thou rede,
Thinke all day on her faire hede,

Whome thou beheld with so good will,
And hold thy selfe beguiled ill,
That thou ne hadst no hardiment,
To shew her ought of thine entent;

Thine herte full sore thou wolt dispise,
And eke repreve of cowardise,
That thou so dull in every thing,
Were domme for drede, without speaking.

" Thou shalt eke thinke thou didst folly,
That thou were her so faste by,
And durst not a venture thee to say
Some thing or thou came away,

For thou hadest no more wonne,
To speake of her when thou begonne:
But yet if she wold for thy sake,
In armes goodly thee haue take,
It should haue be more worth to thee,
Than of treasure great pleste.

" Thus shalt thou moorne and eke complain,
And yet eschason to gone again,
Unto thy walke, or to thy place,
Where thou beheld her fleshy face,

And never for false suspicion,
Thou wouldest spide occasion,
For to gone unto her house,
So art thou than desirouse,

A sight of her for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any errand mightest make
Thider, for thy loves sake:

Full faine thou wouldest, but for drede
Thou goest not, least that men take heede,
Wherefore I read in thy going,
And also in thine againe coming,

Thou be well ware that men ne wit,
Feine thee other cause than it,
To goe that way, or faste bie,
To heale well is no follie:

And if so be it happe thee,
That thou thy love there mayest see,
In sike wise thou her sawest,
Wherewith thy colour wold transwee,

And eke thy blood shal all to quake,
Thy hewe eke chaungen for her sake,
But word and wit, with chere full pale
Shull want for to tell thy tale,

And if thou mayest so ferre forth winne,
That thou reason durst beginne,
And wouldest saine three things or mo,
Thou shalt full scarcely maine the two,

Though thou bethinke thee never so wala,
Thou shalt foryete yet somedele.

" But if thou deale with trechery,
For false lovers mowe all foully
Sain what hem lust withouten dred,
They be so double in hir falsed,

For they in herte can thinke o thing
And saine another, in hir speaking,
And when thy speech is ended all,
Right thus to thee it shal befall:

If any word than come to minde,
That thou to say hast left behinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in great martire,
For thou shalt brenne as any fire,

This is the strife and eke the affraie,
And the buttaile that lasteth aie:
This bargaine endamay never take,
But if that she thy peace will make.

" And when the night is comen anon,
A thousand angres shall come upon,
To bed as fast thou wolt thee dight,
There thou shalt have but small delight,

For when thou weneest for to sleepe,
So full of paine shalt thou creepe,
Start in thy bed about full wide,
And turne fall oft on everie side:
Now downward graffe, and now upright,
And wallow in woe the longe night,
Thine armes shalt thou sprede a brede,
As man in warre were forwerde.
Than shalt the come a remembrance
Of her shape and her semblance,
Whereto none other may be pere,
And wete thou well without were,
That thee shall see sometime that night,
That thou hast her, that is so bright,
Naked betwene thine armes there,
All nothfastnesse as though it were;
Thou shalt make castles than in Spaine,
And dreame of joy, all but in vaine,
And thee delighten of right nought,
While thou so slumbrest in that thought,
That is so swete and delitable,
The which in sooth nis but a fable,
For it ne shall no while last;
Than shalt thou sigh and wepe fast,
And say, "Deere God, what thing is this,
My dreame is turned all amis,
Which was full sweet and apparent:
But now I wake it is all shent,
Now yede this merry thought away,
Twentis times upon a day
I would this thought would come againe,
For it slleggeth well my paine,
It maketh me full of joyfull thought,
It sleeth me that it lasteth nought.
Ah Lord, why nil ye me succour?
The joy I trow that I langour,
The death I would me shoulde slo,
While I lye in her armes two,
Miche harme is hard withouten wene,
My great unesse full oft I mene.

"But woulde Love do so I might
Have fully joy of her so bright,
My paine were quit me richely,
Alas too great a thing aske I:
It is but folly, and wrong wening,
To aske so outrageous a thing,
And who so asketh follily,
He mote be warned hastily,
And I ne wote what I may say,
I am so ferre out of the way,
For I would have full great liking,
And full great joy of lasse thing,
For would she of her gentleness,
Withouten more, me ones keese,
It were to me a great gerdoun,
Release of all my passion:
But it is hard to come thereto,
All is but folly that I do,
So high I have mine herte set,
Where I may no comfort get,
I wote not where I say well or nought,
But this I wote well in my thought,
That it were bette of her alone.
For to flint my woe and moone:
A looke on her I cast goodly,
That for to have all utterly,
Of another all hole the play.
Ah Lord, where I shall bide the day

That ever she shall my ladie be,
He is full cured, that may her see.
Ah God, when shall the dauning spring,
To leggen thus as an angrie thing,
I have no joy thus here to ly,
When that my love is not me by:
A man to lye hath great disease,
Which may not sleepe ne rest in ease,
I would it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away,
For were it day, I would up rise,
Ah slowe Sunne, shew thine cuprise,
Speede thee to spread thy beames bright,
And chase the darkness of the night,
To put away the stoundes strong,
Which to me lasten all too long.
"The night shalt thou continue me,
Without rest, in paine and wo,
If ever thou know of love distresse,
Thou shalt mowe learne in that sickness,
And thus enduring shalt thou lye
And rise on morow up earlye,
Out of thy bed, and harnesse thee
Er ever dawning thou maifest see:
All privily than shalt thou gone,
What whider it be, thy selfe alone,
For raine, or halle, for snow, for slete,
Theder she dwelleth that is so swete,
The which may fall a sleepe bee,
And thinketh but litle upon thee,
Than shalt thou goe, full foule aferde,
Looke if the gate be unperde,
And waite without in woe and paine,
Full evill a cold in mind and raine:
Than shalt thou goe the dore before,
If thou mayest finde any shore,
Or hole, or reft, what ever it were,
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to cure
If they within a sleepe be,
I mene all save thy ladie free,
Whom waking if thou mayest aspie,
Goe put thy selfe in jeopardie,
To aske grace, and thee bimeane,
That she may wete without wene,
That thou all night no rest hast had,
So sore for her thou were bestad.
"Women well ought pitie to take
Of hem that sorowen for hir sake.
And looke for love of that relike,
That thou thinke none other like,
For when thou hast so great amoy,
Shall kisse thee er thou gos away,
And hold that in full great deinte,
And for that no man shall thee see
Before the house, ne in the way,
Looke thou be gon againe er day.
Suche comming, and such going,
Such heavynesse, and such walking,
Maketh lovers withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
For Love leaveth colour ne clearnesse,
Who loveth trow bath no fatnesse,
Thou shalt well by thy selfe see
That thou must needs assayed bee:
For men that shape hem other way
Falsely hir ladies to betray,
It is no wonder though they be fatte,
With false othes her loves they gatte,
For oft I see such losengours
Fatter than abbots or priours,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

" Yet with o thing I thee charge,
That is to say, that thou be large
Unto the maid, that her doth serve,
So best her thanke thou shalt deserve.
Yeue her giftes, and get her grace,
For so thou may thanke purchase,
That she thee worthy hold and free,
Thy ladie, and all that may thee see.
Also her seruaunts worship aie,
And please as muche as thou maie,
Great good through hem may come to thee,
Because with her they been prive:
They shall her tell how they thee fand
Courteous and wise, and well doned,
And she shall praise well thee more.
Looke out of lood thou be not fore,
And if such cause thou have, that thee
Behoveth to gone out of countree,
Leave hole thine herte in hostage,
Till thou againe make thy passage,
Thinke long to see the swete thing
That hath thine heart in her keeping.
" Now have I told thee, in what wise
A lover shall doe me service,
Do it than, if thou wote hane
The mede that thou after crave."

Was Love all this had boden me,
I said him: " Sir how may it be
That louers may in such manere,
Endure the paine ye have sayd here?
I marvaile me wonder fast,
How any man may live or last
In suche paine, and such brenning,
In sorrow and thought, and such sighing,
As unreleased woe to make,
Whether so it be they sleepe or wake,
In such annoy continually,
As helpe me God this marvaile I
How man, but he were made of Steele,
Might live a mometh, such paine to feele."

The god of love then sayd me,
" Friend, bye the faith I owe to thee,
May no man have good, but he it buy:
A man looeth more tenderly
The thing that he hath bought most dere.
For wete thou well without were,
In thanke that thing is taken more,
For which a man hath suffred sore:
Certes no woe ne may attaine,
Unto the sore of loves paine,
None euill thereto ne may amount,
No more than a man count
The drops that of the water bee:
For drie as well the grete see
Thou mightest, as the harmes tell
Of hem that with Love dwell
In service, for paine been sleeth,
And that eche would flee the death
And trowe they should never escape,
Here that hope couth hem make,
Glad as man in prison sete,
And may not getten for to ete
But barley bread, and water pure,
And lyeth in vermin and in ordure,
With all this yet can he live,
God hope such comfort hath him yeue,

Which maketh woe that he shall be
Delivered and come to libertie,
In fortune is full trust,
Though he lye in straw or dust,
In hope is all his sustaining:
And so faire louers in her wening,
Which loue hath set in his prison
Good hope is her saluation:
Good hope (how sore that they smart)
Yeueh hem both will and hart
To profer her body to martire,
For hope so sore doth hem desire
To suffer each harme that men deute,
For joy that afterward shall arise.

Hors in desire catch victorie,
In hope of love is all the glorie,
For hope is all that love may yeue,
Nere hope, there should no lenger lye.
Blessed be hope, which with desire,
Assuoneth louers in such manere.
Good hope is curteis for to please,
To keepe louers from all disease.
Hope keepeth his lood, and well abide,
For any perill that may betide,
For hope to louers, as most chiefe,
Doth hem endure all mischiefe.
Hope is hir helpe when miserie is,
And I shall yeue thee eke iwis.
Three other thinges, that great soillace
Doth to hem that be in my lace.

" The firste good that may be found,
To hem that in my lace be bound,
Is swete thought, for to record
Thing wherewith thou canst accord
Best in thine herte, where she be,
Thinking in absence is good to thee.
When any lover doth complaine,
And lieth in distresse and in paine
Than swete thought shall come as hitte,
Away his anger for to driue,
It maketh louers to have remembrance
Of comfort, and of high pleasaunce,
That hope hath hight him for to winne,
For thought anon than shall beginne,
As farre God wote as he can finde,
To make a mirroure of his minde,
For to behold he woll not let,
Her person he shall afore him set,
Her laughing eyen persuaunt and clere,
Her shape, her form, her goodly chere,
Her mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so savourous,
Of all her feitors he shall take heed,
His eyen with all her limmes feed.

Thus swete thinking shall savege
The paine of louers, and hir rage,
Thy joy shall double without gease
When thou thinkest on her seemeliness,
Or of her laughing, or of her chere
That to thee made thy lady dere,
This comfort woll I that thou take,
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse savourous,
Thou shouldst not ben too daungerous.

" The second shall be swete spech,
That hath to many one be leech,

To bring hem out of woe and were,
 And helpe many a bachelere,
 And many a ladie sent succour,
 That haue loued paramour,
 Through speaking, when they might here,
 Of hir louers to hem so deare:
 To me it voideth all hir smart,
 The which is closed in hir hart.
 In heart it maketh hem glad and light,
 Speech, when they mowe haue sight.
 And therefore now it commeth to mind,
 In olde dawes as I find,
 That clerkes writen that her knew,
 There was a ladie fresh of hew,
 Which of her love made a song,
 On him for to remember among,
 In which she sayd, 'When that I here
 Speaken of him that is so deare,
 To me it voideth all smart,
 Iwis he sitteth so nere mine hart,
 To speake of him at eve or morrow,
 It cureth me of all my sorrow,
 To me is none so high plesaunce
 As of his person daliaunce.'
 She wist full well that sweet speaking
 Comforteth in full muche thing,
 Her love she had full well assaide,
 Of him she was full well assaide,
 To speake of him her joy was set.
 Therefore I read thee that thou get
 A fellow that can well counsele,
 And kepe thy counsaile, and walhele
 To whom goe shew wholly thine hart
 Both well and woe, joy and smart:
 To get comfort to him thou go,
 And prively between you two,
 Ye shall speake of that goodly thing,
 That hath thine heart in her keeping,
 Of her beaute and her semblance,
 And of her goodly countenance,
 Of all thy state, thou shalt him say,
 And aske him counsaile how thou may,
 Do any thing that may her please,
 For it to thee shall doe great ease,
 That he may wete thou trust him so,
 Both of thy wele and of thy wo.
 And if his heart to lous be set,
 His companie is much the bet,
 For reason wolle he shew to thee
 All utterly his priuite,
 And what she is he loveth so
 To thee plainly he shall vnde,
 Without drede of any shame,
 Both tell her renome and her name.
 Than shall be further farre and nere,
 And namely to thy ladie dere
 In siker wise, ye every other,
 Shall helpen as his owne brother,
 In trouthe without doublenesse,
 And keepen close in sikennesse:
 For it is noble thing in fay,
 To haue a man thou darste say
 Thy priue counsaile euerie dele,
 For that wolle comfort thee right wele,
 And thou shalt hold thee well assaide,
 When such a friend thou hast assaide.

"The thirde good of great comfort
 That yoweth to lovers most disport,

Commeth of sight and beholding,
 The cleped is swete looking,
 The which may none ease do,
 When thou art fere thy ladie fro,
 Wherefore thou prese alway to be
 In place, where thou mayest her see:
 For it is thing most amorous
 Most delectable and fauerous,
 For to aswage a mannes sorrow
 To seen his ladie by the morrow,
 For it is a full noble thing
 When thine eyen have meeting,
 With that relike precious,
 Whereof they be so desirous.
 But all day after sooth it is,
 They have no drede to faren athis,
 They dredea neither wide ne raine,
 Ne none other manner paine:
 For when thine eyen were thus in blame,
 Yet of her courtesie iwise
 Alone they cannot haue hir joy,
 But to the herte they comouy
 Part of hir blame, to him thou send,
 Of all this harme to make an end.

"The eye is a good messenger,
 Which can to the heart in such maner
 Tidings sende, that hath seme
 To voide him of his paines cleue:
 Whereof the heart joyyeth so
 That a great partie of his wo
 Is voided, and put away to flight.
 Right as the darknesse of the night
 Is chased with clerenesse of the moone,
 Right so is all his woe full soone
 Decouided cleue, when that the sight
 Beholden may that fresh wight
 That the herte desireth so,
 That all his darknesse is ago,
 For than the herte is all at ease,
 When they seen that may hem please.

Now haue I declared thee all out,
 Of that thou were in dread and dout,
 For I haue told thee faithfully,
 What thee may curen utterly,
 And all louers that wolle be
 Faithfull, and full of stablité,
 Good hope alway keepe by thy side,
 And sweet thought make eke abide,
 Sweet looking and sweet spech
 Of all thine harmes they shall be lech,
 Of ouerie thou shalt haue great plesaunce,
 If thou canst bide in suffraunce,
 And serue well without fantise,
 Thou shalt be quite of thine emprise
 With more guerdoun, if that thou live,
 But all this time this I thee yeece.

The god of love, when all the day
 Had taught me, as ye haue heard say,
 And enformed compendously,
 He vanished away all sodainly,
 And I alone left all soole,
 So full of complaint and of doole,
 For I saw no man there me by.
 My woundes me greeten wonderly,
 Me for to curen nothing I knewe,
 Saue the bothum bright of hewe,
 Whereou was sette holly my thought,
 Of other comfort knew I nought,

But it were through the God of Love,
I knew nat else to my behove
That might me ease or comfort gette,
Nat if he would him entermette.

The roser was withouten dout
Owed with an hedge without,
As ye tofore have heard me saine,
And fast I besied, and would faine
Have passed the haie, if I might
Have gotten in by any sleight
Unto the bothum so faire to see,
But ever I dradde blamed to bee,
If men would have respectioun
That I would of entencion
Have stole the roses that there were,
Therefore to enter I was in fore.
But at the last, as I bethought
Whether I should passe or nought,
I have come with a glad chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature and of good height,
And Bialacoil forsooth he height:
Thus he was to Curtisie,
And he me granted full gladly,
The passage of the vtter bay,
And sayd: "Sir, how that you may
Use, if your will be
To see the freshe roser for to see:
And ye the swete savour fele,
How verraus may right wile,
Whon thou thee keeps fro folly,
Shall no man doe thee villany,
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shall not faime, dredeth nought,
As I am bound to your servise,
Fully desoid of feintise."

Thus unto Bialacoil sayd I,
I thanke you sir full hartely,
And your behest take at gree,
And ye so goodly profer mee,
I you it commeth of great franchise,
And ye me profer your servise."
Thus after full deliverty,
Through the breces anon went I,
Whereof encombrid was the haie,
And was well pleased, the soth to saie,
To see the bothum faire and swete,
The freshe sprong out of the rote.

Thus Bialacoil me served wile,
And I so nigh me might fele
The bothum the sweet odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour:
More than a charlie, foule him beside,
Whiche the roses gan him hide,
I kepte the roses of that rosere,
Whom the name was Daungere:
The charlie was hid there in the grouces,
Covered with grasse and with lewes,
I spide and take whom that he foud
That roser put an hood.
He was not soole, for there was mo,
And with him were other two
Of wicked manners, and euill fame,
The one was cleyed by his name,
The other Tongue, God yve him sorrow,
Neither at one ne at morrow,
Of no man good speake,
For every best man doth he wreake.

VOL. I.

There was a woman that eke hight
Shame, that who can reckon right,
Trespasse was her fathers name,
Her mother Reason, and thus was Shame
Brought of these ilke two:
And yet had Trespasse never ado
With Reason, ne never leie her by,
He was hidous and so vgly,
I meane this that Trespasse hight,
But Reason conceiueth of a sight,
Shame of that I spake aforne.

And whan that Shame was thus borne,
It was ordained, that Chastite,
Should of the roser ladie be:
Which of the bothums more and las,
With sundrie folkes assailed was,
That she ne wiste what to do,
For Venus her assaileth so,
That night and day for her she stall
Bothoms and roses our all.
To Reason than prayeth Chastite,
Whom Venus hath sēmed over the see,
That she ber daughter would her leue,
To keepe the roser fresh and grene.

Anon Reason to Chastite
Is fully assented that it be,
And granted her at her request,
That Shame, because she is honest,
Shall keeper of the roser be:
And thus to keepe it, there were thre,
That none should hardy be ne hold,
(Were ye young or were he old)
Againe her will away to bere
Bothoms ne roses, that there were.
I had well sped, had I nat been
Awaited with these thre, and seem:
For Bialacoil, that was so faire,
So gracious and debonaire,
Quitte him to me full courteously,
And me to please hadde that I,
Should drawe to the bothom nere,
Prese in to touche the rosere
Which bare the roses, he yave me leue,
This graunt ne might but little grece:
And for he saw it liked me,
Right nigh the bothom pulled he
A leafe all grene, and yave me that
The which full nigh the bothom sat.
I made of that leafe full quaint,
And whan I felt I was acquieit
With Bialacoil, and so prise,
I wende all my will had be.
Than went I hardy for to tell
To Bialacoil how me befell,
Of lous, that toke and wounded me,
And sayd: "Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joy have in no wise,
Upon no side, but it arise,
For sithe (if I shall not faite)
In herte I have had so great paine,
So great annoy, and such affraie,
That I ne wotte what I shall saie,
I drede your wrothe to deserue,
Lover me were, that kniues kerue
My bodie should in peeces small,
Than in any wise it should fall,
That ye wrothed should been with me."
"Say boldely thy will" (quod he)
"I will be wroth if that I may,
For nought that thou shalt to me say."

Q

THAN said I, "Sir, not you displese,
To knowne of my great unese,
In which only loue hath me brought,
For paines great, disease and thought,
Fro day to day it doth me drie,
Suppoeth not, sir, that I lie,
In me flue woundes did he make,
The sore of which shall neuer slake,
But ye the bothom graunt me,
Which is most passaunt of beaute,
My life, my death, and my martire,
And treasour that I most desire."

Than Bialacoil affraied all
Said "Sir, it may not fall,
That ye desire it may not arise,
What would ye shend me in this wise:
A mokell fooler than I were,
If I suffred you away to beare
The fresh bothom, so faire of sight,
For it were neither skill ne right,
Of the roser ye broke the riode,
Or take the rose aforme his kidde;
Ye are not courteous to aske it,
Let it still on the roser sit,
And let it grow till it amended be,
And perfectly come to beaute,
I nolde not that it pulled were,
Fro the roser that it bere,
To me it is so lefe and dere."
With that anon start out Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hidde,
His malice in his chere was kidde:
Full great he was and blacke of hewe,
Sturdy, and hidous, who so him knewe,
Like sharpe vrebons his haire was grow,
His eyes red sparkling as the fire glow,
His nose frounced full kirked stood,
He come criand as he were wood,
And said, "Bialacoil, tell me why
Thou bringest hider so boldly
Him that so nigh the rosere,
Thou worchest in a wrong manere,
He thinketh to disphonour thee,
Thou art well worthy to haue maugre,
To let him of the rosere witte,
Who serueth a felon is euill quitte."

"Thou wouldest haue done great bounte,
And he with shame would quite thee,
Flye hence, fellow, I rede thee go,
It wanteth little he woll thee slo,
For Bialacoil he knew thee nougt,
Whan thee to serue he set his thought,
For thou wolt shame him if thou might,
Both againe reson and right,
I woll no more in thee affie,
That comest so slightly for tespie:
For it prooueth wonder wele,
Thy sleight and treason euerie dele."

I durst no more make there abode,
For the churle he was so wode,
So gan he threat and manace,
And through the haie he did me chace,
For feare of him I trembled and quake,
So churlish his head he shoke,
And said, if eft he might me take,
I should not from his hands scape.
Than Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I all soole and disconsolate,
Was left alone in paine and thought,
Fro shame to death I was nigh brought.

Than thought on my high folly,
How that my bodie vterly,
Was yeue to paine and martire,
And thereto had I so great desire,
That I ne durst the haies pease,
There was no hope, there was no grace,
I trow neuer man wist of paine,
But he were faced in Loues chaine,
Ne no man, and sooth it is,
But if he loue, what anger is.

Loue holdeth his best to me right wele,
Whan paine (he sayd) I should fele,
No herte may thinke, no tongue saie,
A quarter of my woe and paine,
I might not with the anger last,
Mine heart in point was for to brast,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so,
Was through Daunger cast me fro,
A long while stode I in that state,
Till that me sawe so medde and mate,
The ladie of the high ward,
Which from her tower looked thiderward.

Reason, men clepe that lady,
Which from her tower deliuerly,
Come downe to me without more.
But she was neither young, ne bore,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne leanne,
But best, as it were in a meane:
Her eyes two were clere and light
As any candle that brenneth bright,
And on her head she had a croune,
Her seemed well an high peroune:
For round enuiron her crounet
Was full of riche stones fret.
Her goodly semblaunt by deuise,
I trow was made in Paradise,
For nature had neuer such a grace,
To forge a worke of such compace:
For certain, but if the letter lye,
God him selfe, that is so bye,
Made her aßer his image,
And yafe her sith such auaunte,
That she hath might and seignory
To keepe men from all folly,
Who so woll trowe her lore,
Ne may offenden neuermore.

And while I stode this darke and pale,
Reason began to me her tale,
She said: "Alhaile my sweete frend,
Folly and chifdhood woll thee shend,
Which thee haue put in great affraie,
Thou hast bought dere time of Maie,
That made thine herte merrie to be;
In euill time thou wonest to see
The gardin, whereof Idenesse
Bare the key and was maistrisse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
With her, and had acquaintance:
Her acquaintance is perillous,
First soft, and after noyous,
She hath thee trashed without wene,
The god of loue had thee not sene,
Ne had Idenesse thee conuaid
In the verge where Nirth him pleid,
If Folly haue surprised thee,
Do so that it recovered be,
And be well ware to take no more
Counsaile, that greeneth after sore:
He is wise, that woll himselfe chaustie.

And though a young man in any wise

Trespane among, and do follic,
 Let him nat tarie, but hastellie
 Let him amend what so be mis,
 And eke I counsaile thee iwis,
 The god of love holly foryete,
 That hath thee in such paine sete,
 And thee in herte tormentoth so,
 I cannot seen how thou maist go
 Other waies thee to garison,
 For Daunger, that is so feloun,
 Felle purposeth thee to werreie,
 Which is full cruel the sooth to seie.

“ Am yet of Daunger cometh no blame,
 In reward of my daughter Shame,
 Which hath the roses in her ward,
 As she that may be no musard,
 And Wicked Tongue is with these two,
 That suffreth no man thider goe,
 For er a thing be doe he shall,
 Where that he cometh over all,
 In fortie places, if it be sought,
 Seie thing that never was done ne wrought,
 So much trespass is in his male,
 Of falsehoose for to faime a tale:
 Thou dealest with angry folke iwis,
 Wherefore to thee better is,
 From these folke away to fare,
 For they wold make thee live in care;
 This is the evill that love they call,
 Wherein there is but folly all,
 For love is folly everie dell;
 Who loveth, in no wise may do well,
 Ne set his thought on no good werke,
 His schoole he leseth, if he be a clerke,
 Or other craft eke, if that he be,
 He shall not thrive therein, for he
 In love shall have more passiou,
 Than mooke, hermite, or chanoun:
 This paine is heard out of measure,
 The joy may eke no while endure,
 And in the possession,
 Is much tribulation,
 The joye it is so short and lasting,
 And but in hap is the getting;
 For I see there many in travaile,
 That at last foule faille,
 I was nothing thy counsaile,
 When thou were made the homager
 Of god of love so hastely:
 Where was no wisdom but folly,
 Thine herte was jolly, but not sage,
 When thou were brought in such a rage,
 To yelde thee so readily,
 And to Love of his great maistrie.

“ I lede thee Love away to drive,
 That maketh the vetch not of thy live,
 The folly more fro day to day
 Shall growe, but thou it put away;
 Take with thy teeth the bridle fast,
 To daunt thy herte, and eke the cast
 If that thou mayest, to get the defence
 For to redresse thy first offence.
 Who so his herte alway wold leve,
 Shall soule among that shall him grove.”
 When I heard her thus me chastise,
 I moweward in full angry wise,

I prayed her cease of her speach,
 Either to chastise me or teach,
 To bidde me my thought refreine,
 Which Love hath caught in his demaine:
 “ What wene ye Love wold consent,
 (That me assaieth with bowe bent)
 To draw mine herte out of his houd,
 Which is so quickly in his bond?
 That ye counsaile, may never bee,
 For whan he first arested mee,
 He tooke mine herte so sore him till,
 That it is nothing at my will,
 He thought it so him for to obey,
 That he it sparred with a key.
 I pray you let me be all still,
 For ye may well, if that ye will,
 Your wordes wast in idleness,
 For utterly withouten gesse,
 All that ye saie is but in vaine,
 Me were lever die in the paine,
 Than Love to me ward should arette,
 Faked or treason on me sette,
 I wold me get pris or blame,
 And love true to save my name,
 Who that me chastiseth, I him hate.”

With that word, Reason went her gate,
 Whan she saw for no sermoning
 She might me fro my folly bring.
 Than dismayed I left all soole,
 Forwarie, forwardred as a foole,
 For I ne knew ne cherissaunce.
 Then fell into my remembrance,
 How Love bad me to purvey
 A fellow, to whome I might sey
 My counsaile and my privite,
 For that shuld much availe me.

With that bethought I me, that I
 Had a fellowe faste by,
 True and siker, courteous, and hend,
 And he called was by name a frend,
 A truer fellowe was no where noue,
 In hast to him I went anone,
 And to him all my woe I told,
 Fro him right nought I would withhold,
 I told him all without were,
 And made my complaint on Daungere,
 How for to sey he was hidous,
 And to me ward contrarious,
 The whiche through his cruelte,
 Was in point to have meimed me,
 With Bialacoil whan he me sey
 Within the gardin walke and pley,
 Fro me he made him for to goe,
 And I be left alone in woe:
 I durst no longer with him speake,
 For Daunger sayd he would be wreake,
 Whan that he sawe how I went,
 The freshe bothum for to hent,
 If I were hardie to come nere,
 Betweene the haje and the rosere,

This frend when he wist of my thought,
 He discomforted me right nought,
 But saied, “ Fellow, be nat so madde,
 Ne so abashed nor bestadde,
 My selfe I know full well Daungere,
 And how he is fierce of chere,
 At prime temps, Love to manace,
 Full oft I have beene in his case;
 A felon first though that he be,
 After thou shalt him souple see;

Of long passed I knew him welc,
 Ungodly first though men him fele,
 He wold meeke after in his bering
 Been, for scrules and obeising:
 I shall thee tell what thou shalt do:
 Meekely I rede thou go him to,
 Of herte pray him specially
 Of thy trespass to haue mercy,
 And hote him well here to please,
 That thou shalt neuer more him displese:
 Who can best serue of flattery,
 Shall please Daunger vterly."

My friend hath saied to me so welc,
 That he me eased hath some dele,
 And eke allegged of my tourment,
 For through him had I hardement
 Agains to Daunger for to go,
 To proue if I might meeke him so.

To Daunger came I all asbamed,
 The which afore me had blamed,
 Desiring for to please my wo,
 But ouer hedge durst I not go,
 For he forbode me the passage:
 I found him cruell in his rage,
 And in his hond a great bourdoun,
 To him I kneeled low adoun,
 Full mecke of port, and simple of chere,
 And saied, "Sir, I am comen here
 Onely to aske of you mercy,
 It greueth me full greatly
 That euer my life I wrathed you,
 But for to amend I am come now,
 With all my might, both loud and still,
 To doon right at your owne will,
 For Loue made me for to do
 That I haue trespassed hiderto,
 Fro whom I ne may withdraw mine herte,
 Yet shall I use for joy no smart
 (What so befall good or ill)
 Offande more againe your will,
 Leuer I haue endure disense,
 Than doe that should you displese.

"I row require, and pray that ye
 Of me haue mercy and pite,
 To stint your ire that greueth so,
 That I wold swere for euermo
 To be redressed at your liking
 If I trespass in any thing,
 Sauer that (I pray thee) graunt me
 A thing, that may not warned be,
 That I may loue all onely,
 None other thing of you aske I:
 I shall doon all ywis,
 If of your grace ye graunt me this,
 And ye may not letten mee,
 For well wote ye that loue is free:
 And I shall louen such that I will,
 Whoever like it well or ill:
 And yet ne would I not for all Fraunce
 Doe thing to doe you displeasaunce."

Than daunger fell in his entent
 For to foryeue his male talent,
 But all his wratie yet at last
 He hath released, I praide so fast:
 "Shortly" (he saied) "thy request
 Is not too mockell dishonest,

Ne I wold not werne it thee,
 For yet nothing engreueeth mee:
 For though thou loue thus euermore,
 To me is neither soft ne sore:
 Loue where that thee list, what retcheth me,
 So ferre fro my roses be:
 Trust not on me for none assaie,
 In any time for please the haie."

Thus hath he graunted my prayere,
 Than went I forth withonten were
 Unto my friend, and told him all,
 Which was right joyfall of my tale,
 (He saied) "Now goeth well thine affaire,
 He shall to thee be debonaire,
 Though he afore was displeasur,
 He shall hereafter be gracious:
 If he were touched on some good veine,
 He should yet reuen on thy peine,
 Suffer I rede, and no bouat make,
 Till thou at good mes maist him take."

By suffraunce, and by wordes soft,
 A man may ouercome oft
 Him that afore he had in drede,
 In bookes soothly as I rede.
 Thus hath my friend with great confort
 Auanced me with high disport,
 Which would me good, as much as I:
 And than anon full sodainely
 I toke my leave, and streight I went
 Unto the bay, for great talent
 I had to seeke the fresh bothoun,
 Wherein lay my saluation,
 And Daunger tooke keepe, if that I
 Keepe him couenaunt truly;
 So sore I dread his manning,
 I durst not breake his bidding,
 For least that I were of him shent,
 I brake not his commaundement,
 For to purchase his good will,
 It was for to come there till,
 His mercy was too ferre behind
 I kept, for I ne might it find.
 I complained and sighed sore,
 And languished euermore,
 For I durst nat ouerge,
 Unto the rose I loued so,
 Throughout my deming vterly,
 That he had knowlege certainly:
 Than Loue me ladde in such wise,
 That in me there was no feintise,
 Falshood, ne no trecherie:
 And yet he full of villanie,
 Of dadaine, and crueltie,
 On me ne would haue pite
 His cruell will for to refraine,
 Tho I wept alway, and me complain.

And while I was in this turment,
 Were come of grace, by God sent,
 Fraunchise, and with her Pity,
 Fulfille the bothum of bounty:
 They go to Daunger anon right
 To fether me with all hir might,
 And helpe in worde and in deed,
 For well they saw that it was need.
 First of her grace dame Fraunchise
 Hath taken of this emprise:
 She saied, "Daunger great wrong ye do
 To worche this man so much wo,

Or pisen him so angrily,
It is to you great villany:
I cannot see why he how
That he hath trespassed agayne you,
Sawe that he loveth, wherefore ye shold
The more in charitie of him hold:
The force of love maketh him do this,
Who would him blame he did amis.
His leneth more than he may do,
His paine is hard, ye may see to:
And love in no wise would consent
That ye haue power to repent,
For though that quicke ye would him slo,
Fro love his herte may nat go.

"Now swete sir, it is your ease
Him for to anger or disease.
Alas, what may it you assuance
To doen to him so great greaunance?
What worship is it agayne him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sith he so lowly eury wise
Is ready, as ye lust deuisse?
If love have caught him in his laas,
You for to beie in eury case,
And been your subject at your will,
Should ye therefore willeen him ill?
Ye shold him spare more all out,
Than him that is both proud and stout:
Cortoise would that ye succoure
Eem that been mecke vnder your cure:
His herte is hard that woll not mecke,
Whan men of meckenesse him beseeke."

"This is certaine," said Pite,
"We see oft that humilitie,
Both ire, and also felonie,
Unquibeth, and also malanchollie,
To stonde forth in such duresse
This cruelle and wickednesse:
Wherefore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to maintaine no lenger here
Such cruell warre agayne your man,
As wholly yours as euer he can,
Nor that ye wochen no more wo
Upon this castife that languiseth so,
Which woll no more to you trespass,
But put him wholly in your grace:
His offence was but lite,
The god of love it was to wite,
That he your thrall so greatly is,
And if ye harme him ye doen amis,
For he hath had full hard penaunce,
Sith that ye reft him thacquintaunce
Of Bialacoil, his moest joy,
Which all his paines might acoy:
He was before annoyed sore,
But than ye doobed him well more,
For he of blisse hath been full bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare:
Love hath to him great distresse,
He hath no need of more duresse:
Unleth from him your ire I rede,
Ye may not wimmen in this dede,
Maketh Bialacoil repaire agayne,
And haveth pitie ypon his paine,
Fw franchise woll, and I Pite,
That mercifull to him ye be,
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have ypon him misericorde,

For I you pray, and che moneste,
Nought to refusen our requeste:
For he is hard and fell of thought,
That for vs two woll doe right nought."

Dauger ne might no more endure,
He meeked him vnto measure.
"I woll in no wise," saith Daungere,
"Denis that ye haue asked here:
It were too great vncortoise,
I woll ye have the companie
Of Bialacoil, as ye deuisse,
I woll him let in no wise."

To Bialacoil than went in bie,
Franchise, and saied full curtealie:
"Ye haue too long be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungereous
Fro him to withdraw your presence,
Which hath do to him great offence,
That ye not would ypon him see,
Wherefore a sorrowfull man is hee:
Shape ye to pay him, and to please,
Of my love if ye woll have ease,
Fulfil his will, sith that ye know
Dauger is daunted and brought low
Through helpe of me and of Pite
You dare no more aferde be."

"I shall doe right as ye will"
Saith Bialacoil, "for it is skill,
Sith Daunger woll that it so be!"
Than franchise hath him sent to me.

BIALACOIL at the beginning
Salued me in his coming,
No straungenesse was in him scene,
No more than he had wrathed been,
As faire semblaunt than shewed he me,
And goodly, as afore did he,
And by the honde without dout,
Within the haie right all about,
He lad me with right good chere,
All enuiron the vergere,
That Daungere had me chased fro:
Now have I leave ouer all to go,
Now am I raised at my deuisse
Fro Hell vnto Paradise.
Thus Bialacoil of gentenesse
With all his paine and businesse,
Hath shewed me onely of grace
The efters of the swote place.

I saw the rose when I was nigh,
Was greater woxen, and more high,
Freshe, roddy, and faire of hew,
Of colour euer iliche new:
And when I had it long scene,
I saw that through the leaues greene
The rose spread to spannishing,
To scene it was a goodly thing,
But it ne was so sprede on brede,
That men within might know the sede,
For it couert was and close
Both with the leaues and with the rose,
The stalke was euen and grece upright,
It was thereon a goodly sight,
And well the better without wene
For the seede was not sene,
Full faire it sprad, the god of blisse,
For much another, as I gesse,
Afore ne was, ne more vermaile,
I was abawed for marquale,

For ever the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loues laas.
Long I abode there sooth to say,
Till Bialacoil I gan to pray,
When that I saw him in no wise
To me warnen his arseise,
That he me would graunt a thing,
Which to remember is well sitting :
This is to saipe, that of his grace
He would me yeus leisure and spaci
To me that was so desirous
To haue a kissing precious
Of the goodly fresh rose,
That so sweetly smelleth in my nose,
" For if it you displeased nought,
I woll gladly, as I haue sought,
Haue a kias thereof freely
Of your yeft, for certainly
I woll none haue but by your leue,
So loth me were you for to greue."

He said, " Frennd, so God me spede,
Of Chastitie I haue such drede,
Thou shouldest not warned be for me,
But I dare not for Chastite :
Againe her dare I not misdo,
For alway biddeth she me so
To yere no louer leaue to kisse,
For who therto may winnen wise,
He of the surplus of the prai
May live in hope to get some day,
For who so kissing may ataiue,
Of loues paine hath (sooth to saine)
The best and moste auenaunt,
And earnest of the remenaunt."

Or his answer I sighed sore,
I durst assay him tho no more,
I had such drede to greve him aye ;
A man shuld not too much assaye
To chafe his friend out of measure,
Nor put his life in auenture ;
For no man at the first stroke
Ne may not fell downe an oke,
Nor of the reisis haue the wine,
Till grapes be ripe and well afine,
Be sore empressed, I you ensure,
And drawn out of the pressure :
But I forpeined wonder strong,
Though that I abode right long
And after the kiasse, in paine and we,
Sith I to kiasse desired so :
Till that renning ou my distresse,
There come Venus the goddessse
(Which aye werrieth Chastite)
Came of her grace to succour me,
Whose might is know ferre and wide,
For she is mother of Cupide,

THE god of Loue, blinde as stone,
That helpeth louers many one.
This lady brought in her right hond
Of breuning fire a blasing brood,
Whereof the flame and hote fire
Hath many a lady in desire
Of loue brought, and sore hette,
And in her seruice her herte is sette.

This lady was of good entaile,
Right wonderfull of appaiaile,
By her attire so bright and shene,
Men might perceine well and see,
She was not of religion :
Nor I will make mentiou
Nor of robe, nor of treasure,
Of broche, neither of her rich attour,
Ne of her girdle about her side,
For that I will not long abide,
But knoweth well, that certainly
She was arraied richely ;
Deuoid of pride certaine she was,
To Bialacoil she went apas,
And to him shortly in a clause
She said : " Sir, what is the cause
Ye ben of port so dangerous
Unto this louer, and dainous,
To graunt him nothing but a kiasse ?
To warne it him ye done amisse,
Sith well ye wot, how that hee
Is Loues seruauant, as ye may see,
And hath beantie, where through is
Worthy of loue to haue the blis :
How he is seemely behold and see,
How he is faire, how he is free,
How he is swote and debonaire,
Of age young, lusty, and faire,
There is no lady so hautaine,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chastelaine,
That I nolde hold her vngodly,
For to refuse him viterly.

" His breath is also good and swete,
And eke his lips roddy and mete,
Onely to plaine, and to kiasse,
Graunt him a kiasse of genilenisse.

" His teeth aree also white and clene,
He thinketh wrong withouten wene,
If ye now warne him, trusteth me,
To graunt that a kiasse haue he,
The lasse ye helpe him that ye haste,
And the more time shull ye waste."

When the flame of the very brood
That Venus brought in her right hond,
Had Bialacoil with his hete smete,
Among he bad me withouten lete,
Graunt to me the rose kiasse,
Than of my paine I gan to lisse,
And to the rose anon went I,
And kissed it full faithfully :
There need no man aske if I was blith,
When the savour soft and lith
Stroke to mine herte without more,
And me allegged of my sore,
So was I full of joy and blisse,
It is faire such a flour to kiasse,
It was so swote and sauerous,
I might not be so anguishous,
That I mote glad and jolly be,
When that I remembre me,
Yet euer among soothly to saine,
I suffer noie and muche paine.

THE see may neuer be so still,
That with a little wind at will
Overwhelme and tourne also,
As it were wood in waves go,
After the calme the trouble soone
Mote follow, and change as the Moone.

Right so fareth Love, that selde in one
 Holdeth his anker, for right anon
 Whas they in case wene best to live,
 They ben with tempest all fordrine :
 Who scructh Love, can tell of wo,
 The stoundmele joy mote overgo,
 Now he hurteth, and now he curath,
 For selde in a point Love endureth.

Now is it right me to proceed,
 How Shame gan meddle and take heed,
 Through whom fell angers I have hade,
 And how the strong wall was made,
 And the castle of brede and length,
 That god of love wan with his strength :
 All this romance will I set,
 And for no thing me will I let,
 So that it liking to her be,
 That is the soure of beaute,
 For she may best my labour quite,
 That I for her love shall endite.

Wicked Tongue, that the couine
 Of every lover can define
 Worst, and addeth more somdele
 (For wicked tongue saith never wele)
 To me ward bare he right great hate,
 Epyng me early and late,
 Tyl he hath seene the great chere
 Of Bialacoil and me ifere :
 Be might not his tongue withstand
 Worse to reporte than he foud,
 He was so full of cursed rage ;
 That hit him wele of his lineage,
 For him an irous woman bare ;
 His tongue was filed sharpe and square,
 Poppant and right kernung,
 And wonder bitter in speaking ;
 For whan that he me gan cappy,
 He swore (affirming sikerly)
 Betweene Bialacoil and me
 Was euill acquaintaunce and priue :
 He spake thereof so folithe,
 That he awakid lelouise,
 Which all afraied in his rising,
 When that he heard langling,
 He ran anon as he were wood
 To Bialacoil there that he stood,
 Which had leuer in this caas
 Hane ben at Reines or Amias,
 For fote hote in his felonie,
 To him thus said lelouise :
 " Why hast thou ben so negligent,
 To keopen, whan I was absent,
 The verger here left in thy ward ?
 To me thou haddest no regard,
 To trust (to thy confusion)
 Him thus, to whom suspicion
 I have right great, for it is nele,
 It is well shewed by the dede,
 Great fault in thee now have I found,
 By God anon thou shalt be bound,
 And faste locken in a toure,
 Without refuite or succour.

" For Shame too long hath be thee fro,
 Overcome she was ago,
 Whan thou hast lost both drede and fere,
 It seemed well she was not here,
 She was bumie in no wise,
 To keepe thee and chastise,

And for to helpen Chastite
 To keepe the roser, as thinketh me,
 For then this boy knawe so boldly,
 Ne should not have be hardy
 In this verge had such game,
 Which now me turneth to great shame."

BIALACOIL nist what to say,
 Full faine he would have fled away,
 For feare have bid, nere that he
 All suddainly tooke him with me :
 And whan I saw he had so,
 This lelouise take vs two,
 I was astonied, and knew no rede,
 But fled away for very drede.

Then Shame came forth full simply,
 She wend have trespced full greatly,
 Humble of her port, and made it simple,
 Wearing a vaille in stede of wimple,
 As nonnes done in hir abbey :
 Because her herte was in affray,
 She gan to speake within a throw
 To lelouise, right wonder low.

First of his grace she besought,
 And said : " Sir, ne leueth nought
 Wicked Tongue, that false espie,
 Which is so glad to faime and lie,
 He hath you made, through flattering,
 On Bialacoil a false leasing :
 His falsenesse is not now anew,
 It is too long that he him knew :
 This is not the first daie,
 For Wicked Tongue hath custome aie,
 Younge folkes to bewrie,
 And false lesings on hem lie.

" Yet neuerthelesse I see among,
 That the soigne it is so long
 Of Bialacoil, hertes to lure,
 In Loves service for to endure,
 Drawing suche folke him to,
 That he had nothing with to do,
 But in soothnesse I trowe nought,
 That Bialacoil had ever in thought
 To do trespace or villanie,
 But for his mother Curtesie
 Hath taught him euer to be
 Good of acquaintaunce and priue,
 For he loveth none heautnesse,
 But mirth and pley, and all gladnesse ;
 He hateth all trechous,
 Soleine folke and eniuous :
 For ye weten how that he
 Woll ever glad and joyfull be
 Honestly with folke to pley :
 I have be negligent in good fey
 To chastise him, therefore now I
 Of herte I crie you here mercy,
 That I have ben so recheles
 To tamen him withouten locs,
 Of my folly I me repent,
 Now woll I hote set mine entent
 To keepe both low and still
 Bialacoil to do your will."

" Shame, Shame" (said lelouy)
 " To be bitrashed great drede hane I.

" Lecherie hath clombe so his,
 That almost bleared is mine eie,
 No wonder is, if that drede hane I,
 Ouer all reigneth Lechery,

Whose might groweth night and day,
 Both in cloyster and in abbey,
 Chastite is worried ower all,
 Therefore I wolle with sikar wall
 Close both roses and roseere,
 I have too long in this manere
 Left hem vncloused wilfully:
 Wherefore I am right inwardly
 Sorrowfull, and repent me,
 But now they shall no lenger be
 Unclosed, and yet I drede sore,
 I shall repent forthermore,
 For the game goeth all amiss,
 Counsaile I must new ywis,
 I haue too long trusted thee,
 But now it shall no lenger bee:
 For he may best in enery cost
 Deceiue that men tresten most:
 I see well that I am nigh shent,
 But if I set my full entent
 Remedy to puruey:
 Wherefore close I shall the wey
 From hem that wolle the rose espie,
 And come to wait me villonie,
 For in good faith and in trouth
 I wolle not let for no slooth
 To lye the more in sikernesse,
 Do make anon a fortrese.
 Than close the roses of good sauour;
 In middes shall I make a tour
 To put Bialacoil in prison,
 For ever I drede me of tresson;
 I trow I shall him keepe so,
 That he shall haue no might to go
 About to make compaignie
 To hem that thinke of villanie,
 Ne to no such as hath ben here
 Afore, and found in him good chere,
 Which han assailed him to shend,
 And with his trowardise to blend,
 A foole is eith to bequile,
 But may I lye a little while,
 He shall forthinke his faire semblaunt."
 And with that word came Drede Auaunt,
 Which was abashed, and in great fere,
 When he wist Ielousie was there.
 He was for drede in such affray,
 That not a worde durst he say,
 But quaking stood full still alone
 (Till Ielousie his way was gone)
 Saue Shame, that him not forsoke,
 Both Drede and she full sore quoke,
 That at last Drede abraide,
 And to his cousin Shame saide,
 "Shame" (he said) "in soothfastnesse,
 To me it is great heouinesse,
 That the noise so ferre is go,
 And the slaunder of vs two:
 But sithe that it is befall,
 We may it not againe call,
 When once sprung is a fame:
 For many a yeare withouten blame
 We haue ben, and many a day,
 For many an April and many a May
 We han passed, not ashamed,
 Till Ielousie hath vs blamed
 Of mistrust and suspencion
 Causelesse, without enyexon:
 Go we to Daunger hastily,
 And let vs shew him openly,

That he hath not aright wrought,
 When that he set not his thought
 To keepe better the purposse;
 In his doing he is not wis.
 He hath to vs do great wrong,
 That hath suffred now so long
 Bialacoil to haue his will
 All his lustes to fulfill:
 He must ameed it vterly,
 Or els shall he villanously
 Exiled be out of this lond:
 For he the warre may not withstand
 Of Ielousie, nor the greefe,
 Sith Bialacoil is at mischeefe."

To Daunger, Shame and Drede anon
 The right way been gon:
 The chorle they founde hem aforne
 Liggig vnder an hawthorne.
 Under his head no pillow was,
 But in the stede a trusse of gras:
 He slombred, and a nappe he toke,
 Till Shame pryncesly him shoke,
 And great manace on him gan make.
 "Why sleepest thou when thou shouldst wake?"
 (Quod Shame) "thou dost vs villanie,
 Who trustest thee, he doth folie,
 To keepe roses or bothusis
 When they be faire in hir seasons:
 Thou art worse too familiere
 Where thou shouldst be straunge of chere,
 Stout of thy port, ready to grooe:
 Thou doest great folly for to leue
 Bialacoil here in to call
 The younger man to abonden vs all:
 Though that thou sleepest, we may here,
 Of Ielousie great noise here,
 Art thou now late, rise vp and hye,
 And stop soone and deliueriye
 All the gaps of the hay;
 Do no fauour I thee pray:
 It falleth nothing to thy name,
 To make fair semblant, were thou maist blame"

"If Bialacoil be sweet and free,
 Dogged and fell thou shuldest bee,
 Froward and outrageous iwis,
 A chorle chaungeth that curteis is:
 This haue I heard oft in saying,
 That man may for no daunting
 Make a sperhauke of a bozarde:
 All men hold thee for musarde,
 That debunaire haue founden thee,
 It siteth thee nought curteis to bee,
 To do men pleasaunce or seruise,
 In thee it is recreaundise:
 Let thy werkes ferre and nere
 Be like thy name, which is Daungere."
 Then all abashed in shewing,
 Anon spake Drede, right thus saying,
 And said, "Daunger, I drede me,
 That thou be wolle besie be
 To keepe that thou hast to keepe,
 When thou shuldest wake, thou art asleep:
 Thou shalt be greued certainly,
 If thee aspie Ielousy,
 Or if he finde thee in blame.
 He hath to do assailed Shame,

And chased away with great manace
 Bialacoi out of this place,
 And sweareth shortly that he shall
 Enclose him in a sturdy wall;
 And all is for thy wickednesse,
 For that thee failteth straungenesse;
 Thine herte I trow be failed all;
 Thou shalt repent in speciall,
 If lelouise the soothe knew,
 Thou shalt forthinke, and sore rew."

With that the chorle his clubbe gan shake,
 Frowning his eyes gan to make,
 And hidous chere, as man in rage,
 For ire he brest in his visage:
 Whan that he heard him blamed so,
 He said, "Out of my witte I go,
 To be discourte I haue great wrong,
 Certes, I haue now liued too long,
 Sith I may not this closer keepe,
 All quicke I would be dolcen depe,
 If any man shall more repaire
 Into this garden for foule or faire,
 Mine herte for ire gothe afeer,
 That I let any entre here,
 I haue doe folly now I see,
 But now it shall amended be,
 Who setteth foot here any more,
 Truly he shall repent it sore,
 For no man more into this place
 Of me to enter shall haue grace,
 Lenv I had with swerdes twaine,
 Throughout mine herte, in euery vaine
 Perced to be, with many a wound,
 That slouth should in me be found:
 From henceforth by night or day,
 I shall defend it if I may
 Withouten any exception
 Of eche mauner condition,
 And if I it any man graunt,
 Holdeth me for recreant."

Then Daunger on his feet gan stand,
 And bent a burdon in his hood,
 Wroth in his ire he left he sought,
 But through the verger he hath sought,
 If he might find hole or trace,
 Where through that me mote forth by pace,
 Or any gappe, he did it close,
 That no man might touch a rose
 Of the roser all about,
 He shetteth euery mea without.

Thus day by day Daunger is went,
 More wonderfull and more diuers,
 And feller eke than euer he was,
 For him full oft I sing alas,
 For I me may noight through his ire
 Recouer that I most desire;
 Mine herte alas wolle brest awo,
 For Bialacoi I wrathed so:
 For certainly in euery member
 I quake, when I me remember
 Of the botham, which I would
 Fall oft a day seene and behold,
 And when I thinke vpon the kisse,
 And how moche ioy and blisse,
 I had through the saour swete,
 For want of it I grone and grette:
 Me thinketh I fele yet in my nose
 The swete saour of the rose,

And now I wote that I mote go
 So ferre the fresh floures fro,
 To me full welcome were the death,
 Absence thereof (alas) me sleeth,
 For whylome with this rose, alas,
 I touched nose, mouth, and face,
 But now the death I must abide;
 But Love consent another tide,
 That ones I touch may and kisse,
 I trow my paine shall neuer lise;
 Thereon is all my couetise,
 Which brent my heart in many wise,
 Now shall repaire againe sighing,
 Long watch on nights, and no sleeping,
 Thought in wishing, turment, and wo,
 With many a turning to and fro,
 That halfe my paine I cannot tell,
 For I am fallen into Hell,
 From paradise and wealth, the more
 My turment greueth more and more,
 Annoyeth now the bitternesse,
 That I toforne haue felt sweetnessse,
 And Wicked Tongue, through his falsheede,
 Caueth all my wo and drede,
 On me he lieth a pitous charge,
 Because his tongue was too large.

Now it is time shortly that I
 Tell you something of lelouise,
 That was in great suspicion:
 About him left he no mason,
 That stone could lay, he narrower,
 He hired hem to make a tour:
 And first the roses for to keepe,
 About hem made he a ditch depe,
 Right wonder large, and also brode,
 Upon the whiche also stode
 Of squared stone a sturdy wall,
 Which on a cragge was founded all,
 And right great thicknesse eke it bare,
 About it was founded square
 An hundred fadome on euery side,
 It was all liche long and wide,
 Least any time it were assailed,
 Full well about it was battailed,
 And round eniiron eke were set
 Full many a rich and faire tournet,
 At euery corner of this wall
 Was set a tour full principall,
 And eueriche had without fable
 A porticullise defensible
 To keepe off enemies, and to grece,
 That there hir force would prece.

And eke amidde this surpris
 Was made a tour of great maistrise,
 A fairer saugh no man with sight,
 Large and wide, and of great might,
 They dradde none assaut,
 Of ginne, goune, nor staffaut,
 The temprure of the mortere
 Was made of liquour wonder dere,
 Of quicke lime persant and agre,
 The which was tempered with vinegre.

The stoon was hard of adamaunt,
 Whereof they made the foundemaunt,
 The toure was round made in compes,
 In all this world no richer was,
 Ne better ordeined therewithall,
 About the tour was made a wall,
 So that betwixt that and the tour,
 Roses were set of sweet saour,

With many roses that they bere,
 And eke within the castle were
 Springolds, gounes, bowes, and archers,
 And eke about at corners
 Men seine ouer the wall stound
 Great engines, who were nere bond,
 And in the kernels here and there,
 Of arblastens great plentie were.
 Nouse armour might hir stroke withstound,
 It were folly to prease to hood;
 Without the diche were listes made,
 With wall battailed large and brade,
 For men and horse should not attaine
 Too nigh the diche ouer the plaine.
 Thus Ielousie hath enuiron
 Sette about his garnison
 With walles round, and diche deepe,
 Onely the roser for to keepe,
 And Daunger early and late
 The keyes kept of the vttar gate,
 The which opened toward the east,
 And he had with him at least
 Thirtie seruaunts echone by name.

That other gate kept Shame,
 Which opened, as it was couth,
 Toward the parte of the south,
 Sergeaunts assigned were her to
 Full many, her will for to do.
 Than Drede had in her bailla
 The keeping of the constablerie,
 Toward the north I vnderstound,
 That opened vpon the left hond,
 The which for nothing may be surs,
 But if she doe busie cure
 Early on morrow and also late,
 Strongly to shette and barre the gate:
 Of euery thing that she may see,
 Drede is aferde, where so she be,
 For with a pufte of litle wind,
 Drede is astonied in her mind,
 Therefore for stealing of the rose,
 I rede her nat the yate vncluse,
 A foules flight would make her flee,
 And eke a shaddow if she it see.

THAN Wicked Tongue full of enuie,
 With souldiers of Normandie,
 As he that causeth all debate,
 Was keeper of the fourth gate,
 And also to the tother three,
 He went full ofte for to see.
 When his lotte was to walke a night,
 His instrumentes would he dight,
 For to blowe and make sounne,
 Ofter than he hath enchesounne,
 And walken oft vpon the wall,
 Corners and wickettes ouer all,
 Full narrow searchen and espie;
 Though he nought fond, yet would he lie
 Discordaunt euer fro armonie,
 And dissoned from melodie,
 Controue he would, and foule faile,
 With hornepipes of Corneweise.
 In floites made he discordaunce,
 And in his musike with mischaunce,
 He would seine with notes newe,
 That he fond no woman trew,
 Ne that he saw neuer in his life,
 Unto her husband a trew wife:

Ne none so full of honeste,
 That she nil laugh and merry be,
 Whan that she heareth or may espie
 A man speaken of lecherie.
 Eueriche of hem hath some vice,
 One is dishonest, another is nice,
 If one be full of villanie,
 Another with a licourous eis,
 If one be full of woxtonnesse,
 Another is a chideresse.

Thus Wicked tong, God yeve him shame,
 Can put hem euerichone in blame,
 Without desert and causelesse,
 He lieth, though they ben guiltlesse;
 I have pity to seee the sorrow,
 That waketh both euen and morrow,
 To innocents doth such greuaunce,
 I pray God yeue him euill chaunce,
 That he euer so busie is,
 Of any woman to seine amis.

Eke Ielousie God confound,
 That hath made a toure so round,
 And made about a garison,
 To sette Bialacoil in prison,
 The which is shette there in the tour,
 Full long to holde there soour,
 There for liue in penaunce,
 And for to do him more greuaunce,
 Which hath ordained Ielousie,
 An olde vecke for to spie
 The manner of his gouernaunce,
 The which deuill in her enfaunce
 Had learned of Loues art,
 And of his plais tooke her part,
 She was expert in his seruise,
 She knew each wrenche and euery gise
 Of loue, and euery wile,
 It was hard her to beguile.

Of Bialacoil she toke aye hede,
 That euer he lieth in wo and drede,
 He kept him coy and eke priue,
 Least in him she hadde see
 And folly countenance,
 For she knew all the old daunce.

And after this, whan Ielousie
 Had Bialacoil in his baillie,
 And shette him vp that was so free,
 For sere of him he would be,
 He trusteth sore in his castell,
 The strong werke him liketh well,
 He dradde nat that no glotons
 Should steale his roses or bothoms,
 The roses weren assured all
 Defenced with the strong wall,
 Now Ielousie full well may be
 Of drede deuoid in liberta,
 Whether that he sleepe or wake,
 For of his roses may none betake.

But I (alaa) now mourns shall,
 Because I was without the wall,
 Full muche dole and none I made,
 Who had wist what wo I hade,
 I trow he would haue had pite,
 Loue too deare had solde me
 The good that of his loue had I,
 I went about it all quietly,
 But now through doubling of my paine
 I see he well it sell againe,

And me a new bargaine lere,
 The which all out the mure is dere,
 For the solace that I haue lorne,
 Than I had it neuer afore;
 Certaine I am full like indeede
 To him that cast in earth his seed,
 And bath ioy of the new springing,
 When it greeneth in the ginning,
 And is also faire and fresh of flour,
 Lestie to scene, swote of odour,
 But ere he it in his sheues shere,
 May fall a weather that shall it dere,
 And make it to fade and fall,
 The stalks, the greins, and floures all,
 That to the tillers is fordone,
 The hope that he had too soone:
 I drede certaine that so fare I,
 For hope and traualle sikerly
 Ben me beraft all with a storme,
 The flour will soden of my corne,
 For Loue hath so auanced me,
 When I began my priuite,
 To Bialacoil all for to tell,
 When I ne found froward ne fell,
 But toke agree all whole my play;
 But Loue is of so hard assay,
 That all at ones he reued me,
 When I went best abouen to haue be.
 It is of Loue, as of Fortune,
 That chapangeth oft, and nil contene,
 Which whylome wolle of folke smile,
 And glombe on hem another while,
 Now friend, now foe, shalk her feele,
 For a twinkling tourneth her wheele.
 She can writhe her head away,
 This is the concourse of her play,
 She can arise that doeth mourne,
 And whirle adoune, and ouertourne
 Who sitteth highest, but as her lust,
 A foole is he that wolle her trust,
 For it is I that am come down
 Through charge and reuolucoun,
 Sith Bialacoil mote fro me twin,
 Sette in her prison yonde within,
 En absence at mine herte I fele,
 For all my ioy and all mine hele
 Was in him and in the rose,
 That but you will, which him doeth close,
 Open, that I may him see,
 Loue wolle not that I cured bee
 Of the paines that I endure,
 Nor of my cruell auenture.

As, Bialacoil mine owne dere,
 Though thou be now a prisounere,
 Keepe at least thine herte to me,
 And suffer nat that it daunted be,
 Ne let not lealouisie in his rage,
 Puttere thine heart in no seruage,
 Although he chastice thee without,
 And make thy bodie vnto him lout,
 Haue herte as hard as Diamant,
 Redfast, and naught pliant:
 In prison through thy bodie bee
 As large keepe thine herte free,
 A true herte will not plie
 For no mannaice that it may drie.
 If lealousie doeth thee paine,
 Quite him his while thus againe,
 To venge thee at least in thought,

If other way thou maigest nought,
 And in this wise subtly
 Worsh, and winne the maistrice.
 But yet I am in great affray,
 Least thou doe nat as I say,
 I drede thou canst me great maugre,
 That thou emprisoned art for me,
 But that nat for my trespas,
 For through me neuer discovered was
 Yet thing that ought be secrete:
 Well more annoie is in me,
 Than is in thee of this mischaunce,
 For I endure more hard penaunce
 Than any can saine or thinke,
 That for the sorrow almost I sink,
 When I remember me of my wo,
 Full nigh out of my witte I go.

Inward mine herte I feele blede,
 For comfortlesse the death I drede,
 Owe I nat well to haue distresse,
 When false, through hir wickednesse,
 And traitours, that arae envious,
 To noien me be so coragious.

Ah, Bialacoil full well I see,
 That they hem shap to deceiue thee,
 To make thee buxom to hir law,
 And with hir corde thee to draw
 Where so hem lust, right at hir will,
 I drede they haue thee brought theretill:
 Without comfort, thought me sleath,
 This game would bring me to my death,
 For if your good will I lese,
 I mote be dead, I may not chese,
 And if that thou foryete me,
 Mine herte shall neuer in liking be,
 Nor elsewhere find solace,
 If I be put out of your grace,
 As it shall neuer ben I hope,
 Than should I fall in wanhope.

Alas, in wanhope, nay parde,
 For I wolle neuer despaird be;
 If Hope me faile, than am I
 Ungracious and unworthy;
 In Hope I wolle comforted be,
 For Loue, when he betought her me,
 Saied, that Hope where so I go,
 Should aye be releas to my wo.

But what and she my bales bete,
 And be to me curteis and swete?
 She is in nothing full certaine,
 Louers she put in full great paine,
 And maketh hem with wo to dele,
 Her faire beheste decraineth fele,
 For she wolle babote sikerly,
 And faulen after viterly.

Ah, that is a full noyous thing,
 For many a louner in louing
 Hangeth upon her, and trusteth fast,
 Which lese hir traualle at the last.

Of thing to commen she wat right nought,
 Therefore if it be wisely sought,
 Her counsaile follie is to take,
 For many times, when she wolle make
 A full yond silligioun, I drede,
 That afterward there shall indede
 Follow an euill conclusion,
 This put me in confusion.
 For many times I haue it scene,
 That many haue beguiled bene,
 For trust that they haue set in hope,
 Which fell hem afterward a slope.

But natheles yet gladly she would,
That he that wold him with her hold,
Had all times her purpose clere,
Without deceit any where,
That she desirith slykerly;
Whan I her blamed, I did folly;
But what availleth her good will,
Whan she ne may staunch my stound ill,
That helpeth litte that she may do,
Or take behest unto my wo:
And heste certaine in no wise,
Without lifete is not to preise.

When heste and deed ascunder vary,
They doen a great contrary;
Thus am I posted vp and doun
With dole, thought, and confusioun,
Of my disease there is no number,
Daunger and Shame me encumber,
Drede also, and Jalousie,
And Wicked Tongue full of envie,
Of which the sharpe and cruell ire
Full oft me put in great manere;
They haue my ioie fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they haue bestet
Fro me in prison wickedly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it wold my hane be,
But I the sooner may him see.

And yet moreouer worst of all,
There is nat to keepe, foule her befall,
A rimpel rocke ferre roune in rage,
Frowning and yellow in her visage,
Which in await lieth day and night,
That noon of him may haue a sight.

Now mote my sorrow enforced be,
Full sooth it is, that Loue yafe me
Three wonder yetes of his grace,
Which I haue lorne, now in this place,
Sith they ne maie without drede
Helpen but litte, who taketh hede:
For her availleth no Sweet Thought,
And Sweet Speech helpeth right nought,
The third was called Sweet Looking,
That now is lorne without losing.

Yetes were faire, but nat for thy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil loosed bee
To gone at large and to be free,
For him my life lieth all in dout,
But if he come the rather out.

Alas, I trow it wold nat beene,
For how should I euermore him see?
He may nat out, and that is wrong,
Because the toure is so strong,
How should he out, or by whose prowess
Of so strong a forteresse?

By me certaine it will be do,
God wote I haue no wit thereto,
But well I wote I was in rage,
When I to Loue did homage;
Who was the cause (in soothfastnesse)
But her selfe dame Idleness?
Which me comide through faire priere
To enter into that faire vergere:
She was to blame me to leue,
The which now doeth me sore greue,
A fooles word is nought to trow,
Ne worth an apple for to low,

Men should hem snibbe bitterly,
At prime temps of his folly:
I was a foole, and she me leued,
Through whom I am right nought releued,
She accomplished all my will,
That now me greueth wonder ill.

Reason me saied what should fall,
A foole my selfe I may well call,
That looe aside I had not laied,
And trowed that dame Reason saied.
Reason had both skill and right,
When she me blamed with all her might
To meddle of looe, that bath me absent,
But certaine now I wold repent.

Why should I repent? Nay parde,
A false traitour then should I be,
The devils engins wold me take,
If I Love wold forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly betray.
Should I at micheweefe hate him? nay,
Sith he now for his courtisie
Is in prison of jelousie;
Courtisie certaine did he me,
So much, that it may not yolden be,
When he the haie pannen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete,
Should I therefore come him maugre?
Nay certaine, it shall nat be,
For Love shall never (yeue God will)
Here of me, through word or will,
Offence or complaint more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idleness:
For certes, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir courtisie.
There is not els, but suffer and thinke,
And waken whan I should winke,
Abide in hope, till Loue through chance
Send me succour or allegaunce,
Expectaunt' aye till I may see,
To gotten mercie of that swete.

Whilome I thinke how Loue to see
Saied he wold take at grece
My service, if vnpatience
Caused me to doen offence:
He saied, "In thanke I shall it take,
And high maister els thee make,
If wickednesse ne reue it thee,
But none I trow that shall nat bee."
These were his wordes by and by,
It seemed he loved me truly.

Now is there not but serue him wele,
If that I thinke his thanke to fele,
My good, mine harme, litte hole in me,
In Love may no default be,
For true Love ne failed neuer man:
Soothly the faute mote needs than
As God forbide, be found in me,
And how it commeth, I cannot see.
Now let it gone as it may go,
Whether Love wold succour me or no,
He may do hole on me his will,
I am so sore bound him til,
From his service I may not fene,
For life and death withouten ween
Is in his hond, I may nat chese,
He may me doe both winne and lese,

And with so sore he doth me greave,
 Yet if my lust he would abouse,
 To Balacoil goodly to be,
 I yene no force what fell on me :
 For though I die, as I mote needs,
 I pray Love of his goddlyhede,
 To Balacoil doe gentleness,
 For whom I live in such distresse,
 That I mote dien for penance,
 Not first, without repentance,
 And will me confesse in good entent,
 And make in hast my testament,
 As known doen that feelen smart :
 To Balacoil leave I mine herte
 All hole, without departing,
 For doubtes sake of repeating.

COMERT REASON VIEWT A LAMAUNT.

As I made my passage
 In complaint, and in cruell rage,
 And I not where to finde a leche,
 And cooth unto mine helping ache,
 And helpe agayne comen doun
 Out of her toure I saw Reason,
 Secret and wise, and full pleasaunt,
 And of her port full avenaunt ;
 The right waie she tooke to me,
 Which stood in gret perplexite
 That was pushed in every side,
 And I not where I might abide,
 All the demerely and of chere
 Said to me as she came nere.
 * Miss owne friend, art thou greved,
 For is this quarrell yet atcheued
 Of love's side? Anone me tell,
 And thou not yet of love thy fill ?
 And thou nat wearie of thy service
 And thee hath in suche wise ?
 * What joy hast thou in thy loving ?
 Is sweet or bitter thing ?
 And thou yet chere, let me see,
 And best thy succour might bee ?
 * Thou servest a full noble lord,
 And maketh thee thrall for thy reward,
 Which eye reneweth thy tourment,
 With folly so he hath thee blent ;
 How fell in mischeefe thilke day,
 How thou diddest the sooth to say
 And eke homage
 And wroughtest nothing as the sage ;
 How thou became his liege man,
 How thou diddest a great folie than ;
 How thou wistest nat what fell thereto,
 And what lord thou haddest to do,
 How thou haddest him well know
 How thou haddest nought be brought so low,
 How if thou wiste what it were,
 How thou haddest serve him halfe a yere,
 How thou haddest a wecke, nor halfe a day,
 How thou haddest yet an houre without delay :
 How thou haddest loved paramours,
 How thou haddest lordship is so full of short :
 How thou haddest him ought ?
 * Anone. Ye, dame, parde.
 * Anone. Nay nay. Lamaunt. Yes I.
 * Anone. Wherefore let see.
 * Anone. Of that he said I should be
 How thou haddest to have such lord as (he)

And maister of such seignorie.
 Reason. Knowest him no more ?
 Lamaunt. Nay, certes, I,
 Save that he yafe me rules there,
 And went his way I mist where,
 And I abode bound in ballance,
 Lo there a noble cognisaunce.

REASON.

But I wolle that thou know him now
 Ginning and end, sith that thou
 Art so anguious and mate,
 Disfigured out of estate,
 There may no wrache have more of wo,
 Ne carliffe none enduren so,
 It were to every man sitting,
 Of his lord have knowynging :
 For if thou knew him out of dout,
 Lightly thou shouldest scapen out
 Of thy prison that marreth thee.

LAMAUNT.

Yea dame with my lord is hee,
 And I his man made with mine bond,
 I would right faine understand
 To knowe of what kind he be,
 If any would enforme me.

REASON.

" I would" (said Reason) " thee lere,
 Sith thou to lerne hast such desire,
 And shewe thee withouten fable
 A thing that is not demonstrable ;
 Thou shalt withouten science,
 And know withouten experience
 The thing that may not knowen bee,
 Ne wist ne sheweth in no degree,
 Thou maiest the sooth of it not witten,
 Though in thee it were witten,
 Thou shalt not knowe thereof more,
 While thou art ruled by his lore,
 But unto him that loue wolle fle,
 The knotte may unloued be,
 Which hath to thee, as it is found,
 So long to knitte and not unbound,
 Now set well thine entencion,
 To heare of loue the description.

Loke it is an hateful pena,
 A free acquitance without releas,
 And through the fret fall of falschode,
 A sikernes all set in drede,
 In herte is a despairing hope,
 And full of hope it is wanhope,
 Wise woodnesse, and void reason,
 A swete perill in to droun,
 An heaue burthen light to beare,
 A wicked way away to weare.
 It is Caribdes perillous,
 Disagreable and gracious,
 It is discordaunce that can accord,
 And accordaunce to discord,
 It is counting without science,
 Wisedome without sapience,
 Witte without discrecion,
 Hauoir without possession ;
 It is like heale and hole sicknesse,
 A trust drowned and drookennesse,

And health full of maladie,
 And charitie full of curie,
 And anger full of aboundance,
 And a greedie sustenance,
 Delight right full of heauynesse,
 And drierid full of gladnesse,
 Bitter sweetnesse and sweet error,
 Right euill sauoured good sauour,
 Sin that pardon hath within,
 And pardon spotted without sin,
 A paine also it is ioyous,
 And felonie right pitous,
 Also play that selde is stable,
 And stedfast right menable,
 A strength weiked to stond upright,
 And feeblenesse full of might,
 Witte unauised, sage follie,
 And ioy full of tourmentrie,
 A laughter it is weeping aie,
 Rest that traouaileth night and daie,
 Also a sweete Hell it is,
 And a sorrowfull Paradis,
 A pleassant gaile and easie prison,
 And full of froste summer season,
 Prime temps full of frostes white,
 And Maie deuoid of all delite,
 With seer braunches, blossoms vngrene,
 And new fruit filled with winter tene,
 It is a slowe may nat forbear,
 Ragges ribaned with gold to wear,
 For also well woll loue be sette
 Under ragges as rich rotchette,
 And eke as well by amorettes
 In mourning blacke, as bright burnettes,
 For none is of so mokell prise,
 Ne no man founden so wise,
 Ne none so high of parage,
 Ne no man found of witte so sage,
 No man so hardie ne so wight,
 Ne no man of so mokell might,
 None so fulfilled of bounte,
 That he with loue may daunted be;
 All the worlde holdeth this way,
 Loue maketh all to gone misway,
 But it be they of euill life,
 Whom genius cursed man and wife,
 That wrongly werke againe nature,
 None such I loue, ne haue no cure
 Of such as loues seruaunts beene,
 And woll nat by my counsaile seene,
 For I be preise that louing,
 Wherethrough man at the last ending
 Shall call hem wretches full of wo,
 Loue greueth hem and shendeth so;
 But if thou wolt well loue eschew,
 For to escape out of his mew,
 And make all whole the sorrow to stak,
 No better counsaile maigest thou take,
 Than thinke to seem well iwis,
 May nought helpe els: for wit thou this,
 If thou fye it, it shall fye thee,
 Follow it, and followen shall it thee."

LAMAUNT.

WHEN I had heard Reason saun,
 Whiche had spilt her speech in vain:
 "Dame" (said I) "I dare well say
 Of this aunsunt me well I may
 That from your schoole so deuiaunt
 I am, that neuer the more aunsunt:

Right nought am I through your doctriaun,
 I dull vnder your discipline,
 I wote no more than wist euer
 To me so contrarie and so fer
 Is euerie thing that ye me lere,
 And yet I can it all by partnere:
 Mine herte forgeteth thereof right nought,
 It is so writen in my thought,
 And sleepe graucn it is so tender
 That all by herte I can it render,
 And rede it ouer comunely,
 But to my selfe lewdest am I.

But sith ye love discriuen so
 And lacke and preise it bothe two
 Defineth it into this letter,
 That I may thinke on it the better:
 For I heard neuer defined here,
 And willfully I would it lere."
 "If love be searched well and sought
 It is a sicknesse of the thought
 Annexed and knodde betwixt tweine,
 With male and female with o cheine,
 So freely that bindeth, yet they will twine,
 Wheder so thereof they lose or wioine:
 The roote springeth through hot burning
 Into disordinate desiring,
 For to kissen and embrace,
 And at hir lust them to solace,
 Of other thing love retcheth nought
 But setteth hir herte and all hir thought,
 More for delectatioun
 Than any procreatioun
 Of other fruit by engendrure:
 Which love, to God is not pleasure,
 For of hir body fruit to get
 They yeue no force, they are so set
 Upon delight to play in fere.
 And some have also this manere,
 To faisen hem for love seke,
 Such love I preise not at a leke.
 For paramours they doc but faise,
 To love truly they diadaine,
 They falsen ladies traitorously,
 And swerne hem othes vtterly,
 With many a leasing, and many a fable,
 And all the finden deceuable.

"And when they han hir lust getten
 The hote crnes they all forgetten;
 Women the harme buyen full sore:
 But men thus thinke eucrmore,
 The lasse harme is, so mote I thee,
 Deceue them, than deceived be.
 And namely where they ne may
 Finde none other meane way:
 For I wote well in soothfastnesse,
 That who doeth now his businesse
 With any woman for to dele,
 For any lust that he may fele,
 But if it be for engendure,
 He doth trespassse I you ensure:
 For he should setten all his will
 To getten a likely thing him till,
 And to sustaine, if he might,
 And keepe forth by kindes right
 His owne likenesse and semblable:
 For because all is corruptible
 And faile should succession
 Ne were there generation,

Our sectes sterne for to sane,
 Whas father or mother arne in grace,
 Her children should, when they been dead,
 Full diligent been in hir stead
 To vse that works on such a wise,
 That one may through another rise.
 Therefore set kinde therein delight,
 For men therein should hem delight,
 And of that deede be not orke,
 But ofte sithes haunt that werke:
 For none would draw thereof a draught
 Ne were delight, which hath hem caught,
 This had subtil dame Nature:
 For none goeth right I thee ensue
 Ne hath entent hoole ue perite,
 For hir desire is for delite,
 The which fortene crease and eke
 The play of love, for oft seeke
 And thrall hem selfe they be so nice
 Unto the prince of euerie vice:
 For of each sinne it is the roote
 Dolefull lust, though it be soote,
 And of all euill the racine,
 As Tullins can determine,
 Which in his time was full sage,
 In a booke be made of age,
 Where that more he praiseth Elde
 Though he be crooked and unweide,
 And more of commendatioun,
 Than youth in his discriptioun:
 For youth set bothe man and wife
 In all perill of soule and life,
 And perill is, but men have grace.
 The perill of youth for to pace,
 Without any death or distresse,
 It is so full of wildnesse,
 So oft it doeth shame and damage
 To him or to his linage,
 It leadeh man, now vp now down
 In mokell dissolutioun,
 And maketh him love euill companie,
 And lead his life disrullie,
 And halt him payd with none estate
 Within himselfe in such debate,
 He chaungeth purpose and entent,
 And yalte into some content,
 To luen after hir emprise,
 And leaseth freedome and franchise,
 That nature in him had set,
 The which againe he may not get,
 If he there make his mansion,
 For to abide profession.
 Though for a time his herte absent
 It may not faile, he shall repent,
 And eke abide thilke day,
 To leane his abite, and gone his way,
 And leaseth his worship and his name,
 And dare not come againe for shame,
 But all his life he doth so mourne,
 Because he dare not home retourne,
 Freedome of kinde so lost hath he
 That neuer may recured be,
 But that if God him graunt grace
 That he may, er he bence pace,
 Containe vnder obediencie
 Through the vertus of patience.
 For youth set men in all folie,
 In vnturist and tribaudrie,
 In lecherie, and in outrage,
 So oft it chaungeth of courage.

Youth ginneth oft such bargaine,
 That may not ende without paine.
 In great perill is set youth hede
 Delight so doeth his bridell lede,
 Delight this hangeth, drede thee nought,
 Both mannes bodie and his thought,
 Onely through youthes chambers,
 That to doen euill is customere,
 And of naught else taketh hede,
 But onely folkes for to lede
 Into disport and wildnesse,
 So is froward from sadnesse,
 But elde draweth hem therefro,
 Who wote it not, he may well go,
 And mo of them, that now arne old,
 That whilom youth had in bold,
 Which yet remembreth of tender age
 How it him brought in many a rage,
 And many a follie therein wrought:
 But now that elde hath him through sought
 They repeat hem of hir folie,
 That youth hem put in jeopardie,
 In perill and in muche wo,
 And made hem oft amisse to doe,
 And seven euill companie
 Riot and advoutrie.

But elde gan againe restraine
 From such folie, and refraine
 And set men by her ordinaunce,
 In good rule and governaunce,
 But evil she spendeth her servise,
 For no man wold her love, neither praise,
 She is hated, this wote I wele,
 Her acquaintance would no man fele,
 Ne han of elde companie,
 Men hate to be of her alie,
 For no man would becommen old,
 Ne die, when he is young and bold,
 And elde maruaileth right greatly,
 When they remember hem inwardly
 Of many a perillous emprise
 Which that they wrought in sundry wise,
 However they might without blame
 Escape awaie without shame,
 In youth without damage
 Or represe of her linage,
 Lose of member, shedding of blood,
 Perill of death, or losse of good.
 Wost thou nat where youth abite,
 That men so preisen in hir wit?
 With Delight she halt sojour,
 For both they dwellen in o tour,
 As long as youth is in season,
 They dwellen in one mansion:
 Delight, of youth wold have servise
 To doe what so he wold devise,
 And youth is readie evermore
 For to obey, for smart or sore,
 Urto Delight, and him to yeve
 Her servise, while that she may live.
 "Where elde abite, I wold thee tell
 Shortly, and no while dwell,
 For thider behoveth thee to go
 If death in youth thee not slo:
 Of this journey thou mayst not faile,
 With her Labour and Trauaile,
 Lodged been with Sorrow and Wo,
 That never out of her court go:

Paine and Distresse, Sicknesse, and Ire,
 And Melancholly that angrie sire,
 Ben of her paleis sonatours,
 Grouning and grutching, her herbegeours,
 The day and night her to tourment
 With cruell death they how present,
 And tellen her erish and late
 That Death stondeth armed at her gate:
 Than bring they to her remembrance
 The folly deedes of her enfauce,
 Which causen her to mourne in wo
 That youth hath her beguiled so
 Which sodainly away is hasted,
 She weoped the time that she hath wasted,
 Complaining of the prerittie,
 And the present, that nat abitte,
 And of her olde vanitee
 That but aforne her she may see,
 In the future scooe succour,
 To leggen her of her dolour
 To graunt her time of repentaunce,
 For her sinnes to doe penance,
 And at the last so her gouerne
 To winne the joy that is eterne,
 Fro which goe backward youth he made
 In vanitie to drowne and wade,
 For present time abideth nought,
 It is more swift than any thought,
 So little while it doth endure
 That there nis compte ne measure.
 " But how that ever the game go
 Who list to love joy and mirth also
 Of love, be it he or she,
 His or lowe who it be,
 In fruite they should hem delite,
 Hir part they may not else quite,
 To save hem selfe in honeste,
 And yet full many one I see
 Of women, mootherly for to eaine,
 That desire and would beaine
 The play of love, they feine so wilde
 And not covet to go with childe:
 And if with childe they be perchaunce,
 They woll it hold a great mischaunce,
 But whatsoever woe they fele,
 They woll not plaine, but concele,
 But if it be any foole or nice,
 In whome that shame hath no justice,
 For to delight each one they draw,
 That haunt this worke both his and law,
 Save such that arne worth right nought,
 That for money will be bought,
 Such love I praise in no wise,
 When it is given for covetise;
 I praise no woman, though she be wood
 That yeveth her selfe for any good:
 For little should a manne tell
 Of her, that will her bodie sell,
 Be she maide, be she wife,
 That quickes woll sell her by her life,
 How faire chere that ever she make,
 He is a wretch I undertake
 That loved such one, for sweete or soure,
 Though she him called her paramoure,
 And laugheth on him, and maketh him feast,
 For certainly no sucbe beast
 To be loved is not worthy
 Or beare the name of Drury,
 None should her please, but be wor wood,
 That woll dispoile him of his good:

Yet nathelasse I woll not say
 That she for solace and for play,
 Maie a jewell or other thing
 Take of her loves free yeving:
 But that she asks it in no wise,
 For drede of shame or covetise.
 And she of hers may him certaine
 Without slaunder yeven againe,
 And joyne hir hearts together so
 In love, and take and yere also,
 Trow not that I woll hem twine,
 When in hir love there is no sinne,
 I woll that they together go,
 And done all that they han ado,
 As curtes should and debonaire,
 And in hir love been hem faire,
 Without vice, both he and she,
 So that alway in honeste,
 Fro folly Love to keepe hem clere
 That brenneth hertes with his fere,
 And that hir love in any wise,
 Be devoide of covetise.
 Good love should engendred be
 Of true herte, just, and accree,
 And not of such as set hir thought
 To have hir lust, and else nought:
 So are they caught in Loves lace,
 Truly for bodilly solace,
 Fleishly delighte is so present
 With thee, that set all thine entent,
 Without more, what should I glose,
 For to get and have the rose,
 Which maketh thee so mate and wood
 That thou desirest none other good;
 But thou art not an inch the nerre,
 But ever abidest in sorrow and warre,
 As in thy face it is seene,
 It maketh thee both pale and leene,
 Thy might, thy vertue goeth away:
 A sorry guest (in good fay)
 Thou harbourest in thine time
 The god of love when thou let inne:
 Wherefore I read thou sbette him out,
 Or he shall greve thee out of dout,
 For to thy profite it woll tourne,
 If he no more with thee sojourn.
 In great mischiefe and sorrow souken,
 Ben hertes, that of love arne dronken,
 As thou peraventure knowen shall,
 When thou hast lost the time all,
 And spent thy thought in idlennesse,
 In waste, and wofull lustinesse:
 If thou maigest live the time to see
 Of love for to delivered bee,
 Thy time thou shalt beweepe sore
 The which never thou maigest restore:
 For time lost, as men may see,
 For nothing may recovered bee,
 And if thou scape, yet at last,
 Fro Loye that hath thee so fast
 Knitte and bounden in his lace,
 Certaine I hold it but a grace,
 For many one as it is seine
 Have lost, and spent also in veine
 In his servise without succour
 Bodie and soule, good, and tresour,
 Wit, and strength, and eke richesse,
 Of which they had never redresse.

LAMENT.

True taught and preached hath Reason,
 But Love spilt her sermon,
 That was so impud in my thought,
 That her doctrine I set at nought,
 And yet ne sayd she never a dele,
 That I ne understood it wale,
 Word by word the matter all,
 But unto Love I was so thrall,
 Which calleth over all his praise,
 He chaseth so my thought aie,
 And holdeth mine herte under his seie,
 As trustie and true as any stele:
 So that no devotion
 Ne had I in the sermon
 Of dame Reason, ne of her rede
 I toke no sojour in mine hede.
 For all yede out at one ere
 That in that other she did lere,
 Fully on me she lost her lore
 Her speech me greved wonder sore.

That unto her for ire I said
 For anger, as I did abraid:
 " Dame, and is it your will algate,
 That I not love, but that I hate
 All men, as ye me teach,
 For if I doe after your speach,
 Sith that you seine love is not good,
 Than must I nedes say with mood
 If I it leve, in hatred aie
 Liven, and voide love awaie,
 From me a sinfull wretch,
 Hated of all that tetch,
 I may not go none other gate,
 For either must I love or hate,
 And if I hate men of new,
 More than love it will me rew,
 As by your preaching seemeth mee,
 For love nothing ne praineth thee:
 Ye yeve good counsaile sikerly
 That precbeth me all day, that I
 Should not loves lore alove,
 He were a foole woulde you not trowe?
 Is speech also ye ban me taught,
 Another love that knowne is naught
 Which I have heard you not reprove,
 To love each other by your leve,
 If ye would diffine it mee,
 I would gladly here to see,
 At the least if I may lere
 Of sundrie loves the manere."

RAISON.

" Curtes friend, a foole art thou
 When that thou nothing wilt allow
 That I for thy profite say:
 Yet wold I say thee more in fay,
 For I am readie at the leest,
 To accomplish thy request,
 But I not where it wold anaile,
 In vaine persuaunture I shall traunaile:
 Love there is in sundrie wise,
 As I shall thee here devise.
 " For some love lefull is and good,
 I wene not that which maketh thee wood,
 And bringeth thee in many a fite,
 And raiseth fro thee all thy witte,

It is so mercenous and queint,
 With such lous be no more aquaint.

COMMENT: RAISON DIFFINIST AURENT.

" Love of friendship also there is
 Which maketh no man dome amis,
 Of will knitte betwixt two,
 That wold not breake for wele ne wo,
 Which long is likely to contune,
 When will and goods been in comune,
 Grounded by Gods ordinaunce,
 Hoole without discordaunce,
 With hem holding communaunce
 Of all her good in charite,
 That there be none exception,
 Through chaunging of cotentioun,
 That each helpe other at her nede,
 And wisely hole both word and dede,
 True of meaning, devoide of slouth,
 For wit is nought without trowth:
 So that the tone dare all his thought
 Saive to his friend, and spare nought,
 As to himselfe without dreding,
 To be discourered by wreying,
 For glad is that conuption,
 When there is none suspection,
 Whom they would proue
 That true and perfite weren in love:
 For no man may be amiable,
 But if he be so firme and stable,
 That fortune change him not as blinde,
 But that his friend alway him finde,
 Both poore and riche in o state:
 For if his friend through any gate,
 Wold complaine of his pouerte,
 He should not bide so long, till he
 Of his helping him require,
 For good deed done through priere
 Is sold and bought too deere iwis
 To herte that of great valour is.
 For herte fulfilled of gentleness,
 Can culll demeane his distresse,
 And man that worthy is of name,
 To asken often hath great shame.
 " A good man breuneth in his thought,
 For shame when he asketh ought,
 He hath great thought, and dredeth aie
 For his disease when he shall praie
 His friend, leest that he warnel be
 Till that he preue his stabilite:
 But when that he bath founden one
 That trustie is and true as stoue,
 And assayed him at all,
 And found him stedfast as a wall,
 And of his friendship be certaine,
 He shall him shew both joy and paine,
 And all that he dare thinke or say,
 Without shame, as he well may,
 For how should he ashamed be,
 Of such one as I told thee?
 For when he wote his secret thought,
 The third shall know thereof right nought,
 For twey in number is bet than three,
 In euerie counsaile and secree:
 Repreue he dredeth neuer a dele,
 Who that beset his wordes wele,
 For euerie wise man out of drede,
 Can keepe his tongue till he see nede.
 " And foolles cannot hold his tongue,
 A foolles bell is soone ronge,

P

Yet shall a true friend do more
 To helpe his fellow of his sore,
 And succour him when he hath need
 In all that he may done indeed,
 And gladder that he him pleaseth
 Than his felowe that he easeth,
 And if he doe not his request,
 He shall as muche him molest
 As his felowe, for that he
 Maie not fulfill his volonte
 Fully, as he hath required ;
 If both the hertes lone hath fired
 Joy and woe they shall depart,
 And take suenly each his part,
 Halfe his annoy he shall haue aie,
 And comforte what that he may,
 And of this blisse part shall he,
 If loue wold departed be.

And whilom of this vntie
 Spake Tullius in a dicitie,
 And should maken his request
 Unto his friend, that is honest,
 And he goodly should it fulfill,
 But it the more were out of skill,
 And otherwise not graunt thereto,
 Except cooely in causes two.

“ If men his friend to death wold drive
 Let him be basie to saue his liue.

“ Also if men wollen beam assaile,
 Of his worship to make him faile
 And hindren him of his resoun,
 Let him with full entencion,
 His deuer done in each degree
 That his friend ne ashamed be.

“ In this two case with his might,
 Taking no keepe to skill nor right,
 As farre as loue may him excuse,
 This ought no manne to refuse.

“ This loue that I haue told to thee
 Is nothing contrarie to mee,
 This wold I that thou follow wele,
 And leaue the other enerie dele,
 This loue to vertue all attendeth,
 The tother foolles blent and shendeth.

“ Another love also there is,
 That is contrarie vnto this,
 Which desire is so constrained
 That is bot will faised ;
 Away fro trowth it doth so varie
 That to good love it is contrarie ;
 For it maymeth in many wise
 Sicke hertes with coeetrie ;
 All in winning and in profite,
 Such love setteth his delita :

This love so hangeth in balaunce
 That if it lese his hope perchaunce.
 Of lucre, that he is set vpou,
 It wold faile, and quench anon,
 For no man may be amorous,
 Ne in his liuing vertuous,
 But he love more in mood.
 Men for hem selfe than for hir good :
 For loue that profite doth abide,
 Is false, and hideth not in no tide.
 Love commeth of dame Fortune,
 That little while wold contune,
 For it shall chaungen wondrous soone,
 And take eclips as the Moone

When she is from vs let
 Through Earth, that betwint is set
 The Sunne and her, as it may fall,
 Be it in partie, or in all ;
 The shadow maketh her beames merke,
 And her hornes to shew derke,
 That part where she hath lost her light
 Of Phoebus fully, and the sight,
 Till when the shadow is ouerpast,
 She is enlumined againe as fast,
 Through the brightnesse of the sun beames
 That yeueth to her againe her leames :
 That love is right of such nature,
 Now is faire, and now obscure,
 Now bright, now clipsey of manere,
 And whilom dimme, and whilom clere,
 Aswoone as penerte ginneth take,
 With mantall and weedes blake
 Hideth of love the light away,
 That into night it tourneth day,
 It may not see riches shine,
 Till the blacke shadowes fine,
 For when riches shineth bright
 Love recooereth ayen his light,
 And when it falleth, he wold sit,
 And as she greeneth, so greeneth it.
 “ Of this love heare what I saie :
 The riche men are loved aie,
 And namely tho that sparand beene,
 That wold not wash hir hertes cleene
 Of the filth, nor of the vice
 Of greedy breening avarice.

“ The rich men full fond is iwis,
 That weneth that he loved is,
 If that his herte is vnderstood,
 It is not he, it is his good,
 He may well weten in his thought,
 His good is loved, and he right nougth :
 For if he be a niggard eke,
 Men wold not set by him a leke,
 But haten him, this is the sooth,
 Lo what profite his cattell dooth,
 Of every man that may him see,
 It getteth him nougth but exmittee :
 But he amend himselfe of that vice,
 And know himselfe, he is not wise.

“ Certes he should aye friendly be,
 To get him love also been free,
 Or else he is not wise ne sage
 No more than is a gote ramage.
 That he not loueth, his deede proneth,
 When he his riches so well loueth,
 That he wold hide it aie and spare,
 His poore friends seeme forfare
 To keppen aie his purpose
 Till for drede his eyes close,
 And till a wicked death him take
 Him had leuer asunder shake,
 And let all his limmes asunder rive,
 Than leaue his riches in his liue ;
 He thinketh to part it with no man,
 Certaine no love is in him than :
 How should love with him be,
 When in his herte is no pite ?
 That he trespasseth well I wate,
 For each man knoweth his estate,
 For well him ought to be reprinted
 That loveth nougth, he is not loved.

“ But sith we arne to Fortune comen,
 And hath our sermon of her comen,

A wonder will I tell thee now,
 Thou hardest never such one I trow;
 I not where thou me leuen shall,
 Though soothfastness it be all,
 As it is written, and is sooth
 That vnto men more profite dooth
 The froward Fortune and contraire,
 Than the swote and debonaire:
 And if they thinke it is doutable,
 It is through argument provable,
 For the debonaire and soft
 Falseth and beguileth oft,
 For lich a mother she can cherish
 And milken as doth a porice,
 And of her good to him deles
 And yeueth him part of her iewels,
 With great riches and dignitie,
 And hem she hoteth stabillite,
 In state that is not stable,
 But changing sic and variable,
 And feedeth him with glorie vaine,
 And worldly blisse none certaine,
 Whan she him setteth on her whele,
 Than wene they to be right wele,
 And is so stable state withall
 That neuer they wene for to fall,
 And when they set so high to be,
 They wene to have in certainte
 Of hearty friendes to great nombre,
 That nothing might hir state encombre,
 They trust hem so on euerie side,
 Wening with hem they would abide,
 In euerie perill and mischaunce
 Without change or variance,
 Both of cattell and of good,
 And also for to spend hir blood,
 And all hir members for to spill
 Oonly to fulfill hir will,
 They maken it whole in many wise
 And hote hem hir full seruis
 How sore that it doe hem smart,
 Into hir very naked part,
 Herte and also bothe they yeve,
 For the time that they may live,
 So that with hir flatterie
 They maken foolis glorie
 Of hir wordis speaking,
 And han chere of a rejoycing,
 And trow them as the Evangile,
 And it is all falshe and gyle,
 As they shall afterward see,
 Whan they arise full in poverte,
 And bea of good and cattell bare,
 Than should they seeme who friendis ware,
 For of an hundred certaine,
 Nor of a thousand full scarcely,
 Ne shall they finde unnethe one,
 Whan poverte is counoun upon.
 " For thus Fortune that I of tell,
 With men whan her lost to dwell,
 Maketh hem to lese hir counsaunce,
 And souriseth hem in ignoraunce.
 " But froward Fortune and perverse,
 Whan high estates she doth reverse,
 And maketh hem to tumble doune
 Off her whele with sodaine tourne,
 And from her richesse doth hem sic,
 And plungeth hem in poverte,
 As a stepmother envious,
 And layeth a plaister dolorous,

Unto-hir hertes wounded egre,
 Which is not tempered with vinegre,
 But with poverte and indigence,
 For to shew by experience,
 That she is Fortune verifie
 In whome no man should affie,
 Nor in her yeftes have flauice;
 She is so full of variance.

" Thus can she maken bye and lowe,
 Whan they from richesse arise throwe,
 Fully to knowen without were
 Friend of effect, and friend of chere,
 And which in love weren true and stable,
 And which also weren variable.
 After Fortune hir goddesse,
 In poverte, either in richesse,
 For all that yeveth here out of drede,
 Unhappes beareth it indeede,
 For infortune let not one
 Of friendes, whan Fortune is gone,
 I meane the friendes that woll fe
 Anone as astreth poverte,
 And yet they woll not leave hem so,
 But in each place where they go
 They call hem wretch, scorn and blame,
 And of hir mishap heu diffame,
 And namely such as in richesse,
 Pretendeth most of stablesse
 Whan that they saw hem set on loft,
 And weren of hem succoured oft,
 And most sholpe in all hir need:
 But now they take no maner heed,
 But saine in voice of flatterie,
 That now appeareth hir follie,
 Over all where so they fare,
 And sing, Go farewell felde fare.

" All such friendes I beswre,
 For of true there be too few,
 But soothfast friendes, what so betide,
 In every fortune wolle abide,
 They han hir hertes in such noblesse
 That they nil love for no richesse,
 Nor for that Fortune may hem send
 They wolle hem succour and defend,
 And change for softe ne for sore;
 For who his friend loveth evermore
 Though men draw sword him to slo.
 He may not hev hir love a two:
 But in case that I shall say,
 For pride and ire less it may,
 And for reproove by nicete,
 And discovering of privite,
 With tonge wounding, as felon,
 Through venemous detraction.

" Friend in this case will gooe his way;
 For nothing grieve him more ne may,
 And for nought else woll he fe,
 If that he love in stabillite.
 And certaine he is well begone
 Among a thousand that findeth one:
 For there may be no richesse,
 Aynst friendship of worthinesse,
 For it ne may so high attaine,
 As may the valour, sooth to saine.
 Of him that loveth true and well,
 Friendship is more than is cattell,
 For friend in court aie better is
 Than penny in purse certis,
 And Fortune mishaping,
 Whan upon men she is fabling,

Through misturning of her chance,
And cast hem out of balauce.

"She maketh through her adversite
Men full clerely for to see
Him that is friend in existence
From him that is by appearance:
For infortune maketh anon,
To know thy friendes fro thy fone,
By experience, right as it is,
The which is more to praise win,
Than in much richesse and treasour,
For more deepe profite and valour,
Povertie, and such adversite
Before, than doth prosperite,
For that one yeveth counsaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce.

"And thus in povertie is indeed
Trowth declared fro falschede,
For faint friendes it will declare,
And true alas, what way they fare.
For when he was in his richesse,
These friendes full of doubleness
Offred him in many wise
Herte and body, and service,
What wold he than now to have bought,
To known openly hir thought,
That he now hath so clerely seen?
The lasse beguiled he should have been,
And he had than perceived it,
But richesse nolde not let him wit:
Well more avauntage doeth him than,
Sith that he maketh him a wise man,
The great mischief that he perceiveth
Than doeth richesse that him deceiveth:
Richesse rich ne maketh nought
Him that on treasour set his thought,
For richesse stont in suffisaunce,
And nothing in aboundaunce:
For suffisaunce all onely
Maketh menne to live richly.

For he that hath mitches tweine,
No value in his demeine,
Liveth more at ease, and more is rich,
Than doeth he that is chich,
And in his barn bath sooth to saine,
An hundred mavis of wheat graine,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of gold many beaunt:
For in getting he hath such wo,
And in the keeping drede also,
And set evermore his businesse
For to increase, and not to lesse,
For to augment and multiply,
And though on heapes that lye him by,
Yet never shall make his richesse,
Asseth unto his greedinesse:
But the poore that retcheth nought,
Save of his livelnde in his thought,
Which that he getteth with his travaile,
He dredeth nought that it shall faille,
Though he have little worldes good,
Meate and drinke, and easie food,
Upon his travaile and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing,
Or if in sickness that he fall,
And loath meat and drinke withall,
Though he have not his meat to buy,
He shall betinke him hastely,

To put him out of all daungere,
That he of meat hath no mistere,
Or that he may with little eke
Be founden, while that he is seke,
Or that men shull him berne in hast,
To live till his sicknesse be past,
To some maisondeve beaide,
He cast nought what shall him betide,
He thinketh nought that ever he shall
Into any sicknesse fall.

And though it fall, as it may be,
That all betime spare shall he
As mollell as shall to him suffice,
While he is sick in any wise,
He doeth for that he wold be
Content with his poverte
Without neede of any man,
So much in litle have he can,
He is apaid with his fortune,
And for he will be importune
Unto no wight, ne overous,
Nor of hir goodnesse covetous:
Therefore he spareth, it may well been,
His poore estate for to susteen.

Or if him lust not for to spare,
But suffereth forth, as not yet ware,
At last it happeneth, as it may
Right unto his laste day,
And take the world as it wold be:
For ever in herte thinketh he
The sooner that Death him alo,
To paradise the sooner go
He shall, there for to live in blisse
Where that he shall no good misse:
Thider he hopeth God shall him send
After this wretched liues end.
Pythagoras himselve reheares
In a booke that the Golde Verses
Is cleped, for the nobilite
Of the honourable dite:

"Than when thou goest thy body fro,
Free in the ayre thou shalt up go
And leaven all humanitie,
And purely live in delitie,
He is a foole withouten were
That truweth have his country here."

"In yearth is not our country,
That may these clarkes seie and sey
In Boece of Consolation
Where it is makend mention
Of our country plaine at the eis,
By teaching of philosophie,
Where lewd men might lere wit,
Who so that wold translaten it.
If he be such that can well live
After his rent, may him yeve,
And not desireth more to have,
Than may fro povertie him save.
A wise man saied, as we may seen,
Is no man wretched, but he it ween,
Be he king, knight, or ribaude,
And many a ribaud is merrie and baude,
That swinketh, and beareth both day and night
Many a burthen of great might,
The which doeth him lasse offence,
For he suffreth in patience:

They laugh and dance, trippes and sing,
 And lay nought up for hir living,
 But in the tavernes all dispendeth
 The winning that God hem sendeth;
 Thus goeth he fardels for to beare,
 With as good chere as he did eare;
 To swinke and travails he not fainteth,
 For to robben he disdaineth,
 But right anon, after his swinke,
 He goeth to tavernes for to drinke:
 All these are rich in abundance,
 That can thus have suffeance
 Well more than can an asurer,
 As God well knoweth, without weze.
 For an usurer, so God me see,
 Shall never for richesse rishe see,
 Not evermore poore and indigent,
 Scame, and greedy in his entent.

“ For sooth it is, whom it displeaseth,
 There may no marchaunt live at ease,
 His herte in such a where is set
 That it quicke brenneth to get,
 No never shall, though he hath gotten,
 Though he have gold in garners yeten,
 For to be needy he dredeth sore:
 Wherefore to gotten more and more
 He set his herte and his desire;
 So hote he brenneth in the fire
 Of covetise, that maketh him wood
 To purchase other meenes good;
 He vnderfongeth a great paine,
 That vndertaketh to drinke vp Saine:
 For the more he drinketh aie
 The more he leaveth, the sooth to say:
 This is thurst of false getting,
 That last ever in coveting,
 And the agonish and distresse
 With the fire of greedynesse;
 He fighteth with him aie, and striveth,
 That his herte asunder riveth,
 Such greedynesse him assideth,
 That when he most hath, most he faileth.

“ Paintours and advocates
 Goe right by the same yates,
 They sell hir science for winning,
 And haunt hir craft for great getting:
 Hir winning is of such sweetnesse,
 That if a man fall in sicknesse,
 They are full glad, for hir encrease:
 For by hir will, without lease,
 Everich man shoulde be sorke,
 And though they die, they set not a loeke;
 After when they the gould have take,
 Full little care of hem they roake;
 They would that fortie were sick at ones,
 Yea two hundred, in flesh and bones,
 And yet two thousand, as I gesse,
 For to encrease hir richesse.

“ They wol not worchen in no wise,
 But for lucre and covetise,
 For phynike ginneth first by (phi)
 The phynion also soothly,
 And when it goeth fro de to de,
 To trust on hem it is folie,
 For they nil in no maner gree,
 The right nought for charitee.
 Eke is the same sect are set
 All tho that preachen for to get
 Worships, honour, and richesse,
 Hir hertes are in great distresse,

That folke live not holily,
 But aboven all specially,
 Such as preachen vaine glorie
 And toward God have no memorie,
 But forth as ipocrites trace,
 And to hir soules death purchase
 And outward shewing holynesse,
 Though they be full of cursednesse,
 Nor lich to the apostles twelve,
 They deceiue other and hem selve:
 Beguiled in the guiler than,
 For preaching of a cursed man
 Though to other may profit
 Himself it availleth not a mite:
 For oft good predicatioun
 Commeth of evil ententioun:
 To him not valioth his preaching
 All helpe he other with his teaching,
 For where they good example take,
 There is he with vaine glory shake.

“ But let us leaven these preachours,
 And speake of hem which in hir tours
 Heape vp hir gould, and fast esbet,
 And sore thereon their hertes set:
 They neither love God ne drede,
 They keepe more than it is nede,
 And in hir bagges sore it bind
 Out of the summe, and of the wind:
 They put vp more than need warre,
 When they seen poore folke sturfare,
 For hunger die, and for cold quake;
 God can wel vengeance therof take;
 The great mischiefes hem assaileth,
 And thus in gadering ey travaileth;
 With muche paine they winne richesse,
 And drede hem holdeth in distresse,
 To keepe that they gather fast,
 With sorrow they leave it at the last:
 With sorrow they both die and live,
 That unto richesse her hertes yve,
 And in default of love it is,
 As it sheweth full well iwis:
 For if these greedy, the sooth to waine,
 Loveden, and were loved againe,
 And good love raigned over all,
 Such wickednesse ne should fall,
 But he should yve, that most good had
 To hem that weren in neede bestad,
 And live without false sure,
 For charitie, full cleane and pure:
 If they hem yve to goodnesse,
 Defending hem from idlenesse,
 In all this world than poore none
 We should finde, I trow not one:
 But changed is this world variable,
 For love is over all vendable.

“ We see that no man loveth now
 But for winning and for prow,
 And love is thrallid in servage
 When it is sold for advantage;
 Yet women woll hir bodies sell:
 Such soules goeth to the Divell of Hell.”

When Love had told hem his entent,
 The baronage to counsaile went,
 In many sentences they fill,
 And diversly they said hir will:
 But after discord they accorded,
 And hir accord to Love recorded:
 “ Sir,” sayden they, “ we been at one,
 By even accord of everichone,

Out take Richesse all onely
 That sworne bath full bautinely,
 That she the castle will not assaile,
 Ne smite a stroke in this bataille,
 With dart, ne mace, speare, ne kuife,
 For man that speaketh and beareth the life,
 And blameth your emprise iwis,
 And from our host departed is,
 At least waie, as in this pite,
 So hath she this man in despite:
 For she sayth he ne loved her never,
 And therefore she woll hate him ever;
 For he woll gather no treasure,
 He hath her wraths for evermore;
 He agilte her pever in other cause,
 Lo here all holly his trespass.
 She sayeth well, that this other day
 He asked her leave to gone the way
 That is cleped too much yeving,
 And spake full faire in his praying:
 But whan he prayed her, poore was he,
 Therefore she warned him the cure,
 Ne yet is he not thriwen so
 That he hath gotten a penne or two,
 That quietly is his owe in hold:
 Thus hath Richesse us all told,
 And whan Richesse us this recorded,
 Withouten her we been accorded.

" And we finde in our accordaunce,
 That Faise Semblaunt and Abstaunce,
 With all the folke of hir bataille
 Shull at the hinder gate assaile,
 That Wicked Tongue hath in keeping,
 With his Normans full of jangling,
 And with hem Courtesie and Largesse,
 That shull shew hir hardynesse,
 To the old wife that kept so hard
 Faire Welcoming within her ward:
 Than shall Delight and Well Heling
 Fond Shame adoun to bring,
 With all her host early and late,
 They shall assayen that ilke gate,
 Against Drede shall Hardynesse
 Assaile, and also Sikernesse,
 With all the folke of hir leading
 That never wist what wast slaying.

FRAUNCIS shall fight and eke Pite,
 With Daunger full of cruelte,
 Thus is your host ordained weale;
 Downe shall the castle every deale,
 If everiche doe his entent,
 So that Venus be present,
 Your mother full of veselage
 That can inough of such usage;
 Withouten her may no wight speed
 This worke, neither for word ne deed:
 Therefore is good ye for her send,
 For through her may this worke ahead."

" Loardness, my mother, the gooddes,
 That is my ladie, and my mistres,
 Nis nat all at my willing,
 Ne doth all my desiring.
 Yet can she sometime doen labour,
 Whan that her lust, in my succour.
 As my neede is for to atchieve:
 But now I thinke hey not to grieve,

My mother is she, and of childhede
 I both worship her, and eke drude,
 For who that dredeth sire ne dame,
 Shall it abide in bodie or name.
 And nathelesse, yet can we
 Send after her if need be,
 And were she nigh, she comen would,
 I trow that nothing might her hold.
 " My mother is of great prowese,
 She hath tane many a fortresse,
 That cost hath many a pound or this,
 There I was not present iwis,
 And yet men sayd it was my doode,
 But I come never in that stodee,
 Ne me ne liketh so mote I thee,
 That such towers been take with mee,
 For why? Me thinketh that in no wise,
 It may be cleped but marchaundise.

Go by a courser blacke or white,
 And pay therefore, than art thou quite,
 The marchaunt oweth thee right nought,
 Ne thou him whan thou it bought.
 I woll not selling clepe yeving,
 For selling asketh no guerdoning,
 Here lithe no thanks, ne no merite,
 That one goeth from that other all quite,
 But this selling is not sensible:

" For whan his horse is in the stable
 He may it sell againe parde,
 And wimen on it, such happe may be,
 All may the same not lese iwis,
 For at the least the skinne is his.

" Or else, if it so beside
 That he woll keepe his horse to ride,
 Yet is he lord sic of his horse:
 But thilke chaffare is well wose,
 There Venus entermeteth ought,
 For who so such chaffare hath bought,
 He shall not worchon so wisely,
 That he ne shall lese utterly
 Both his mooney and his chaffare:
 But the seller of the ware,
 The prise and profite have shall,
 Certaine the buyer shall lese all,
 For he ne can so dere it buy
 To have lordship and full maistry,
 Ne have power to make letting,
 Neither for yett ne for preaching,
 That of his chaffare maugre his,
 Another shall have as much iwis,
 If he woll yere as much as he,
 Of what cuntry so that he be,
 Or for right nought, so happe may,
 If he can flatter her to her pay.

" Been then suche marchauntes wise?
 No, but foolles in every wise,
 Whan they buy such thing wilfully,
 There as they lese hir good follily.
 But nathelesse, this dare I say,
 My mother is not wont to pay,
 For she is neither so foole ne nice,
 To entremete her of such vice,
 But trust well, he shall paie all,
 That repent of his bargaine shall,
 Whan Poverte put him in distresse,
 All were he schooller to Richesse,
 That is for me in great yeving,
 Whan she assentoth to my willing,

Her by my mother saint Venus,
And by her father Saturnus,
That her engendred by his life,
But set upon his wedded wife,
Yet wold I more unto you swere,
To make this thing the surere.

" Now by that faith, and that beastes
That I owe to all my brethren free,
Of which there nis wight under Hevin
That can hir fathers names nevin,
So divers and so many there be,
That with my mother have be prive,
Yet wold I swere for sikernesse,
The pole of Hell to my witnessse,
Now drinke I not this yere clarre,
If that I lye, or forsworne be,
For of the goddes the usage is,
That who so him forwarreth amis,
Shall that yere drinke no clarre.

" Now have I sworne inough parde,
If forswore me than an I forne,
But I wold never be forsworne:
Sith Richesse hath me failed here,
She shall avie that trespassse dere,
At least way bet I her harme
With swerd, or sparth, or gisarme.

" For certes sith she loveth not me,
In thilke time that she may see
The castle and the tower to shake,
In sorie time she shall awake;
If I may gripe a rich man
I shall so poll him, if I can,
That he shall in a fewe stoundes,
Lose all his markes, and his poundes.

" I shall him make his penoe out aling,
But they in his garnar spring.
Our maidens shall eke plucke him so,
That him shall needes feathere mo,
And make him sell his lood to spend,
But he the bet can him defend.

Poore men han made hir lord of me;
Although they not so mightie be,
That they may feede me in delite,
I wold not have them in dispite:
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
For chinch and felon is Richesse,
That so can chace hem and dispise,
And hem defoule in sundris wise:
They loven full bette, so God me spede,
That doeth the rich chinchy grede,
And been (in good faith) more stable
And truer, and more serviable:
And therefore it suffiseth me
Hir good herte, and hir besute;
They han on me set all their thought,
And therefore I foryete hem nought.

" I wold hem bring in great noblesse,
If that I were god of richesse,
As I am god of love soothly,
Sich ruth upon hir plaint have I:
Therefore I must his succour be,
That paineth him to serve me,
For if he dyed for love of this,
That seemeth in me no love there is."
" Sir," sayd they, " sooth is everie dele
That ye rehearse, and ye wote welle
Thilke oath to hold is reasonable,
For it is good and ovyenable,

That ye on riche men han swoune:
For, sir, this wote we well beforen,
If rich men doen you homage,
That is as foles doen outrage,
But ye shall not forsworne be,
Ne let therefore to drinke clarre,
Or piment makid fresh and new,
Ladies shullen hem such pepir brow,
If that they fall into hir laas,
That they for woe mow saigne Alas!
Ladies shullen ever so courteous be,
That they shall quite your oath all free,
Ne seeketh never other vicaires,
For they shall speake with hem so faire
That ye shall hold you payd full well,
Though ye you meddle never a deale,
Let ladies worch with hir thinges,
They shall han tell so fele tidinges,
And moove hem eke so many requestes
By flatterie, that not bocest is,
And thereto yeve hem such thankinges,
What with kissing, and with talkinges,
That certes if they trowed be,
Shall never leave hem lood ne fee
That it will as the moeble fare,
Of which they first delivered are:
Now may you tell us all your will,
And we your hestes shall fulfill.

Her False Semblaunt dare not for drede
Of you, sir, meddle him of this dede,
For he sayth that ye been his foe,
He not, if ye will worch him woe:
Wherefore we pray you all, beate sere,
That ye foryewe him now your ire,
And that he may dwell as your man
With Abstynence his deere lemman,
This our accord and our will now."

" Parfey," said Love, " I graunt it you,
I wold well hold him for my man,
Now led him some:" and he forth ran.
" False semblant," (quod Love) " in this wise
I take thee here to my servise,
That thou our friendes helpe alwaie,
And hindreth hem neither night ne daie,
But doe thy might hem to relieve,
And eke our enemies that thou grieve,
Thine be this might, I graunt it thee,
My king of harlots shalt thou beo:
We wold that thou have soch honour,
Certaine thou art a false traitour,
And eke a theefe; sith thou were borne,
A thousand times thou art forsworne:
But nathelesse in our hearing,
To put our folke out of doubting,
I biide thee teach hem, wost thou how?
By some generall signe now,
In what place thou shalt fownden be,
If that men had mistere of thee,
And how men shall thee best espie,
For thee to know is great maistris,
Tell in what place is thine haunting."

" Sir I have full divers wounding,
That I kepe not rehearsed be,
So that ye wold respiten me,
For if that I tell you the sooth,
I may have harme and shame both,
If that my fellowes wisten it,
My tales shoulden me be quit,

For certain they would hate me,
 If ever I knew hir crueltye,
 For they would over all bold hem still
 Of troth, that is agayne hir will,
 Such tales keepen they not here,
 I might eftsoone buy it full dere,
 If I said of hem any thing,
 That ought displeaseth to hir hearing,
 For what word that hem tricketh or biteth,
 In that word noon of hem deliteth,
 All were it gospel the exaunte,
 That would reprove hem of hir guile,
 For they are cruell and hautain;
 And this thing wote I well certain,
 If I speake ought to paire or loos,
 Your court shall not so well be cloos,
 That they ne shall wite it at last:
 Of good men am Iought agast,
 For they wolle taken on hem nothing,
 Whan that they know all my meaning,
 But be that wolle it on him take,
 He wolle himselfe suspicious make,
 That he his life let covertly,
 In guile and in hypocrisie,
 That me engendred and yave fostring."

"They made a full good engendring,"
 (Quod Love) "for who so soothly tell,
 They engendred the Diuell of Hell.

"But needely, howsoever it be"
 (Quod Love) "I will and charge thee,
 To tell anon thy wounding plous,
 Hearing each wight that in this place is:
 And what life thou livest also,
 Hide it no lenger now, whereto:
 Thou must discover all thy working,
 How thou earnest, and of what thing,
 Though that thou shuldest for thy sothsay
 Ben all to beaten and to draw,
 And yet art thou not woot parde,
 But nathelesse, though thou beaten be,
 Thou shalt not be the first, that so
 Hath for sothsaywe suffred wo."

"Sir, with that it may liken you,
 Though that I should be slaine right now,
 I shall doen your commaundement,
 For thereto have I great talent."

Withouten words mo, right than
 False Semblaunt his sermon began,
 And saied hem thus in audience,

"Barons, take heed of my sentence,
 That wight that list to have knowing
 Of False Semblaunt full of flattering,
 He must in worldly folke him seke,
 And certes in the cloysters eke,
 I won no where, but in hem tway,
 But not like esen, sooth to say,
 Shortly I wolle herborow me,
 There I hope best to huilred be,
 And certainly, sikerest hiding
 Is undermeath humblest clothing."

"Religious folke ben full covert,
 Secular folke ben more apert:
 But nathelesse, I wolle not blame
 Religious folke, ne hem difame
 In what habite that ever they go:
 Religion humble, and true also,
 Wolle I not blame, ne dispise,
 But I will love if in no wise,
 I meane of false religious,
 That stout been, and malicious,

That wolle in an habite go,
 And setten not hir herte thereto."

Religious folke been all pitous,
 Thou shalt not seeme one dispitous,
 They loven no pride, ne no strife,
 But humbly they wolle lede hir life,
 With which folke wolle I never be,
 And if I dwell, I faine me
 I may well in hir habite go,
 But me were leser my necke atwo,
 Than let a purpose that I take,
 What couenaunt that ever I make.
 "I dwell with hem that proude be,
 And full of wiles and subtelte,
 That worship of this world couisen,
 And great nedes comen experiten,
 And gone and gadren great pitaunces,
 And purchase hem the acquaintaunces
 Of men that mightie life may leden,
 And faine hem poore, and hemselfe feden
 With good morsels delicious,
 And drinken good wine precious,
 And preach vs povert and distresse,
 And fishen hemselfe great richesse,
 With wily nettes that they cast,
 It wolle come foule out at the last."

"They ben fro cleane religion went,
 They make the world an argument,
 That hath a foule conclusion.
 I have a robe of religion,
 Than am I all religious:
 This argument is all roignons,
 It is not worth a crooked breere,
 Habite ne maketh neither wonke ne frere,
 But cleane life and deuotion,
 Maketh men of good religion."

"Nathelesse, there can none answer,
 How high that ever his head be shere,
 With rasour whetted never so kene,
 That guile in braunches cutte thurteene,
 There can no wight distinct it so,
 That be dare say a word thereto."

"But what herborow that ever I take,
 Or what semblaunt that ever I make,
 I meane but guile, and follow that,
 For right no more than Gibbe our cat,
 (That awaiteth mice and rattes to killen)
 Ne entend I but to beguilen,
 Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
 Wete with what folke is my dwelling,
 Ne by my wordes yet parde,
 So soft and so pleasaunt they be."

"Behold the deedes that I do,
 But thou be blind thou oughtest so,
 For varie hir wordes fro hir deed,
 They thinke on guile withouten dread,
 What manner clothing that they were,
 Or what estate what ever they bere,
 Lered or leud, lord or ladie,
 Knight, squire, burgeis, or bailie."

Right thus while False Semblaunt sermoneth,
 Eftsoones Love him arconeth,
 And brake his tale in his speaking
 As though he had him told leasing.
 And saied: "What deuill is that I here?
 What folke hast thou vs sempred here?
 May menne flud religious
 In worldly habitations?"

" Yea, sir, it followeth nat that they
 should lead a wicked life parrey,
 Ne not therefore hir soules lese,
 That hem to worldly clothes chese,
 For certes it were great pitee;
 Men may in secular clothes see,
 Florisben holy religion;
 Full many a saint in field and town,
 With many a virgine glorious,
 Devout, and full religious,
 Has died, that common cloth aye beren,
 Yet vaintes neuertheless they weren.
 I could reken you many a ten,
 Yea velsigh all these holy women
 That men in churches berry and seke,
 Both maidens, and these wices eke,
 That baren full many a faire child here,
 Wered alway clothes seculere,
 And is the same diden they
 That saints weren, and ben alway.

" The nine thousand maidens dere,
 That baren in Heauesen hir ceriges clere,
 Of which men rede in church and sing,
 Were take in secular clothing,
 When they receiued martirdome,
 And wommen Heauesen unto hir home.

" Good herte maketh the good thought,
 The clothing yeueth us reueth nought:
 The good thought and the working,
 That maketh the religion flourishing,
 There lieth the good religious,
 After the right entencion.

" Who so tooke a weathers skin,
 And wrapped a greedy wolfe therein,
 For he should go with lambes white,
 Wentest thou not he would hem bite?
 Yea: heartbelasse as he were wood
 He would hem wriry, and drinke the blood,
 And well the rather hem deceiue,
 For with they coode nat perceiue
 His tregette, and his crochic,
 They would him follow, altho he fle.

Is there be volues of such bew,
 Amonges these apostles new
 Thou, holy church, thou maist be wailed,
 Sith that thy cite is assailed
 Through knyghtes of thine owne table,
 God wot thy lordship is doutable:
 If they enforce it to win,
 That should defend it fro within,
 Who might defence ayenst hem make?
 Without stroke it mote be take,
 Of trepget or mangonell,
 Without displaying of pensell,
 And if God will done it succour,
 Bet let reane in this colour,
 Thou must thy bestes letten bee,
 Thus is there nought, but yeild thee,
 Or yene hem tribute douteles,
 And hold it of hem to have pees:
 Bet greater harme beside thee,
 That they all maister of it bee:
 Well can they soorne thee withall,
 By day stuffen they the wall,
 And all the night they misen there:
 Nay, thou plasten must eis where
 Time impes, if thou wilt fruit have,
 Abide not there thy seife to save.

Ber now peace, here I turns againe,
 I woll no more of this thing faine,
 If I might passen me hereby;
 For I might maken you weary;
 But I woll heten you alway,
 To helpe your friendes what I may,
 So they wollen my company,
 For they ben sheen all vterly,
 But if so fall, that I be
 Oft with hem, and they with me,
 And eke my lemman mote they serue,
 Or they shull not my love deserue,
 Forsooth I am a false traitour,
 God iudged me for a theefe trechour,
 Forsworne I am, but well nigh none
 Wote of my guile, till it be done.

" Through me hath many one doth receiued,
 That my tregret neuer aperceiued,
 And yet receiuet, and shall receiue,
 That my falsenesse shall neuer aperceiue:
 But who so doth, if he wise be,
 Him is right good beware of me.
 But so aligh is the aperceiuing
 That all to late cometh knowing;
 For Protheus that cood him change,
 In euery shap homely and strange,
 Coud neuer such guile ne treasonn
 As I, for I come neuer in town
 There as I might known be,
 Though men me both might here and see.
 Full well I can my clothes change,
 Take one, and make another strange.
 Now am I knight, now chastelaine,
 Now prelate, and now chaplaine,
 Now priest, now clerke, now fostere,
 Now am I maister, now scollere,
 Now monke, now chanon, now baily,
 What euer mister man am I.

" Now am I prince, now am I paga,
 And can by herte euery language,
 Sometime am I hoore and old,
 Now am I younge, stoute, and bold,
 Now am I Robert, now Robin,
 Now frere minor, now jacobin,
 And with me followeth my loby,
 To done me solace and company,
 That hight dame Abstynence, and raigned
 In many a queint array faigued,
 Right as it cometh to her liking,
 I fulfill all her desiring.

" Sometime a womans cloth take I,
 Now am I a maid, now lady.

" Sometime I am religious,
 Now like an anker in an hous.

" Sometime am I priorese,
 And now a nonne, and now abbese,
 And go through all religious,
 Seeking all religious.

" But to what order that I am sworne,
 I take the straw and beat the corne,
 To jolly folke I enhabite,
 I aske no more but hir habite.

" What wolle ye more? in euery wise
 Right as me list I me disguise?

" Well can I beare me under wede,
 Unlike is my word to my dede,
 Thus make I into my trappes fall
 The people, through my priviledges all,
 That ben in Christendome alive.

" I may assoile, and I may shrive,

That no prelate may let me,
All folke, where ever they found be :
I not no prelate may done so,
But it the pope be, and no mo,
That made thike establishing,
Now is not this a proper thing ?
But were my sleights apperceived

As I was wont, and wold thou why ?
For I did hem a tregetry,
But thereof yewe I a little tale,
I have the siluer and the male,
So have I preached and eke shiriven,
So have I take, so have I yeven,
Through hir folly, husband and wife,
That I lede right a jolly life,
Through simplesse of the prelatie,
They know not all my tregettrie.

But for as much as man and wife
Should shew hir parish priest hir life
Once a yere, as sayth the booke,
Ere any wight his boucel took,
Than have I priviledges large,
That may of manche thing discharge,
For he may say right thus pardee :

“ Sir Priest, in shrift I tell it thee,
That he to whom that I am shriven,
Hath me assoyled, and me yeven
Penance soothly for my sin,
Which that I found me guilty in,
Ne I ne have never entencion
To make double confession,
Ne rehearse eft my shrift to thee,
O shrift is right ynough to mee,
This ought thee suffice wale,
Ne be not rebell never adele,
For certes, though thou haddest it sworne,
I wote no priest ne prelate borne
That may to shrift eft me constraine,
And if they done I wold me plaine,
For I wote where to plaine wale,
Thou shalt not streine me adele,
Ne enforce me, ne not me trouble,
To make my confession double ;
Ne I have none affection
To have double absolution :
The first is right ynough to mee,
This latter assoyling quite I thee,
I am unbond, what maist thou find
More of my sinnes me to unbond ?
For he that might hath in his bond,
Of all my sinnes me unbond :
And if thou wold me thus constraine
That me mote nedes on thee plaine,
There shall no judge imperiall,
Ne bishop, ne officiall,
Done judgement on me, for I
Shall gone and plaine me openly
Unto my shriftfather new,
That bight Frere Wolfe untrow,
And he shall chuse him for mee,
For I trow he can hamper thee ;
But lord he would be wroth withall,
If men would him Frere Wolfe call,
For he would have no patience,
But done all cruell vengeance,
He would his might done at the leest,
Nothing spare for Goddes best,

And God so wise be my succour,
But thou yewe me my avouur
At Easter, when it liketh mee,
Without praising more on thee,
I wold forth, and to him gone,
And he shall boucel me azone,
For I am out of thy grutching,
I keepe not deale with thee nothing.

“ Thus may he shrive him, that formaketh
His parish priest, and to me taketh,
And if the priest wold him refuse,
I am full ready him to accuse,
And him punish and hamper so,
That he his churebe shall forgo.

“ But who so hath in his feeling
The conscience of such shriving,
Shall see, that priest may never have might
To know the conscience aright
Of him that is under his care :

And this is yest holy scripture,
That biddeth every herde boest
Have very knowing of his best.
But poore folke that gone by strete,
That have no gold, ne summes grete,
Hem would I let to hir prelates,
Or let hir priests know hir states,
For to me right ought yewe they,
And why it is, for they ne may.

“ They ben so bare, I take no keepe,
But I wold have the fat sbeope ;
Let parish priests have the lone,
I yewe not of hir harme a bene ;
And if that prelates grutch it,
That oughten wroth be in hir wit,
To lese hir fat bestes so,
I shall yewe hem a stroke or two,
That they shall leese with force,
Yea, both hir mitre and hir croce.

“ Thus yape I hem, and have do long,
My priviledges ben so strong.”

False Semblant wold have stinted here,
But Love ne made him no such chere,
That he was weary of his saw,
But for to make him glad and faw,
He said, “ Tell on more specially,
How that thou servest untruly.

“ Tell furth, and shame thee never adele,
For as thine habit sheweth wale,
Thou servest an holy hermite.

“ Sooth is, but I am but an hypocrite,
Thou goest and preachest poverts !

“ Yea, sir, but Richesse hath poste,
Thou preachest abstinence also ?”

“ Sir, I wold fille, so mote I go,
My paunche, of good meat and wine,
As should a maister of divine,
For how that I me poore faine,
Yet all poore folke I disdain.

I love better the acquaintance
Ten times of the king of Fraunce,
Than of a poore man of mild mood,
Though that his soule be also good.

“ For when I see beggars quaking,
Naked on mixins all stinking,
For hunger crie, and eke for care,
I entremet not of hir fare,
They ben so poore, and full of pine,
They might not ones yewe me a dine,

For they have nothing but hir life,
 What should he yere that licketh his knife?
 It is but folly to outreneste
 To seeke in boundes nest fat mote:
 Let heere hem to the spittle anone,
 But fro me comfort get they none:
 But a rich sicke usurers
 Would I visite and draw nere,
 Him would I comfort and rebete,
 For I hope of his gold to gete,
 And if that wicked Death him have,
 I wold go with him in hir grave,
 And if there any reprove me,
 Why that I let the poore be,
 West thou how I not escape?
 I sey and swere him full rape,
 That riche men han more tetches
 Of sinne, than han poore wretches,
 And han of counsaile more mistere,
 And therefore I wold draw hem nere:
 Let as great hurt, it may so be,
 Hath a soule in right great poverte,
 As soule in great richesse forsooth,
 Albeit that they hurten both,
 For richesse and mendicities
 Be cleped two extremities,
 The meane is cleped suffisaunce,
 There lieth of vertue the abondaunce.
 "For Salomon full well I wote,
 In his parables us wrote,
 As it is knowen of many a wight,
 In his thirteene chapitre right,
 God thou me keepe for thy poete,
 For richesse and mendicitee,
 For if a rich man him dresse,
 To thinke too much on richesse,
 His herte on that so ferre is sette,
 That he his creator doth foryette,
 And him that beggeth, wold aye greve,
 How should I by his word him leve,
 Uneth that he ais a micher,
 Forsworne, or eis Goddes her,
 Thus myth Salomon sawes.
 "Ne we find written in no lawes,
 And namely in our Christen ley,
 (Who with ys, I dare say nay)
 That Christ, ne his apostles dere,
 While that they walked in earth here,
 Were never seene herbred begging,
 For they nolden beggen for nothing.
 "And right thus were men wont to teach,
 And in this wise would it preach,
 The maisters of divinitie
 Sometime in Paris the citee.

And if men wold there gaine appose
 The saked text, and let the gloce,
 It might some assailed be,
 For men may well the sooth see,
 That pard they might aske a thing
 Mainly forth without begging,
 For they weren Goddes boordes dere,
 And cure of soules hadden here,
 They wold nothing begge hir food,
 For after Christ was done on rood,
 With their proper hounds they wrought,
 And with travaile, and eis nought,
 They woupen all hir sustenaunce,
 And linden forth in hir penance,

And the remenaunt yafe away
 To other poore folkes alway.

"They neither builden toure ne halle,
 But thry in houses small with alle.

"A mighty man that can and may,
 Should with his hood and body alway,
 Winne him his food in labouring,
 If he ne have rent or such a thing;
 Although he be religious,
 And God to seven curious,
 Thus mote he done, or do trespass,
 But if it be in certaine cas,
 That I can rehearse, if mistere bee,
 Right well, when the time I see.

"Seeko the booke of Saint Augustine,
 Be it in paper or perchemene,
 There as he wite of these worchings,
 Thou shalt seee that none excusings
 A perfitt man us should seeke
 By wordes, ne by deedes eke,
 Although he be religious,
 And God to seven curious,
 That he ne shall, so mote I go,
 With proper hounds and body also
 Get his food in labouring,
 If he ne have properte of thing,
 Yet should he sell all his substaunce,
 And with his swinke have sustenaunce,
 If he be perfitt in bounte;
 Thus han the bookes told me:

For he that wold gone idelly,
 And useth it aye busly
 To haunten other mennes table,
 He is a trechour full of fable,
 Ne he ne may by good reason
 Excuse him by his orison,
 For men beboveth in some gise,
 Ben sometime in Goddes service,
 To gone and purchasen hir neede.

"Men mote eate, that is no drede,
 And sleepe, and eke do other thing,
 So long may they leave praying.

"So may they eke hir prayer blinde,
 While that they werke hir meat to winne,
 Saint Austine wold thereto accord,
 In thilke booke that I record.

"Justinian eke, that made lawes,
 Hath thus forboden by old sawes:
 'No man, vp paine to be dead,
 Mighty of body, to beg his bread,
 If he may awinke it for to gete,
 Men should him rather maine or bete,
 Or done of him aperte justice,
 Than suffren him in such mallice.'

"They done not well so mote I go,
 That taken such almese so,
 But if they have some priviledge,
 That of the paine hem wold allidde.

"But how that is, can I not see,
 But if the prince deceived bee,
 Ne I ne wene not sikerty,
 That they may have it rightfully.

"But I wold not determine
 Of princes power, ne define,
 Ne by my word comprehend ywis,
 If it so ferre may stretch in this;
 I wold not extremete a dele,
 But I trow that the booke sayth wel,
 Who that taketh almese, that bee
 Dew to folke that men may see

Lame, feeble, weary, and bare,
Poore, or in such manner care,
That con wisse hem nevermo,
For they have no power therin,
He eateth his owne dampning,
But if he lie that made all thing,
And if ye such a truant find,
Chastise him well, if ye be kind,
But they would hate you parcaas,
If ye fillen in hir laas.

" They would eftsoones do you soathe,
If that they might, late or rathe,
For they be not full patient,
That han the world thus foule blant,
And woteth well, that God had
The good man sell all that he had,
And follow him, and to poure it yove :
He would not therefore that he live,
To serven him in mendicence,
For it was never his sentence,
But he had werken when that need is,
And follow him in goode deedis.

" Saint Poule that loved all holy church,
He bade the apostles for to wurch,
And winnen hir livelode in that wise,
And hem defended trauandine,
And said, werketh with your hondes,
Thus should the thing be vnderstondeu.

" He nolde wis have bid hem begging,
Ne sellen gospel, ne preching,
Least they beraft, with hir asking,
Folke of hir cattall or of hir thing.

" For in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for be no can
Werne it for shame, or else he
Would of the asker delivered be,
And for he him encombreth so,
He yeveth him good to let him go :
But it can him nothing profite,
They lese the yeft and the merite.

" The good folke that Poule to preched,
Profred him oft, when he hem teached,
Some of hir good in charite,
But thereof right nothing tooke he,
But of his honde would he gette
Clothes to wrine him, and his mete.

Tell me then how a man may liveu,
That all his good to poore hath yevu,
And woll but openly hidde his bedes,
And never with hondes labour his nades.
May he do so? Yea sir: and how?

Sir I woll gladly tell you :
Saint Austen saith, a man may be
In houses that han properte,
As templers and hospiteles,
And as these chanoys regulers,
Or white monkes, or these blake,
I woll no mo ensamples make,
And take thereof his susteinig,
For therein lithe no begging,
But otherwaies not wis,
Yet Austen gabbeth not of this,
And yet full many a monke labourth,
That God in holy church honoureth :
For when hir swinking is agone,
They rede and sing in church anone.

" And for there hath ben great discord,
As many a wight may beare record,

Upon the estate of mendicence,
I woll shortly in your presence,
Tell how a man may begge at need,
That hath not wherewith him to feed,
Maugre his fellowes langtinge,
For soothfastnesse woll none hidings,
And yet percaas I may obey,
That I to you soothly thus sey.

Lo here the case especiall,
If a man be so bestiall,
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desireth ignoraunce,
Than may he go a begging yevue,
Till be some other craft can lerne,
Through which without trauanding,
He may in trouth have his living.

" Or if he may dowu no labour,
For elde, or sicknesse, or langour,
Or for his tender age also,
Than may he yet a begging go.

" Or if he have peraventure,
Through vsage of his povurte,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folke comenly,
Han of his mischeefe some pite,
And suffren him also, that he
May gone about and begge his bread,
That he be not for longer dead ;
Or if he have of craft conning,
And strength also, and desiring
To wochen, as he had what,
But he find neither this ne that,
Than may he begge till that he
Have gotten his necessite.

" Or if his winning be so litte,
That his labour woll not aquite
Sufficiauntly all his living,
Yet may he go his brode begging
Fro dore to dore, he may go trace,
Till be the remnaunt may purchace.

" Or if a man would vndertake
Any empirie for to make,
In the rescuous of our ley,
And it defenden as he may,
Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other ooverenable cure,
If it be so he poore be,
Than may he begge, till that he
May find in trouth for to swinke
And get him clothe, meat, and drinke,
Swinke he with his hondes corporell,
And not with hondes esprituel.

In all this case, and in semblables,
If that there ben no reasonables,
He may begge, as I tell you here,
And eis not in no manere,
As William Saint Amour would prech,
And oft would dispute and teach
Of this matter all openly
At Paris full solemnely,
And also God my soule blesse
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The accord of the vuiverite
And of the people, as accueth me.

" No good man ought it to refuse,
Ne ought him thereof to excuse,

Be wrothe or blithe, who so be,
 For I wolle speake, and tell it thee,
 All should I die, and be put doun,
 As was mist Foule in derke prison,
 Or be exiled in this caas
 With wrong, as minister William was,
 That my mother Hypocrisie
 Banished for her great envie.
 " My mother blemed him Saint Amour :
 This noble did suche labour
 To sustene ever the loyalte,
 That he too much agifte me :
 He made a booke, and let it write,
 Wherein his life he did all write,
 And would eke remaine begging,
 And live by my travelling,
 If I had rent no other good,
 What wenech he that I were wood ?
 For labour might me never please,
 I have more will to be at ease,
 And have well lever, sooth to say,
 Before the people patten and pray,
 And wrie me in my foxerie
 Under a cope of papelardie."
 (Good Love) " What divell is this that I here,
 What wordes tellest thou me here ?"
 " What, sir, falsnesse, that apart is."
 " Than drodest thou not God ?" " No certes :
 For while in great thing shall he spede
 In this world, that God wolle drede,
 Be folke that been to vertue yoven,
 And truly on hir owen liven,
 And been in goodnesse aye content,
 On hem is litle thrift isent,
 Such folke drinken great misese,
 That life may me never please.
 " But see what gold han rrevers,
 And silver eke in garners,
 Tailiers, and these monours,
 Shufflers, beedles, provost, countours,
 These liven well nigh by ravine,
 The small people hem mote encline,
 And they as wolves wolle hem eten :
 Upon the poure folke they geten
 Full much of that they spend or kepe,
 For some of hem that they will strepe,
 And wrie hem selfe well at full,
 Without scolding they hem pull.
 " The strong the feeble overgothe,
 But I that weare my simple clothe,
 Shalbe both robbed, and robbours,
 And guile guiling, and guilours :
 By my tregret, I gather and threste
 The great tresoor into my cheste,
 That lieth with me so fast bound,
 Whiche high paleis doe I found,
 And my delighes I fulfill,
 With wine at feastes at my will,
 And tables full of entremees ;
 I wolle no life, but ease and pece,
 And wine gold to spend also,
 For when the great bagge is go,
 A couneth right with my yapes,
 Make I not well tomlie mine apes :
 To winnen is alway mine entent,
 My purchase is better than my rent,
 For though I should beaten be,
 Over all I extremete me ;
 Without me maie no wright dure,
 I walke soules for to care,

Of all the world cure have I
 In brede and length ; boldly
 I wolle both preach and eke counsaile,
 With bondes wolle I not travaile,
 For of the pope I have the boll,
 I me hold not my wittes dull,
 I wolle not stinten in my live
 These emperours for to thrive,
 Or kinges, dukes, and lords grete :
 But poure folke all quite I leta,
 I love no such thriving parde,
 But it for other cause be :
 I recke not of poure men,
 Hir estate is not worth an hen.

" Where findest thou a swinker of labour
 Have me to his confessor ?
 But empresses, and duchesses,
 These queenes, and eke countesses,
 These abbesses, and eke bigins,
 These great ladies palasins,
 These lolly knightes, and bailives,
 These nonnes, and these burgeis wives
 That riche ben, and eke pleasing,
 And these maidens welkering,
 Where so they clad or naked be,
 Unconsailed folk there none for me ;
 And for hir soules safete,
 At lord and lady, and hir meine,
 I aske, when they hem to me shrive,
 The propertie of all hir live,
 And make hem trow, both most and least,
 Hir parish priest is but a beast
 Ayenst me and my company,
 That shrewes been as grant (as I)
 For which I wolle not hide in hold,
 No private that me is told,
 That I by word or signe lwis,
 Ne wolle make hem know what it is,
 And they wolden also telen me,
 They bele for me no private.
 And for to make you hem perceiven,
 That vren folke thus to deceiven,
 I wolle you saine withouten drede,
 What men may in the Gospell rede,
 Of Saint Mathew the gospellere,
 That saith, as I shall you say here.

Vrow the chaire of Moses
 Thus it is glosed douteles,
 (That is the olde testament,
 For thereby is the chaire ment)
 Sitte scribes and pharisen,
 That is to saine, the cursed men,
 Which that we ipocrites call :
 Doeth that they preache, I rede you all,
 But doeth not as they doen adele,
 That been not weary to say wele,
 But to doe well, no will have they,
 And they would bind on folke alway
 (That been to be beguiled able)
 Burdons that been importable ;
 On folkes shoulders things they couchet,
 That they will with their fingers touchet,
 And why wolle they not touch it, why ?
 For hem we list nat sikerly,
 For sadder burdons that men taken,
 Make folkes shoulders aken.

" And if they do ought that good be,
 That is for folke it should see :

Hir burdons larger maken they,
 And maken hir becomes wide alway,
 And loven seates at the table
 The first and most honourable,
 And for to han the first chairs,
 In synagogues, to hem full dore is,
 And willen that folke bein houte and grete,
 When that they passen through the strete,
 And wullen be cleped maister also:
 But they ne should not willen so,
 The gospell is there ayenst I ganne,
 That showeth well hir wickednesse.

ANOTHER custome was
 Of hem that woll ayenst vs be,
 We hate hem deadly everychone,
 And we woll werry him, as one,
 Him that one hateth, hate we all,
 And coniect how to doem him fall:
 And if we seeen him wisse honour,
 Richesse or preise, through his valour,
 Provide, rent, or dignite,
 Full fast iwis compassen we
 By what ladder he is clobben so,
 And for to maken him downe to go,
 With treason we woll him defame,
 And doen him lese his good name.

" Thus from his ladder we him take,
 And thus his frendes foes we make,
 But word ne wete shall he none,
 Till all his frendes been his fone,
 For if we did it openly,
 We might have blame readily,
 For hac he wist of our mallice,
 He had him kept, but he were nice.

" Another is this, that if so fall,
 That there be one among vs all
 That doeth a good tourne, out of drede,
 We saine it is our alder dede,
 Yea sikely, though he it fained,
 Or that him list, or that him dained
 A man through him avauced be,
 Thereof all parteners be we,
 And tellen folke where so we go,
 That ma through vs is sprongen so.

" And for to have of men praising,
 We purchase through our flattering
 Of riche men of great poste
 Letters, to witness our bounte,
 So that man weseeth that may vs see,
 That all vertue in vs be.

" And alway poore we vs faine,
 But how so that we begge or paigne,
 We ben the folke without leasing,
 That all thing have without having.
 " Thus se dradde of the people iwis,
 And gladly my purpose is this.

" I deak with no wight, but he
 Have gold and treasour great plente,
 Hir acquaintance well love I:
 This much my desire shortly,
 I entremete me of brocages,
 I make pease and mariages,
 I am gladly executour,
 And many tmes a procuratour,
 I am sometime messangere,
 That falleth out to my mistere.

" And many times I make enquest,
 For me that office is nat honest,

To deale with other meenes thing,
 That is to me a great liking:
 And if that ye have ought to do
 In place that I reparaire to,
 I shall it speden through my wit,
 As soon as ye have told me it,
 So that ye serve me to pay,
 My service shall be yours alway.

" But who so woll chastice me,
 Anone my love lost hath he,
 For I love no man in no gise,
 That woll me reprove or chastise,
 But I woll all folke vndertake,
 And of no wight no teaching take,
 For I that other folke chastie,
 Woll not be taught fro my folie.

I love none hermitage more,
 All desertes and boites boore
 And greates woodes everychon,
 I let hem to the Baptist Iohn,
 I queth him quite, and him release
 Of Egipt all the wilderness;
 Too ferre were all my manours
 Fro all cities and good town.

" My paleis and mine house make I
 There noon may renne in openly,
 And say that I the world forsake,
 But all amiddie I build and make
 My house, and swim and play thercis
 Bette than a fish doeth with his finne.

Or Antichristes men am I,
 Of which thet Christ sayeth openly,
 They have habite of holnesse,
 And liven in such wikednesse.

" Outward lamben seemen we,
 Full of goodnesse and of pite,
 And inward we withouten fable
 Been greedy wolves ravisable.

" We envour both lond and see,
 With all the world werrien we,
 We woll ordaine of all thing,
 Of folkes good, and hir living.

" If there be castell or cite
 Within that any bougerous be,
 Although that they of Millaine were,
 For thereof been they blamed there;
 Or if a wight out of measure,
 Would lene hir gold, and take vsare,
 For that he is so covetous,
 Or if he be too lecherous,
 Or these that haunten simonie,
 Or provost full of trecherie,
 Or prelate living idilly,
 Or priest that halt his quein him by,
 Or olde hooves hostillers,
 Or other baudes or bordellers,
 Or els blamed of any vice,

Of which men shoulde don justice:
 " By all the saintes that we prey,
 But they defend them with lamprey,
 With luce, with elis, with samons,
 With tender goese, and with capons,
 With tartes, or with cheffes fat,
 With daintie flannes, brode and flat,
 With caleweis, or with pailaie,
 With coninges, or with fine vitaille,

That we vnder our clothes wide,
Melve through our gullet glide,
Or but he wold doe come in hast
The venous baks in past,
Whether so that he leare or groine,
He shall have of a corde a loigne,
With which men shall him bind and lede,
To brame him for his sinful dede,
That men shull heare him crye and rore
A mile way about and more,
Or els he shall in prison die,
But if he wold his friendship buy,
Or smerten that, that he hath do,
More than his guilt amonseth to.

" But and he couth through his sleight
The maken up a toure of height,
Kought roght I whether of stons or tree,
Or yearth, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with aquier and scantilone,
So that the toure were stufed well
With all riches temporell :

" And than that he wold vp dresse
Juyres, both more and lesse,
To cast at vs by every side,
To beare his good name wide :

" Such sleights I shall you yeven,
Jurnis of wine, by sixe or seven,
Of gold in sackes great plenty,
He should some delivered be,
And if he have no such pitences,
Let him studie in equipolences,
And let lies and fallaces,

That he wold deserve our graces,
Or we shall beare him soch witness
Of same, and of his wretchednesse,
And doon his losse no wide renne
That all quicke we should him brenne,
Or els yere him soch penaunce,
That is well worse than the pitaunce.

" For thou shalt never for nothing
Be knowen stright by hir clothing
The traitours full of trecherie,
But thes hir werkes can espie.

" And he had the good keeping be
Fylowne of the univarsite,
That keepeth the key of Christendome,
We had been tourmented all and some.

" Such beem the stinking propheetis,
The none of hem, that good propheet is,
For they through wicked entencion,
The yere of the incarnation

Of thousand and two hundred yere,
Fifty and fiftie farther no pere,
Boughten a booke with sorrie grace,
The yeven an example in common place,

That said thus, though it were fable,
This is the gospell perdurable,
That fro the Holy Ghost is sent
Well were it worthe to be brent.

Which was in such manere
This booke, of which I tell here,
There was no wight in all Paris,
Wherof our ladie at pertis,

That they no might the booke by,
The sentence pleased hem well truly.
So the copie, if him talent wolk
Of the evangelistes booke,

There might he see by great traisoun
Full many a false comparisoun.

" As much as through his greates might,
Be it of heate or of light,
The Sunne surmounteth the Moone,
That troubler is, and chaungeth soone,
And the putte kernell the shell,
I scoone nat that I you tell :

" Right so withouten any gyle
Surmounteth this noble evangile,
The word of any evangele,
And to hir title they taken Christ,
And many such comparisoun,
Of which I make no mentioon,
Might menne in that booke find,
Who so could of hem have mind.

" The univarsitie that tho was wise
Gan for to braide, and taken kepe,
And at the noise, the head vp cast,
Ne never sithen slept it fast,
But vp it stert, and armes tooke
Aynst this false horrible booke,
All ready bataille for to make,
And to the iudge the booke they take.

" But they that broughten the booke there,
Hent it anooe away for feare,
They nolde shew it no more adele,
But than it kept, and kepen wel,
Till such a time that they may see,
That they so strunge woken bee,
That no wight may hem well withstand,
For by that booke they durst not stond,
Away they gone it for to bere,
For they ne durst not answere
By exposition no glose

To that that clerkes wold appose
Aynst the curnednesse iwis
That in that booke written is.

" Now wote I nat, ne I can nat see
What manner end that there shall bee
Of all this that they hide,
But yet algate they shall abide,
Till that they may it bette defend,
This trow I best wold be hir end.

" Thus Antichrist abiden we,
For we ben all of his meine,
And what man that wold not be so,
Right soone he shall his life forgo.
We wold a people upon him arise,
And through our guile doon him cease,
And him on sharpe speares rive,
Or other waies bring him fro live,
But if that he wold follow wyis,
That in our booke written is.

Twis much wold our booke signifie,
That while Peter had maistris
May never Iohn shew well his might.

" Now have I you declared right,
The meaning of the barke and rinde,
That maketh the entencions blinde,
But now at erst I wold begin,
To expoune you the pith within,
And the seculers comprehend,
That Christes lawe wold defend,
And should it kepen and maintainen
Aynst hem that all sustenen,
And falsely to the people teachen,
That Iohn betokeneth hem to preachen,
That there nis law counsaile,
But tilke gospell perdurable,

That fro the Holy Ghost was sent
To turne folke that ben miswent.
" The strength of Iohn they vnderstood,
The grace in which they say they stound,
That doeth the sinfull folke conuert,
And hem to Iesu Christ reuert,
Full many another horriblee,
May meene in that booke see,
That been commaunded doublelesse
Aynst the law of Rome expresse,
And all with Antichrist they holden,
As men may in the booke beholden.
" And than commaunden they to sleepe,
All tho that with Peter been,
Bot they shall never have that might,
And God toforne, for strife to fight,
That they ne shall ynough find,
That Peters law shall have in mind,
And euer hold, and so maintene,
That at the last it shall be seen,
That they shall all come thereto,
For ougt that they can speake or do.
" And thiike laws shall not stound,
That they by Iohn have vnderstood,
But maugre hem it shall adoun,
And been brought to confusoun,
" But I woll stint of this matere,
For it is wonder long to here,
Dut had that ilke booke endured,
Of better estate I were ensured,
And friendes have I yet pardes,
That han me set in great degres.

Or all this world is emperour
Guile my father, the trechour,
And empresse my mother is,
Maugre the Holy Ghost isie,
Our mightie linage and our rout
Reigneth in every reigne about,
And well is worthy we ministers be,
For all this worlde governe we,
And can the folke so well deceive,
That none our guile can perceive,
And though they doen, they dare not say,
The sooth dare no wight bewray.
" But he in Christes wrath him leadeth,
That more than Christ my brethren dredeth,
He nis no full good champion,
That dredeth such similation,
Nor that for paine woll refusen,
Us to correct and accusen.
" He woll not extremete by right,
Ne have God in his eyesight,
And therefore God shall him punice;
But me ne recketh of no vice,
Sithen men vs loven comunally,
And holden vs for so worthy,
That we may folke repreve echone,
And we nil have repreve of none:
Whom shoulde folke worshippen so,
But vs that stinten never mo
To patren while that folke may vs see,
Though it not so behind hem be.

And where is more wood follic,
Than to enhance chivalrie,
And love noble men and gay,
That illy clothes wearen alway?

If they be such folke as they seemed,
So cleane, as men hir clothes demed,
And that hir wordes follow hir dede,
It is great pitie out of drede,
For they woll be none hypocritia,
Of hem me thinketh greste spight is,
I cannot love hem on no side.
" But beggers with these hoodes wide,
With sleigh and pale faces leane,
And graie clothes nat full cleane,
But frosted full of tatarwagges,
And high shoes knopped with dagges,
That frounceen like a quale pipe,
Or bootes riveling as a gipe.
" To such folke as I you devise,
Should princes and these lordes wise,
Take all hir landes and hir things,
Both warre and peace in goverouns,
To such folke should a prince him yve,
That would his life in honour live.
" And if they be nat as they seeme,
They serven thus the world to queme,
There would I dwell to deceive
The folke, for they shall nat perceive.
" But I ne speake in no such wise,
That men should humble habite dispe,
So that no pride there vnder be,
No man should hate, as thinketh me,
The poore man in such clothing,
But God ne preiseith him nothing,
That saith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glory him take,
And woll of such delices vse,
Who may that begger well excuse?
" That papelarde, that him yeoldeth so,
And woll to worldly case go,
And saith that he the world hath left,
And greedily it gripeth eft,
He is the bound, shame is to saine,
That to his casting gooth againe.

But vnto you dare I not lie,
But might I feelen or espie,
That ye perceived it nothing,
Ye should have a starke leasing:
Right in your hood thus to beginne,
I nolde it let for no sinne."
The god lough at the wonder tho,
And every wight gan lough also,
And saied: " Lo here a man right,
For to be trustie to every wight."

" FALSH semblaunt," (quod Love) " say to me,
Sith I thus have avauced thee,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of ribaudes shalt be my king,
Wolt thou well holden my forwardes?"
" Yea, sir, from hence forwardes,
Had never your father here beforen,
Seruaunt so true, sith he was borne,
That is aynst all nature.
" Sir, put you in that aventure,
For though ye borowes take of me,
The sikerer shall ye never be
For hostages, ne sikernesse,
Or chartrea, for to beare witness:
I take your selfe to record here,
That men ne may in no manere

Tears the wolfe out of his hide,
Till he be slaine backe and side,
Though men him beat and all defile,
What wene ye that I wold beguile?

"For I am clothed meekely,
There vnder is all my trechery,
Mine herte chaungeth never the mo
For none habite, in which I go;
Though I have chere of simplenesse,
I am not wearie of shreudnesse;
My lemman, strained Abstenaunce,
Bath mister of my purposaunce,
She had full long ago be ded,
Nere my counsaile and my red;
Let her alone, and you and mee."

And Love answered, "I trust thee
Without borow, for I wold none."

And False Semblant the theefe anon,
Right in that ilke name place,
That had of treason all his face,
Right blacke within, and white without,
Thanking him, gan on his knees lout.

Then was there nought, but every man
Row to assaute, that seiken can
(Good Love) and that full bardely:

Two armed they hem comely
Of such armour as to hem fell,
Whan they were armed fiers and fell,

They went hem forth all in a rout,
And set the castle all about;
They will not away for no dread,
Till it so be that they ben dead,
Or till they have the castle take,
And here battels they gan make,
And parted hem in foure anone,
And took hir way, and forth they gone,
The foure gates for to assaile,

Of which the keepers wold not faile,
For they ben neither sickle ne dede,
But hardie folke, and strong in dede.

Row wold I sein the countenaunce
Of False Semblant, and Abstenaunce,

That ben to Wicked Tongue went;
At first they held hir parliament,

Whether it to doen were,
Whether hem be knowne there,
Or this walken forth disguised;

At the last they deuided,
That they would gone in tapinage,
As it were in a pilgrimage,

As the good and holy folke vnfained:
The dame Abstenaunce strained
Toke of the robe of camelive,
And gan her gratche as a bigine.

A large cocerchief of thread,
She wrapped all about her head,
That she forgate not her psaltere.

A paire of beades eke she bere
Upon a face, all of white thread,
In which that she her beades bedde,

That she ne bought hem never adele,
That they were given her, I wote wele,
The wote of a full holy frere,

That said he was her father dere,
Whom she had offer went,
Whom any frere of his count.

And he visited her also,
That many a sermon said he to,
That he ne would her off shrive,

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And with so great devotion
They made her confession,
That they had oft for the nones
Two heades in one hood at ones.

Of faire shape I deuided her thee,
But pale of face sometime was shee,
That false tratouresse untrew,
Was like that swallow horse of bew,
That in the Apocalips is shewed,
That signifeth the folke beshrewed,
That been all full of trecherie,
And pale, through hypocrisie,
For on that horse no colour is,
But onely dead and pale iwis,
Of such a colour eningoured,
Was Abstenaunce iwis coloured,
Of her estate she her repented,
As her visage represented.

She had a burdoune all of theft,
That Guile had yene her of his yeft,
And a scrippe of faint distresse,
That full was of eleuosioun,
And forth she walked soberlie:
And False Semblant saint, in roos die,
And as it were for such mistere,
Doen on the cope of a frere,
With chere simple, and full pitous,
His looking was not disdeinous,
Ne prond, but mecke and full possible.

About his necke he bare a Bible,
And squierly forth gan he gon,
And for to rest his limmes vpon,
He had of treason a portent,
As he were feeble, his way he went.

But in his sleue he gan to bring
A rasour sharpe, and well biting,
That was forged in a forge,
Which that men clepen coupe gorge.

So long forth hir way they nomen,
Till they to Wicked Tongue comen,
That at his gate was sitting,
And saw folke in the way passing.

The pilgrimes saw he fast by,
That bearen hem full meekely,
And humbly they with hem mette,
Dame Abstenaunce first him grette,
And sith him False Semblant salued,
And he hem, but he not remeued,
For he ne drede him not adele:
For when he saw hir faces wele,
Alway in herte him thought so,
He should know hem both two,
For well he knew dame Abstenaunce,
But he ne knew not Constraunaunce,
He knew nat that she was constrained,
Ne of her theenes life fained,
But wend she come of will all free,
But she come in another degree,
And if of good will she began,
That will was failed her than.

And False Semblant had he seine also,
But he knew nat that he was false,
Yet false was he, but his falsenesse
He could be not espie, nor gesse,
For Semblant was so dille wrought,
That falsenesse he ne espyed nought:
But haddert thou knownen him before,
Thou woldert on a booke have sworned,

Q

Whan thou him saw in thilke arraie
That he, that whilome was so gaie,
And of the danncce Jolly Robin
Was tho become a Jacobin:
But soothly what so men him call
Frere preachours been good men all,
Hir order wickedly they bearen
Such ministrelous if they wearen.

So been Augustins, and Cordeliers,
And Carmes, and eke sacked froers,
And all freers shode and bare,
Though some of hem ben great and square,
Full holy men, as I hem deme,
Everich of hem would good man seme:
But abalt thou neuer of apparence
Seme conclude good consequence
In none argument iwis,
If existence all failed is:
For men may finde alway sopheme
The consequence to enuenseme,
Who so that hath had the subtiltee
The double sentence for to see.

Whan the pilgrimes comen were
To Wicked Tongue that dwelth there,
Hir harnes nigh hem was algate,
By Wicked tougue adoune they sate,
That bad hem nere him for to come,
And of tidinges tell him some,
And sayd hem: "What case maketh you
To come into this place now?"

"Sir," sayed strained Abstinence,
"We for to drie our penaunce,
With hertes pitous and deuout,
Are comen, as pilgrimes gone about,
Well nigh on foote alway we go
Full doughtie been our heedis two,
And thus both we be sent
Throughout the world that is miswent,
To yeve ensuple, and preach also,
To fishen sinfull men we go,
For other fishing, ne fish we,
And, sir, for that charite,
As we be wont, herborow we craue,
Your life to amenne Christ it saue,
And so it should you not displease,
We woulde, if it were your case,
A short sermon vnto you saie.
And Wicked Tongue answered again,
"The house" (quod he) "such (as ye see)
Shall not be warned you for me,
Saie what you list, and I wolle heere."
"Graunt mercie sweet sir deare,"
(Quod silderfirst) "dame Abstinence,"
And thus began the her sentence.
"Sir, the first vertus certainne,
The greatest, and most soueraigne
That may be found in any man,
For having, or for wit he can,
That is his tongue to refraine,
Thereto ought euerie wight him paine:
For it is better still be,
Than for to speaken harme parde,
And he that hearkeneth it gladly,
He is no good man sikerly.

"And sir, abouen all other sinne,
In that art thou most guiltie inne:
Thou speake a yape, not long agoe.

"And sir, that was right euill doe

Of a young man, that here repaired,
And never yet this place apaired:
Thou saidest he awaited nothing,
But to deceiue Faire Welcomming:
Ye sayd nothing sooth of that,
But sir, ye lye, I tell ye plat,
He ne commeth no more, ne goeth parde,
I trow ye shall him never see;
Faire Welcomming in prison is,
That oft hath played with you er this,
The fairest games that he coude,
Without flith, still or louds.
Now dare she not her selfe solace,
Ye han also the man doe chase,
That he dare neither come ne go,
What mooveth you to hate him so?
But properly your wicked thought,
That many a false lesing hath thought,
That mooveth your foule eloquence,
That langletth ever in audience,
And on the folke ariseth blame,
And doth hem dishonour and shame,
For thing that may have no preuing,
But likelinese, and contriving.

"For I dare saie, that Reason deemeth,
It is not all sooth thing that seemeth,
And it is sime to coutroue
Thing that is to reprove;
This wote ye welle, and sir, therefore
Ye arne to blame the more,
And nathelesse, he recketh lite
He yeueth not now thereof a mite,
For if he thought harme, parfais,
He woulde come and gone all daie,
He coude himselfe not abeteine,
Now commeth he not, and that is sene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But if it be through aventure,
And lasse than other folke algate,
And thou here watchest at the gate,
With speare in thine arest alwaie,
There muse musard all the daie,
Thou wakest night and day for thought,
Iwis thy trauaile is for nought,
And Ielousie withouten faile,
Shall never quit thee thy trauaile,
And skath is, that Faire Welcoming,
Without any trespassing,
Shall wrongfully in prison be,
There weepeth and languisheth be,
And though thou never yet iwis,
Agilttest man no more but this,
Take not a greefe it were worthy
To put thee out of this bailey,
And afterward in prison lie,
And fetred thee till that thou die;
For thou shalt for this sinne dwell
Right in the Duels arse of Hell,
But if that thou repent thee:
Malfaic, thou lyest falsely." (Quod he)

"What, welcomme with mischance now,
Have I therefore herbourued you
To say me shame, and eke reprove,
With sorrie happe to your behoue,
Am I to day your herbegare
Go herber you elsewhere than here,
That han a lye called me,
Two tregretours art thou and he,
That in mine house doe me this shame,
And for my soothsaw ye me blame,

Is this the sermon that ye make?
 For all the diuels I me take,
 By othe God thou me confound,
 For er men didden this castle found,
 I passed not two dayes of twelce,
 But it was told right to my selce,
 And as they sayd, right so told I,
 Is this the rose priuily:
 Has sayd I now, and have sayd yore,
 I not where he did any more.
 Why should men say me such a thing,
 If I had been gabbing?
 Right so saide I, and wold say yet,
 I wold I had not of it,
 And with my bezes I wold blow
 In all neighbours arrow,
 For he hath both comen and gone."
 The spake False Semblant right anon,
 "All is not gospell out of dout,
 That men saine in the towne about,
 May so defe care to my speaking,
 I swere you, sir, it is gabbing,
 How you wote well certainly,
 That no man loveth him tenderly,
 That sayth him harme, if he wote it,
 He be he never so poore of wit;
 And sooth is also sikerly,
 This know ye, sir, as well as I,
 That lovers gladly wold visiten
 The places there hir loves habiten:
 The man you loveth and eke honoureth,
 The man to serve you laboureth,
 And depeth you his freind so deere,
 And this man maketh you good cheere,
 And carie man that you meeteth,
 He you salueth, and he you greeteth;
 He prouth not so oft, that ye
 Right of his comynge encomber he:
 He pressen other folke on you,
 And offer than he dooth now,
 And if his herte him strained so
 Into the rose for to go,
 He should him seme so oft need,
 And ye should take him with the deed;
 He good his comynge not forbears,
 Though ye him thrilled with a speare;
 He were not than as it is now,
 He trusteth well, I swere it you,
 But it is cleue out of his thought.
 He, certes he ne thinketh it nought,
 He more ne doth Faire Welcoming,
 He not more shieth all this thing:
 He not if they were of one assent,
 He not if some were the rose hent,
 He not if some were the rose hent,

The mangre yours wold be.

"And sir, of o thing hearkeneth me,
 Sith ye this man, that loveth you,
 Has sayd such harme and shame, now
 Witteth well, if he gamed it,
 Ye may well demen in your wit,
 He nolde nothing love you so,
 Ne callen you his friend also,
 But night and daie he wold wake,
 The castle to destroy and take,
 If it were sooth, as ye devise;
 Or some man in some manner wise
 Might it warne him everidele,
 Or by himselfe perceiue wele,
 For sith he might not come and gose
 As he was whilom wont to done,
 He might it soone wite and see,
 But now all otherwise wote hee.

"Than have ye, sir, all vtterly
 Deserved Hell, and iollyly
 The death of Hell doubtlesse,
 That thralen folke so guiltlesse."

False Semblant so prooveth this thing,
 That he can none answering,
 And sooth alwaie such appurance,
 That nigh he fell in repentaunce,
 And sayd him, "Sir, it may well be.
 Semblant, a good man seemen ye,
 And Abstinence, full wise ye seeme,
 Of o talent you both I doome,
 What counsaile wold ye to me yeven?"

"Right here anon thou shalt be shrivep
 And say thy sinne without more,
 Of this shalt thou repent sore,
 For I am priest, and have poote,
 To shrive folke of most dignite
 That ben as wide as world my dure,
 Of all this world I have the cure,
 And that had yet never persoun,
 Ne vicarie of no manner toun.

"And God wote I have of thee,
 A thousand times more pitee,
 Than hath thy priest parochiall
 Though he thy friend be speciall.

"I have avauntage, in o wise,
 That your priests be not so wise
 Ne halfe so letired (as am I)
 I am licensed boldly,
 In divinitie for to read,
 And to confemen out of dread.

"If ye wold you now confeme,
 And leave your sinnes more and lesse,
 Without shode, kneele doune anon,
 And you shall have absolution."

HERE ENDETH THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

HERE AFTER FOLLOWETH THE

BOOKE OF TROILUS AND CRESEIDE,

In this excellent booke is shewed the fervent love of
Troilus to Creseide, whom he enjoyed for a time:
and her great untruth to him again in giving
herself to Diomedes, who in the end did so cast
her off, that she came to great misery. In which
discourse Chaucer liberally treateth of the divine
purveyance.

THE double sorrow of Troilus to tellen,
That was kinge Priamus sonne of Troy,
In loving, how his adventures fellea
From woe to wele, and after out of ioy,
My purpose is, er that I part froy.
Thou Theziphone, thou helpe me for tendite
These wofull verses, that wepen as I write.

To thee I clepe, thou goddesse of tourment
Thou cruell furie, sorrowing ever in paine,
Helpe me that am the sorrowfull instrument,
That helpeth lovers, as I can complaine:
For well sit it, the sooth fur to saine,
A wofull wight to have a drery feare,
And to a sorrowfull tale a sorie cheare.

For I that god of loves servants serve,
Ne dare to love, for mine unlikynesse,
Prayen for speed, all should I therefore sterve,
So farre am I fro his helpe in derkenesse.
But nathelesse, if this may done gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause availe,
Have he my thanke, and mine be the travaile,

But ye lovers that bethen in gladnesse,
If any droppe of pite in you be,
Remembreth you of passed beavynesse
That ye have felt, and on the adversite
Of other folke, and thinketh how that ye
Hav felt, that Love durst you to displease,
Else ye han won him with too great an ease.

And prayeth for hem that been in the case
Of Troilus, as ye may after heare,
That he hem bring in Heaven to solace.
And eke for me prayeth to God so deare,
That I have might to stow in some manere,
Such paine and woe, as Loves folke endure,
In Troilus vnsely aventure.

And biddeth eke for hem that ben dispaired
In love, that never will recovered be:
And eke for hem that falsely ben apaired,
Through wicked tongues, be it he or she:
Thus biddeth God for his benygnte,
So grant hem some out of this world to pace
That ben dispaired out of Loves grace.

And biddeth eke for hem that ben at ease,
That God hem graunt aie good perseveraunce,
And send hem grace hir loves for to please,
That it to love be worship and pleasaunce:
For so hope I my selfe best to avance
To pray for hem, that Loves servants be,
And write hir woe, and live in charite.

And for to have of hem compassion,
As though I were hir owne brother dere,
Now hearkeneth with a good entencion,
For now woll I go straight to my matere:
In which ye may the double sorrowes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Creseide,
And how she forsoke him er that she deide,

It is well wist, how that the Greekes strong
In armes with a thousand shipes went
To Troie wardes, and the cite long
Besiegeden, nigh ten yeres ere they went,
And how in divers wise, and one entent,
The ravishing to wreake of queen Heleice,
By Paris don, they wroughten all hir peine.

Now fell it so, that in the toone there was
Dwelling a lord of great autorite
A great divine that cleped was Calcas,
That in that science so expert was, that he
Knew well, that Troie should destroyed be,
By answeare of his god, that hight thus,
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus.

So when this Calcas knew by calculing,
And eke by the answeare of this god Apollo,
That the Greekes should such a peopple bring,
Thorow the which that Troy must be fordo,
He cast anon out of the toone to go:
For well he wist by spyt, that Troie shold
Destroyed be, ye would who so or noide.

Wherefore he to departen softly,
Tooke purpose full, this forknowing wise,
And to the Greekes host full prively
He stalle anon, and they in courteous wise
Did to him both worship and servise,
In trust that he hath cunning hem to rede
In every perill, which that was to dread.

Great rumour rose, when it was first espied,
In all the toone, and openly was spoken,
That Calcas traitour fled was and allied
To hem of Grece: and cast was to be wroken
On him, that falsely hath his faith broken,
And sayd, he and all his kinne atones,
Were worthy to be brent, both fell and bones.

Now had Calcas left in this mischaunce,
 Urvis of this false and wicked dede,
 A daughter, whiche was in great penance,
 And of her life she was full sore in drede,
 And wist no pever what best was to rede:
 And as a widdow was she, and all alone,
 And nist to whom she might make her moone.

Creseide was this ladies name aright,
 As to my dome, in all Troies cite
 Most fairest ludie, far passing every wight
 So sayelike aboves her native beaute,
 That no mortal thing seemed she:
 And therewith was she so perfect a creature,
 As she had be made in scorning of nature.

The ludie, that all day heard at eare
 Her fathers shame, falsehood, and treason,
 (Full sigh out of her wit for sorrow and feare,
 In widdowes habite large of samite brown)
 Before Hector on knees she fell adoun,
 And his mercy bad, her selfe excusing,
 With pitous voice, and tenderly weeping.

Now was this Hector pitous of nature,
 And saw that she was sorrowfull begone,
 And that she was so faire a creature,
 Of his goodnesse he gladed her alone,
 And said: "Let your fathers treason gone
 Forth with mischaunce, and ye your selfe in joy
 Dwellth with us while you list in Troy.

"And all the honour that men may do ye have,
 As forsoth as though your father dwelt here,
 Ye shall have, and your body shall men save,
 As ferre as I may ought enquire and here:"
 And she him thanked with full humble chere,
 And after would, and it had been his will,
 She took her leve, went home, and held her still.

And in her house she abode with such meine
 As till her honour nede was to hold,
 And while she was dwelling in that cite,
 She kept her estate, and of yong and old
 Full well beloved, and men well of her told:
 But whether that she children had or none,
 I trowe it nat, therefore I let it gone.

The thinges fallen as they don of werre,
 Betwixen hem of Troy and Greekes oft,
 For sometime broughten they of Troy it derre,
 And este the Greekes founden nothing soft.
 The folke of Troy: and thus fortune aloft,
 And under este gan hem to whelmen both,
 After her course, sie while that they were wroth.

But how this toune came to destruction,
 He falleth not to purpose me to tell,
 For it were a long digression
 To my matter, and you too long to dwell;
 But the Trojan iestes all as they fell,
 In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
 Who so that can, may reden hem as they write.

But though the Greekes hem of Troy in shetten,
 And hir cite besieged all about,
 Her old unges nolde they not leffen,
 As to honouren hir gods fell devout,
 But uttermost in honour out of dout,
 They had a relike hight Palladion,
 That was hir trust aboven everychon.

And so befell, whan comen was the time
 Of April, whan clothed is the mede,
 With new grene, of lustie veer the prime,
 And with sweet smelling floures white and rede
 In sundrie wise shewed, as I rede,
 The folke of Troie, their observances old,
 Palladion feast went for to hold.

Unto the temple in all their best wise,
 Generally there went many a wight,
 To hearken of Palladions service,
 And namely many a lustie knight,
 And many a ladie fresh, and maiden bright,
 Full well arraied bothe most and least,
 Both for the season and the high feast.

Among these other folke was Creseide,
 In widdowes habite blacke: but nathales
 Right as our first letter is now an A,
 In beauteie first so stood she makeles,
 Her goodly looking gladed all the prees,
 Nas neuer seene thing to be praised so derre,
 Nor under cloude blacke so bright a sterre.

As was Creseide, they sayden everichone,
 That her behelden in her blacke wode,
 And yet she stood full lowe and still alone
 Behinde other folke in litle bread,
 And nie the dove under shames dread,
 Simple of attire, and debonaire of chere,
 With full assured looking and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to guide
 His yonge knightes, had hem up and doun,
 In thilke large temple on every side,
 Beholding sie the ladies of the toune,
 Now here now there, for no devotoun
 Had he to none, to reven him his rest,
 But gan to praise and lacke whome he lest:

And in his walk full fast he gan to witen,
 If knight or squier of his companie,
 Gan for to sike, or let his eyen heiten
 On any woman, that he coude espie,
 He would smile, and hold it a follie,
 And say hem thus: "O Lord she sleepeth soft
 For love of thee, whan thou turnest full oft.

"I have heard tell pardieux of your living,
 Ye lovers, and eke your lewed observances,
 And which a labour folke have in winning
 Of love, and in keeping such doutances,
 And whan your pray is lost, wo and penaunce:
 O, very fooles, blinde and nice be ye,
 There is not one can ware by another be."

And with that word he gan cast up the brow,
 Aschaunce, lo, is this not well isoken,
 At which the god of love gan looken low,
 Right for dispite, and shope him to be wroken.
 He kidded anone his bowe was not broken:
 For sodainly he hitte him at the full,
 And yet as proude a peacocks gan he pull.

O blinde world, o blind entencion,
 How often falleth all the effect contraire
 Of sequedrie and foule presumption,
 For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire:
 This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
 And litle weneeth that he mote descend,
 But all day it faileth that fooler warden.

As proud Bayard beginneth for to skippe
Out of the way, so pricketh him his come,
Till he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Then thinketh he, "The I prouaunce all beforen
First in the traine, full fat and new horsen,
Yet am I but an horse, and horses law
I must endure, and with my feeres draw."

So fared it by this flers and proud knight,
Though he a worthy kinges soune were,
And woode nothing had had suche might,
Ayenst his will, that should his herte stere,
Yet with a looke his herte woxe on fire,
That he that now was most in pride above,
Woxe sodainly most subject unto love.

Forty ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wise, proud, and worthy folkes all,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thrall,
For ever it was, and ever it be shall,
That Love is he that all thinges may bind,
For no man may fordo the law of kind.

That this be sooth hath proved and doth yet,
For this (I trowe) ye know all and sone,
Men redeu not that folke han greater wit
Than they that han ben most with love inome,
And strongest folke been therewith overcome,
The worthyest and greatest of degree,
This was and is, and yet man shall it see.

And traicliche that sitte well to be so,
For alderwisest han therewith ben pleased,
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben comforted and most eased,
And oft it hath the cruell herte appeased,
And worthy folke made worthier of name,
And cometh most to dreden vice and shame.

Now sith it may nat goodly be withstond,
And is a thing so vertuous and kind,
Refuseth nought to Love for to ben bond,
Sith as him selven list he may you bind;
The yerde is bette that bowen wolle and wind
Than that that breest, and therefore I you rede,
Now followeth him, that so well can you lede.

But for to tellen forth in speciall,
As of this kinges soune, of which I told,
And leven other thing collateral,
Of him think I my tale forth to bold,
Both of his joy, and of his cares cold,
And bis werke, as touchyng this matere,
For I it gan, I wolle thereto refere.

Within the temple he went him forth playing
This Troilus, of every wight about,
Now on this lady, and now on that looking,
Where so she were of tounne, or of without:
And upon case befell, that through a rout
His eye peired, and so deepe it went
Till on Cresside it smote, and there it stent.

And sodainly for wonder west astoned,
And gan her bet behold in thrifty wise,
"O very God," thought he, "wher hast thou wooded,
That art so faire and goodly to devise?"
Therewith his herte gan to spread and rise,
And soft sighed, lest men might him here,
And caught ayen his firste playing chere.

She nas nat with the most of her stature,
But all her limmes so well unswearing
Weren to womanhood, that creature
Was never lease mannissh in seeming.
And eke the pure wise of her meaning
Shewed well, that men might in her gess
Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse.

The Troilus, right wonder well withall,
Gan for to like her meaning and her chere,
Which somdele deignous was, for she let fall
Her looke a little aside, in such manere
Ascaunce, what may I not stonden here,
And after that her looking gan she light,
That never thought him seen so good a sight.

And of her looke in him there gan to quicke
So great desire, and such affection,
That in his hertes bottoome gan to sticke
Of her his fixe, and deepe impression:
And though he earst had pored vp and down,
Than was he glad his hornes in to shrinke,
Unmethes wist he how to looke or wink.

Lo, he that lets him seiven so cunning,
And scorned hem that loves paines drien,
Was full vware that Love had his dwelling
Within the subtil streames of her eyes,
That sodainly him thought he feite dyes,
Right with her looke, the spirite in his herte,
Blessed be Love, that thus can folke convert.

She thus in blaue, liking to Troilus,
Over all thing he stood for to behold:
But his desire, so wherefore he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne word thereof told,
But from a ferre, his manner for to hold,
On other thing sometime his looke be cast,
And eft on her, while that the service last:

And after this, nat fullish all whaped,
Out of the temple eslich he went,
Repenting him that ever he had isped
Of Loves folke, least fully the discent
Of scorne fill on himselfe, but what he ment,
Least it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he gan dissimulen and hide.

When he was fro the temple thus departed,
He straight anone unto his palleice turneth,
Right with her loke through shotten and darterd,
All faineth he in lust that he soiaureth,
And all his chere and speech also be burneth,
And aie of Loves servaunts every while
Him selfe to wrie, at hem he gan to smile,

And saied, "Lord, so they live all in lust
Ye lovers, for the cunningest of you,
That servest most ententiflich and best
Him tite as often harme thereof as prow,
Your hire is quit ayen, ye, God wote how,
Not well for well, but scorne for good service,
In faith your order is ruled in good wise.

"In no certaine been your observances,
But it onely a sely few points be,
Ne nothing maketh so great attendances,
As doth your laze, and that know all ye:
But that is not the worst, as mote I the,
But told I you the worst point, I leve,
All saied I sooth, ye wouldeu at me greve.

" But take this: that ye lovers oft eschew,
Or else done of good entencion,
Fall off thy ladie well it misse comstrew,
And deesse it harme in her opinion,
And yet if she for other encheson
Be wroth, than shalt thou beve a groin anon:
Love, well is him that may been of you one."

But for all this, when that he seeth his time
Es held his peace, none other bote him gained,
For Love began his feathers so to lime,
That well vaneth unto his folke he fained,
That other horsie needes him distraind,
So woe was him, that what to done he mist,
But had his folke to gon where as hem list.

And when that he in chamber was alone,
He doune vpon his beddes feet him set,
And first he gan to site, and eft to grooe,
And thought aie on her so withouten let,
That as he sate and woke, his spirit met
That he ber saw and temple, and all the wise
Light of her looke, and gan it new avise.

Thus gan he make a mirrouer of his mind,
In which he saw all wholly her figure,
And that he well cood in his herte find
It was to him a right good aventure
To love such one, and if he did his cure
To serve her, yet might he fall in grace,
Or else, for one of her servantes pace.

Imagining, that travaile nor grame
Ne might for so goodly one be borne
As she, ne him for his desire no shame
All were it wist, but in prise and vp borne
Of all lovers, well more than beforne.
Thus argued he, in his ginning,
Fell ravised of his wo comming.

Thus took he purpose Loves craft to sewe
And thought he would worken privily
First for to hide his desire in newe
From evens wight iborne, all overly,
But he might ought recovered been thereby,
Remembering him, that love too wide iblowe
Yet bitter fruite, though sweet seed he sowe.

And over all this, full moked more he thought
What for to speake, and what to bolden inne
And what to arten, or to love he sought,
And on a song anone right to beginne,
And gan loude on his sorrow for to winne:
For with good hope he gan fully assent,
Creseide for to love, and nought repent.

And of his song not onely his sentence,
As write mine authour called Lohius,
But plainly save our tongues difference,
I dare well say, in all that Troilus
Seyed in his song, to every word right thus,
As I shall mine, and who so list it heare
In this next verse, he may it finde there.

THE SONG OF TROILUS.

" If no love is, O God, what feete I so?
And if love is, what thing and which is he?
If love be good, from whence cometh my wo?
If it be wicke, a wonder thinketh me,
When every torment and adversite
That cometh of him, may to me seavery think:
For aie thowt I the more that ichs it drinke.

" And if that at mine owne lust I brenne,
From whence cometh my wailing and my plaint:
If harme agree me, whereto p'aine I thence,
I not, ne why unwery that I feint.
O quicks death, o sweets harme so quaint,
How may of thee in me be such quantite,
But if that I consent that it so be?"

" And if that I consent, I wrongfully
Complaine iwis: thus posed to and fro,
All sterelless within a bote am I
Amidde the sea, atwixen windes two,
That in contrary stonden ever mo.
Alas, what is this wonder maladie?
For heat of cold, for cold of heat I die."

And to the god of love thus sayed he
With piteous voice, " O lord, now yours is
My spirits, which that oughten yours to be,
You thank I, lord, that han me brought to this:
But whether goddesse or woman iwis
She be, I not, which that ye do me serve,
But as her man I wold aie live and starve.

" Ye stonde in her eyen mightily,
As in a place to your vertue digne:
Wherefore, lord, if my servise or I
May liken you, so both to the benigne,
For mine estate royall here I resigne
Into her honde, and with full humble cheer,
Become her man, as to my lady dere."

In him ne deigned to sparen blood royall
The fire of love, where fro God me blesse,
Ne him forbare in no degree, for all
His vertue, or his excellent proresse,
But held him as his thrall lowe in distresse,
And brend him so in sundry wise aie newe,
That sixty times a day he lost his hewe.

So muchell day fro day his owne thought
For lust to her gan quicken and increase,
That everiche other charge he set at nought,
For thy full oft, his bot fire to cease,
To seen her goodly looke he gan to prease,
For thereby to ben eased well he wend,
And aie the nere he was, the more he brend.

For aie the nere the fire the hotter is,
This (trow I) knoweth all this companie:
But were he ferre or nere, I dare say this;
By night or day, for wisdoms or follic,
His herte, which that is his breates eie,
Was aie on her, that fairer was to seepe
Than ever was Helein, or Polixene.

Eke of the day there passed not an hour,
That to himselfe a thousand times he sayd,
" God goodly, to whome I serve and labour
As I best can, now would to God Creseide
Ye woulden on me rue, er that I deide:
My dere herte alas, mine bele and my hew,
And life is lost, but ye woll on me rew."

All other dredes woren from him fled,
Both of thersiege, and his salvation,
Ne in desire none other founes bred,
But arguments to his conclusion,
That she on him would have compassion
And ha to ben her man, while he may dure,
Lo here his life, and from his death his cure.

The sharpe showers fell of armes prece
That Hector or his other brethren didden
Ne made him openly therefore ones weve,
And yet was he, where so men went or ridden,
Found one the best, and lengest time abidden
There perill was, and eke did such travaile
In armes, that to thinke it was a marvaile.

But for none hate he to the Greekes had,
Ne also for the reuous of the town,
Ne made him thus in armes for to mad,
But only lo, for this conclusioun,
To liken her the bet for his renoun:
Fro day to day in armes so he sped,
That all the Greekes as the death him dred.

And fro this forth tho rest him love his alepe
And made his meate his foe, and eke his sorrow
Gan multiply, that who so toke keepe,
It shewed in his hew both even and morow:
Therefore a tulle he gan him for to borow
Of other sickennesse, leat men of him wend
That the hot fire of love him breed.

And sayd he had a fever, and fared amia,
But were it certaine I cannot sey
If that his lady understood not this
Or fained her she list, one of the twey:
But well rede I, that by no manner wey
Ne seemed it that she on him rougt,
Or of his paine, what so ever he thought.

But than felt this Troilus suche wo
That he was weligh wood, for aie his drede
Was this, that she some wight loved so,
That never of hire she would han take heed:
For which him thought he felt his herte bleed,
Ne of his woe ne durst he nought begin
To tellen her, for all this world to win.

But when he had a space left from his care,
Thus to himselfe full oft he gan to plaine:
He sayd, "O foole, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom yapedest at lovers pain:
Now art thou bent, now gnaw thine owne chain;
Thou wert aie woned ech lover reprehend
Of thing fro which thou canst not thee defend.

"What wold now every lover saine of thee,
If this be wist? But ever in thine absence
Laughen in scorn, and saine, lo there goth he
That is the man of grete sapience,
That held us lovers leat in reverence:
Now thanked be God, he may gon on that daunce
Of hem that Love list feebly avaunce.

"But o, thou wofull Troilus, God wold,
(Sith thou must loven, through thy destinee)
That thou best wer of such one, that should
Know all thy wo, all lacked her pitee:
But all too cold in love towards thee
Thy ladie is, as frost in winter Moone,
And thou fordo, as snow in fire is soone.

"God wold I were arrived in the port
Of death, to which my sorow wold me lede:
Ah lord, to me it were a grete comfort,
Than were I quite of languishing in drede:
For by my hidde sorrow blowen in drede,
I shall beaped been a thousand time,
More than that foole, of whose folly man tyme.

"But now help God, and ye my sweet, for whom
I plaine, icought ye never wight so fast:
O mercie, deare herte, and helpe me from
The death, for I, while that my life may last,
More than my selfe wold love you to my last,
And with some frendly look gladeth me swete;
Though never more thing ye to me bebeta."

These wordes, and full many another mo
He spake, and called ever is his compleint
Her name, for to tellen her his wo,
Till nigh that he in saite teares was dreint,
All was for nought, she heard nat his pleint:
And when that he bethought on that folie,
A thousand fold his woe gan multiplye.

Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
A friend of his, that called was Pandare,
Came ones in unware, and heard him grove,
And saw his friend in such distresse and care:
"Alas," (quod he) "who causeth all this fare?
O mercy God, what unhappe may this mene?
Han now thus some the Greekes made you lene?"

"Or hast then some remorse of conscience?
And art now fall in some devotion,
And wailest for thy sinne and thine offence,
And hast for ferde cougt contrition?
God save hem, that besieged han our town,
That so can laie our iollitie on presse,
And bring our lustie folke to holyresse."

These wordes said he for the nones all, [make,
That with such thing he might him angry
And with his anger done his sorrow fall,
As for a time, and his courage awaken:
But well wist he, as far as tongues speaken,
There was a man of greter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

"What cas," (quod Troilus) "or what aventure-
Hath guided thee to seen me languishing,
That am refuse of everie creature?
But for the love of God, at me praying
Goe hence away, for certes my dying
Wold thee disease, and I mote nedes deie,
Therefore goe way, there is no more to seie."

"But if thou wene, I be thus sick for drede,
It is not so, and therefore scornis nought:
There is an other thing I take of hede,
Welmore than ought the Grekes han yet wrought,
Which cause is of my deth for sorow and thought:
But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,
Be thou not wroth, I hide it for the best."

This Pandare, that nigh malt for wo and routh,
Full often sayd, "Alas, what may this be?
"Now friend," (quod he) "if ever love or trouth
Hath been er this betwixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never such a cruelte,
To hiden fro thy friend so grete a care,
Wost thou not well that I am Pandare?"

"I wold partee with thee all thy paine,
If it so be I doe thee no comfort,
As it is friendes right, sooff for to saine,
To caterparten woe, as glad disport
I have and shall, for true or false report,
In wrong and right loved thee all my live,
Hide not thy woe fro me, but tell it blive."

Thus gan this sorrowfull Troilus to sigh,
And sayd him thus, "God leve it be my best
To telle thee, for sith it may thee like,
Yet woul I tell it, though my herte breast,
And well wote I, thou maigest do me no rest,
But least thou deeme I trust not to thee
Now heurke friend, for thus it stand with me.

"Love, ayest the which who so defowdeth
Him seven worst, him aldrest availeth,
With dispaire so sorrowfully me offendeth
That straight vnto the death my herte faileth:
Theere desire, so breeningly me assaileth,
That to been staine, it were a greater ioy
To me, than king of Grece be and of Troy.

"Suffeeth this, my full friende Pandare,
That I have said, for now wotest thou my wo:
And for the love of God my colde care
So hide it well, I told it never to no:
For harmes mighten followen me than two
If it were wist, but be thou in gladnesse,
And let me sterve unknowne of my distresse."

"How hast thou thus unkindly and long
Hid this fro me, thou fool?" (quod Pandarus)
"Peraventure thou maist after such one long,
That mine advise anone may helpen vs."
"This were a wonder thing," (quod Troilus)
"Thou couldest never in love thy selfen wisse,
How divell maigest thou bringan me to blisse."

"Ye Troilus, now hearken," (quod Pandare)
"Though I be nice, it happeth often so,
That one that of axes doeth full evil fare,
By good counsaill can keep his frend ther fro:
I have my selfe seen a blinde man go
There as he fell, that could looken wide,
A fool may eke a wise man off guide.

"A whetstone is no carving instrument,
But yet it maketh sharpe kerving tollis,
And after thou wost that I have aught miswent,
Zachue thou that, for such thing to schole is,
Thus often wise men bewaren by foolis:
If thou so doe, thy wit is well bewar'd,
By his contrarie is everie thing declared.

"For how might ever sweetnesse have be know
To him, that never tasted bitternesse?
So manne wot what gladnesse is I trow,
That never was in sorrow, or some distresse:
Eke white by blacke, by shame eke worthines,
Each set by other, more for other seemeth,
As men may seen, and so the wise it deemeth.

"Sith thus of two contraries is a love,
I that have in love so oft assayd
Greevances, ought conuen well the more
Counsaillen thee of that thou art dismayd,
And eke the ne ought not been enill payed,
Though I desire with thee for to beare
Thine heauie charge, it shall thee lasse deare.

"I wote well that it fared thus by me,
As to thy brother Paris, an hierdesse,
Which that icoleped was Demone,
Wrote in a complaint of her heauinesse:
Ye saw the letter that she wrote I gese."
"Nay never yett is," (quod Troilus.)
"Now" (quod Pandare) "hearkeneth, it was thus:

"'Phebus, that first found art of medicine,
(Quod she) 'and cood in eserie wightes care
Remedic and rede, by herbes he knew fine,
Yet to himselfe his cunning was full bare,
For love had him so bounden in a snare,
All for the daughter of king Admete,
That all his craft no cood his sorrow bete.'

"Right so fare I, unhappie for me,
I love one best, and that me smerteth sore:
And yet peradventure I can reden thee
And nat my selfe: reпреue me no more,
I have no cause I wote well for to sore,
As doeth an hauke, that listeth for to play,
But to thine helpe, yet somewhat can I say.

"And of o thing, right siker mayest thou be,
That certaine for to dyen in the paine
That I shall never mo discover thee,
Ne by my trowth, I keepe nat to restraine
Thee fro thy love, although it were Helleine,
That is thy brothers wife, if iche it wist,
Be what she be, and love her as thee list.

"Therefore as friendfullich in me assure,
And tell me platte, what is thine covechon,
And finall cause of woe, that ye endure:
For doubteth nothing, mine entencion
Was nat to youn of reprehencion
To speake, as now, for no wight may bereue
A man to love, till that him list to leue.

"And weteth well, that both two been vici,
Mistrusten all, or else all becoue:
But well I wote, the meane of it no vice is,
As for to trusten some wight is a preue
Of trowth, and forthy would I faise remeue
Thy-wrong conceit, and do the some wight trust
Thy woe to telle: and tell me if thou lust.

"The wise eke sayth, woe him that is alone,
For and he fall, he hath none helpe to rise:
And sith thou hast a fellow, tell thy moore,
For this nis nought certaine the next wise
To winnen love, as teachen vs the wise,
To wallow and weep, as Niobe the queene,
Whose teares yet in marble been isene.

"Let be thy weeping, and thy dreerinesse,
And let vs leuen woe with other spech,
So may thy wofull time seeme the lesse;
Delighte nought in woe, thy woe to seech,
As doue these foolis, that hir sorrowes eche
With sorrowe, whan they han misaventure,
And lusten nought to seechen other cure.

"Men saine, to wretch in consolacion
To have another fellow in his paine:
That ought well been our opinion,
For bothe thou and I of love doe plaine,
So full of sorrow am I, sooth to saine,
That certainly, as now no more hard grace
May sit on me, for why, there is no space.

"If God woul, thou art nought agast of me,
Least I would of thy ladie thee beguile:
Thou wost thy selfe, whom that I love parde
As I best can, gone sithen longe while,
And sithen thou wost, I doe it for no wile,
And sith I am he, that thou trustest most,
Tell me somewhat, since all my woe thou wost."

Yet Troilus, for all this no word said;
But long he laie still, as he dead were,
And after this, with siking he shraid,
And to Pandarus voice he lent his care,
And vp his eyen cast he: and than in feare
Was Pandarus leas that in frenseye,
He should either fall or else soone deye.

And sayd, "Awake," full wonderlich and sharpe.
"What slumbrest thou, as in a litergie?
Or art thou like an esse to the harpe,
That heareth sound, whan men the stringes ply,
But in his mind, of that no melodie
May synke him to gladen, for that he
So dull is, in his bestialite?"

And with this Pandare of his wordes stant:
But Troilus to him nothing answerde,
For why, to tell was nought his entent
Never to no man, for whome that he so ferde:
For it is sayd, men maken oft a yerde
With which the maker is himselfe ibeten
In sundrie manner, as these wise men treten.

And nameliche in his counsaile telling,
That toucheth love, that ought been scre:
For of himselfe it wold inough out spring
But if that it the bet governed be.
Eke sometime it is craft to seeme flece
Fro thing which in effect men hurten fast:
All this gan Troilus in his herte cast.

But natheles, when he had heard him cris,
Awake he gan, and sike wonder sore:
And sayd, "My friends, though that I still lie,
I am not deafe, now peace and cris no more:
For I have heard thy wordes and thy love,
But suffer me my fortune to bewailen,
For thy proverbes may nought me availen.

"Nor other cure canst thou none for me,
Eke I will not been cured, I will die:
What know I of the queene Niobe?
Let be thine old enamples, I thee prey."
"No friend," (quod Pandarus) "therefore I sey,
Such is delight of foolles to beweepe
Hir woe, but to seeken bote they ne keepe.

"Now know I that reason in thee faileth:
But tell me, if I wiste what she were
For whome that thee all misaventure aileth,
Darst thou that I told it in her care
Thy woe, sith thou darst not thy self for fear,
And her besought on thee to han some routh?"
"Why, nay," (quod he) "by God and by my trouth."

"What, not as busily" (quod Pandarus)
"As though mine owne life lay in this need?"
"Why, no parde, sir," (quod this Troilus) [speed."
"And why?" — "For that thou shouldest never
"Wost thou that well?" — "Ye, that isout of dreed,"
(Quod Troilus) "for all that ever ye comen,
She wold to no such wretch as I be wonne."

(Quod Pandarus) "Alas what may this be,
That thou despaird art, thus causelesse?
What, liveth nat thy ladie, benedicite?
How wost thou so, that thou art gracelesse?
Such evil is not alway botelesse:
Why, put not thus imposible thy cure,
Sith thing to com is oft in aventure.

"I graunt well that thou endurst wo,
As sharpe as doth he Tesippos in Hell,
Whose stomacke foules tiren evermo,
That highten vultures, as bookes teil:
But I may not endure that thou dwell
In so unskilfull an opinion,
That of thy woe nis no curacion.

"But ones kill thou, for thy coward herte,
And for thine yre, and foolish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust tellen of thy sorrowes smart,
Ne to thine owne helpe do businesse,
As much as speake a word, yea more or lesse,
But lyest as he that of life nothing notch,
What woman living good love such a wretch?

"What may she demen oter of thy death,
If thou thus die, and she not why it is,
But that for feare, is yolden vp thy breath,
For Greekes han besieged vs iwin?
Lord, which a thank shalt thou have than of this
Thus wold she saine, and all the toun atones,
The wretch is deed, the diuel have his bones.

"Thou mayest alone here weepe, cry, and kecle,
And love a woman that she wote it nought,
And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel;
Unknow vakist, and lost that is vnought.
What, many a man hath love full dere bought
Twentie winter that his ladie ne wist,
That never yet his ladies mouth he kist.

"What, should he therefore fallen in dispair?
Or be reccaunt for his owne tesse,
Or alaine himselfe, all be his lakie faire?
Nay, nay: but ever in one be fresh and green,
To serve and love his dere hertes queen,
And think it is a guardouse her to serve
A thousand part more than he can deserve."

And of that worde tooke heed Troilus,
And thought anon, what folly he was in,
And how that sooth him sayd Pandarus,
That for to alaien himselfe, might he not win,
But both doen vumanhood and a sime
And of his death his ladie nought to wite,
For of his woe, God wote she know full lite.

And with that thought, he gan full sore sike,
And sayd, "Alas, what is me best to doe?"
To whome Pandare sayd, "If thee it like,
The best is, that thou telle me thy woe,
And have my trouth, but if thou finde it so
I be thy boote, or it been full long,
To peeces doe me drawe, and sithen hang."

"Yea, so sayest thou," (quod Troilus) "alas,
But God wote it is nought the rather so:
Full hard it were to helpen in this case,
For well finde I, that Fortune is my fo:
Ne all the men that ride con or go,
May of her cruell whele the harme withstand,
For as her list, she playeth with free and bond."

(Quod Pandarus) "Than blamest thou Fortune,
For thou art wroth, ye now at erst I see,
Wost thou not well that Fortune is commonne
To everie manner wight, in some degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo parde,
That as her ioyes moten overgone,
So mote her sorrowes passen everichone.

"For if her whole stree any thing to tourne,
Than cometh she Forteano anyone to be:
Now sith her whole by no way may mouren,
What wost thou of her mutabilitie?
Whether as thy self lust she wold don by thee,
Or that she be nought ferre fro thine helping,
Peraventure thou hast cause for to sing.

"And therefore wost thou what I thee beseech?
Let be thy woe, and touring to the ground:
For who so list have healing of his leech,
To him behooveth first vnrrie his wound:
To Cerberus in Hell sic be I bound,
Wer it for my suster all thy sorrow,
By my will she should be thine to morrow.

"Looke vp, I say, and tell me what she is
Acom, that I may goe about thy need:
Know ich her aught, for my love tell me this;
Than would I hope rather for to speed."
Tho gan the veine of Troilus to bleed,
For he was hit, and woxe all redde for shame,
"Aha," (quod Pandare) "here beginneth game."

And with that word, he gan him for to shake,
And said him thus, "Thou shalt her name tell:"
But the gan sely Troilus for to quake,
As though men should han had him into Hell,
And sayd, "Alas, of all my woe the well,
Thou is my sweete foe called Creseide,"
And well nigh with that word for feare he deide.

And when that Pandare herd her name nevon,
lord, he was glad, and said, "Friend so decee,
Now fare a right, for Joves name in Heaven,
Love hath beset thee well, be of good cheere,
For of good name, and wisdom, and manere
She hath inough, and eke of gentlenessse:
Ye she be faire, thou wost thy selfe, I gesse.

"Ne never seie I a more bounteous
Of her estate, no a gladder: ne of spech
& friendlyer, ne more gracious
For to doe well, ne lasse had ned to seech
What for to doen, and all this bet to ech
in honour to as farre as she may stretch:
A kinges herte seemeth by hers a wretch.

"And forthy, look of good comfort thou be:
For certainly the first point is this
Of noble courage, and well ordaine the
A man to have peace with himselfe iwis:
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is,
To loven well, and in a worthy place,
Thou ought not clepe it happe, but grace.

"And also think, and therewith glad thee,
That sith the ladie vertuous is all,
So followeth it, that there is some pitce
Amonges all these other in generall,
And for they see that thou in speciall
Require nought, that is ayen her name,
For vertue stretcheth not himself to shame.

"But well is me, that ever I was born,
That thou beset art in so good a place:
For by my trowth in love I durst have sworn,
Thou should never have tidde so fair a grace,
And wost thou why? for thou were wont to chace
At Love in scoorne, and for despite him call
Saint Idiote, lord of these foolles all.

"How often hast thou made thy nice yapes,
And said, that Loves servaunts overichone
Of nicete ben verie goddes apes,
And some would monche hir meat all alone,
Ligging a bed, and make hem for to groone,
And some thou saidest had a blaunch feverre,
And praidest God, they should never keverre.

"And some of hem took on hem for the cold,
More than inough, so saydest thou full oft:
And some han fained oft time and told,
How that they waken, when they sleepe soft,
And thus they would have set hem self a loft,
And nathelesse were vnder at the last,
Thus saydest thou, and yapedest full fast.

"Yet saydest thou, that for the more part
These lovers woudd speake in generall,
And thoughten it was a siker art,
For failing, for to assayon over all:
Now may I yape of thee, if that I shall;
But nathelesse, though that I should deie,
Thou art none of tho, I dare well seie.

"Now bete thy brest, and say to god of love,
'Thy grace, lord, for now I me repent
If I misspake, for now my selfe, I love:'
Thus say with all thine herte, in good entent."
(Quod Troilus) "Ah lord, I me consent,
And pray to thee, my yapes thou foryerve,
And I shall never more while I live."

"Thou sayst wel," (quod Pandare) "and now I hope
That thou the goddes wrath hast all appeased:
And sith thou hast wepten many a drop,
And said such thing wherwith thy god is pleased,
Now would never god, but thou were eased:
And think well she, of whom rest all thy wo,
Here after may thy comfort bein also.

"For thilke ground, that beareth the wedes wick,
Beareth eke these holosome herbes, as full oft
Next the foule nettle, rough and thick,
The rose waxeth, soote, smooth, and soft,
And next the valey is the hill a loft,
And next the derke night the glad morowe,
And also joy is next the fine of sorrow.

"Now looke that attempre be thy bridell,
And for the best sic suffer to the tide,
Or else all our labour is on idell,
He husteth well, that wisely can abide:
Be diligent and true, and sic well hide,
Be lustie, free, persever in thy service,
And all is well, if thou worke in this wise.

"But he that departed is in everie place
Is no where hole, as written clerkes wis:
What wonder is, if such one have no grace?
Eke wost thou how it fareth of some service,
As plant a tree or herbe, in sondrie wise,
And on the morrow pull it vp as hlive,
No wonder is, though it may never thrive.

"And sith the god of love hath thee bestowed
In place digue vnto thy worthinesse,
Stonde fast, for to good port hast thou rowed,
And of thy selfe, for any heavinesse,
Hope awaie well, for but if drerinesse
Or over hast both our labour shend,
I hope of this to maken a good end.

" And wost thou why, I am the lesse afered
Of this maizer with my nece to trete?
For this have I heard say of wise lered,
Was never man or woman yet beyete,
That was vcept to suffer loves hete
Celestiall, or eles love of kind:
Forthy, some grace I hope in her to find.

" And for to speake of her in speciall,
Her beautie to bethinken, and her youth,
It sit her nought, to been celestiall
As yet, though that her list bothe end kouth:
And truely it sit her well right nouth
A worthy knight to loven and cherice,
And but she doe, I hold it for a vice.

" Wherefore I am, and wolle be eye ready
To paine me to doe you this service,
For both you to please, this hope I
Here after, for that ye been both wise,
And con counsaile keepe in such a wise,
That no man shall the wiser of it bee,
And so we maie ben gladded all three,

" And by my trouth I have right now of thee
A good conceit, in my wit as I gesse:
And what it is, I wolle now that thou see,
I thinke that with Love of his goodnesse
Hath thee converted out of wickednesse,
That thou shalt been the beste part, I leue,
Of all his lay, and most his foes greue.

" Example why, see now these great clerkes,
That erren aldermost ayen a law,
And ben converted from hir wicked werkes
Throgh grace of God, that lest hem to withdraw:
They arne the folke that han God most in aw,
And strengest faithed been, I vnderstond,
And con an error alder best withstond."

When Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To ben his helpe in loving of Creseide,
He wext of his wo, as who saith vturmented,
But hotter wext his love, and than he said
With sober chere, as though his herte plaid:
" Now blisfull Venus helpe, ere that I sterue,
Of thee Pandare I mowe some thank deserue.

" But dere friend, how shall my wo be lesse,
Till this be done? and good eke tell me this,
How wilt thou saime of me and my distreme,
Least she be wroth, this drede I most iwis,
Or wolle not heren all, how it is,
All this drede I, and eke for the manere
Of thee her Eme, she will no such thing here."

(Quod Pandarus) " Thou hast a full great care,
Lest the chorie may fall out of the Moone:
Why, lord! I hate of thee the nice fare,
Why entremete of that thou hast to doome?
For Godes love, I bid thee a boone:
So let me alone, and it shall be thy best." [lest.
" Why friend" (quod he) " than done right as thee

" But herke Pandare o word, for I nolde,
That thou in me wendest so great follie,
That to my lady I desiren should,
That toucheth harme, or any villanie:
For dredeleste me were leuer to die,

Than she of me ought eles vnderstod,
But that, that might sownen into good."

The lough this Pandarus, and anon answerd:
" And I thy borow, fie no wight doth but so,
I raught not though she stode and herd,
How that thou saiest, but farwell, I wolle go:
Adieu, be glad, God speed vs bothe two,
Yeue me this labour and this businesse,
And of my speed be thine all the sweetnesse."

The Troilus gan doune on knees to fall,
And Pandare in his armes bent him fast,
And saide, " Now se on the Greekes all:
Yet parde, God shall helpen at the last,
And dredelesse, if that my life may last,
And God toforne, in some of hem shall smerte,
And yet me a thinketh that this anaunt mesteris"

" And now Pandare, I can no more say,
Thou wise, thou wost, thou maist, thou art all:
My life, my death, hole in thine hand I lay,"
" Helpe me now," (quod he) " Yes by my trouth
I shal."

" God yeeld thee friend, and this in speciall"
(Quod Troilus) " that thou me recommaund
To her that may me to the death commaund."

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His full frende, he said in this manere:
" Farewell, and thinke I wolle thy thanke deservt:
Have here my trouth, and that thou shalt here,"
And went his way, thinking on this matere,
And how he best might beseechen her of grace,
And find a time thereto and a place.

For every wight that hath a house to found,
He remeth nat the werke for to begin,
With rakel hand, but he wolle biden stound,
And send his hertes line out fro within,
Alderfirst his purpose for to win:
All thus Pandare in his herte thought,
And cast his werke full wisely ere he wrought.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger doune,
But anone gat vpon his stede baie,
And in the field he played the lion,
Who was the Greek, that with him met that day:
And in the toune, his manner tho forth aye
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That eche him loved that looked in his face.

For he became the friendliest wight,
The gentilest, and eke the most free,
The thristiest, and one the best knight
That in his time was, or els might be:
Dead were his yapes and his cruelite,
His high port and his mauner strange,
And each of hem gan for a vertue change.

Now let vs stint of Troilus a stound,
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,
And is somedele of aking of his wood
Yllesed well, but healed no dele more:
And as an easie patient the lore
Abite of him that goeth about his cure,
And thus he drieth forth his aventure.

EXPLICIT LIBER SECVNDVS.

Out of these black waves let vs for to sail,
O wnde, now the weather ginneeth clere :
For in the sea the boate hath such trauaile
Of my conning, that vnneath I it sters :
This sea clepe I the tempestuous matere
Of deepe dispaire, that Troilus was in :
But now of hope the kalendes begin.

O lady mine, that called art Cleo,
Thou be my spede fro this forth, and my Muse,
To rime well this booke till I haue do,
No murther here name other art to use :
For why, to every lover I me excuse,
That of so sentement I this codite,
Bet out of Latine in my tongue it write.

Wherefore I nil haue neither thank ne blame
Of all this worke : but pray you mekely,
Discometh me, if any word be lame,
For as mine authour said, so say I :
Eke though I speake of love vnfeelingly,
No wonder is, for it nothing of new is,
A blind man cannot iudge as well in hewis.

I know, that in forme of spech is change
Within a thousand yere, and wordes tho
That ladden priue, now wonder nice and strange
Thinketh hem, and yet they spake hem so,
And speelde as well in love, as men now do :
Eke for to winnen love, in sundry ages,
In sundry loddes sundry ben vsages.

And forthy, if it happes in any wise,
That here be any lover in this place,
That herkeneth, as the story wold devise,
How Troilus came to his ladies grace,
And thinketh, so nolde I not love purchase,
Or woodreth on his spech or his doing,
I not, but it is to me no woodring :

For every wight, which that to Rome went,
But nat o pathes, ne alway o maneres :
Eke in some lond were all the gamen shent,
If that men fardes in love, as men done here,
As then, in open doing or in chere,
In visiting, in forme, or said our saws,
Forthy men saun, ech country hath his laws.

Eke scarcely ben there in this place three,
That haue in love said like, and done in all :
For to this purpose this may liken thee,
And thee right nought, yet all is done or shall :
Eke some men graue in tre, som in stone wall,
As it betide, but sith I haue begonne,
Mine authour shall I follow, as I konne.

EXPLICIT LIBER SECVNDVS.

In May, that mother is of moneths glade,
That the fresh fooros, both blew, white, and rede,
Ben quick eyen, that winter dead made,
And full of beaume is fleting every mede,
Whan Rhebus doth his brighte beames spred,
Right in the white Bole, it so betide,
As I shall sing, on Maies day the thriddle,

That Pandarus, for all his wise speach,
Felt eke his part of Loves shotes kene,
That coude he neuer so well of loving preach,
It made his hew a day full ofte grene :
So shope it, that him fill that day a tene
In love, for which in wo to bed he went,
And made ere it ware day full many a went.

The swallow Progne, with a sorrowfull lay,
Whan morrow come, gan make her waimenting
Why she forthapen was : and ever lay
Pandarus a bed, halfe in a slombing,
Till she so nigh him made her waimenting,
How Tereus gan forth her suster take,
That with the noies of her he gan awake,

And to call, and dresse him vp to rise,
Remembering him his arrand was to done
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise,
And cast, and knew in good plite was the Moone
To done voiage, and tooke his way full soone
Unto his neeces paleis there beside :
Now Ianus god of entre, thou him guide.

When he was come vnto his neeces place,
"Where is my lady," to her folke (quod he)
And they him told, and be forth in gan pace,
And found two other ladies sit and abee,
Within a paced parlour, and they thre
Herden a maiden hem reden the geste
Of the seige of Thebes, whils hem laste :

(Quod Pandarus) "Madame, God you see,
With your booke, and all the companie :"
"Eigh, vncle mine, welcome iwh," (quod she)
And vp she rose, and by the hond in hie
She tooke him fast, and said, "This night thrie,
To good mote it turne, of you I met :"
And with that word, she downe on bench him set.

"Yea, wece, ye shull faren well the bet,
If God woll, all this yere," (quod Pandarus)
"But I am sorry that I haue you let
To hearken of your booke, ye praisen thus :
For Godes love what saith it, tell it vs,
Is it of love, or some good ye me here ?"
"Uncle" (quod she) "your maistresse is nat here."

With that they gonnen laugh, and tho she wiede,
"This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede,
And we haue heard how that king Laios deide
Through Edippus his soone, and al the dede :
And here we sinten, at these letters rede,
How the bishop, as the booke can tell,
Amphiorax, fell through the ground to Hell."

(Quod Pandarus) "All this know I my selwe,
And all thausiege of Thebes, and the care,
For hereof ben there naked bookes twelue :
But let be this, and tell me how ye fare,
Do way your barbe, and shew your face bare,
Do way your book, rise vp and let vs daunce,
And let vs done to May some obseruaunce."

"Eighe, God forbid :"
"Quod she" "be ye mad !
Is that a widdowes life, so God you save ?
By God ye maken me right sore adrad,
Ye ben so wild, it seemeth as ye raue,
It eat me well bet eye in a caue
To bide, and rede on holy saintes liues :
Let maidens gon to daunce, and youge wiuers."

"As ever thrise I," (quod this Padarus)
 "Yet could I tell o thing, to done you play,"
 "Now vncle dere," (quod she) "tell it vs
 For Godes love, is than thaninge away ?
 I am of Greekes ferde, so that I dey!"
 "Nay, nay," (quod he) "as ever mote I thrise,
 It is a thing well bet than suchs flus."

"Ye holy God," (quod she) "what thing is that,
 What, bet than suchs fvs ? eithe any iwis,
 For all this world ne can I reden what
 It shoulde ben ; some iape I trow it is,
 And but your selven tell us what it is,
 My wit is for to arede it all to leane :
 As helpe me God, I not what that ye meane."

"And I your borow, ne never shall," (quod he)
 "This thing be told to you, as mote I thrise!"
 "And why, uncle mine, why so?" (quod she)
 "By God," (quod he) "that woul I tell as blive,
 For prouder woman is there none on live,
 And ye it wist, in all the toune of Troy :
 I iape nat, so ever have I joy."

The gan she wondren more than before,
 A thousand fold, and downe her eyen cast :
 For never sith the time that she was bore,
 To knowen thing desired she so fast,
 And with a sike, she said him at the last,
 "Now uncle mine, I will you not displease,
 Nor asken more, that may do you disease."

So after this, with many wordes glade,
 And friendly tales, and with merry chere,
 Of this and that they speake, and gonnen wade
 In many an unkouth glad and deepe matere,
 As friendes done, when they bethe ifere,
 Till she gan asken him how Hector ferde,
 That was the tonnes wall, and Greekes yerde.

"Full wel I thanke it God," said Pandarus,
 "Save in his armes he hath a little wound,
 And eke his fresh brother Troilus,
 The wis worthy Hector the second,
 In whom that every vertue list habound,
 And first all trouthe, and all gentleness,
 Wisdom, honour, freedom, and worthinesse."

"In good fait, eme," (quod she) "that liketh me,
 They faren well, God save hem both two :
 For trewliche, I hold it great deinite,
 A kinges come in armes well to do,
 And be of good condicions thereto :
 For great power, and morall vertue here
 Is seide meene in one persone ifere."

"In good faith, that is sooth" (quod Pandarus)
 "But by my trowth the king hath somes twey,
 That is to meane, Hector and Troilus,
 That certainly though that I should dey,
 They ben as void of vices, dare I sey,
 As any man that liven under Same,
 Hir might is wide iknow, and what they coune."

"Of Hector needeth it no more for to tell,
 In all this world there nis a better knight
 Than he, that is of worthinesse the well,
 And he well more vertue bath than might,
 This knoweth many a wise and worthy knight :
 And the same prisie of Troilus I sey,
 God helpe me so, I know not suchs twey."

"By God," (quod she) "of Hector that is sooth,
 And of Troilus the same thing trow I :
 For dredelesse, men telleth that he dooth
 In armes day by day so worthely,
 And beareth him here at home so gently
 To every wight, that all prisie hath he
 Of hem that me were levest praised be."

"Ye sey right sooth iwis," (quod Pandarus)
 "For yesterday, who so had with him been,
 Mighten have wondred upon Troilus,
 For never yet so thicke a swarms of beam
 Ne flew, as Greekes from him gan flean,
 And through the field in every wightes care,
 There was no criie, but Troilus is there."

"Now here, now there, be husted hem so fast,
 There nas but Greekes blood, and Troilus,
 Now him be hurt, and him all doun be cast,
 Aye where he went it was arraied thus :
 He was hir death, and shield and life for us,
 That as the day ther durst him none withstood,
 While that he held his bloody sward in hood."

"Therein he is the friendliest man
 Of great estate, that ever I saw my live :
 And where him list, best fellowship can
 To such as him thinketh able for to thrive."
 And with that word, the Pandarus as blive
 He toke his leave, and said, "I woul gan hem :"
 "Nay, blame have I, uncle," (quod she then.)

"What eileth you to be weary thus soone,
 And naveliche of women, woul ye so ?
 Nay sitteth doune, by God I haue to done
 With you, to speake of wisdoms or ya go :"
 And every wight that was about hem tho,
 That heard that, gan ferre away to stow,
 While they two had all that hem list in hood.

When that her tale all brought was to an end
 Of her estate, and of her governance,
 (Quod Pandarus) "Now time is that I wend,
 But yet I sey, ariseth, let us daunce,
 And cast your widdows habit to mischaunce :
 What list you thus your seife to disfigure,
 Sith you is tidde so glad an aventure ?"

"But well bethought : for love of God," (quod she)
 "Shall I not weten what ye meane of this ?"
 "No, this thing asketh lesser tho," (quod he)
 "And eke me woul full much greve iwis,
 If I it told, and ye it toke amis :
 Yet were it bette my tongue to hold still,
 Than say a sooth, that were ayenst your will."

"For nece mine, by the goddesse Minerve,
 And Jupiter, that maketh the thundering,
 And the blisfull Venus, that I serve,
 Ye ben the woman in this world living
 Withouten paramours, to my weting,
 That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
 And that ye weten well your selfe, I love."

"Iwis mine uncle," (quod she) "graunt mercy,
 Your friendship have I founden ever yet,
 I am to no man beholden truly
 So much as you, and have so little quit :
 And with the grace of God, enforth my wit
 As in my guilt, I shall you never offend,
 And if I have ere this, I woul amend."

" But for the love of God I you beseech
As ye be he that I love most and trist,
Let he to me your fremed manner speech,
And say to me your nece what you list:"
And with that word her uncle anon her kist,
And said, " Gladly my love nece so dere,
Take it for good that I shall say you here."

With that she gan her eien doome to cast,
And Pandarus to coughe gan a lite,
And mid: " Nece, away lo, to the last,
How so it be, that some men hem delite
With subtle art hir tales for tendite,
Yet for all that in hir entencion,
Her tale is all for some conclusion."

" And with the end is every tales strength,
And this matter is so behovedly,
What should I paint it or drawn it on length
To you, that ben my friend so faithfully?"
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and looken in her face,
And said, " On such a mirrou much good grace."

Then thought he thus, " If I my tale endite
Oght hard, or make a processe any while,
She shall no savour have therein but lite,
And trow I would her in my will beguile:
For tender wittes weneu all be wile,
Whereas they con nat plainliche understand:
For thy her wit to serven woll I fond."

And looked on her in busie wise,
And she was ware that he beheld her so:
" Ah lord," (quod she) " so fast ye me advise,
Saw ye me never ere now, what say ye no?"
" Ye, yes," (quod he) " and bet woll ere I go:
For by my trouth I thought now, if ye
Be fortunate: for now men shall it see."

" For every wight some goodly aventure,
Sometime is shape, if he it can receive:
But if he will take of it no cure
When that it cometh, but wilfully it weivent
Lo, neither case nor fortune him deceiven,
But right his own slouth and wretchednesse:
And such a wight is for to blame, I geese."

" Good aventure, O belle nece, have ye
Full lightly founden, and ye comne it take:
And for the love of God, and eke of me,
Catch it anon, least aventure wake:
What should I lenger processe of it make,
Yere me your hood, for in this world is non,
If that you list, a wight so well begoon."

" And with I speake of good entencion,
As I to you have told well here before,
And love as well your honour and renown,
As any creature in all the world iborne:
By all the othes that I have you sworne,
And ye be wroth therefore or wene I lie,
We shall I never seeue you eft with cie."

" Both nat agast, no quaketh nat, whereto?
Ne change nat for fere so your hew,
For hardely the worst of this is do:
And though my tale as now be to you new,
Yet trust away: ye shall me Gode true,
And were it thing that me thought unfitting,
To you we would I no such tales bring."

" Now, my good eme, for Godes love I prey,"
(Quod she) " come off tell me what it is:
For both I am agast what ye woll say,
And eke me longeth it to wit iwis:
For whether it be well, or be amis,
Say on, let me not in this feare dwell."
" So woll I done, now hearkeneth I shall tell:

" Now, nece mine, the kinges own dere sonne,
The good, wise, worthy, fresh, and free,
Which alway for to done well is his womne,
The noble Troilus so loveth thee,
That hut ye helpe, it woll his bane be,
Lo here is all, what should I more sey?
Doth what you list, to make him live or dey."

" But if ye let him die, I woll sterven,
Have here my trouthe, nece, I will not lien,
All should I with this knife my throte kerven."
With that the teares burst out of his eien,
And said, " If that ye done us both dien
Thus guiltlesse, than have ye fished faire:
What mend ye, though that we both aspire?"

" Alas, be which that is my lord so dere,
That trowe man, that noble gentle knight,
That uought desireth but your friendly chere,
I see him dien, there he goeth upright:
And hasteth him with all his fulle might
For to ben slaine, if his fortune assent,
Alas that God you such a beaute sent."

" If it be so that ye so cruell be,
That of his death you listeth nought to retch,
That is so trow and worthy as we see,
No more than of a yasper or a wretch,
If ye be such, your beaute may nat stretch,
To make amendes of so cruell a dede:
Avicement is good before the nede."

" Wo worth the faire gemme vertulesse,
Wo worth that hearbe also that doth no bote,
Wo worth the beauty that is routhlesse,
Wo worth that wight that trade ech under fote:
And ye that ben of beantie crophe and rote,
If therewithall in you ne be no routh,
Than is it harme ye liven by my trouth."

" And also thinke well, that this is no gaud,
For me were lever, thou, I, and he
Were honged, than I should hen his band,
As high as men might on us all see:
I am thine eme, the shame were to mee,
As well as thee, if that I should assent
Through mine abet, that he thine honour abent."

" Now understand, for I you nought requere
To bind you to him, through no behest,
Sane onely that ye make him better cheere
Than ye han don or this, and more feate,
So that his life be saued at the leste:
This al and some, and plainly our entente,
God helpe me so, I neuer other mente."

" Lo, this request is nought but skill iwis,
Ne doubt of reason parde is there none:
I set the worst, that ye dreden this.
Men would wonder to seeu him come and gone:
There ayent answers I thus anon,
That every wight, but he be foole of kind,
Woll deeme it love of friendship in his mind."

" What, who wold demen tho he see a man
To temple gone, that he the images eateth ?
Thinke eke, how well and wisely that he can
Govern himselfe, that he nothing foryetteth,
That wher he cometh, he pris and thounk him getteth ;
And eke thereto he shal come here so seid,
What force were it, thogh all the toun beheld.

" Such love of friends reigenth thorow al this toun :
And wrie you in that mantle evermo,
And God so wis be my salvatioun
As I have sayd, your best is to do so :
But, good nece, alway to stint his wo,
So let your daunger sugred ben alite,
That of his death ye be not all to wite."

Creseide, which that herd him in this wise,
Thought, " I shall fele what he meaneth wis :
" Now eme," (quod she) " what wold ye devise ?
What is your rede, I should done of this ?"
" That is well said," (quod he) " certaine best is,
That ye him love ayen for his loving,
As love for love is skilfull guerdoning.

" Thinke eke how elde wasteth every hour
In each of you a part of beaute,
And therefore, ere that age the devour,
Go love, for old there wold no wight of these :
Let this proverbe, a love unto you bee,
' Too late iware' (quod beaute) " whan it past,
And elde daunteth daunger, at the last."

" The kinges foole is wout to crie aloud,
Whan that he thinketh a woman bereth her hie,
' So longe mote ye live, and all proud,
Till crows feet growen under your eie,
And send you than a mirroure in to prie,
In which that ye may see your face a morow,'
Neece, I bid him wish you no more sorow."

With this he stint, and caste down the head,
And she began to brest and wepe anon,
And said, " Alas for wo, why nere I dead,
For of this world the faith is all agone :
Alas, what shoulde straunge unto me done,
Whan he that for my best frende I wend,
Rate me to love, and should it me defend.

" Alas, I wold have trusted doubteles,
That if that I, through my disaventure,
Had loved either him or Achilles,
Nector, any other creature,
Ye wolde have had mercy ne measure
On me, but alway had me in reprieve :
This false world alas, who may it leve ?

" What ? is this all the joy and all the feost ?
Is this your rede ? is this my blissfull caas ?
Is this the very mede of your behest ?
In all this painted processe said (alas)
Right for this fine ? O lady mine Pallas,
Thou in this dredefull case for me purvey,
For so astonied am I, that I dey."

With that she gan full sorrowfully to sike,
" Ne may it be no bet," (quod Pandarus)
" By God I shall no more come here this weke,
And God toforne, that am mistrusted thus :
I see well now ye setten light of us,
Or of our death, alas, I wofull wretch,
Might he yet live, of me were nought to retch.

" O cruell god, O dispitous Mars,
O furies thre of Hell, on you I crie,
So let me never out of this house depart,
If that I meant harme or villanie :
But sith I see my lord mote needes die,
And I with him, here I me shrive and sey,
That wickedly ye done us both to dey.

" But sith it liketh you, that I be dead,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shall I never eaten bread,
Till that I mine owne herte blood may see :
For certaine I wold die as soone as bee."
And up he stert, and on his way he raught,
Till she againe him by the lappe caught.

Creseide, which that well nigh starf for feare,
So as she was the fearfullest wight
That might be, and heard eke with her care,
And saw the sorrowfull earnest of the knight,
And in his prair saw eke none unright,
And for the harme eke that might fall more,
She gan to raw and dread her wonder sore.

And thought thus, " Unhapes do fallen thicke
Alday for love, and in such maner caas,
As men beu cruell in bemelfe and wike :
And if this man esee bere bemelfe, alas,
In my presence, it will be so wolla,
What men wold of it deme I can nat say,
It nedeth me full alightly for to play."

And with a sorrowfull sigh, she said thrie,
" Ah, Lord, what me is tidde a sorry chance,
For mine estate lieth in jeopardy,
And eke mine emes life lieth in ballaunce :
But nathelesse, with Godes governaunce
I shall so done, mine honour shall I keepe,
And eke his life, and stinte for to weepe.

" Of harmes two, the lease is for to chese,
Yet bad I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than my emes life to lese.
Ye sain, ye nothing eles me requere."
" No wis," (quod he) " mine owne nece so dere."
" Now well" (quod she) " and I wold done my paine,
I shall mine herte ayen my lust constraine.

" But that I will nat bolden him in bond,
Ne love a man, that can I naught ne may,
Ayenst my will, but eke wold I fonde,
Mine honour save, plesen him fro day to day,
Thereto wolde I not ones have said nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasie :
But cense cause, aie cessesth maladie.

" But here I make a protestacion,
That in this processe if ye deper go,
That certainly, for no salvation
Of you, though that ye sterven bothe two,
Though all the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shall I never on him have other routhe :"
" I graunt wel," (quod Pandarus) " by my trouthe.

" But maie I trust well to you," (quod he)
" That of this thing that ye han high me here
Ye wold it holde truly unto me ?"
" Ye doubtesse," (quod she) " mine uncle dere."
" Ne that I shall have cause in this matere"
(Quod he) " to plain, or offer you to preach :"
" Why no parde, what nedeth more spech."

The fill they in other tales glade
Till at the last, "O good Eme," (quod she tho)
"For love of God which that us bothe made,
Tell me how first ye wistan of his wo:
Wot none of it but ye?" he said "No:"
"Can he well speake of love," (quod she) "I prele?
Tell me, for I the bet shall me persuaie."

The Pandarus a litel gan to smile,
And said: "By my trouth I shall now tell,
This other daie, nat gon full long while,
Within the paleis gardin by a well
Gan he and I, well halfe a day to dwell,
Right for to speaken of an ordinaunce,
How we the Grekes mighten disavaunce.

"Some after that we goose for to lepe,
And casten with our dertes to and fro:
Till at the last, he said, he would slepe,
And on the grass adounne he laied him tho,
And I after gan to romen to and fro,
Till that I heard, as I walked alone,
How he began full woefully to grone.

"The gan I stalks him softly behind,
And sikerly the sothe for to seine,
As I can clepe ayen now to my mind,
Right thus to love he gan him for to plain,
He said: 'Lorde, have routh vpon my pain,
All have I been rebel in mine entent,
Now (mea culpa) lord I me repent.

"O God, that at thy disposicion
Lestest the sue, by just purveuaunce
Of every wight, my lowe confuscion
Accept in gree, and sende me soche penaunce
As liketh thee, but from the desperaunce,
That may my ghost departe alway fro the,
Thou be my shilde, for thy beniguite.

"For certes, lorde, so sore hath she me wounded
That stode in blacke, with loking of hir eyen,
That to mine hertes botome it is ifounded
Through which I wot, that I must nedes dien;
This is the worst, I dare me nought bewrien,
And well the boter been the gledes rede
That mee hem wren with ashen pale and dede."

"With that he smote his hedde adounne anoue
And gan to muttre, I nat what truly,
And I with that gan still awaie to gose
And lete thereof, as nothing wist had I,
And come again anon and stode him by
And said, 'Awake, ye slepen all to long:
It semeth nought that love doth you wrong.

"That slepen so that no man maie you wake;
Who seie ever er this so dull a man?"
"Ye, frende," (quod he) "doe ye your heddes ake
For love, and let me liven as I can."
But lorde though he for wo was pale and wan;
Yet made he tho as fresh a countenaunce,
As though he should have led the newe daunce

"This passed forth, till now this other daie
It fell that I come roming all alone
Into his chambrer, and founde how that he laie
Upon his hedde: but man so sore grone
He heard I neuer, and what was his moue
He wist I nought, for as I was comming
All sodainly he left his complaining.

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"Of whiche I take somewhat suspectioud,
And nere I come, and found him wepe sore;
And God so wise be my saluacion,
As never of thing had I no routh more:
For neither with engine, ne with no lore,
Unnethe might I fro the death him kepe,
That yet fele I mine herte for him wepe.

"And God wot neuer sith that I was borne
Was I so busie no man for to preache,
Ne never was to wight so depe sworne,
Er he me told, who might been his leache;
But not to you rebearen all his speache,
Or all his woeful wordes for to sowne,
Ne bid me nought, but ye well se me swone.

"But for to saue his life, and eles nought,
And to none harme of you, thus am I driven,
And for the loue of God that us hath wrought
Soche chere him doth, that he and I maie liuen;
Now haue I plat to you mine herte shruen,
And sith ye wote that mine entent is cleane
Take hede thereof, for none euill I meane.

"And right good thrift, I pray to God haue ye,
That han soche oue icought withouten net,
And be ye wise, as ye be faire to se,
Well in the ring, than is the rubie set;
There were neuer two so well iunet
When ye been his all hole, as he is your:
There mightie God yet graunt vs to se the hour."

"Naie thereof spake I nat: A ha!" (quod she)
"As helpe me God, ye shenden every dele:"
"A mercis, dere nece, anon" (quod he)
"What so I spake, I ment nought but wele,
By Mars the god, that helmed is of stale:
Now beth not wroth, my blood, my nece dere."
"Now well," (quod she) "foryeuen be it here."

With this he toke his leave, and home he went,
Ye, Lord, how he was glad, and well bigon:
Creseide arose, no longer she ne shent,
But streight into her closet went anon,
And set her doune, as still as any stone,
And every word gan vp and doune to wind,
That he had said as it came her to mind.

And wote somdele astonied in her thought,
Right for the newe case, but when that she
Was full avized, the found she right nought,
Of perill, why that she ought aferde be:
For man may love of possibilitie
A woman so, his herte may to brest,
And she nat love ayen, but if her lest.

But as she sat alone, and thought thus,
Thascrie arose at skarnoch all without,
And men cried in the strete, "Se Troilus
Hath right now put to fight the Grekes rout."
With that goone all her meire for to about:
"A, go we se, cast up the gates wide,
For through this strete he mote to paleis ride."

For other waie is fro the yates none,
Of Dardarus, there open is the chaine:
With that come he, and all his folke anon
An easie pace riding, in routes tweine,
Right as his happy day was, soth to seine:
For which men saith, may not disturbed be
That shall betide of necessite.

R.

This Troilus sat on his baie stede
 All armed save his head full richely,
 And wounded was his horse, and gan to blede,
 On which he rode a pace full softly:
 But such a knightly sight truly
 As was on him, was nat withouten faile
 To loken on Mars, that god is of bataille.

So like a man of armes, and a knight
 He was to seen, fulfilled of high prowess,
 For both he had a body, and might
 To doon that thing, as well as hardinesse,
 And eke to seen him in his geare dresse
 So freshe, so yong, so weldy seemed he,
 It was as heaven vpon him for to see.

His helms to hewen was in twenty places,
 That by a tissue bong, his backe behind,
 His shelde to dashed with swords and with maces,
 In which men might many an arrowe find,
 That thirled had both horn, nerfe, and riind:
 And aie the people cried, "Here cometh our ioie,
 And next his brother, holder vp of Troie."

For which he went a little redde for shame
 When he so heard the people vpon him crien,
 That to behold it was a noble game,
 How soberliche he cast adoune his iyen:
 Creseide anon gan all his chere espieen,
 And let it so soft in hir herte sinke,
 That to her self she said, "Who yare me drinke?"

For all her own thought, she wore all redde,
 Remembering her right thus, "Lo this is he,
 Which that mine vncle swereth he mote dedde,
 But I on him have mercie and pite:"
 And with that thought, for pure ashamed she,
 Gan in her hedde to pull, and that as fast,
 While he and all the people forth by past.

And gan to cast, and rollen vp and doun
 Within her thought his excellent prowess,
 And his estate, and also his renou, his
 His witte, his shape, and eke his goodnesse,
 But most her favour was, for his distresse,
 Was all for ber, and thought it were a routh,
 To staen soche one, if that he ment trouth.

Now might some envious iangle thus,
 "This was a sodain love, how might it be,
 That she so lightly loved Troilus?
 Right for the first sight: ye, parde?"
 Now whoso said so, mote he never the:
 For every thing a ginning hath it nede,
 Er all be wrought, withouten any drede.

For I saie nat that she so sodainly
 Yafe him her love, but that she gan encline
 To liken him tho, and I have told you why:
 And after that, his manhode, and his pine,
 Made that love within her gan to mine:
 For which by process, and by good service
 He wanne her love, and in no sodain wise.

And all so blisfull Venus wole arated
 Sette in her seventh house of Heven tho,
 Disposed welle, and with aspectes payed,
 To helpe sely Troilus of his wo:
 And sothe to sayne, she nas nat all a for
 To Troilus, in his natuyte,
 God wote that welle the sooner spede he.

Now let vs staen of Troilus a throw,
 That rideth forth, and let vs tourne fast
 Unto Creseide, that heng her hedde full low,
 There as she satte alone, and gan to cast
 Whereon she would appoint her at the last,
 If it so were her eme ne would cease,
 For Troilus vpon her for to please.

And lorde so she gan in her thought argue
 In this matter, of which I have you told,
 And what to doon best were, and what eschue,
 That plited she full oft in many fold:
 Now was hir herte warme, now was it cold,
 And what she thought, somewhat shall I write:
 As mine antour listeth for to telle.

She thought first, that Troilus person
 She knew by sight and eke his gentleness:
 And thus she said, "All were it noight to doot
 To grant him love, yet for his worthinesse,
 It were honor with paine, and with gladnesse,
 In honeste with such a lorde to deale,
 For mine estate, and also for his heale.

"Eke well wote I, my kinges soune is he,
 And sith he hath to see me soch daite,
 If I would vterliche his right fie,
 Paraventure he might have me in dispite,
 Through which I might stond in wors plite:
 Now were I wise, me late to purchase
 Without nede, there I may standa in grace?"

"In every thing, I wot there lieth measure:
 For though a man forbid drunkennesse,
 He noight forbiddeth that every creature
 Be drinkelesse for a way, as I gease:
 Eke, sith I wot for me is his distresse,
 I ne ought not for that thing him dispise,
 Sith it is so, he meaneth in good wise.

"And eke I know, of long time agone
 His thewes good, and that he nis not nice,
 No vauntour seine men, certain he is soue,
 To wise is he to doon so great a vice:
 Ne als I nil him never so cherice,
 That he shall make avaunt by iust cause:
 He shall me never binde in soche a clause.

"Now set a case, the hardest is iuris,
 Men might demen that he loveth me:
 What dishonour were it vnto me this?
 Maie iche been let of that? why oiaie parde:
 I know also, and alway heare and se,
 Men loven women all this toun about,
 Be they the wers? Why maie withouten dout?"

"I thinke eke how, he worthie is to have
 Of all this noble toun the thristiest,
 That woman is, if she her honour save:
 For out and out he is the worthiest,
 Save only Hector, which that is the best,
 And yet his life lieth all now in my cure,
 But sothe is love, and eke mine aventure.

"Ne me to love, a wonder is it naught:
 For well wote I my self, no God me spede,
 All wolle I that no man wist of this thought,
 I am one the fairest out of drede
 And goodliest, who so that seketh hede:
 And no men saine in all the toun of Troie,
 What wonder is though he of me have ioie?"

" I am mine owne woman well at ease,
I thank't God, as after mine estate,
Eight yong, and stound valied in lustie lease,
Withouten ielousie, and such debate :
Shall no husbande saine to me cheeke mate,
For either they be full of ielousie,
Or masterfull, or loven noveltrie.

" What shall I doo? to what fine live I this?
Shall I not love, in case if that me list?
What pardieure I am not religious:
And though that I mine herte set at rest
Upon this tnight, that is the worthiest,
And kepe alway mine honor, and my name,
By all right it may doe me no shame."

But right as when the Sunne shineth bright
In March, that chaungeth oft time his face,
And that a cloud is put with winde to flight,
Which oversprat the Sunne, as for a space,
A slowly thought gan through her soul pace,
That overspradde her bright thoughtes all,
So that for feare almost she gan to fall.

That thought was this: " Alas sith I am free,
Should I now love, and put in jeopardy
My shrewdness, and thralven libertie?
Alas, how durst I thinke that folie?
May I not well in other folke espie
Her dreadfull ioye, hir constraint, and hir pain:
That loveth none, that she ne hath why to plain.

" For love is yet the moste stormie life,
Right of himself, that ever was begonne:
For ever some mistrust, or nice strife,
There is in love, some cloud over the Sunne:
Thereto we wretched women nothing conne
When vs is wo, but wepe and sit and thinke,
Our wretch is this, our owne wo to drinke.

Also wicked tongues been ay so prest
To speake vs harme: eke men ben so vntrue,
That right anon as ceased is hir lust,
To cometh love, and forth to love a newe:
But harme idoe is doon, who so it rue:
For though these men for love hem first to reade,
Fell sharp beginning breaketh oft at ende.

" How oft time may men both rede and see,
The treason, that to woman hath be doe?
To what fine is soche love, I can not seen,
Or where becometh it, when it is go,
There is no wight that wote, I trowe so,
When it becometh, lo, no wight on it sporneth;
That erst was nothing, into naught turneth.

" How basic (if I love) eke must I ha
To plesse hem, that iangle of love, and demen,
And coven hem, that thei saie no harm of me:
For though there be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harme, that folke hir frendes quemen:
And who maie stoppen every wicked tong?
Or none of belies, while that they been rong?"

And after that her thought gan for to clere
And said, " He which that nothing vndertaketh
Nothing achieveth, be him loth or dere;"
And with another thought her herte quaketh
That slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh,
Now bote, now cold, but thus bitwixen tway
She rist her vp, and went hir for to play.

Adoun the staire anon right tho she went
Into her gardine, with her neeces thre,
And vp and down, they maden many a went
Flexippe and she, Tarbe, and Antigone,
To plaien, that to ioye was to see,
And other of her women a great rout
Her followeth in the gardaine all about.

This yerde was large, and railed al the alies
And shadowed wel, with blossomy howes grete,
And benched nowe, and sanded all the waies
In which she walketh arms in arme betwene,
Till at the last Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singen clere,
That it an Heven was her voice to here.

She said, " O Love, to whom I have, and shall
Been humble subiect, true in mine entent
As I best can, to you, lorde, yeve iche all
For evermore mine hertes lust to rent:
For never yet thy grace to no wight sent
So blisfull cause as me, my life to lede
In all ioye and suretie, out of drede.

" The blisfull god, hath me so well beest
In love itis, that all that beareth life
Imaginen ne could how to be bet,
For, lorde, withouten ielousie or strife
I love one, which that moste is ententife
To serven well, vnwerily or vnfaired,
That ever was, and lest with harme distaired,

" As he that is the well of worthinesse,
Of trouth ground, mirroure of goodlibhedde,
Of wit Apollo, stone of sikenesse,
Of vertue roots, of luste finder and hedde,
Through which is all sorrows fro me dedde:
I wis I love him best, so deeth he me;
Now good thrift have he, where so ever he be.

" Whom should I thanke but you, god of love,
Of all this blisse, in which to bath I gonne.
And thanked be ye, lorde, for that I love,
This is the right life that I am inne,
To fermen all maner vice and sinne:
This doeth me so to vertus for to entende
That daie by daie I in my will amende.

" And who that saith that for to love is vice,
Or thraldome, though he fele it in distresse,
He either is envious, or right nice,
Or is vnrichtie for his shrewdnesse,
To loven, for soch maner folke I gesse
Disfamen Love, as nothing of him know
They speaken, but they bent never his bowe.

" What is the Sunne worse of his kind right,
Though that a man, for febleness of his iyen
Maie not endure on it to se for bright?
Or love the worst, that wretches on it crien?
No wele is worth, that may no sorowe driem:
And forthy, who that hath an bedde of verre
Pro cast of stones ware him in the werre.

" But I with all mine herte and all my might,
As I have said, woll love vnto my last
My owne dere herte and all mine owne knight,
In which mine herte growen is so fast
And his in me, that it shall ever last:
All drede I first love him to begin,
Now wote I well there is no perill in."

And of her song right with that word she stent,
 And therewithall, "Now nece" (quod Creseide)
 "Who made this song now with so good entent?"
 Antigone answerde anon and saide,
 "Madame iwis the goodliest maide
 Of great estate in all the toune of Troie
 And led her life in most honour and ioie."

"Fornoth so semeth it by her song,"
 Quod the Creseide, and gan therewith to sike,
 And said: "Lorde, is there soche blisse among
 These lovers, as they can faire endite?"
 "Ye, wise," quod fresh Antigone the white,
 "For all the folke that have or been on live
 Ne can well the blisse of love describe."

"But wene ye that every wretche wote
 The parfitte blisse of love? why naie iwis:
 They wenen all be love, if one be hote:
 Do waie do waie, they wote nothing of this.
 Men mote asken of sancties, if it is
 Ought faire in Heven, and why? for they can tell,
 And aske fendes, if it be foule in Hell."

Creseide vnto the purpose naught answerde,
 But said, "Iwis it will be night as fast,"
 But every worde, which that she of her berde,
 She gan to printen in her herte fast,
 And sic gan love her lasse for to agast
 Than it did erst, and sinken in her herte,
 That she waxe somewhat able to courtaite.

The daies honour, and the Heavens iye,
 The nightes foe, all this clepe I thee Some,
 Gan westren fast, and downward for to wrie,
 As be that had his daies course ironne,
 And white thinges wosen al dimme and donne
 For lacke of light, and sterres for to spere,
 That she and all her folke in went ifere.

So when it liked her to gon to rest,
 And voided weren they that voiden ought,
 She said, that to slepen well her laste:
 Her women some till her bedde her brought:
 Whan al was hush, than lay she still and thought
 Of all this thing the maner and the wise,
 Reherce it needeth not, for ye been wise.

A nightingale vpon a cedre greue
 Under the chamber wall, there as she laie,
 Full loude song ayen the Mone shene
 Paraventure in his birdes wise a laie
 Of love, that made her herte freshe and gaie,
 That berkened she so long in good entent,
 Till at the last the dodde sleepe her hent.

And as she slept, anon right the her met,
 How that an egre fethered white as bone,
 Under her brest his longe claws last,
 And out her herte he rent, and that anon,
 And did his herte into her brest to gan,
 Of which she nought agrose, ne nothing smart,
 And forth he fieth, with herte left for herte.

Now let her slepe, and we our tales holde
 Of Troilus, that is to palcis ridden,
 Fro the scarmishe of which I you tolde,
 And in his chamber sate, and bath abidden,
 Till two or three of his messengers yeden
 For Pandarus, and soughten him full fast,
 Till they him found, and brought him at the last.

This Pandarus came leaping in at ones,
 And said thus, "Who hath been well here
 To day with swerde, and along stonnes,
 But Troilus, that hath caught him as hets?"
 And gan to yape, and spied, "Lord ye swets,
 But rise and let vs soupe, and go to resta,"
 And he answerde him, "Do we as thee treste."

With all the hast goonly as they might,
 They sped hem fro the souper, and to bedde,
 And every wight out at the doore him dight,
 And whider him list, vpon his waie him sped:
 But Troilus thought that his herte bledde
 For wo, till that he heard some tiding,
 And said, "Frende, shall I now wepe or sing?"

(Quod Pandarus) "Be still and let me slepe,
 And doe on thy hooche, thine nedes spedde be,
 And chose if thou wolt sing, daunce, or lepe,
 At short wordes thou shalt trowe all by me,
 Sir, my nece wold doen well by thee,
 And love thee best, by God and by trothe,
 But lacke of pursute marre it in thy slothe."

"For thus ferforth I have thy werk begoo,
 Fro daie to daie, till this daie by the morow,
 Hir love of frendship have I to thee woo,
 And therefore bath she laid her faith to bowe,
 Algate a foote is harmed of thy sorow:"
 What should I longer sermon of thy holde,
 As ye have heard before, all he him tolde.

But right as floures through the cold of night
 I closed, stoupen in hir stalken love,
 Redresen hem ayen the Summe bright,
 And spreaden in hir kinde course by rose,
 Right so gan the his iyen vp to throwe
 This Troilus, and said: "O Venus dret,
 Thy might, thy grace, ishered be hit here."

And to Pandarus he held vp both his bond,
 And said, "Lorde all thine be that I have,
 For I am hole, and broken been my bond,
 A thousand Troies, who so that me yave
 Ech' after other, God so wis me save,
 Ne might me so gladen, lo mine herte
 It xpedeth so for ioie it wold to starte."

"But lorde how shall I doen? how shal I live,
 Whan shal I next my dere herte se?
 How shal this longe time away be driven?
 Till that thou be ayen at her fro me,
 Thou maist answer, abide abide: but be
 That hangeth by the necke, sothe to saie,
 In great disease abideth for the paine."

"All easily now, for the love of Marte,"
 (Quod Pandarus) "for every thing bath time,
 So long abide, till that the night departe,
 For also siker as thou list here by me,
 And God tofore, I wold be there at prime,
 And for thy werke somewhat, as I shall say,
 Or on some other wight this charge lay."

"For parde, God wot, I have ever yet
 Ben ready thee to serve, and this night
 Have I not faised, but embathe my wit
 Doen all thy lust, and shal with al my might:
 Dee now as I shall saie, and fare aright:
 And if thou nilte, wite all thy selfe the cure,
 On me is nought along thine evill fare."

" I wote well, that thou wisest art than I
A thousand fold: but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I would vnterly
Right of mine owne honde write her now
A letter, in which I would her telle how
I fare amisse, and her beseech of routh:
Now help thy self, and leave it for no slouth.

" And I my selfe shall therewith to her gone,
And when thou wost that I am with her there
Wrote thou vpon a courser right anon,
Ye hardely, and that right in thy best gere,
And ride forth by the place, as naught ne were,
And thou shalt find vs (if I may) sitting
At some window, into the street looking.

" And if thee list, then mayest thou vs salve,
And vpon me make thou thy countenaunce,
But by thy life beware, and fast eschue
To tarne ought, God shild vs fro mischaunce:
Ride forth thy way, and hold thy gouernaunce,
And we shall speake of thee somewhat I trow
When thou art gone, to doe thine eares glow.

" Touching thy letter, thou art wise ynough,
I wot thou like it deigueliche endite,
Is make it with these argumentes tough,
Ne scriveinische or craftely thou it write,
Rehoite it with thy teares eke mite,
And if thou write a goodly word all soft,
Though it be good, rebearse it not too oft.

" For though the best harpoun vpon liue
Would on the best souned iolly harpe
That ever was, with all his fingers five
Touch eye o strong, or eye o warble harpe,
Where his nailes pointed neuer so sharpe,
It should make every wight to dull,
To heare his glee, and of his strokes full.

" Ne iourne eke no disordeant thing idere,
As thou, to vane tearmes of phisicke,
In loves tearmes hold of thy mestere
The forme alway, and doe that it be like,
For if a painter would paint a pike
With eares feet, and headed as an ape,
It couldst not, so were it but a yape."

This counsaile liked well into Troilus,
But as a dredefull lover he saied this:
" Alas my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to write iwis,
Least of mine innocense I saied amis,
Or that she nolde it for dispate receive,
Then were I dead, there might it nothing weire."

To that Pandare answerde, " If thee list,
Do that I say, and let me therewith gone,
For by that Lord that formed east and west,
I hope of it to bring answer anon
Right of her bond, and if that thou milte none,
Let be, and sorrie mote be been his live,
Ayent thy lust that helpeth thee to thre."

(Good Troilus) " Depardieu x iche assent,
Sith that thee list, I will arise and write,
And blisfull God pray iche with good content
The ynage and the letter I shall endite,
So speed it, and thou Minerva the white,
Yere thou me witte, my letter to devise:"
And set him downe, and wrote right in this wise.

First he gan her his right ladie call,
His hertes life, his lust, his sorowes leche,
His blame, and eke these other tearmes all,
That in such case ye lovers all seeche,
And in full humble wise, as in his speche,
He gan him recommaund vnto her grace,
To tell all how, it asketh mokell space.

And after this full lowly he her praied
To be nought wroth, though he of his follie
So hardie was to her to write, and saied
That love it made, or eles must he die,
And pitously gan mercis for to crie:
And after that he saied, and lied full loud,
Himselfe was little wroth, and lasse he could.

And that she would have his cooning excused,
That little was, and eke he dradde her so,
And his vnworthinesse aye he accused:
And after that than gan he tell his wo,
But that was endless withouten do:
And said, he would in trowth alway him hold,
And redde it over, and gan the letter fold.

And with his salte teares gan he bathe
The rubie in his signet, and it sette
Upon the weze deliverliche and rathe,
Therewith a thousand times, or he lette,
He kiste tho the letter thit be shette
And said, " Letter, a blisfull destine
Thee shapen is, my ladie shall thee see."

This Pandare toke the letter, and betime
A morrow to his necis-pallaice sterte,
And fast he swore, that it was passed prime:
And gan to yape, and said, " Iwis my herte
So fresh it is, although it sore smert,
I may not sleepe never a Mayes morrow,
I have a iollie woe, a lustie sorrow."

Creseide when that she her uncle heard,
With dreddfull herte, and desirous to heare,
The cause of his cooning, thus answered,
" Now by yourfaith, mine vncke!" (quod she) " deare,
What manner winde guideth you now here?
Tell vs your iolly woe, and your penaunce,
How farre forth be ye put in loves daunce."

" By God" (quod he) " I hop alway behinde,"
And to laugh, it thought her herte brest,
(Quod Pandarus) " Looke alway that ye finde
Game in mine hood: but herkeneth if you list,
There is right now come into the toun a gest,
A Grecke captie, and telleth newe thinges,
For which I come to tell you new tidings,

" Into the garden go we, and ye shall heare
All privily of this a long sermon:"
With that they wenten arm in arm ifere,
Into the gardin fro the chamber down.
And when he was so farre, that the soun
Of that he spake, no man heren might,
He sayd her thus, and out the letter plight.

" Lo, he that is all holly yours free,
Him recommaundeth lowly to your grace,
And east you this letter here by me,
Avisth you on it, when ye han space,
And of some goodly answere you purchase,
Or helpe me God so, plainly for to saie,
He may not longe liven for his paine.

Full dredefully the gan she stonde still,
And toke it not, but all her humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and said, "Scripe nor bill,
For love of God, that toucheth such matere
Ne bring me none: and also, vncle dere,
To mine estate have more regard I pray
Than to his lust, what should I more say."

"And looketh now if this be reasonable,
And letteth not for favour ne for slouth
To sein a sooth, now is it covenable
To mine estate, by God and by my trowth
To take it, or to have of him routh,
In harming of my selfe or in reprete:
Beare it ayen, for him that ye on leve."

This Pandarus gan on her for to stare,
And sayd, "Now is this the greatest wonder
That ever I saw, let he this nice fare,
To death smote I smiten be with thunder,
If for the cite which that stondeth yonder,
Would I a letter vnto you bring or take,
To harm of you: what list you thus it make."

"But thus ye faren well nigh all and some,
That he that most desireth you to serve,
Of him ye rech least where he become,
And whether that he live, or else sterve:
But for all that, that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it not" (quod he) and bent her fast,
And in ber boosome the letter doune he threst.

And said her, "Now cast it away anon
That folk may seen, and gauren on vs twey."
(Quod she) "I can abide till they be gon"
And gan to smile, and said him, "Erne I pray
Such answers as you list your selfe purvey:
For truly I wold no letter write:"
"No, than wold I" (quod he) "so ye endite."

Therewith she lough, and said "Go we dine,"
And he gan at himselfe yapan fast,
And sayd "Neece, I have so great a pine
For love, that everich other day I fast,"
And gan his best yapes forth to cast,
And made her for to laugh at his follie,
That she for laughter wente for to die.

And whan that she was comen into the hall,
"Now sme" (quod she) "we wold go dine anon,"
And gan some of her women to her call,
And straight into her chamber gan she gone,
But of her businesse this was one,
Amonges other thinges, out of drede,
Full prively this letter for to rede.

Avised word by word in every line,
And found no lacke, she thought he coude his good,
And vp it put, and went her in to dine,
And Pandarus, that in a studie stood,
Ere he was ware, she toke him by the hood,
And said "Ye were caught ere that ye wist,
"I vouchsafe," (quod he) "do what you list."

The weshen they, and set hem down and ete,
And after noone fall slightly Pandarus
Gan draw him to the window nye the strete,
And said, "Neece, who hath arised thus
The yonder house, that stant aforeyene vs?"
"Which house?" (quod she) and gan for to behold,
And knew it well, and whose it was him told.

And fellen forth in spech of thinges smate,
And saten in the window both twey:
Whan Pandarus saw time vnto his tale,
And saw well that her folke were all away:
"Now nece mine, tell on" (quod he) "I pray,
How liketh you the letter that ye wot,
Can he therson, for by my trowth I not."

Therewith all rosy bewed the woxe she,
And gan to hum, and said, "So I trow,"
"Aquite him well for Gods love" (quod he)
"My selfe to medes wold the letter sow,"
And held his hondes vp, and sat on know,
"Now good nece, be it never so lite,
Yeue me the labour, it to sow and plite."

"Ye, for I can so written" (quod she) "tho,
And eke I not what I should to him say:"
"Nay nece" (quod Pandare) "say not so,
Yet at the least, thouketh him I pray
Of his good will: O, doth him not to dey,
Now for the love of me my once dere,
Refuseth not at this time my priere."

"Depardieux" (quod she) "God leve all be wels,
God helpe me so, this is the first letter
That ever I wrote, ye all or any dele,"
And into a closet for to avise her better,
She went alone, and gan her herte vntetter
Out of disdainis prison, but a lite,
And set her doune, and gan a letter write.

Of which to tell in short is mine entent
Theffect, as ferre as I can understand:
She thouked him, of all that he well ment,
Towardes her, but holden him in hond
She holde not, ne make her selven hond
In love, but as his suster him to please,
She would aye faise to done his herte an ease.

She shette it, and to Pandare into gooe
There as he sat, and looked into strate,
And doune she set her by him on a stone
Of iasper, vpon a quisenen of gold thete,
And said, "As wisely helpe me God the grete,
I never did a thing with more paine,
Than write this, to which ye me restraine."

And toke it him: he thouked hir, and seide,
"God wot of thing full often lothe begonne
Commeth end good: and once mine Creseide,
That ye to him of hard now ben iwoome,
Ought he be glad, by God and yonder some:
For why, men saith impressions light
Full lightly ben aye readie to the fight."

"But ye han plaid the tyrant all too long,
And hard was it your herte for to grave,
Now stur, that ye no lenger on it bong,
All wouden ye the forme of danger save,
But hasteth you to done him joye have:
For trusteth well, too long idome hardnesse
Cansthe dispite full often for distresse."

And right as they declared this matere,
Lo Troilus, right at the stretes end
Came riding with his teeth somme idere
All softly, and thiderward gan bend
There as they sate, as was his way to vend
To paleis ward, and Pandare him aspide,
And said, "Neece, isse who commeth here ride."

" O fie not ha, he seeth vs I suppose,
Least he may thinke that ye him eschue."
" Nay, nay" (quod she) and wore as red as rose,
With that he gan ber humbly salus
With dredefull chere, and oft his heues mue,
And vp his looke debonairely he cast,
And becked on Pandare, and forth by past.

God wot if he sat on his horse a right,
Or goodly was besene that ilke day,
God wot where he were like a manly knight,
What should I dredche, or tell of his array:
Creseide, which that all those thinges sey,
To tell in short, her liked all ifere,
His person, his aray, his looke, his chere.

His goodly manner, and his gentleness,
So well, that never sith that she was borne,
Ne had she suche routh of his distresse,
And how so, she hath hard ben here before,
To God hope I, she hath now caught a thorn,
She shall nat pull it out this next wike,
God send her mo such thornes on to pike.

Pandare, which that stood her faste by,
Felt iron hot, and he began to amite,
And said, " Nece, I pray you heartly..
Tell me that I shall asken you afite,
A woman that were of his death to write
Withouten his gilt, but for her lack of routh,
Were it well done?" (quod she) " Nay by my trouth."

" God helpe me so" (quod he) " ye say me sooth,
Ye feelen well your selfe that I nought lie,
Lo, yonde he rideth:" (quod she) " Ye so he dooth:"
" Well" (quod Pandare) " as I have told you thrie,
Let be your nice shame, and your follie,
And speake with him in easing of his herte,
Let excete nat do you bothe smert."

But ther on was to Heuven and to done,
Considering all thing, it may nat be,
And why? for shame, and it were eke too soone
To graunten him so great a libertie:
For plainly hir entent, as (said she)
Was for to love him vnwist, if she might,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sight.

But Pandare thought, it shall nat be so,
If that I may, this nice opinion
Shall nat ben holden fully yeares two.
What should I make of this a long sermon?
He must assent on that conclusion,
As for the time, and when that it was eve,
And all was well, he rose and tooke his leve.

And on his way fast homeward he spedde,
And right for joy he felt his herte daunce,
And Troilus he found alone abedde,
That lay, as done these lovers in a trance,
Betwene hope and derke desperation,
But Pandare, right at his in coming,
He song, as who saith, " Lo, somewhat I bring."

And said, " Who is in his bedde so soone
Turbed thus?" " It am I friend" (quod ha)
" Who, Troilus? nay, help me so the Moone"
(Quod Pandarus) " thou shalt vp rise and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can healen thee of this accorse,
If thou do forthwith all thy business."

" Ye, through the might of God:" (quod Troilus)
And Pandarus gan him the letter take,
And said, " Parde God hath holpen vs,
Have here a light, and look on all these blake."
But often gan the herte glad and quake
Of Troilus, while he it gan to rede,
So as the worden yave him hope or drede,

But finally he tooke all for the best
That she him wrote, for somewhat he beheld,
On which he thought he might his herte rest,
All covered she the wordes vnder shield,
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That what for hope, and Pandarus behest,
His greates wo foryede he at the lest.

But as we may all day our seluen see,
Through wood or cole kindeleth the more fire,
Right so encrease of hope, of what it be,
Therewith full oft encreaseeth eke desire,
Or as an oke commeth of a little spire,
So through this letter, which that she him sent,
Encreaseen gan desire of which he brent.

Wherefore I say alway, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desieren more
Than he did erst through hope, and did his might
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And writen to ber of his sorowes sore
Fro day to day, he let it nought refeede,
That by Pandare he somewhat wrot or seide.

And did also his other obseruaunces,
That till a lover longeth in this case,
And after as his dice turned on channaces,
So was he either glad, or said alas,
And held after his gates aye his pass,
And after such answeres as he had,
So were his daies sorry either glad.

But to Pandare alway was his recours,
And pitously gan aye on him to plaine,
And him besought of rede, and some socourt,
And Pandarus, that saw his wood paine,
Wext well nigh dead for routh, sooth to mine,
And busily with all his herte cast,
Some of his wo to sleen, and that as fast.

And said, " Lord and friend, and brother dere,
God wot that thy disease doth me wo,
But wolt thou stinten all this wofull chere,
And by my trouth, ere it be daies two,
And God toforn, yet shall I shape it so,
That thou shalt come into a certaine place,
There as thou maist thy self praien her of grace.

" And certainly I not if thou it wost,
But they that ben expert in love, it say,
It is one of these thinges fartherst most,
A man-to have a leiser for to pray,
And siker place, his wo for to bewray,
For in good herte it mote some routh impress
To heare and see the guiltless in distresse.

" Peraventure thinkest thou, though it be so,
That kind would her done for to begin,
To have a manner routh vpon my wo,
Smith danger nay, thou shalt me never win:
So ruleth her herten ghost within,
That though she bend, yet she stout on rote,
What in effect is this vnto my bote.

" Think here ayen, when that the sturdy oke
On which men hacketh ofte for the nooses,
Received hath the happy falling stroke,
The great swight doth it come all at ones,
As done these great rocks or these mila stones,
For swifter course cometh thing that is of wight
When it descendeth, than done things light.

" But rede that boweth down for every blast,
Full lightly cress wind, it will arise,
But so will not an oke, when it is cast,
It needeth me nought longe thee forwise,
Men shall rejoycen of a great emprise,
Atcheived well, and stant withouten dout,
All have men ben the longer thereabout.

" But, Troilus, now tell me if thee lest
A thing, which that I shall aken thee,
Which is thy brother, that thou lovest best,
As in thy very hertes privite?"
" Iwis my brother Deiphobus tho" (quod he.)
" Now" (quod Pandare) " ere boures twice twelve,
He shall the ease, vnvist of it himselfe.

" Now let me alone, and worken as I may,"
(Quod he) and to Deiphobus went he tho,
Which had his lord, and great friend ben aye,
Save Troilus no man he loved so:
To telen in short withouten words mo
(Quod Pandarus) " I pray you that ye be
Friend to a cause, which that toucheth me."

" Yes parde" (quod Deiphobus) " wal thou wotest
All that ever I may, and God tofore,
All nere it but for the man I love most,
My brother Troilus; but say wherefore
It is, for sith the day that I was bore,
I nas, ne never mo to ben I thinke,
Ayeost a thing that might thee forthinke."

Pandare gan him thank, and to him seide,
" Lo sir, I have a lady in this town
That is my nece, and called is Creseide,
Which some men would done oppressoun,
And wrongfully have her possessoun,
Wherefore I of your lordship you beseech
To ben our friend, withouten more speech."

Deiphobus him answerd: " O, is nat this
That thou speakest of to me thus straungly,
Creseide my friend?" He said him " Yes."
" Than needeth" (quod Deiphobus) " hardely
No more of this to speke, for trusteth well that I
Will be her champion with spere and yerde,
I ne raught nat though all her foes it herde.

" But tel me how, for thou wost this matere,
I might best availen, now lette see?"
(Quod Pandarus) " If ye my lord so dere
Woulden as now do this honour to me,
To praien her to morrow, so that she
Came unto you, her plaints to devise,
Her adversaries would of it agrise.

" And if I more durst praien as now,
And chargen you to have so great travails,
To have some of your brethren here with you,
That mighten to her cause bet availen,
Than wote I well she might never faile
For to ben hoopen, what at your instance,
What with her othr friendes governaunce."

Deiphobus, which that comen was of kind
To all honour and boupy to consent,
Answerd, " It shall be done: and I can find
Yet greater helpe to this mine entent:
What woldest thou saine, if for Heletoe I seest
To speake of this? I trow it be the best,
For she may leden Paris as her lest.

" Of Hector, which that is my lord my brother,
It needeth nat to praien him friend to be,
For I have heard him o time and eke other
Speaken of Creseide such honour, that he
May saine no bet, such hap to him hath she,
It needeth nat his helpe more to crave,
He shall be such, right as we woll him have.

" Speake thou thy selfe also to Troilus
On my behalfe, and pray him with us dine."
" Sir, all this shall be done" (quod Pandarus)
And toke his leave, and never gan to fine,
But to his neces house as straight as line
He came, and found her fro the meat arise,
And set him down, and spake right in this wise:

He said, " O very God, so have I roune,
Lo nece mine, see ye nat how I swete?
I not where ye the more thanke me come:
Be ye not ware how false Poliphete
Is now about cfoocoon for to plete,
And bring on you advocacies new?"
" I, no" (quod she) and changed all her hev.

" What, is he more about me to dretche
And done me wrong, what shall I dooe, alas,
Yet of himselfe nothing would I retche,
Nere it for Antenor and Encas,
That ben his friends in such manner caus:
But for the love of God mine uncle dere,
No force of that, let him have all ifere,

" Withouten that, I have ynough for us."
" Nay" (quod Pandare) " it shall nothing be so,
For I have ben right now at Deiphobus,
At Hector, and mine other lordes mo,
And shortly makid each of hem his fo,
That by my thrift he shall it never win,
For aught he can, when so that he begin."

And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphobus of his owne courtesie
Came her to pray, in his proper persone,
To hold him on the morrow companie
At dinner, which she nolde not denie,
But goodly gan to his prayer obey,
He thonked her, and went upon his wey.

When this was done, this Pandare anon,
To tell in short, forth he gan to wend
To Troilus, as still as any stoon,
And all this thing he told him word sod god,
And how that he Deiphobus gan to blend,
And said him, " Now is time of that ye come
To here thee well to morrow, and all is womne.

" Now speke, now pray, now pitously complain,
Let nat for nice shame, for drede or slouth,
Sometime a man mote tell his owne pain,
Believe it, and she woll have on thee routh,
Thou shalt ben saved by thy faith in trouth,
But well wot I, thou now art in a drede,
And what it is, I lay that I can grede,

" Thou thinkest now, ' How should I don al this,
For by my cheres mosten folke espie,
That for ber love is that I fare amis,
Yet had I lever unwist for sorrow die:'
Now thinke nat so, for thou hast great follie,
For I right now have founden a manere
Of deight, for to coveren all thy chere.

Thou shalt gone overnight, and that blive,
Unto Deiphebus house, as thee to play,
Thy maladie away the bet to drive,
For which thou seemeth sicke, sooth to say,
Some after that, in thy bed thee lay,
And say thou maist no lenger up endure,
And lie right there, and bide thine aventure.

" Say that thy fever is wout thee for to take
The same time, and last till a morow,
And let see now how well thou canst it make:
For parde sicke is he that is in sorrow.
Go now farwell, and Venus here to borow,
I hope and thou this purpose hold ferme,
Thy grace she shall fully there conferme."

(Quod Troilus) " Iwis thou all needlesse
Commaist me, that sickeliche I me faine,
For I am sicke in earnest doubtlesse,
So that well nigh I sterve for the paine:"
(Quod Pandarus) " Thou shalt the better plaine,
And hast the lesse need to counterfete,
For him demeth men hot, that seeth him swete.

" Ia, hold thee at thy triste close, and I
Shall well the deere vnto the how drive:"
Therewith he tooke his leave all softly,
And Troilus to his paleis went blive,
So glad he was he never in all his live,
And to Pandarus rode gan all asment,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he went.

What nedeth it you to telles all the chere
That Deiphebus vnto his brother made,
Or his aia, or his sickeliche manere,
How men gone him with clothes for to lade,
When he was laid, and how men would him glade:
But all for nought, he held forth aye the wise,
That ye han heard Pandarus ere this devise.

But certaine is, ere Troilus him leide,
Deiphebus had praised him over night
To ben a friend, and helping to Creseide:
God wot that he graunted anon right
To ben her full friend with all his might:
But such a need was it to prisen him thence,
As for to bidden a wood man to reuce.

The morow came, and nighen gan the time
Of mealtide, that the faire queene Heleine
Shope her to ben an houre after the prime
With Deiphebus, to whom she solde faine,
But as his easter, homely sooth to saine
She came to disor in ber plaine entent,
But God and Pandarus wist all what this ment.

Come eke Creseide all innocet of this,
Asygone her wece, and Tarbe also,
But fie we now proliticke best is,
For love of God, and let vs fast go
Right to theeffect, withouten tales too,
Why all this folke assembled in this place,
And let vs of all hir salvinges pace.

Great honour did hem Deiphebus certaine,
And fedde hem well, with all that might like,
But evermo alas, was his refraine:
" My good brother Troilus the sike
Lithe yet," and therewithall he gan to sike,
And after that he pained him to glade
Hem as he might, and chere good he made.

Complained eke Heleine of his sicknesse
So faithfully, that it pitie was to here,
And every wight gan wexen for axes
A leche anon, and said, " In this manere
Men curen folke, this charme I wol thee lere,"
But there sate one, all list her nat to teche,
That thought, yet best could I ben his leche.

After complaint him gonnen they to praise,
As folk don yet when some wight hath begon
To praise a man, and with praise him reise
A thousand fold yet higher than the Sonne,
He is, he can, that few other lordes conne,
And Pandarus of that they would asferme,
He nought forgate hir praising to conferme.

Heard all this thing fair Creseide well inough,
And every word gan for to notife,
For which with sober chere ber herte lough,
For who is that we would her glorifie,
To mowen such a knight does live or die?
But all paise I, least ye too long idwell,
But for o fine is all that ever I tell.

The time came, fro dinow for to rise,
And as hem ought, arisen everychose,
And gane a while of this and that devise,
But Pandarus brake all this speech aniose,
And said to Deiphebus, " Woll ye gone,
If your will be, as erst I you preide,
To speaken of the nedes of Creseide?"

Heleine, which that by the hond her held,
Tooke first the tale, and said, " Go we blive,"
And goodly on Creseide she bebold,
And said, " Joves let him never thrive
That doth you harm, and reve him some of live,
And yeve me sorrow, but he shall it rue,
If that I may, and all folke be true."

" Tell thou thy nices case" (quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus) " for thou canst best it tell."
" My lordes and my ladies, it stant thus,
What should I lenger" (quod he) " do you dwell?"
He rong hem out a proces like a bell
Upon her foe, that bight Poliphete,
So hainous, that men might on it spete.

Anawerd of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
And honged be such one, were he my brother,
And so he shall, for it ne may nought varien,
What should I lenger in this tale tarien,
Plaineliche all at ones they her brighten
To ben her friend in all that ever they mighten.

Spake then Heleine, and said, " Pandarus,
Wot ought my lord my brother of this mater,
I meane Hector, or wote it Troilus?"
He said, " Ye, but woll ye me now here,
Me thinketh thus, with that Troilus is bere,
It were good, if that ye would asment,
She told him her selfe all this ere she went.

" For he wol have the more hir grete at herte,
Because lo, that she a lady is,
And by your will, I woll but in right start,
And do you wete, and that anon iwis,
If that he sleepe, or woll aught here of this:"
And in he lepte, and said him in his ere,
" God have thy soul, for brought have I thy bere."

To smilen of this gan the Troilus,
And Pandarus without reckoning,
Out went anon to Heleine and Deiphebus,
And said hem, " So there be no taryng
Ne more prease, he woll well that ye bring
Creseide my lady, that is now here,
And as he may enduren, he woll her bere."

" But well ye wote, the chamber is but lite,
And few folke may lightly make it warme,
Now looketh ye, for I woll have no wite
To bring in prease, that might done him harme,
Or him diseasen, for my better arme:
Yet were it bette she bid till oft soonis,
Now looke ye that knowen what to donis."

" I say for me best is, as I can know,
That no wight in no wende, but ye twey,
But it were I, for I cannot in a throw
Rebears her case, vnlke that she can sey,
And after this she may him ones prey
To ben good lord in short, and take her leve,
This may not mokell of his ease him reve."

" And eke for she is strange, he woll forbere
His case, which that him dare nat to her,
Eke other thing, that toucheth nat to her,
He woll it tell, I wote it well right now,
That secret is, and for the townes prow!"
And they that knew nothing of his entent,
Without more, to Troilus in they went.

Heleine in all her goodly softe wise
Gan him salve, and womanly to play,
And said, " Iwis, ye mote algate arise:
Now faire brother be all hole I pray,"
And gan her arme right over his shoulder lay,
And him with all her wit to recomfart,
As she best could, she gan him to dispart.

So after this (quod she) " We you beseke
My dere brother Deiphebus and I,
For love of God, and so doeth Pandare eke,
To ben good lord and friend right hertely
Unto Creseide, which that certainly
Received wrong, as wot well here Pandare,
That can her case well bet than I declare."

This Pandarus gan new his tong affile,
And all her case rebears, and that anon,
Whan it was said, anon after in a while,
(Quod Troilus) " As soon as I was gone,
I woll right faime with all my might ben one,
Have God my trouth, her cause to susteine."
" Now good thrift have ye" (quod Helein the queen.)

(Quod Pandarus) " And it your will be,
That she may take her leave ere that she go."
" O eles God forhid it tho" (quod he)
" If that she vouchsaufe for to do so:"
And with that word (quod Troilus) " ye two
Deiphebus, and my suster lefe and dere,
To you have I to speak of a matere,

" To ben avised by your rede the better,"
And found (as hap was) at his bodes bedde
The copie of a treatise, and a letter
That Hector had him sent, to aken rede
If such a man was worthy to ben dede,
Wote I naught who, but in a grisly wise
He prayed hem anon on it avise.

Deiphebus gan this letter for to vnfold
In earnest great, so did Heleine the queene,
And roming outward, fast it goose behold
Downward a steire, into an herbor greene:
This ilke thing they reddeden hem betwene,
And largely the mountenance of an houre
They gonne on it to reden and to poure.

Now let hem rede, and tourne we anon
To Pandarus, that gan full softe prie
That all was well, and out he gan to gone
Into the great chamber, and that in his,
And said, " God save all this companie:
Come nece mine, my lady queene Heleine
Abideth you, and eke my lordes tweine."

" Rise, take with you your nece Antigone,
Or whom you list, or no force hardely,
The hese prease the bet, come forth with me,
And looks that ye thonked humbly
Hem all three, and whan ye may goodly
Your time isee, taketh of hem your leave,
Least we too long his restes him bireave."

All innocent of Pandarus entent
(Quod the Creseide) " Go we vncle dere,"
And arme in arme, inward with him she went,
Avising well her wordes and her chere,
And Pandarus in earnestfull manere,
Said, " All fulke for Godes love I pray,
Stinteth right here, and softly you play."

" Aviseth you what folke ben here within,
And in what plite one is, God him amend,
And inward thus full softe begin,
Neece I conjure, and highly you defend
On his halfe, which that soule we all send,
And in the vertue of coronounes twaine
Slea nat this man, that bath for you this paine."

" Fie on the devill, thinke which on he is,
And in what plite he lieth, come off anon,
Think all such varied tide but lost it nis,
That woll ye both saime, whan ye been one:
Secondly, there yet diuineth none
Upon you two, come off now if ye couse,
While folke is blent, lo, all the time is wouse."

In titiring and pursuite, and delais
The folke divine, at weggung of a stre,
And though ye would han after merry daies,
Than dare ye nat, and why? For she and she
Spake such a word, thus looked be and he:
Least time be lost, I dare not with you deale,
Come off therefore, and bringeth him to heale."

But now to you, ye lovers that ben here,
Was Troilus nat in a cankedort,
That lay, and might the wisping of hem here,
And thought " O lord, right now renneth my sort
Fally to die, or have encouse comforte,"
And was the first time he should her pray
Of love, O mighty God, what shall he may!

EXPLICIT LIBER TERTIUS.

O sunnoll light, of which the beames clere
Adorneth all the third heauen faire,
O sunnes life, O Jounes daughter dere,
Pleasance of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentle hertes aye ready to repaire,
O very cause of heale and of gladnesse,
I heried be thy might and thy goodnesse.

In Heaven and Hell, in yearth, and salt see,
In let thy might, if that I well discern,
As man, and beast, fish, herbe, and grene tree,
They fele in times with vapour etarne,
God loveth, and to love woll naugeth werne,
And in this world no liues creature,
Withouten love is worth, or may endure.

Ye Jounes first, to thilke affectes glade
Through which that thinges liuen all and be,
Commenden, and amorous hem made
On mortall thing, and as you list aye ye
Yeu hem to love, ease, or aduersite:
And in a thousand formes doune hem sent
For love in yearth, and whome you list he hent.

Ye fers Mars appeasen of his ire,
And as you list, ye maken hertes digne:
Algres hem that ye woll set a fire,
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne,
Ye does him curteis be, fresh, and benigne,
And high or low, after a wight entendeth
The ices that he hath, your might it sendeth.

Ye holden regne and house in vnitie,
Ye southerst cause of friendship ben also,
Ye knowen all thilke covered qualitie
Of thinges, which that folke wondren at so,
When they can nat construe how it may go,
She loveth him, or why he loveth here,
As why this fish, and nat that commeth to were.

Ye like a law have set in vniuerse,
And this know I by hem that lovers be,
That who so striveth with you hath the werse:
Now ladie bright, for thy beniguite,
At rouerence of hem that seruen thee,
Whome clerke I am, so teacheth me devise,
Some joy of that is felt in thy servise.

Yes, in my naked herte sentement
Whide, and do me shew of thy sweetnesse
Caliope, thy voice be now present,
For now is need, seest thou nat my distresse,
How I mote tell anon right the gladnesse
Of Troilus, to Venus heryng,
To the which who note hath, God him bring.

EXPLICIT LIBER TERTIUS.

Let all this meane while this Troilus
Recording his lesson in this manere,
"Mafey," thought he, "thus woll I say, and thus,
Thus woll I plaine vnto my lady dere,
That word is good, and this shall be my chere

This will I nat forgotten in no wise,"
God leve him werken as he can devise.

And lord so that his hertes gan to quappe,
Hearing her come, and short for to sike,
And Pandarus that ledde her by the lappe,
Came nere, and gan in at the curtein pike,
And saied, "God doe bote on all that are sike,
See who is here you comen to visite,
Lo, here is she that is your death to wite."

Therewith it seemed as he wept almost,
"A, a" (quod Troilus so ruthfully)
Whether me be wo, O mighty god thou wost,
Who is all there, I see nat truly:"
"Sir" (quod Creseide) "it is Pandare and I,"
"Ye sweet herte alas, I may nat rise
To kneele, and do you honour in some wise."

And dressed him vpwart, and she right tho
Gan both her bondes soft vpon him ley,
"O for the love of God doe ye not so
To me," (quod she) "eye what is this to sey?
Sir comen am I to you for causes tway,
First you to thanke, and of your lordship eke
Continuance I would you beseeke."

This Troilus that heard his ladie pray
Of lordship, him wox neither quick ne dedde,
Ne might o word for shame to it say,
Although men shoulde smiten off his hedde,
But lord so he wox sodainelicke redde:
And sir, his lesson that be wende come
To praien her, is through his wit ironne.

Creseide all this aspided well ynough,
For she was wise, and loved him never the lasse,
All nere be in all apert, or made it tough,
Or was too hold to sing a foole a masse,
But when his shame gan somewhat to passe
His reasons, as I may my rimes hold,
I woll you tell, as teachen bookes old.

In channged voice, right for his very drede,
Which voice eke quoke, and thereto his manere
Goodly abasht, and now his hewe rede,
Now pale, vnto Creseide his ladie dere,
With looke doun cast, and humble yrolden chere,
Lo, the siderfirst word that him astart,
Was twice, "Mercy, mercy, O my sweet herte."

And stint a while, and when he might out bring,
The next word was, "God wote for I have
As faithfully as I have had knowing,
Ben yours all, God so my soule do save,
And shall, till that I wofull might be grave,
And though I dare ne can vnto you plaine,
Iwis I suffer not the lasse paine.

"Thus much as now, ah, womanliche wife,
I may out bring, and if this you displease,
That shall I wrike vpon mine owne life
Right soone I trow, and do your herte an ease,
If with my death your herte may appease:
But seest that ye han heard me somewhat sey,
Now retch I never how soone that I dey."

Therewith his manly sorrow to behold,
It might have made an herte of ston to rew,
And Pandare wept as he to water would,
And poked ever his nece new and new,
And said, "Wo begon been hertes true,
For love of God, make of this thing an end,
Or slea us both at ones, ere that ye wend."

"I, what" (quod she) "by God and by my trouth
I not nat what ye wille that I sey:"
"Eye, what" (quod he) "that ye have on him routh
For Godes love, and doeth him nat to dey:"
"Now than thus" (quod she) "I woll him prey,
To tell me the fine of his entent,
Yet wist I never well what that he ment."

"What that I mean, O my sweet herte dere"
(Quod Troilus) "O goodly fresh and free,
That with the streames of your eyen so clere
Ye shoulde sometime friendly on me see,
And than agree that I may ben hee
Withouten branch of vice, on any wise,
In trouth alway to do you my servise,"

"As to my lady right, and cheefe resort,
With all my witte and all my diligence,
And to have right as you list comfort,
Under your yerde egall to mine offence,
As death, if that I breake your defence,
And that ye dignis me so much honour,
Me to commaunden aught in any hour."

"And I to ben your very humble, true,
Secret, and in my paines patient,
And ever to desiren freshly new
To serven, and to ben aye like diligent,
And with good herte all holly your talent
Receiven well, how sore that me smart,
Lo this meane I, O mine owne sweet herte."

(Quod Pandarus) "Lo here an hard request,
And reasonable, a lady for to werne:
Now nece mine, by Natall Joves feest,
Were I a God, ye shoulde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel this man wol nothng yerne,
But your honour, and secue him almost sterve,
And ben so loth to suffer him you to serve."

With that she gan her eyen on him cast
Full easily, and full debonairely
Avising her, and hied not too fast,
With never a word, but said him softly,
"Mine honour safe, I woll well truly,
And in such forme, as I can now devise,
Receiven him fully to my servise."

"Beseeching him for Godes love, that he
Would in honour of trouth and gentillesse,
As I well meane, eke meaneen well to me:
And mine honour with wit and businesse
Aye kepe, and if I may doon him gladnesse
From henceforth iwis I will not feine:
Now beth all hole, no lenger ye ne plaine."

"But nathelesse, this warne I you" (quod she)
"A kinges conne although ye be iwis,
Ye shall no more have coverainte
Of me in love, than right in that case is,
Ne will forbear, if that ye doen amis
To wrath you, and while that ye me serve,
Cherishen you, right after that ye deserve."

And shortly, dere herte and all my knight,
Both glad, and draweth you to lustinesse,
And I shall truly, withhall my full might
Your bitter tourmen all to sweetnessse,
If I be she that may doe you gladnesse,
For every wo ye shall recover a blisse."
And him in armes tooke, and gan him kisse.

Fell Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen
To Heaven threw, and held his handes hi:
"Immortall God" (quod he) "that maigest not die,
Cupide I meane, of this maigest glorie,
And Venus, thou maigest maken melodie
Withouten bond, me seemeth that in troue,
For this miracle iche here eche bell some."

"But ho, no more now of this matter,
For why? This folke woll comen up anon,
That have the letter redde, lo I hem here,
But I conjure thee Cresiede, and one
And two, thou Troilus when thou maist goe
That at mine house ye hen at my warning,
For I full well shall shapen your coming."

"And eseth there your hertes right yough,
And let see which of you shall beare the bell
To speak of love aright," and therwith he loogh,
"For there have I a leiser for to tell:"
(Quod Troilus) "How long shall I here dwell
Ere this be doon?" (quod he) "When thou maigest
This thing shall be right as you list devise."

With that Heleine and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward right at the staires end,
And lord so tho gan grownen Troilus,
His mother and his suster for to blend:
(Quod Pandarus) "It time is that we wend,
Take nec mine your leave at hem all thre,
And let hem speak, and commeth forth with us."

She took her leave at hem full thirifly,
As she well could, and they her reverence
Unto the full didden hartely,
And wonder well spoken in her absence
Of her, in praising of her excellence,
Her governaunce, her wit, and her manere
Commendedden, that it joy was to here.

Now let her wend unto her owne place,
And tourne we unto Troilus againe,
That gan full lightly of the letter pace,
That Deiphebus had in the garden seime,
And of Heleine and him he wold feine
Delivered ben, and said, that him list
To sleepe, and after tales have a rest.

Heleine him kist, and tooke her leave blive,
Deiphebus eke, and home went every wight,
And Pandarus as fast as he may drive
To Troilus the came, as line right,
And on a paillet, all that glad night
By Troilus he lay, with merry chere
To tale, and well was hem they were here.

Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And all the dores weren fast ishet,
To tell us short, withouten words mo,
This Pandarus, without any let
Up rose, and on his beddes side him set,
And gan to spoken in a sober wise
To Troilus, as I shall you devise.

" Mine eldestest lord, and brother dere,
God wot, and thou, that it sate me so sore,
When I thee saw so languishing to here,
For love of which thy wo worse away more,
That I with all my might, and all my love,
Have ever sitten doen my business
To bring thee to joye out of distresse.

" And have it brought to such pite as thou wost
So that through me thou stondest now in way
To fare well, I say it for no boast,
And wost thou why, but shame it is to say,
For thee have I begon a games play,
Which that I never doen shall eft for other,
All tho he were a thousand fold my brother.

" That is to say, for thee am I becomen,
Betwixen game and earnest such a meane,
As makeo women unto men to comen,
All my I nat, thou wost well what I meane,
For thee have I my nece, of vices cleane,
So fully made thy gentillesse trist,
That all shall ben right as thy selfe list.

" But God, that all woteth, take I to witness,
That never I this for covetise wrought,
But only for to abredge that distresse,
For which welnie thou diddest, as me thought:
But good brother do now as thee ought,
For Godes love, and kepe her out of blame,
See thou art wise, and save away her name.

" For well thou wost, the name as yet of her
Among the people as (who saith) halowed is,
For that man is unborn I dare well swere,
That ever wist that she did amiss,
But wo is me, that I that cause all this,
May thiken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eme, and traitour eke ifere.

" And wer it wist, that I through mine engine
Had is mine nece iput this fantasie
To doen thy lust, and holly to be thine:
Why all the world would upon it crie,
And say, that I the worste trecherie
Did in this case, that ever was begon,
And she fardone, and thou right nought iwon.

" Wherefore ere I woll further gone or past,
Yet eft I thee beseech, and fully say,
That private go with us in this caas,
That is to waine, that thou us never wray,
And be not wroth, though I thee ofte pray,
To holden secree such an high mattere,
For skiffull is, thou wost well, my priere.

" And thinke what wo there hath betid ere this
For making of avauntes, as men rede,
And what mischaunce in this world yet is
Pro day to day, right for that wicked dede,
For which these wise clerkes that ben dede
Have ever this proverbed to us young,
That the first vertue is to kepe the tonge.

" And were it that I wisse as now abredge
Diffusion of speech, I could almost
A thousand old stories thee alledge
Of women lost, through false and foolis best,
Proverbes canst thy selfe know, and wost
Ayenst that vice for to been a blabbe,
All sined men sooth, as often as they gabbe.

" O tongue alas, so often here before
Hast thou made many a lady bright of hew,
Said " Welaway the day that I was borne,"
And many a maidens sorrow for to new,
And for the more part all is untrew
That men of yelpo, and it were brought to prove,
Of kind, none avauntour is to leve.

" Avauntour and a lier, all is one,
As thus: I pose a woman graunt me
Her love, and saith that other woll she none,
And I am swore to holden it secree,
And after I tell it two or three,
I wis I am a vauntour at the lest,
And lie eke, for I breaks my bebest.

" Now looks than if they be not to blame,
Such maner folk, what shall I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunt of women, and by name,
That yet behight hem never this no that,
Ne know hem no more than mine old hat,
No wonder is, so God me sende hale,
Though women dreden with us men to dele.

" I say not this for no mistrust of you,
Ne for no wise men, but for foolcs wice,
And for the harme that in the world is now,
As well for follie oft, as for mallice,
For well wote I, in wiss folke that vice
No woman dredeth, if she be well aviad,
For wise been by foolcs harme chastised.

" But now to purpose, leve brother dere,
Have all this thing that I have saied in mind,
And keep thee close, and be now of good chere
For all thy deies thou shalt me true fere,
I shall thy processe set in such a kind,
And God tofore, that it shall thee suffice,
For it shall be right as thou wolt devise.

" For well I wote, thou meenest well pards,
Therefore I dare this fully undertake,
Thou wost eke what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set the charters to make,
Have now good night, I may no longer wake,
And bid for me, sith thou art now in blisse,
That God me sende death, or some lisse."

Who might tellen halfe the joy or feate
Which that the soule of Troilus the felt,
Hearing theffect of Pandarus bebeste:
His old wo, that made his herte to swell,
Gan tho for joy waten, and to melt,
And all the richesse of his sighes sore
At ones fel, he felt of hem no more.

But right so as these holtes and these hayis
That han in winter dead ben and dey,
Roveston hem in grene, when that May is,
When every lusty beste listeth to play,
Right in that selfe wise, sooth for to sey,
Woxe suddainly his herte full of joy,
That gladder was there never man in Troy.

And gan his looks on Pandarus up cast
Full soberly, and friendly no to see,
And saied, " Friend, in April the lest,
As well thou wost, if it remember thee,
How nigh the death for wo thou founde me,
And how thou diddest all thy business
To know of me the cause of my distresse.

But O Fortune, executrice of wiesdes,
O influens of these hevens his,
Soth is, that vnder God ye ben our hierdes,
Though to vs beestes ben the causes wrie:
This mene I now, for she gan honward hie;
But execute was all beside hir love,
At the goddes wil, for which she must bleve.

The beste Moos with her hornes all pale,
Saturnus and Jove, in Cancro ioyned were,
That such a raine from Heven gan availle,
That every meeser woman that was there,
Had of that smoky raine a very feere:
At which Pandarus tho laugh, and said theenne,
"Now were it time a lady to go heene."

"Bot good noon, if I might ever please
You any thing, than pray I you," (quod he)
"To don mine beris as now so great an ease,
As for to dwell here al this night with me,
For why? this is your owne house parde:
For by my trouth, I say it nat in game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame."

Creseide, which that could as much good
As halfe a world, toke bede of his praire,
And sent it rained, and al was in a fode,
She thought, "As good chepe may I dwel here
And graunt it gladly with a frendes chere,
And have a thank, as grutch and than abide,
For home to go it may nat well betide."

"I wol," (quod she) "mine vncle liefe and dere,
Sens that you list, it skill is to be so,
I am right glad with you to dwellen here,
I said but agame that I would go."
"Iwis graunt mercy noon," (quod he) "tho:
Were it agame or no, soth is to tell,
Now am I glad, sens that you list to dwel."

Thus al is wel, but tho began aright
The newe ioy, and al the fest againe,
But Pandarus, if goodly had he might,
He would have hied her to bedde full faine,
And said, "O Lord this is an huge raine,
This were a wether for to slepen in,
And that I rede vs soon to begin."

"And noon, wote ye where I woll you lay,
For that we shul not ligger ferre a sonder,
And for ye neither shulden, dare I say,
Here noise of raine, ne yet of thonder?
By God right in my closet yonder,
And I wol in that viter house alone,
Ben wardain of your women everichone."

"And in this middle chambre that ye se,
Shal your women slepen, wel and soft,
And there I said, shal your selven be:
And if ye ligger wel to night, come oft,
And careth not what wether is aloft,
The wise anon, and whan so you lest,
Go we to slepe, I trowe it be the best."

There nis no more, but hereafter some
They vnde, dronke, and travers draw anon,
Gan every night that hath nought to dome
More in the place, out of the chambre gone,
And ever more so stereliche it rone,
And blew therwith an wonderliche loude,
That wel nigh no man heren other coude."

Tho Pandarus her eme, right as him eight
With women, such as were her most about,
Ful glad unto her beddes side her brought,
And toke his leave, and gan ful love lout,
And said, "Here at this closet dore without,
Right overtwart, your women ligger all,
That whom ye list of hem, ye may some call."

Lo whan that she was in the closet hid,
And al her women forth by ordinnance,
A bedde weren, there as I have said,
There nas no more to skippen nor to prance,
But bedde gan to bedde with mischaunce,
If any wight stering were any where,
And let hem slepen, that abedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel couth echie adde,
The old dance, and every point therein,
Whan that he saw that all thing was wele,
He thought he wold vpon his werke begin:
And gan the stews dore al soft unpin,
As still as a stone, without lenger let,
By Troilus adoun right he him set.

And shortly to the point right for to gone,
Of al this werke he told him worde and end,
And said, "Make thee redy right anon,
For thou shalt into Heven blisse wend."
"Now blisfull Venus, thou me grace send,"
(Quod Troilus) "for never yet no dede,
Had I er now, ne halfendeke the drede."

(Quod Pandarus) "Ne drede thee never a dede,
For it shal be right as thou wolt desire,
So thrie I, this night shall I make it wele,
Or casten all the gruel in the fire."
"Yet blisful Venus this night thou me inspire,"
(Quod Troilus) "as wis as I the serve,
And ever bet and bet shall till I sterve."

"And if I had, O Venus ful of mirth,
Aspects hadde of Mars, or of Saturne,
Or thou combuste, or let were in my birth,
Thy father pray, al thilke harme disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayen may turne:
For love of him thou lovedst in the shawe,
I mean Adon, that with the bove was slawe."

"Jove eke, for the love of faire Europe,
The which in forme of a bulle away thou fet:
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy bloody cope
For love of Cipria, thou me naught ne let:
O Phebus, think when Daphus her siven shet
Under the bark, and laurx wore for drede,
Yet for her love, O help now at this nede."

"Mercurie, for the love of her eke,
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wroth,
Now helpe, and eke Diane I the besette,
That this viage be nat to the loth:
O fatal sustren, which or any cloth
Me shapen was, my destine me spoone,
So helpeh to this werke that is begonne."

(Quod Pandarus) "Thou wretched monces beris
Art thou agast so that she will the bite?
Why do on this forred cloke on thy sherte,
And folow me, for I wol have the wite:
But bide, and let me gon before alite,"
And with that he gan vndone a trappe,
And Troilus he brought in by the lappe."

The steepe winds so loude gan for to rout
That no wight other noise might here,
And they that laien at the doore without,
Ful sickerly they slepten al i here:
And Pandarus, with ful sobre chere,
Goth to the doore anon withouten lette,
There as they lay, and softly it shette.

And as he came ayen pryvely
His eere awoke, and asketh, "Who gooth there?"
"My owne dere nece," (quod he) "it am I,
Ne wondreth not, no have of it no fere."
And sere he came, and said her in her eere:
"No words for love of God I you besech,
Let no wight arise, and here of our spech."

"What, which way be ye comen? benedicite,"
(Quod she) "and how vntwiste of dem all?"
"Here at this secrete trap doore," (quod he)
(Quod the Creseide) "Let me some wight call:"
"Egh, God forbid that it should so fall,"
(Quod Pandarus) "that ye such foly wrought,
"They might demen thing they never er thought."

"It is nat good a sleeping bound to wake,
Ye yve a wight a cause for to devine,
Your women slepen al, I vndertake,
So that for hem the house men might misse,
And slepen wolleu till the Sume shine,
And when my tafe is brooght to an end,
Durst right as I came, so wol I wende.

"Now nece mine, ye shal well vnderstonde,"
Quod he) "so as ye women demen all,
That for to hold in love a man in hoodes,
And him her lefe and dere berte to call,
And maken him an howne above to call:
I seee, as love an other in this mene while,
She doth her selfe a shame, and him a gyle.

"Now whereby that I tel you al this,
Ye wote your selfe, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthiest wight
Oue of the world, and theerto trooth iplight,
That but it were on him alone, ye nold
Ere never falsen, while ye liven shold.

"Now stonde it thus, that with I fro you went,
This Troilus, right platly for to seine,
Is through a gutter by a pryvy went,
Into my chambre come in al this reine:
Durst of every maner wight certaine,
Sawe of my selfe, as wisely have I joy,
And by the faith I owe to Priam of Troy.

"And he is come in such paine and distresse,
That but if he be al fully wood by this,
He sodainly mote fal into woodnesse,
But if God helpe: and cause why is this?
He with him tolde is of a frende of his,
How that ye should loven one, that bight Horast,
Ye sawe of which this night shal be his last."

Creseide, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodainly about her berte cold,
And with a sighe she sorrowfully answered,
"Alas, I wende who so ever tales told,
My dere berte wouldeu me nat have held
In lightly faulse: alas conceites wrong,
What harm they done, for now live I to long."

"Horaste alas, and falsen Troilus,
I know him not, God helpe me so," (quod she)
"Alas, what wicked spirite told him thus,
Now certes, come, to morrow and I-him me,
I shal therof as full excusen me,
As ever did woman, if him like,"
And with that word she gan ful sore sike.

"O God," (quod she) "so worldly solinesse
Which clerkes callen false felicie,
Ynmodied is with many bitternesse,
Ful anguishous, than is, God wote," (quod she)
"Condicion of veine prosperite,
For either joyes comen nat ifere,
Or eles no wight hath been alway here.

"O brotli wole of mannes joy unstable,
With what wight so thou be, or thou who play,
Either he wote, that thou joy art mutable,
Or wote it nat, it mote ben one of tway:
Now if he wot it nat, how may he say,
That he hath very joy and solinesse,
That is of ignorance aie in derkenesse?

"Now if he wote that joy is transitory,
As every joy of worldly thing mote seee,
Than every time he that hath in memory,
The drede of lesing, maketh him that he
May in no parfitte sikernessee be:
And if to lese his joy, be set a mite,
Than semeth it, that joy is worth ful lite.

"Wherfore I wol devine in this matere,
That truly for sight I can espie,
There is no very wole in this world here,
But O thou wicked serpent Jalousie,
Thou misbeloved, and envious folie,
Why hast thou Troilus made to me vntrist,
That never yett agilte, that I wist?"

(Quod Pandarus) "Thus fallen is this case."
"Why vntwiste mine," (quod she) "who told him this,
And why doth my dere berte thus, alas?"
"Ye wote, ye nece mine," (quod he) "what it is,
I hope al shal we wel, that is amis,
For ye may quenche al this, if that you leat,
And doeth right so, I hold it for the best."

"So shal I do to morrow, iwis," (quod she)
"And God toforne, so that it shall suffice:"
"To morrow alas, that were faire," (quod he)
"Nay nay, it may nat stonden in this wise:
For nece mine, this written clerkes wise,
That peill is with dretching in drawe,
Nay soche abodes ben nat worth an bewe.

"Nece, all thing hath time I dare avow,
For whan a chambre a fire is or an hall,
Well more nede is, it sodainly rescow,
Than to disputen and aske amonges all,
How the candle in the strawe is fall:
Ah benedicite, for al among that fare,
The harme is done, and farwel feldefare.

"And nece mine, no take it nat a grete,
If that ye suffre him at night in this wo,
God helpe me so, ye had him never lete,
That dare I sein, now there is but we two,
But wel I wote that ye wol nat so do,
Ye ben to wise to done an great folie,
To put his life al night in jeopardie."

"Had I him never lefe? By God I wene,
Ye had never thing so lefe," (quod she.) [sece,
"Now by my thirte," (quod he) "that shall be
For sith ye make this ensample of me,
If iche al night would him in sorow se,
For al the tresour in the toune of Troie,
I bidde God, I never mote have joie,

"Now loks than, if ye that ben his love,
Should put his life al night in jeopardie,
For thing of nought: now by that God above
Nat oonly this delay cometh of folie,
But of malice, if that I should nat lie:
What, plaitly and ye stifle him in distresse,
Ye neither bounte done ne gentillnes."

(Quod the Cresside) "Wol ye done o thing,
And ye therewith shal stinte al his discece,
Have here and here to him this blew ring,
For there is nothing might him better please,
Save I my selfe, ne more his herte apese,
And say, my dere herte, that his sorow,
Is causelesse, that shal be seme to sorow."

"A ring," (quod he) "ye hase wodes shaken,
Ye nece mine, that ring must have a stone,
That might deed men alive all makeen,
And such a ring trowe I that yee have none:
Discrecion out of your heed is gone,
That fele I now," (quod he) "and that is routh:
O time ilost, wel maist thou curseen slouth."

"Wote ye not wel that noble and his corage
Ne soroweth nat, ne stinteth eke for lide,
But if a foole were in a jealous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorow a mite,
But feste him with a fewe wordes all white,
Another day, when that I might him find;
But this thing stant al in another kind."

"This is so gentle and so tender of herte,
That with his death he wol his sorowes wroke
For trust it well, how sore that him smart,
He wol to you no jealous wordes speke,
And forthy nece, or that his herte breke,
So speke your selfe to him of this manere,
For with a wordes ye may his herte stere."

"Now have I told what peril he is in,
And is coming rawist to every wight,
Ne parde harme may there be none, ne sin,
I wol my selfe be with you all this night,
Ye know eke how it is your owne knight,
And that by right, ye must vpon him triste,
And I al prest to fetch him when you liste."

This accident so pitous was to here,
And eke so like a sothe, at prime face,
And Troilus her knight, to her so dore,
His priue comming, and the siker place,
That though she did him as than a grace,
Considred all thinges as they now stood,
No wonder is, wene he did al for good.

Cresside answerde, "As wisely Gnd at rest
My soule bring, as me is for him wo,
And, eme, iwis, faine would I don the best,
If that I grace had for to do so,
But whether that ye dwell, or for him go,
I am, till God me better minde send,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes end."

(Quod Pandarus) "Ye, sece, wol ye here,
Dulcarnon is called fleshing of wretches,
It semeth herd, for wretches wol nought here,
For sere slouth, or other wilfull tetches,
This is said by hem that be not worth two fetches,
But ye ben wise, and that ye has on heed,
Nis neither harde, ne skilfull to withstand."

"Than, eme," (quod she) "doeth here as you list,
But ere he come, I wol vp first arise,
And for the love of God, wene all my trist
Is on you two, and ye beth bothe wise,
So werkeþ now, in so discrete a wise,
That I honour may have and be plesance,
For I am here, al in your governaunce."

"That is well said," (quod he) "my nece dere,
There good thirte on that wise gentill here,
But liggeth still, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth nat no farther for him start,
And eche of you easeþ other sorowes smart,
For love of God, and Venus I the herie,
For some hope I, that we shall ben merie."

This Troilus full sone on knees him sette,
Ful sobrelly, right by her beddes heed,
And in his beste wise his lady grette:
But lord so she wote sodainliche read,
Ne though men should smiten of her heed,
She could not o word a right out bring,
So sodainly for his sodaine coming.

But Pandarus, that so wel coulde fele
In every thing, to play anon began,
And said, "Nece se how this lord gan knele:
How for your trowth, as this gentill man:"
And with that wordes, he for a quishen ran,
And said, "Kneleþ now while that thou lest.
There God, your hertes bring sone at rest."

Can I naught saie, for she bad him nat rise,
If sorow it put out of remembrance,
Or eles that she toke it in the wise
Of ductie, as for his observance,
But well find I, she did him this plesance,
That she him kist, although she siked sore,
And bad him sit adoun withouten more.

(Quod Pandarus) "Now will ye well begin,
Now doth him sitte downe, good nece dere
Upon your beddes side, al there within,
That ech of you the bet may other here,"
And with that wordes he drew him to the here,
And toke a light, and founde his countenaunce,
As far to loken vpon an old romaunce.

Cresside that was Troilus lady right,
And clere stode in a ground of sikernesse,
All thought she her servaunt and her knight
Ne should none vntrowth in her gese:
That nathelesse, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of such folie,
Thus to him spake she of his jealousie.

"Lo, herte mine, as would the excellesse
Of love, ayenst the which that no man may,
Ne ought eke goodly maken resistance,
And eke because I felte wel and say,
Your great trowth, and service every day:
And that your herte al mine was, soth to saie,
This drewe me for to rewe vpon your paine."

" And your goodness have I founden alway yet,
Of which, my dere herte, and al my knight,
I thank it you, as farr as I have wit,
Alone I nat as much as it were right,
And I enforth my coming and my might
Have, and sic shal, how sore that ye smart,
Be to you trow and hole with all mine herte.

" And dredlesse that shal be founden at preue,
But, herte mine, what al this is to sain
Shall well be told, so that ye nought you greue
Though I to you right on your self complain,
For there with meane I finally the pain,
That halte your herte and mine in heatinesse,
Fully to laime, and every wrong redresse.

" My good mine, not I, for why ne how
That jealousie alas, that wicked wivere,
This causelesse is croppen into you,
The harme of which I would faine delivere :
Alas, that he all hole or of him some slivere
Should have his refute in so digne a place,
That love, him some out of your herte rase.

" Bet O thou, O sactour of nature,
Is this an honour to thy dignite,
That folke vagily soffren here inore,
And who that guilty is, al quite goeth he ?
O were it lefall for to plaine of the,
That rederserved sufferest jealousie,
O, that I would vpon thee plaine and crie.

" He al my wo is this, that folke now ven
To some right thus: ye jealousie is love,
And would a bushel of vesum al excusen,
For that a grane of love is on it above,
But that wote high Jove that sit above,
If it be liker love, hate, or grame,
And after that it ought beere his name.

" But certaine is, some maner jealousie
Is excusable, more than some iwis,
As when cause is, and some such fantastic
With pite so well expressed is,
That it smeth dooth or seith amain,
But goodly drinketh vp al his distresse,
And that excuse I for the gentinesse.

" And some so full of fury is, and despite,
That it earnesteth his repression,
But, herte mine, ye be not in that pite,
That thouns I God, for which your passion,
I will nat call it but illusion
Of abundance of love, and besie cure,
That doth your herte this disease endure.

" Of whiche I am sory, but not wrothe,
But for my devoir and your hertes rest,
When so you list, by ordal or by othe,
By sorte, or in what wise so you lest,
For love of God, let prece it for the best,
And if that I be guilty, do me die,
Alas, what might I more done or scie."

With that a few bright taces new,
Out of her eien fel, and thus she said,
" Now God thou wost, in thought ne dede undrew
To Troilus was never yet Crescid,"
With that her heed down in the bed she leid,
And with the shote it wrigh, and sighed sore,
And held her peace, nat a word spake she more.

But now help God, to quench al this sorow,
So hope I that he shall, for he best may,
For I have some of a full misty morow,
Folowen ful off a mery somers day,
And after winter foloweth grene May,
Men sepe all day, and reden eke in stories,
That after sharpe shoures ben victories."

This Troilus, when he her wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him list nat to slepe,
For it thought him no strokes of a yerde
To here or see Crescide his lady wepe,
But well he felt about his herte crepe,
For every teare which that Crescide astert,
The crampe of death, to straine him by the herte,

And in his minde he gan the time accorde
That he came there, and that he was borne,
For now is wicke tourned into worse,
And all that labour he hath doen boforn,
He wende it lost, he thought he nas but torne,
" O Pandarus," thought he, " alas thy wile,
Serveth of nought, so welaway the while."

And therwithall he hing adoun his hedde,
And fell on knees, and sorrowfully he sight,
What might be mine ? he felt he nas but dedde,
For wroth was she that should his sorowes light :
But nathelesse, when that he spoken might,
Than said he thus, " God wote that of this game,
When all is wist, than am I not to blame."

Therwith the sorow of his herte abet,
That from his iyen fell there nat a teare,
And every spirite his vigour in knet,
So they astonied or oppressed were :
The feling of sorow, or of his fere,
Or aught els, feidles were out of treme,
A doune he fell all sodainly in swoupe.

This was no little sorow for to se,
But all was hault, and Pandare up as fast,
" O nece, peace, or we be lost" (quod he.)
Bethes nat agast, but certuin at last,
For this or that, he into hedde him cast,
And said, " O thefe, is this a mannes herte ?"
And off he rurt all to his bare sherte.

And said " Nece, but and ye helpe us now,
Alas your owne Troilus is forlorne.
" Iwis so woud I, and I wist how,
Foll fain" (quod she) " alas that I was borne."
" Ye, nece, wold ye pullen out the thorne
That sticketh in his herte ?" (quod Pandare)
" Sey all foryere, and stint is all this fare."

" Ye, that to me" (quod she) " full lever were
Than all the good the Sonne about goeth,"
And therwithall she swore him in his care,
" Iwis my dere herte I am not wrothe,
Have here my trowth, and many other othe,
Now speake to me, for it am I Crescide :"
But all for naught, yet might he nat abside.

Therwith his poulce, and pacms of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples twain,
And to deliver him fro bitter bondes,
She oft him kist, and shortly for to saun,
Him to rewaken she did all her pain,
And at the last he gan his breath to drawe,
And of his swough-wound after that adawe.

And gan bet mynde, and reason to him take,
But wonder sore he was abashed iwis,
And with a sigh when he gan bet awake
He said, "O mercy God, what thing is this?"
"Why do ye with yourselven thus amis?"
(Quod the Cresside) "is this a manes game,
What Troilus, woli ye do this for shame?"

And therwithal her arm over him she laied,
And all foryave, and oftime him kest.
He thoked her, and to her spake and said
As fill to purpose, for his hertes rest,
And she to that answerde him as her lest,
And with her goodly wordes him disport
She gan and oft his sorowes to comfort.

(Quod Pandarus) "For ought I can espies,
This light see I ne sorren here of naught,
Light is nat good for sike folken eyes,
But for the love of God, sene ye been brought
In this good plite, let now none hevry thought
Been hanged in the hertes of you twey,
And bare the candle to the chimney."

Some after this, though it no node were,
When she soche othes as her list devise
Had of hem take, her thought tho no fere,
Ne cause eke none, to bid him thens rise:
Yet less thing than othes may suffice,
In many a case, for every wight I gesse,
That loyeth well, meaneth nat gentilesse.

But in effect she wold wete anon,
Of what man, and eke where, and also why
He jalous was, sene there was cause non:
And eke the signe that he toke it by,
She bade him that to tell her busily,
Or eke certain she bare him on honde,
That this was doen of malice her to fonde.

Withouten more, shortly for to saie
He must obey unto his ladies best,
And for the lasse harme he must somewhat faine,
He said her, when she was at soche a feint,
She might on him have loked at the best,
Not I nat what, all dere inough a rishe,
As be that nedes must a cause out fish.

And she answerde, "Swete, all were it so
What harme was that, sene I non evill meane?
For by that God that bought us bothe two,
In all maner thing is mine entent cleane:
Soch arguments ne be nat worth a beane:
Woli ye the childis jalous counterfete,
Now were it worthy that ye were thote."

The Troilus gan sorrowfully to sike
Lest she be wroth, him thought his herte deide,
And said, "Alas upon my sorowes sike,
Have mercy, O swete herte mine Cresside:
Aod if that in the wordes that I seide,
Be any wrong, I woli no more trespassce,
Doeth what you list, I am all in your grace."

And she answerde, "Of gilt misericorde,
That is to saine, that I foryewe all this,
And evermore on this night you recorde,
And bethe woli wure ye do no more amis:"
"Nay, dere herte mine, no more"(quod he) "iwis."
"And now"(quod she) "that I have you do smit,
Foryeve it to me, mine owne swete herte."

This Troilus with blisse of that surprisid,
Put all in Goddes hand, as he that meut
Nothing but well, and sodainly avind
He her in his armes fast to him best:
And Pandarus, with a full good entent,
Laied him to slepe, and said, "If ye be wise,
Sweveneth not now, lest more folke arise."

What might or may the asly larke say,
When that the sperhauke hath him in his fet,
I can no more, but of these ilke tway,
(To whom this tale sugre be or sote)
Though I tary a yeere, sometime I mote,
After mise aucthour tellen hir gladnesse,
As well as I have tolde hir hevinesse.

Cresside, which that felt her thus itake,
(As wrien clerkes in hir bokes old)
Right as an aspen lefe she gan to quake,
When she him felt her in his armes fold:
But Troilus all hole of cares cold,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes seven,
Through soodry paine to bring folk to Haven.

This Troilus in armes gan her straine,
And said "Swete, as ever mote I gone,
Now be ye caught, here is but we twaine,
Now yeldeth you, for other boote is none:"
To that Cresside answerde thus anon,
"Ne had I er now, my swete herte dere,
Been yoldis iwis, I were now not here."

O soth is said, that healed for to be
As of a fever, or other great sickness,
Men must drinken, as we often se,
Full bitter drinke: and for to have gladnesse
Men drinken of pain, and great distress:
I mene it here by, as for this aventure,
That through a pain bath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth far more swete,
That bitterness assaid was before,
For out of wo in himse now they fete,
Non soch they felten sene they were borne,
Now is this bet, than both two be lorne:
For love of God, take every woman hede,
To werken thus, if it come to the node.

Cresside all quite from every drede and tere,
As she that just cause had him to trist,
Made him soche fowt, it joy was to seme,
When she his trouthe and clene entent wist:
And as about a tree with many a twist
Bitrent and writhe the swete wodkonde,
Can eche of hem in armes other wende.

And as the nowe abashed nightingale,
That stinteth first, when she begunneth sing,
When that she heareth any herdes tale,
Or in the hedges any wight stouring,
And after sike doeth her voice out ring:
Right so Cresside, when that her drede stent,
Opened her herte, and told him her entent.

And right as he that seeth his death inhapen,
And dien mote, in aught that he may gese,
And sodainly rescuous doeth hem escapen,
And from his death is brought in sikernes:
For all this world, in soche present gladnesse,
Was Troilus, and both his lady swete:
With worse hap God let us never mete,

Her armes smal, her straight backe and soft,
Her sides long, fleshy, smooth, and white,
He gan to stroke, and good thrift had full oft;
For nowise throte, her breastes round and lito:
Thus in this Heauen he gan him to delite,
And therwithall a thousand times her kist;
That what to doo for joy unmeth he wist.

Then said he thus, "O Love, O Charite,
Thy mother eke, Citheria the swete,
That after thy selfe, next herried be she:
Down I meane, the well willy planete:
And next that, Inuus I thee grete,
For never man was to you goddes hold,
As I, which ye have brought fro cares cold.

"Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thingen,
Who so woll grace, and list thee not honouren,
In his desire woll fly withouten winges,
For noldst thou of bouens bein sooveren:
That seruen best, and most away labouren;
Yet were all lost, that dare I well sain certen,
But if thy grace passed our deserten.

"And for thou me, that lest thanke could deserue
Of them that nombred been unto thy grace,
Best holpen, there I likely was to starue,
And me bestowed in so high a place,
That thiike boundes may no blisse surpasse,
I can no more, but laude and reuerence
Be to thy bounte and thine excellence."

And therwithall Creseide anon he kist;
Of whiche certain she felt no disease,
And thus said he, "Now would God I wist,
Mine herte swete, how I you best might please:
What man?" (quod he) "was ever thus at ease,
As I? On which the fairest, and the best
That ever I see, deinethe her to rest.

"Here may men see that mercy passeth right,
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight,
But herte mine, of your benignite
So thinke, that though I unworthy be,
Yet wote I nede amenden in some wise,
Right through the vertue of your his service.

"And for the love of God, my lady dere,
Sith he hath wrought me for I shal you serue,
As thus I meane: woll ye be my fere,
To do me live, if that you list, or sterve:
So teacheth me, how that I may deserve,
Your think, so that I through mine ignorance,
Ne doe nothing that you be displeasance.

"For certes, freite and womanliche wife,
This dare I say, that trouth and diligence,
That shall ye finden in me all my life,
Be I woll not certain broken your defraunce,
And if I doe, present or in absence,
For love of God, let aken me with the dede,
If that it like unto your womanbede."

"Iwis" (quod she) "mise owne hertes lust,
My ground of aue, and al mine herte dere,
Grant mercy, for on that is all my trust:
But let us fall away fro this matere,
For it sufficeth, this that said is here,
And at a wunde, without repentaunce,
Welcome my knight, my peace, my suffisaunce."

Of hir delite or iotes, one of the least
Were impossible to my wit to say,
But judgeth ye that have been at the feast
Of soche gladnesse, if that him list play:
I can no more but thus, these like tway,
That night betwixen drede and sikernesse,
Felten in love the greate worthinesse.

O blisfull night, of hem so long sought,
How blithe unto hem bothe two thou were?
Why ne had I soch feast with my soule bought?
Ye, or but the least joy that was there?
Away thou foule danger and thou fere,
And let him in this Heauen blisse dwell,
That is so high, that all ne can I tell:

But soth is, though I cannot tellen all,
As can mine sauthour of his excellence,
Yet have I said, and God toforen shall,
In every thing all holly his sentence:
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any worde in echod for the best,
Doeth therwithall right as your serven best.

For my wordes here, and every part,
I speake hem all under correction
Of you that felling have in loves art,
And put it all in your discrecion,
To increase or make diminicion
Of my language, and that I you beseech,
But now to purpose of my rather speech,

These like two that ben in armes left,
So lothe to hem a soulder gun it were,
That eche from other wonden been drafft:
Or eles lo, this was her moste fere,
That all this thing but nice dreames were,
For which full oft eche of hem saied, "O swete,
Clepe I you thus, or els doe I it mete."

And lord so he gan goodly out her se,
That never his loke ne bled from her face,
And saied, "O my dere herte, may it be
That it be soth, that ye beene in this place?"
"Ye herte mine, God thanke I of his grace."
(Quod the Creseide) and therwithall braun kist,
That where her spirite was, for joy she rist.

This Troilus full often her iyen two
Gan for to kisse, and saied: "O iyen clere,
It wene ye that wrought me soche wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere:
Tho there be mercy written in your chere,
God wote the text full harde is for to ferd,
How could ye withouten bonde me bind?"

Therwith he gan her fast in armes take,
And well an hundred times gan he wike,
Not such sorrowfull sighes as men make
For wo, or eles when that folke be sike:
But eise sighes, soche as been to like,
That shewed his affection within,
Of soche maner sighes could he not bin.

Some after this, they spake of sondry thinges
As fill to purpose of this aventure,
And playng enterechaungeden hir ringes,
Of which I can not tellen no scripture,
But well I wot, a broche of gold and azure,
In which a rubbie net was like an herte,
Creseide him gave, and stakke it on his sherte.

" For of fortunes sharpe adversite,
The worst kind of infortune is this,
A man that hath been in prosperite,
And it remember, when it passed is.
Thou art wise enough, forthy, doe not amis,
Be not to rakell, though thou sit warme,
For if thou be, certain it wolle thee harme.

" Thou art at ease, and hold thee well therein,
For al so sure as redde is every fire,
As great a crafte is to kepe well as win,
Bridle alway well thy speach and thy desire,
For worldly joy holdeth not by a wire,
That preveth well, it brest alday so ofte,
Forthy neede is to werken with it softe."

(Good Troilus) " I hope, and God to forme,
My dere frende, that I shall so me bere,
That in my gift there shall nothing been forme,
Ne I will not rakle, as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matter often tere,
For wistest thou mine herte wel Pandare,
God wote of this thou wouldest lite case."

The gan he tell him of his glad night,
And whereof first his herte dradde, and how,
And saied " Frende, as I am true knight,
And by that faith I owe to God and you,
I had it never halfe so hote as now,
And sic the more that desire me biteth
To love her best, the more it me deliteth.

" I not my seife not wisely, what it is,
But now I feele a new qualite,
Ye all another than I did er this:"
Pandare answerd and saied thus, " that he
That ones may in Heaven blisse be,
He feeleth other waies dare I lay,
Than thilke time he first heard of it say."

This is a worde for all, that Troilus
Was never ful to speke of this matere,
And for to praisen unto Pandarus
The souste of his right lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke, and maken chere,
This tale was sic span newe to begin,
Til that the tale departed hem a twinne.

Soone after this, for that fortune it would,
Icomen was the blisfull time swete,
That Troilus was warned, that he should,
There he was erst, Creseide his lady mete:
For which he felt his herte in joy sete,
And faithfully gan all the goodes bere,
And let see now, if that he can be mery,

And holden was the forme, and al the gise
Of her comyng, and of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devise,
But plainly to theffect right for to go:
In joy and surete Pandarus hem two
Abedde brooght, when hem both leat,
And thus they ben in quiet and in rest.

Naught nedeth it to you sith they ben met
To aske at me, if that they blithe were,
For if it erst was well, tho was it bet
A thousand folde, this nedeth not enquire:
A go was every sorow and every fere,
And both iwis they had, and so they wend,
As much joy as herte may comprehend.

This nis no litel thing of for to sey,
This passeth every wit for to devise,
For eche of hem gan others lust obey,
Felicite, which that these clerkes wise
Commenden so, ne may no here suffice,
This joy ne may not iwritten be with ink,
This passeth al that herte may betinke.

But cruel day, so welaway the stound,
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knew,
For which hem thought felen dethe wood,
So wo was hem, that chaungen gan hir hew
And day they gounen to dispice al now,
Calling it traitour, envious and worse,
And bitterly the daies light they coree.

(Quod Troilus) " Alas, now am I ware
That Pirous, and the swifte stedes thre,
Which that drawn forth the Summe chare,
Han gon some by pathe in despite of me,
And maketh it so sore day to be,
And for the Summe him hasten thus to rise,
Ne shall I save don him sacrifice.

But nedes day departe hem must soone,
And when hir spech done was, and hir chere,
They twin anon, as they were wont to done,
And setten time of meting eft ihere:
And many a night they wrought in this manere:
And thus fortune a time ladde in ioie
Creseide, and eke this kinges son of Troie.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singings,
This Troilus gan all his life to lede,
He spendeth, justeth, and maketh feestings,
He geveth frely oft, and chaungeth wede,
He helde about him alway out of drede
A world of folke, as come him well of kind,
The freshest and the best he coulde find.

That such a voice was of him, and a staves,
Throughout the world, of honour and largesse,
That it vp ronge unto the yate of Heven,
And as in love he was in such gladnesse,
That in his herte he demed, as I gesse,
That there nis lover in this world at ease,
So wel as he, and thus gan love him please.

The goodlihede or beaute, which the kind,
In any other lady had isette,
Can not the mountenaunce of a goat vntind,
About his herte, of al Creseides notte:
He was so narowe smashed, and ikrette,
That is vndon in any maner side,
That nil nat ben, for ought that may betide.

And by the bond full ofte he would take
This Pandarus, and into gardin lede,
And such a feest, and such a processe make
Him of Creseide, and of her womanhede,
And of her beaute, that withouten drede,
It was an Heven his wordes for to here,
And than he woulde sing in this manere:

" Love, that of erth and sea hath governaunce,
Love, that his beestes hath in Heven bie,
Love, that with an holsume ailunce
Haite people ioyned, as him list hem gie,
Love, that knitteth law and companie,
And couples doth in vertue for to dwell,
Biede this accord, that I have told and tell.

" That, that the world with faith, which that is
 Ivereth so his stannes according, [stable,
 That elements that bethe discordable,
 Holden a bonde, perpetually during,
 That Phoebus mote his rosy day forth bring,
 And that the Mone hath lordship over the nights,
 All this doeth Love, aie heried be his mightis.

" That, that the sea, that greedy is to growen,
 Constraineth to a certaine ende so
 His floodes, that so fiercely they ne growen
 To drenchen earth and all for evermo,
 And if that Love aught let his bridle go,
 All that now loveth asunder should lepe,
 And lost were all, that Love halt now to hepe.

" So would to God, that authour is of kind,
 That with his hood, Love of his vertue list
 To searchen hertes all, and fast bind,
 That from his bond no wight the wey out wist,
 And hertes cold, hem would I that hem twist,
 To maken hem love, and that list hem aie rew
 On hertes sore, and keep hem that hem trew."

In all needes for the townes werre
 He was, and aye the first in armes dight,
 And certainly, but if that bookes erre,
 Save Hector, most idradde of any wight,
 And this excreasce of hardinesse and might
 Come him of love, his ladies thanke to win,
 That altered his spirit so within.

In time of trace on hauking would he ride,
 Or els hunt bore, beare, or fious,
 The small beastes let he gon beside,
 And when that he come riding into the toun,
 Fell off his lady from her window down,
 As fresh as faucon, comen out of mure,
 Fell redely was him goodly to salue.

And most of love and vertue was his speech,
 And in dispite had all wretchednesse,
 And doubtlesse no need was him beseech
 To honouren hem that had worthinesse,
 And easen hem that weren in distresse,
 And glad was he, if any wight well ferde
 That lover was, when he it wist or herde.

For sooth to saie, he lost held every wight,
 But if he were in Loves high servise,
 I meane folke that aught it bea of right,
 And over all this, so well could he devise
 Of sentment, and in so vncouth wise
 All his array, that every lover thought,
 That al was wel, what so he said or wrought.

And though that he be come of blood roiall,
 His list of pride at no wight for to chace,
 Benigne he was to ech in generall,
 For which he gate him thank in every place:
 Thus wilde Love, heried by his grace,
 That pride, and ire, envie, and avarice,
 He gan to fle, and every other vice.

Thou lady bright, the daughter of Disaie,
 Thy blind and winged son eke than Cupide,
 Ye sustren nine eke, that by Helicone
 In hill Parnaso, listen for to abide,
 That ye thus ferre has deined me to gide,
 I can no more, but sens that ye wold wead,
 Ye beried bea for aye withouten ead.

Through you have I said fully in my song
 Theeffect and ioy of Troilus servise,
 All be that there was some disease among,
 As mine authour listeth to devise,
 My thirde booke now end I in this wise,
 And Troilus in lust and in quiete,
 Is with Creseide his owne herte swete.

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS

But all too little, welaway the while
 Lasteth such ioy, ithooked bee Fortune,
 That seemeth truest, when she wold begile,
 And can to foolles her sounge entune,
 That she hem bent, that blent, traitor commune:
 And when a wight is from her whole ithrow,
 Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

For how Creseide Troilus forsooke,
 Or at the least, how that she was unkind,
 Mote honosforth ben matter of my booke,
 As writen folk through which it is in mind,
 Alas, that they should ever cause find
 To speake her harme, and if they on her lie,
 I wis hemselfe should have the villaie.

Loorne in host, as I have said ere this,
 The Greekes strong, about Troy toun,
 Befell, that when that Phoebus shinning is
 Upou the braunt of Hercules Lion,
 That Hector, with many a bold baron,
 Cast on a day with Greekes for to fight,
 As he was wont, to grove bea what he might.

Not I how long or short it was hitwene
 This purpose, and that day they fighten ment,
 But on a day well armed bright and shone,
 Hector and many a worship knight out went
 With spears in bonde, and big bowes bent,
 And in the herde withouten lenger lette,
 Hir fomen in the field amone hem mette.

The longe day with speares sharpe iground
 With arrows, dartes, swordis, and maces fell,
 They fight, and bringen horse and man to ground,
 And with hir axes out the braines quell,
 But in the last shoure, sooth to tell,
 The folke of Troy hem selven so misleden,
 That with the worse at night home they fleden.

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS

At whiche day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polimidas, or Monesteo,
Xantippe, Sarpedon, Palestinor,
Polita, or eke the Troyan dan Rupheo,
And other lasse folke, as Phebusso,
So that for harm that day the folk of Troy
Dreden to lese a great part of hir ioy.

Of Priamus was yeve at Grekes request
A time of trece, and tho they gommen trecte
Hir prisoners to chaungen most and lest,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete,
This thing anon was couth in every strets,
Both in thassiege, in toune, and every where,
And with the first it came to Calcas ere.

Whan Calcas knew this tretise should hold
In consistorie among the Greekes some
He gan in thringe, forth with lordes old,
And set him there as he was wont to done,
And with a chaunged face hom bade a boone
For love of God, to done that reverence,
To stinten noise, and yeve him audience.

Than said he thus, "Lo lordes mine I was
Troyan, as it is known out of drede,
And if that you remember, I am Calcas,
That alderfirst yave comfort to your nede,
And tolde well howe that you shold spede,
For dredelesse through you shall in a stound
Ben Troy ibrent, and besten down to ground.

"And in what forme, or in what manner wise
This toune to shend, and all your lust atchere,
Ye have ere this well herde me devise:
This know ye my lordes, as I leve,
And for the Greekes worsen me so leve,
I came my selfe in my proper persone
To teach in this how you was best to done.

"Having vnto my treasure, ne my rent,
Right no regard in respect of your case,
Thus all my good I left, and to you went,
Wening in this you lordes for to please,
But all that losse ne doth me no disease,
I vouchsafe, as wisely have I ioy,
For you to lese all that I have in Troy.

"Save of a daughter that I left, alas,
Sleeping at home, whan out of Troy I stert,
O sterne, O cruell father that I was,
How might I have in that so hard an herte?
Alas that I ne had brought her in my shert,
For sorow of which I wol nat live to morow,
But if ye lordes rew vpon my snow.

"For because that I saw no time ere now
Her to deliver, iche holden have my pees,
But now or never, if that it like you,
I may her have right now doubtles:
O helpe and grace, among all this pees,
Rew on this old carliffe in distresse,
Sith I through you have all this hevynesse.

"Ye have now caught, and fettered in prison
Troyans inow, and if your willes be,
My child with one may have redemption,
Now for the love of God, and of bounte,
One of so fele alas, so yefe him me:
What need were it this praiser for to werne,
Sith ye shull have both folk and toune as yernes.

"On perill of my life I shall nat lie,
Apollo hath me told full faithfully,
I have eke found by astronomie,
By sort, and by augurie truly,
And dare well say the time is fast by,
That fire and flambe on all the toune shall spreit,
And thus shall Troy turne to ashen dede.

"For certaine, Phebus and Neptunus both,
That makeden the walles of the toune,
Ben with the folke of Troy alway so wroth,
That they woll bring it to confusioun
Right in despite of king Laomedoun,
Because he nolde paien hem hir hire,
The toune of Troy shall ben set on fire."

Telling his tale alway this olde grey,
Humble in his speech and looking ere,
The salte teares from his eyes towey,
Full faste ronnen doune by either cheke,
So long he gan of succour hem beske,
That for to heale him of his sorowes so,
They gave him Antenor withooten more.

Bot who was glad inough, but Calcas tho,
And of this thing full soon his nedes lede
On hem that sholden for the tretise go
And hem for Antenor full ofte preide,
To bringen home king Troas and Creside,
And whan Priam his safegarde sent,
Thembassadours to Troy streight they went.

The cause I told of hir comming, the old
Priam the king, full soon in general,
Let here vpon his parliament hold,
Of which the effect rehearsen you I shall:
Thembassadours ben answerde for final,
The echauge of prisoners, and all this acde
Hem liketh well, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan asked was for Antenor Creside,
For which full some chaungen gan his face,
As he that with the wordes well might deide,
But nathelesse he no word to it seide,
Lest men should his affection espie,
With manner herte he gan his sorowes drie.

And full of anguish and of greyly drede,
Abode what other lords would to it sey,
And if they would graunt, as God forbode,
Thechauge of her, than thought he thinges tvey?
First, how to save her honour, and what way
He might best thechauge of her withstond,
Full fast he cast how all this might stound.

Love him made all prest to done her bide,
And rather dien than she should go,
But Reason said him on that other side,
"Withouten assent of her do nat so,
Lest for thy werke she would be thy fo,
And saine, that through thy meding is yblow
Your brother love, there it was not erst know."

For which he gan deliberen for the best,
And though the lordes would that she went,
He would let hem graunt what hem lest,
And tell his lady first what that they meut,
And whan that she had said him her entent,
Thereafter would he worken also blive,
Tho all the world ayen it wolde strive.

Hector, which that well the Greeks herd,
For Antenor how they would have Creseide,
Can it withstand, and soberly answerd:
"Swa, she is no prisoner," (he saide)
"I not on you who that this charge leide,
Bet on my part, ye may oftcomen hem tell,
We com here no women for to sell."

The noise of people up stert than stones,
As beizme as blase of straw iust on fire,
For infortune it would for the sones,
They shoude hir confusion desire: [spire
"Hector," (quod they) "what ghost may you en-
This woman thus to shild, and down us lese
Daa Antenor, a wrong way now ye chese.

"That is as wise, and eke so bold baroun,
And we have need of folke, as men may see,
He is one of the grettest of this town:
O Hector, lette, thy fantasies bee,
O king Priam," (quod they) "thus segge woo,
That all our voice is to forgoe Creseide,"
And to deliver Antenor they provide.

O Juvall lord, true is thy sentence,
That litle wesen folke what is to yorne,
That they ne fenden in hir desire offence,
For cloud of erreur ne lette hem discorde
What best is, and so, here enexample as yerne:
These folke desiren now deliverance
Of Antenor, that brought hem to mischaunce.

For he was after traitour to the town
Of Troy alas, they quitte him out to rathe,
O nice world, so thy discretioun,
Creseide, which that never did hem scathe,
Shall now no longer in her blisse bathe,
But Antenor, he shall come home to town,
And she shall out, thus said heere and hou.

For which delibered was by parliament,
For Antenor to yeeiden out Creseide,
And it pronounced by the president,
Though that Hector may fall off praid,
And finally, what wight that it withsaid,
It was for naught, it must be, and shoud,
For substance of the parliament it wouid.

Departed out of the parliament echone,
The Troilus, without wordes mo,
Unto his chamber spedde him fast alone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The which he had out faste for to go,
Because he would slepen, as he said,
And hastily upon his bedde him laid.

And as in winter, leaves ben braft
Ech after other, till trees be bare,
So that there nis but berke and branch flaft,
Like Troilus, braft of ech welfare,
I bounden in the blacke berke of care,
Disposid wode out of his witte to breide,
So sere him eate the changinge of Creseide.

Be rist him up, and every dore he shette,
And window eke, and tho this sorrowfull man
Upon his beddes side donne him sette,
Fell like a dead image, pale and wan,
And in his breast the heaped wo began
Out burst, and he to worken in this wise
In his woodnesse, as I shall you devise.

Right as the wilde bull beginneth spring
Now here, now there, idarted to the herte,
And of his deeth roreth, in compleining,
Right so gan he about the chamber stert,
Smiting his breast eye with his fistes smert,
His head to the wall, his body to the ground,
Foll oft he swapt, himselfen to confound.

His eyen two for pity of his herte
Out streameden as swift as welles twey,
The highe sobes of his sorrowes smert
His speech him rest, unnethe might he sey,
"O death alas, why wilt thou do me dey?
Accursed be that day which that nature
Shope me to ben a livers creature."

But after when the fury and all the rage
Which that his heart twist, and fast threst,
By length of time somewhat gan assuage,
Upon his bed he laid him down to rest,
But tho begon his teares more out to brest,
That wonder is the body may soffise
To halfe this wo, which that I you devise.

Than said he thus: "Fortune shee the while
What have I done? what have I thee agilt?
How mightest thou for routhe me begile?
Is there no grace? and shall I thus be spilt?
Shall that Creseide away for that thou wilt?
Alas, how mightest thou in thine herte find
To ben to me thus cruell and unkind?"

"Have I thee nat honoured all my live,
As thou well wotest, above the Gods all?
Why wilt thou me fro joy thus depriv?
O Troilus, what may men now thee call,
But wretch of wretches, out of honour fall
Into misery, in which I woll bewalle
Creseide alas, till that the breath me faile.

"Alas Fortune, if that may life enjoy
Displeasid had unto thy soule envie,
Why ne haddest thou my father king of Troy
Braft the life, or done my brethren die,
Or staine my selfe, that thus complaine and cri?
I combe world, that may of nothing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve.

"If that Creseide alone were me left,
Naught raught I whider thou woldest me stave,
And her alas, then hast thou me byraft:
But evermore, lo this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gierfull violence:
Thus am I lost, there helpeth no defence.

"O very Lord, O Love, O God alas,
That knowest best mine herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorrowfull life done in this caas,
If I forgo that I so dere have bought,
Sens ye Creseide and me have fully brought
Into your grace, and both our hertes sealed,
How may ye suffer alas it be repealed?"

"What I may dooe, I shal while I may dure
On live, in turment and in cruell paine,
This infortune, or this disaventure,
Alone as I was borne I woll complaine,
Ne never woll I seee it shine or raine,
But end I woll as Edippe in derkenesse
My sorrowfull life, and dien in distresse.

" I have else thought, so it were her assent,
To aske her of my father of his grace,
Than thinke I, this were her accusement,
Sens well I wot I may her nat purchase,
For sens my father in so high a place
As parliament, hath her exchange encaled,
He will for me his letter be revealed.

" Yet drede I most her herte to perturbe
With violence, if I doe such a game,
For if I would it openly disturbe,
It must be disclaunde to her name,
And me were lever die than her diffame,
As nolde God, but I should have
Her honour, lever than my life to save.

" Thus am I lost, for aught that I can see,
For certayne is that I am her knight,
I must her honour lever have than me
In every case, as lover ought of right,
Thus am I with desire and reason twight :
Desire for to disturben her me redeth,
And reason will not, so mine herte drodeth."

Thus weeping, that he could never cease,
He said, " Alas, how shall I wretche fare,
For well fete I alway my love encrease,
And hope is lasse and lasse Pandare,
Eccreasen eke the causes of my care,
So welaway, why will mine herte brest,
For as in love there is but little rest."

Pandare answerde, " Friend thou mayst for me
Done as thee list, but had I it so hot,
And thine estate, she should go with me,
Tho all this town cried on this thing by note,
I nolde set at all that noise a gote,
For whan men have cried, than wol they roun,
Eke wonder last but nine deies never in toon.

" Devine not in reason eye so deepe,
Ne curtesly, but helpe thy selfe anon,
Bet is that other than thy selven wepe,
And namely, sens ye two ben al one,
Rise vp, for by mine head she shall not gone,
And rather ben in blame a little ifound,
Than sterve here as a gnat withouten wound.

" It is no shame vnto you, ne no vice,
Her to withholden, that ye loveth most,
Peraventure she might hold thee for nice,
To latten her go thus vnto the Grekes hoste,
Think eke Fortune, as well thy selven woste,
Helpeth hardie man vnto his emprise,
And weineth wretches for hir cowardise.

" And though thy lady would alite her grewe,
Thou shalt thy self thy peace hereafter make,
But as to me certayne I cannot love,
That she would it as now for evil take,
Why should than for feare thine herte quake,
Thinke how Paris bath, that is thy brother,
A love, and why stal thou not have another ?

" And Troilus, o thing I dare thee swere,
That if Creside, which that is thy lefe,
Now loveth thee, as well as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she will not take a grefe,
Though thou do bote anon in this mischeffe,
And if she wilneth fro thee for to pame,
Then is she false, no love her well the lasse.

" Forthy, take herte, and think right as a knight,
Through love is broken aiday every law,
Kith now somwhat thy courage and thy might,
Have mercie on thy selfe for any awe,
Let not this wretched wo thine herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on size and steren,
And if thou die a martir, go to Heaven.

" I will my selfe bee with thee at this dede,
Though I and all my kia vpon a stomed,
Should in a strette, as dogs, ligen dede,
Through girt with many a bloodie wound,
In every case I will a friend be found,
And if thee listeth here sterven as a wretch,
Adieu, the devill speede him that retch."

This Troilus gan with the wordes quicken,
And said, " Friend, graunt mercie, I asceit,
But certayne, thou mayst nat so me prickn,
Ne paine none ne may me so torment,
That for no case it is not mine entent,
At shorte wordes, though I dieu should,
To ravishen her, but if her selfe it would."

" Why, so mean I?" (quod Pandarus) " al this day,
But tell me than, hast thou her well assaid,
That sorowest thus?" and he answerde him " Nay,"
" Wherof art thou?" (quod Pandare) " than disaid,
That nofte not that she will bee evil apaid
To ravishen her, sens thou hast not ben there,
But if that Jove told it in thine care ?

" For thy, rise vp as naught ne were, anon,
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wend,
Or he may wondren whider thou art gone,
Thou must with wisdom him and other bleed,
Or vpon case he may after thee send
Or thou beware, and shortly brother dere
Be glad, and let me werke in this matter.

" For I shall shpe it so, that aikerly
Thou shalt this night somtime in some manere
Come spoken with thy ladie prively,
And by her wordes eke, as by her chere,
Thou shalt full soone aperceve and well here
Of her entent, and in this case the best,
And fare now well, for in this point I rest."

The swifte fame, whiche that fids thinges
Equall reporteth, like the thinges true,
Was throughout Troy filled, with prent winges,
Fro man to man, and made his tale all new,
How Calcas daughter with her bright hew,
At parliament without words more,
Igraunted was in charge of Antenor.

The whiche tale anon right as Creside
Had heard, she, whiche that of her father sought
(As in this case) right might, ne when he dede,
Full busily to Japiter besought
Yeve him mischaunce, that this tretis brought:
But shortly, leest these tales sooth were,
She durst at no wight maken it for feere.

As she that had her herte and all her mind
On Troilus yast so wonder fast,
That al this world ne might her love vniand,
Ne Troilus out of her herte cast,
She would been his while that her life may last,
And she thus brenneth both in love and drete,
So that she nist what was best to rede.

But as men scene in toone, and all about,
That women was hir friends to visite,
So to Creseide of women came a rout,
For pitous ioy, and wonden her delite,
And with hir tales dere yough a mite,
These women, which that in the cite dwell,
They set hem doume, and sayd as I shall tell.

(Good, first that one) "I am glad trustly,
Because of you, that shall your father see,"
Another sayd, "I wis, so am not I,
For all too little hath she with vs be."
(Good the third) "I hope iwis that she
Shall bringen vs the peace on every side,
That was she goth, almighty God her gide."

The wordes and the womannish thinges
She herd hem right as thogh she thence were:
For God it wote, her herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat among hem there,
Her advertence is alway els where,
For Troilus full fast her soule sought,
Withouten word, on him alway she thought.

These women that thus wonden her to please,
About naught gan all hir tales spend,
Such vanite ne can done her none ease,
As she that all this tyme while breed
Of other passion than they woud,
So that she felt almost her herte die
For vs, and werte of that companie.

For which might she no longer restraine
Her teares, they gan so vp to well,
That gave signes of her bitter paine,
In which her spirit was, and must dwell,
Remembering her from Heaven vnto which Hell
She fallen was, seeme she forgo the sight
Of Troilus, and sorrowfully she sight.

And thilke foakes, sitting her about,
Wende that she wept and sighd sore,
Because that she should out of the rout
Departen, and never play with hem more,
And they that had knowen her of yore,
Saw her so wepe, and thought it was kindness,
And ech of hem wept eke for her distresse.

And busily they gossen hir to comforten
On thing God wot, on which she litle thought,
And with hir tales wonden her disparten,
And to be glad they ofte her besought,
But such an ease therewith they her wrought,
Right as a man is eased for to fele,
For ache of head, to clayen him on his bele.

But after all this nice vanitie,
They took hir leve, and home they wenten all,
Creseide full of sorrowfull pitie,
Into her chamber vp went out of the hall,
And on her bedde she gan for dead to fall,
In purpose never thence for to rise,
And thus she wrought, as I shall you devise.

Her couded hair, that sunnish was of hew,
She root, and eke her fingers long and unale
She wrong full oft, and had God on her caw,
And with the death to de bete on her bale,
Her hewe whylken bright, that tho was pale,
Hure witness of her wo, and her constraint;
And thus she spake, sobbing in her complaint.

"Alas" (quod she) "out of this regionn,
I wofull wretch and infortunat wight,
And borne in cursed constellationn,
Mote gon, and thus departen fro my knight,
Wo worth alas, that like daies light,
On which I saw him first with eyen twaine,
That causeth me, and I him all this paine."

Therewith the teares from her eyen two
Doun fell, as shoure in Aprill swithe,
Her white brest she bet, and for the wo,
After the death she cried a thousand sithe,
Sene he that wout her wo was for to lithe,
She mote forgone, for which disaventure
She held her selfe a forlost creature.

She said, "How shall he done and I also
How should I live, if that I from him twin?
O dere herte eke that I love so,
Who shall that sorow slayn, that ye ben in?
O Calcas, father, thine be all this sin:
O mother mine, that cleped wert Argive,
Wo worth that day that thou me bore on live.

"To what fine should I live and sorowen thus?
How should a fish withouten water dure?
What is Creseide worth from Troilus?
How should a plant or liva creature
Live withouten his kind nurture?
For which full oft a by word here I sey,
That rootecase mote greene some day.

"I shal done thus, seeme neither swed ne dart
Dare I none handle, for the cruelte,
That like day that I fro you depart,
If sorow of that nil nat my bane be,
Than shall no meat ne drinke come in me,
Till I my soule out of my brest vnabesth,
And thus my selven woll I done to death.

"And Troilus, my clothes everychone
Shall blacke ben, in tokening, herte sure,
That I am as out of this world agone,
That wout was you to set in quite,
And of mine order eye till death me mete,
The observaunce ever in your absence,
Shall sorrow ben complaint and abstynence.

"Mine herte and eke the woful ghost therein
Bequeath I with your spirit to complaine
Eternally, for they shall never twin,
For thogh in yearth twinned be we twaine,
Yet in the field of pitie, out of paine,
That hight Elisce, shall we ben ifere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

"Thus, herte mine, for Antenor alas
I some shall be changed, as I wene,
But how shall ye done in this sorrowfull caas,
How shall your tender herte this sustene?
But herte mine, forget this sorow and tene,
And me also, for soothly for to sey,
So ye well fare, I reche not to dey."

How might it ever redde ben or isong
The plaint that she made in her distresse,
I not, but as for me my litle tong
If I disciven would her heavynesse,
It should make her sorow seeme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Her high complaint, and therefore I it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was vnto Creseide, as ye haue heard devise,
That for the best it was recorded thus,
And he full glad to done him that seruike,
Unto Creseide in a full secret wise,
There as she lay in tourment and in rage,
Came he to tell all huffy his message.

And found that she her selven gan to greve
Full pitously, for with her salte teeres,
Her breast and face ibathed was full wete,
Her mightie tresses of her sonnish haies
Unbroiden, hangen all about her eares,
Which yave him very signe of mattire
Of death, which that her herte gan desire.

When she him saw, she gan for sorrow anon
Her tearie face awink her armes hibe,
For which this Pandare is so wo bigon,
That in the hous he might vaneth abide,
As he that felt sorrow on every side,
For if Creseide had erst complained sore,
Tho gan she plaine a thousand times more.

And in hey aspre plaint, thus she seide:
" Pandare, first of joies more than two
Was cause, causing vnto me Creseide,
That now transuned ben in cruell wo,
Whether shall I say to yo welcomer or no?
That alderfirst me brought vnto seruike
Of love alas, that endeth in such wise.

" Endeth than love in wo? Ye or men lieth,
And all worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The end of blisse aye sorrow it occupieth,
And who troweth not that it so be,
Let him vpon me wo full wretche see,
That my selfe hate, and aye my birth came,
Feeling alway, fro wicke I go to worse.

" Who so me seeth, he seeth sorow all stumie,
Paine, tourment, plaine, wo and distreame,
Out of my wo full body harme there none is,
As langour, angwish, cruell bitterness,
Anoy, smart, drede, furie, and eke sicknesse,
I trow is in Heven teares raine,
For pitie of my aspre and cruell paine."

" And thou my suster, full of discomfort,"
(Quod Pandarus) " what thinkest thou to do?
Why me hast thou to thy selven some resport?
Why wilt thou thus thy selfe alas fordo?
Leave all this werke, and take now heed to
That I shall saime, and herken of good content
This message, that by me Troilus yo seint."

~~Interlinear text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through.~~

She was right such to seeme in her visage,
As is that wight that men on beare bind,
Her face like of Paradis the image,
Was all ichanged in another kind,
The play, the laughter men were wont to find
On hir, and eke her joyes everichone
Ben fled, and thus lieth Creseide alone.

About her eyen two, a purple ring
Bitrent, in southest tokening of her paine,
That to behold it was a deedly thing,
For which Pandare might nat restraine
The teares from his eyen for to raine,
But nathelesse as he best might he seide
From Troilus these wordes to Creseide.

" Lo nece, I trow ye han heard all how
The king with other lordes for the best,
Hath made echange of Antenor and yo,
That cause is of this sorow and this vntrest,
But how this case doth Troilus modest,
This may some yearlyly mannes tongue say,
For very wo, his wit is all away.

" For which we have so sorowed, he said I,
That into little it had us both slaw,
But through my consente this day fullyly,
He somewhat is fro weeping withdraw,
And seemeth me that he demereth faw
With yo to ben all night for to devise
Remedie of this, if there were any wise.

" This short and plaine, the effect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit can comprehend,
For ye that ben of tourment in such rage,
May to no long prologue as now extend.
And herevpon ye may answer him send,
And for the love of God my nece dere,
So leave this wo or Troilus he here."

" Great is my wo," (quod she) and sigthful sore,
As she that feeleth deedly sharpe distreame,
But yet to me his sorow is smokel more,
That love him bet than he himselfe I geame,
Alas, for me hath he such hevynesse,
Can he for me so pitously complain,
I wis this sorow-doubleth all my paine.

" Grouous to me God wot is for to twin,"
(Quod she) " but yet it harder is to me,
To seepe that sorow which that he is in,
For well wot I, it wold my base be,
And die I wold in certaine tho" (quod she :)
" But bid him come, or deth that thus me threteth,
Drive out the ghost which in mine herte beteth."

These wordes said, she on her armes two
Fill greiffe, and gan to weepen pitously:
(Quod Pandarus) " Alas, why doe ye so?
Eens ye well wote the time is fast by
That he shall come, arise vp hastily,
That he yo nat biwopen thus ne find,
But ye wold have him wode out of his mind.

" For wist he that ye farde in this manere,
He wold himselfe slea: and if I wend
To have this fare, he should nat come here,
For all the good that Prius may dispand:
Far to what flos he wold anon pretend,
That know I well, and forthy yet I sey,
So leave this sorow, or plainly he wold dey.

" And shapeth yo his sorow for to abroad,
And nat increase, life nece swete,
Beth rather to him cause of plat than edge,
And with some windome ye his sorowes bete:
What helpeth it to weepen full a strote,
Or though ye both in salt teares dreint?
Bet is a time of cure aye than of pleint.

" I meane thus, when I him hither bring,
 Sens ye be wise, and both of one assent,
 So shapeth how to disturbe your going,
 Or come ayeu sounce after ye be went,
 Women beeu wise, in short avisement,
 And let seme how your wit shall avails,
 And what that I may helpe, it shall not faile."

" Oo," (quod Creseide) " and, vouch, truly
 I shall done all my might me to restraine
 From weeping in his sight, and humbly
 Him for to glad, I shall doo all my paine,
 And in my herte seeuen every vaine,
 If to his sore there may ben founden halve,
 It shall nat lacke certaine on mine halve."

Geth Pandarus, and Troilus be sought,
 Yll in a temple he found him all alone,
 As be that of his life no longer sought,
 But to the pitous goddes everichone,
 Fell tenderly he praied, and made his mone,
 To done him seme out of the world to pace,
 For well he thought there was none other grace.

And shortly all the soothe for to say,
 He was so fallen in dispaire that day,
 That utterly he shope him for to day,
 For right thus was his argument alway,
 He said he was but lorne, welaway,
 " For all that cometh, cometh by necessitie,
 Thus to ben lorne, it is my destinie."

" For certainly, this wote I well," he said,
 " That foresight of divine purveyaunce
 Had seeme alway me to forgone Creseide,
 Sem God soothe every thing out of doutance
 And ben disposeth through his ordinance,
 In his merites soothly for to be,
 As they shall comen by predestinie."

" But nathelesse, alas, whom shall I love,
 For there beu grete clerkes many out,
 That destinie, through argumentes prove,
 And some saioe, that needely there is none,
 But that free choice is yeven vs everichone:
 O delaway, so slyght arme clerkes old,
 That I not whose opinion I may hold."

" For some men saun, that God seeth all before,
 He God may nat deceived ben parde,
 Thus wote it fallen, though men had it sworn,
 That purveyaunce hath seeme before to be,
 Wherefore I say, that from eterne if he
 Hath wisd before our thought eke as our dede,
 We have no free choice, as these clerkes rede."

" For other thought, nor other deed also,
 Might never been, but such as purveyaunce,
 Which may not been deceived never mo,
 Hath feled biforne, withouten ignoraunce,
 For if there might ben a variaunce
 To withen out fro Goddes purveying,
 There were no prescience of thing comming."

" But it were rather an opinion
 Uncertaine, and no stedfast foreseeing,
 And certes that were an abusoun,
 That God should have no perfite clere weting
 More than we men that have doutous wening,
 But such an error vpon God to seme,
 Were false, and foule, and wicked cursednesse."

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" Eke this is an opinion of some,
 That have hir top ful high and smooth ishot,
 They saine right thus, that thing is nat to come,
 For that the prescience hath seeme before
 That it shall come, but they saun that therfore
 That it shall come, therefore the purveyaunce
 Wote it before withouten ignoraunce."

" And in this maner this necessite
 Retourneth in his part contrary againe,
 For needfully behoueth it nat to be,
 That thilke thinges fallen in certaine
 That ben purveyed, but needfully as they saunt
 Behoueth it that thinges which that fall,
 That they in certaine ben purveyed all:"

" I meane as though I laboured me in this,
 To inquire which thing cause of which thing be,
 As whether that the prescience of God is
 The certaine cause of the necessite
 Of thinges that to comen be parde,
 Or if necessite of thing comming,
 Be cause certaine of the purveying:"

" But now we enforce I me not in shewing,
 How the order of the causes stant, but well wot I
 That it bifoueth, that the befalling
 Of thinges wise before certainly,
 Be necessarie, all seems it not thereby,
 That prescience put falling necessaire
 To thing to come, all fall it foule or faire."

" For if there sit a man yood on a see,
 Than by necessitie behoueth it,
 That certes thine opinion sooth be,
 That wenest or conjectest that he sit,
 And further over, now ayenward yet,
 Lo right so is it on the part contrarye,
 As thus, now hearke, for I woll nat tarie."

" I say, that if the opinion of thee
 Be sooth for that he sit, than say I this,
 That he mote sitten by necessitee,
 And thus necessitee in either is,
 For in him pede of sitting is wis,
 And in the pede of sooth, and thus fortho
 There mote necessitie beu in yon both."

" But thou maist saine the man sit nat therfore,
 That thine opinion of his sitting sooth is,
 Bot rather for the man saite there before,
 Therefore is thine opinion sooth wis,
 And I say though the cause of sooth of this
 Cometh of his sitting, yet necessitee
 Is enterchangenng both in him and in thee."

" Thus in the same wise out of doutance,
 I may well maken, as it seemeth me,
 My reasoning of Goddes purveyaunce,
 And of the thinges that to comen be,
 By whicha reason men may well seee,
 That thilke thinges that in earth yfall,
 That by necessitie they comen all."

" For although that forthing shall come wis
 Therefore is it purveyed certainly,
 Nat that it cometh, for it purveyed is,
 Yet nathelesse behoueth it needfully,
 That thing to come be purveyed truly,
 Or else thinges that purveyed be,
 That they betiden by necessitee."

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" And this sufficeth right ynough certayne,
For to destroy our free choise everyddell,
But now is this abusion to ayme,
That falling of the thinges temporell,
In cause of the goddes prescience eternell ;
Now truly that is a false sentence,
That thing to com shuld cause his prescience.

" What might I wene, and I had such a thought ?
But that God purvieth thing that is to come,
For that it is to come, and else nought :
So might I wene, that thinges all and some,
That whylome ben befall and overcome,
Ben cause of thilke souveraine purveyaunce,
That forwote all, wibouten ignoraunce.

" And over all this, yet say I more thereto,
That right as when I wote there is a thing,
Iwis that thing mote needfully be so,
Eke right so, when I wot a thing comyng,
So mote it come; and thus they befalling
Of thinges that ben wist before the tide,
They mowe not ben eschewed on no side."

Than said he thus, " Almighty Jove in trone,
That wotest of all this thing the soothfastnesse,
Rew on my sorrow and do me dien same,
Or bring Creseide and me fro this distresse."
And while he was in all this heavynesse,
Disputing with himselfe in this metere,
Came Pandare in, and said as ye may here.

" O mighty God" (quod Pandarus) " in trone,
Eigh, who saw ever a wise man faren so ?
Why Troilus, what thinkest thou to done ?
Hast thou such lust to ben thine owne so ?
What, parde, yet is nat Creseide ago,
Why list thee so thy selfe fordoon for drede,
That in thine head thine eyen seemen dede.

" Hast thou nat lived many a yere before
Withouten her, and farde full well at ease ?
Art thou for her and for none other borne,
Hath kind thee wrought al only her to please ?
Let be and think right thus in thy disease,
That in the dice right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love there come and gon plesaunces.

" And yet this is a wonder most of all,
Why thou thus sorowest, with thou wost nat yet
Touching her going, how that it shall fall,
Ne if she can her selfe disturben it ;
Thou hast nat yet assaid all fier wit ;
A man may all betime his necke bede
When it shall off, and sorowen at the wede.

" Forthy, take hede of all that I shall say,
I have with her ispeke, and long ibe,
So as accorded was betwixe vs twey,
And evermore me thinketh thus, that she
Hath somewhat in her hertes privite,
Wherewith she cau, if I shall aught rede,
Disturbe all this, of which thou art in drede.

" For which my counsell is, whan it is night,
Thou to her go, and make of this an end,
And blisfull Juno, through her great might,
Shall (as I hope) ber grace vnto vs send,
Mine herte seith certayne she shall nat wend,
And forthy, put thine herte a while in rest,
And hold thy purpose, for it is the best."

This Troilus answerde, and sighed sore,
" Thou saist right well, and I will do right so,"
And what him list, he said vnto him more,
And whan that it was time for to go,
Full privly himselfe wibouten me
Unto her came, as he was wont to done,
And how they wrought, I shall you tel some.

Sooth is, that whan they gonno first to mete,
So gan the paine hir hertes for to twist,
That neither of hem other mighte grote,
But hem in armes tooke, and after kist,
The lasse wofull of hem bothe nist
Where that he was, ne might o word outbring,
As I said erst, for wo and for sobbing.

The wofull teares that they leten fall,
As bitter weren out of teares kind
For paine, as is ligue sloot, or gall,
So bitter teares wept not as I fiod
The wofull Mirra, through the burke and riol;
That in this world there nis so hard as herte,
That nolde have rewed on hir paines smart.

But whan hir wofull wery ghostes twine
Returned ben, there as hem ought to dwell,
And that somewhat to waken gan the paine
By length of plaint, and ecben gan the well
Of hir teares, and the herte vnswell,
With broken voice, al horse for aught, Creseid
To Troilus these ilke wordes seid.

" O Jove, I die, and mercy thee besech,
Helpe Troilus;" and therewithal her face
Upon his brest she laid, and lost her spech,
Her wofull spirite from his proper place
Right with the worde away in point to pace,
And thus she lith, with howes pale and greet,
That whilom fresh and fairest was to see.

This Troilus that on her gan behold,
Cleping her name, and she lay as for deed,
Wibouten answer, and felt her limmes cold,
Her eien throwen vward to her heed :
This sorrowful man can tow non other red ;
But oft time her colde mouth he kist,
Where him was wo, God and himself it wist.

He riseth him vp, and long straitz he ber leidz,
For signe of life, for aught he can or may,
Can he none finde, in nothing of Creseide,
For which his song full oft is " Welaway !"
But whan he saw that spechlesse she lay,
With sorrowful voice, and herte of blisse al bare,
He said, how she was fro this world fare.

So after that he long had her complainid,
His bondes wroog, and said that was to sey,
And with his teares salt her brest berainid,
He gan the teeres wipe off full drey,
And pitously gan for the soule prey,
And said, " Lord, that set art in thy throe,
Rewe eke on me, for I shall folow her soe."

She colde was, and without sentemnt,
For ought he wote, for brethe felt he none,
And this was him a preiguant argument,
That she was forth out of this world agone :
And whan he saw there was non other wone,
He gan her limmes dresse, in such manere,
As men don hem that shall ben laide on bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerde anon out of his sheeth he twight,
Him selfe to sleen, how sore that him smart,
So that his soule, her soule fokowen might,
There as the dome of Minde would it dight,
Sith love and cruel fortune it ne would,
That in this world be longer liven should.

Then said he thus, fulfild of high disdain,
"O cruel Jove, and thou Fortune adverse,
This is all and some, that falsly have ye slaine
Creseide, and sith ye may do me ne worse,
Fe on your might and werkes so diverse,
Thus cowardly ye shall ne never winne,
There shall no deeth me fro my lady twinne.

"For I this world, sith ye have slain her thus,
Wol let, and fo'ow her spirite low or hie,
Shal never lover oaine that Troilus,
Dare nat for feare with his lady die,
For certaine I woll beere her companie,
But sith ye wol nat suffre vs liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben ifere.

"And thou cite, in which I live in wo,
And thou Priam, and brethren al ifere,
And thou my nother, farewell, for I go,
And Attropose make rody theu my bere:
And thou Creseide, O swete herte dere,
Receiv now my spirite," would he sey
With swerde at herte, all rody for to dey.

But as God would, of swough she abraide,
And gan to sigh, and Troilus she cride,
And he answerde, "Lady mine Creseide,
Live ye yet?" and let his swerde down glide:
"Ye herte mine, that thanked be Cupide,"
(quod she) and therewithal she sore sight,
And he began to glade ber as he might.

Toke ber in armes two and kist her off,
And ber to glad, he did al his entent,
For which her gost, that slikerd aie a lof,
Inu her wofull herte ayeen it went:
But at the last, as that her eye glept
Aside, anon she gan his swerde asprie,
As it lay bare, and gan for feare crie.

And asked him why he had it out draw,
And Troilus anon the cause her told,
And how himself therwith he wold have slain,
For which Creseide vpon him gan behold,
And gan him in her armes faste fold,
And said, "O mercy God, to which a dede,
Alas, how nigh we weren bothe dede.

"Than if I hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wold have slain your selfe anon?" (quod she.)
"Ye doutlesse:" and she answerde, "Alas,
For by that ilke lorde that made me,
I holde a furlong way on live have be,
After your deeth, to have ben crowned quené
Of al the koude the Sunne ou shineth shene.

"But with this selve sword, which that here is
My selfe I would have slain" (quod she) "tho:
But so, for we have right inough of this,
And let vs rise and strait to beddie go:
And there let vs spoken of our wo,
For by that morter, which that I see brenne,
Know I ful well, that day is nat farre hence."

Whan they wer in hir bed in armes fold,
Naught was it like the nightes here before,
For petously ech other gan behold,
As they that hadden al hir blisse borne,
Bewailing aie the day that they were borne,
Till at the last, this sorrowful wight Creseide,
To Troilus these ilke wordes seide.

"Lo hette mine, wel wote ye this" (quod she)
"That if a wight alway his wo complain,
And seketh nat how holpen for to be,
It nis but folie, and encreace of paine:
And sens that here assembled be we twaine,
To finde hote of wo that we ben in,
It were time al soone to begid.

"I am a woman, as ful wel ye wotte,
And as I am avised sodaynly,
So wol I tel you, while it is hotte,
Me thinketh thus, that neyther ye nor I,
Ought halfe this wo to maken skifully,
For there is art inough for to redresse,
That yet is mine, and sleen this hevynesse.

"Soth is, the wo the whiche we ben inne,
For aught I wote, for potbing eles is,
But for the cause that we should twinne,
Considred al, there nis no more amis:
And what is than a remedy vnto this?
But that we shape vs sone for to metre,
This al and some, my dere herte swete.

"Now that I shall wel bringen it about
To comen ayeen, soone after that I go,
Thereof am I no mader thing in dout,
For dredelesse, within a weke or two
I shal ben here: and that it may be so,
By all right, and in wordes few,
I shal you wel an heape of waies shew.

"For which I woll nat maken long sermon,
For time ilost may not be recovered be,
But I will go to my conclusion,
And to the best, in aught that I can see:
And for the love of God foryve it me,
If I speake ayeen aught your hertes resty,
For truly I speake it for the best.

"Making alway a protestation,
That now these wordes which I shal say:
Nis but to shewe you my mocon,
To find vnto our helpe the beste way,
And take it no otherwise I pray,
For in effect, what so ye me commaund,
That wol I done, for that is no demand.

"Now herkeneth this, ye have wel understand
My going graunted is by parliament,
So ferforth that it may not ben withstood,
For al this world, as by my judgement:
And sith there helpeth noon avisement,
To letten it, lette it passe out of mind,
And let vs shape a better way to find.

"The swete is, the twinning of vs twaine,
Wol vs disease, and cruelylly anonie:
But him behoveth sometime have a paine,
That serveth love, if that he woll have joie:
And sith I shall no farther out of Troie
Than I may ride ayeen on halfe a morow,
It ought lesse causen vs for to sorow.

" So as I shal nat so ben hid in mow,
That day by day, mine owne herte dere,
Sens well ye wote that it is now a trow,
Ye shal ful wel al mine estate here:
And er that truce is done, I shal ben here,
Then have ye bothe Antenor iwoone,
And me also, betha glad now if ye conne.

" And thinke right thus, Creseide is now agon,
But what, she shal come hastily ayen,
And whan alas? by God, lo right anon
Er daies ten, this dare I safely asme,
And than at erste, shal we be so faine,
So as we shal togheters ever dwell,
That all this world ne might our blisse tell.

" I see that oft time, there as we ben now
That for the best, our counsaile for to hide,
Ye speke nat with me, nor I with you
In fourtenight, ne see you go ne ride:
May ye nat ten daies than abide,
For mine honour, in such aventure?
Iwis ye mowe, or eles lite endure.

" Ye know eke how that all my kin is here,
But if that onely it my father be,
And eke mine oþer thinges al here,
And namely my dere herte ye,
Whom that I nolde leaven for to see,
For all this world, as wide as it hath space,
Or eles see I never Joves face.

" Why trowe ye my father in this wise
Covaiteth so to see me, but for drede,
Lest in this tounce that folkes me dispise,
Bicause of him, for his unhappy dede?
What wote my father what life that I lede,
For if he wist in Troie how well I fare,
Us neded for my wending nat to care.

" Ye see, that every day eke more and more,
Men treate of peace, and it supposed is,
That men the queene Helene shall restore,
And Grekes vs restore that is mis:
Though there ne were comfort none but this,
That men purposen peace on every side,
Ye make the better at ease of herte abide.

" For if that it be peace, mine herte dere,
The nature of the peace mote nedes drive,
That men must entrecommune here,
And to and fro eke ride and gone as blive,
Al day as thicke as been fien from an hive,
And every wight have liberty to blive,
Where as him list, the bet withouten leve.

" And tho so be that peace there may bene none,
Yet hither, though ther never peace ne were,
I must come, for whider should I gone,
Or how mischaunce should I dwell there
Among the men of armes ever in fere,
For which, as wisely God my soule rede,
I can nat see wherof ye shuld drede.

" Have here another way, if it so be
That all this thing ne may you not suffice,
My father, as he known well parde,
Is olde, and eke full of covetise,
And I right now have founden al the gise,
Withouten nette, wherwith I shal him hent,
And herkeneth now, if that ye woll assent.

" Lo Troilus, men saine, that fol herd it is
The wolfe ful, and the wedder hole to have,
This is to saine, that men full oft wis,
Mote spenden parte, the remnant for to save:
For ais with gold, men may the herte grave,
Of him that set is vpon covetise,
And how I meane, I shal it you devise.

" The morenible, which that I have in this toun,
Unto my father shall I take, and say,
That right for trust, and for salvatoun,
It sent is from a frende of his or teay,
The whiche frendes fervently him pray,
To sende after more and that in hie,
While that this toun stant thus in jeopardie.

" And that shall be of gold an huge quantite,
Thus shal I saie, but lest folke it aspide,
This may be sent by no wight but by me:
I shal eke shewen him, if peace betide,
What frendes that I have on every side,
Toward the court, to don the wraþe pace,
Of Priamus, and do him stonde in grace.

" So what for o thing and for other, reote,
I shall him so enchaunten with my sawn,
That right in Heven his soule is, shal he mete,
For all Apollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculing, availeth not three haves:
Desire of gold shall so his soule bleed,
That as me list, I shall well make an end.

" And if he would asght by his sorte it prove,
If that I lie, in certaine I shall fond
To disturben him, and plucke him by the stowe,
Making his sorte and bearen him on brood,
He hath nat well the goddes woderuond,
For goddes speke in amphibologies,
And for o sothe, they tellen twenty lies.

" Eke drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shall I saie, and that his coward herte,
Made him amis the goddes tent to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of Delphos stert:
And but I make him some to convert,
And done my rede, within a day or twey,
I wol to you oblige me to dey."

And truly, as written wel I find,
That all this thing was said of good entent,
And that her herte trewe was and kind
Towardes him, and spake right as she ment,
And that she starfe for wo nigh whan she went,
And was in purpose ever to be trewe,
Thus writen they that of her werkis knew.

This Troilus, with herte and eeres sprad,
Herde all this thing devised to and fro,
And verily it seemed that he had
The selve witte, but yet to let her go
His herte misgave him evermo,
But finally he gan his herte wrest,
To trusten her, and to ke it for the best.

For which the great fury of his penance,
Was quaint with hope, and therewith been betwix
Began for joye the amorous dance,
And as the birdes, whan the Sonne shew,
Deliten in hir soog, in leves grozme,
Right so the wordes, that they spak dere,
Deliten hem, and made hir hertes chere.

But nathelesse, the wedding of Creseide,
For all this world may nat out of his mind,
For which full oft he pitously her preide,
That of her haste he might her trewe find:
And said her, "Certes if ye be kind,
And but ye come at daie set, in Troie,
Ne shal I never have heale, honor, ne joye.

"For al so sothe as Sonne vprist to morrow,
And God so wisely thou me woful wretch
To reste bring, out of this cruel sorow,
I wol my selven slee, if that ye dretch:
But of my death though little be to retch,
Yet er that ye me causen so to smart,
Deel rather here, my owne sweete herte.

"For truly mine owne lady dere,
The sleightes yet, that I have herd you stave,
Ful shapely ben to fallen all here,
For thus men saith, that one thinketh the bere,
But al another thinketh the ledere,
Your sire is wise, and said is out of drede,
Men may the wise out reunde, and not out rede.

"It is full harde to haiteen vnespied
Before a cressil, for he can the craft,
Your father is it: sleight as Argus eied,
For al be it that his movable is him birraff,
His olde sleight is yet so with him left,
Ye shal nat blende him for your womanhode
Ne faise aright, and that is all my drede.

"I not if peace shal evermo betide,
But peace or no, for earnest be for game,
I wote sith Galens on the Grekes side
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule his name,
Ne dare no more come here ayen for shame,
For which that we, for ought I can espie,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasie.

"Ye shal site seen your father shall you gloze,
To ben a wife, and as he can well prech,
He shal some Greke so praise and wel chose,
That ravishen be shal you with his spech:
Or do you done by force, as he shall tech,
And Troilus on whom ye all have routh,
Shall causelesse so sterren in his trowth.

"And over al this your father shall despise
Us al, and saine this cite is but lorne,
And that thassege never shall arise,
For why? the Grekes beve it al sworne,
Till we ben slaine, and doune our wallis turne,
And thus he shall you with his wordes fere,
That sic drede I, that ye wol blaven there.

"Ye shall eke see so many a lusty knight,
Among the Grekes ful of worthinesse,
And ech of hem, with herte, wit and might
To plessen you, done al his businesse,
That ye shall dullen of the rudenesse
Of sey Troians, but if routhes
Remorde you, or vertus of your trowthes.

"And this to use so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my breast it wol my soule rende,
Ne dredelesse, in me there may nat sinke
O good opinion, if that ye wende,
For why? your fathers sleight woll vs abrende,
And if ye gosse, as I have tolde you yore,
So thinke I nam, but deed, withouten more.

"For which with humble, true and pitous herte
A thousand times mercy I you pray,
So reweth on mine aspre paines smart,
And doth somewhat, as that I shall you say:
And let vs steale away betwixt vs tway,
And thinke that foly is, when a man may chese
For accident, his substance for to lese.

"I meane thus, that sens we knowe or day
Wel steale away, and ben together so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
(In case ye shouden to your father go)
If that ye mighten come ayen or no:
Thus meene I, that were a great follie
To put that sikernes in jeopardie.

"And vulgarly to speken of substance,
Of treasure may we both with vs lede,
Ynough to live in honour and plesaunce,
Till unto time that we shall ben dede,
And thus we may eschewen all this drede,
For every other wale ye can record,
Mise herte iwis may therewith nat accord.

"And hardely ne dredeth no poverté,
For I have kin and frendes oles where,
That though we comen in our bere sherte,
Us shoulde never lacke golde ne geere,
But ben honoured while we dwelten there,
And go we anone, for as in mine entent,
This is the best, if that ye woll assent."

Creseide with a sigh, right in this wise
Answerde, "Iwis, my dere herte traw,
We may well steale away, as ye devise,
And finden such vuthrifty wais new:
But afterward full sore it woll vs rew,
And helpe me God so at my most nede,
As causelesse ye suffren al this drede.

"For thilke day that I for cherishing,
Or drede of fether, or for any other wight,
Or for estate, delite, or for wedding,
Be false to you, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnus daughter Jone, through har might,
As wood as Achamante do me dwell
Eternally with Six in the pit of Hell.

"And this on every god celestiall
I swere it you and eke on eche goddess,
On every nimphe, and deite infernall,
On satyry and fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes ben of wildernesse,
And Atropos my threde of life to brest,
If I be false, now trowd me if you lest.

"And thou Simois, that, as an arrowe, cleve
Through Troy remest, sie downward to the see,
Be witness of this word, that said is here,
That thilke day that I vutwre be
To Troilus, mine owne herte fre,
That thou returne backwarde to thy weil,
And I with body and soule sike to Hell.

"But that ye speake away thus for to go,
And letten all your frendes, God forbede,
For any woman that ye shouden so,
And namely, sens Troy hath now such nede
Of helpe, and eke of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my life lay in balaunce,
And your honor, God shuld vs fro mischaunce.

" And if so be that pece hereafter be take,
As all day happeth after angre game,
Why lord the sorow and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne durst come ayen for shame,
And ere that ye ineparden so your name,
Beth nat too hasty in this hotte fare,
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

" What trowe ye the people eke all about
Would of it say? it is full light to arede,
They wouiden say, and swere it out of dout.
That love ne drave you nat to done this dede
But lust voluptuous, and coward drede,
Thus were all lost wis, mine herte dere
Your honour, whiche that now shineth clere.

" And also thinketh on mine honeste,
That fourteth yet, how foul I should it shend,
And with what filth it spotted shulde be,
If in this forme I should with you wend,
Ne though I lived unto the worldis end,
My name should I never ayenward win,
Thus were I lost, and that were routh and sin.

" And forthy, slee with reason all this hete,
Men sain, the suffraunt overcummeth parde,
Eke whoso will have lefe, he lefe mote lette,
Thus maketh vertue of necessite
By patience, and thinke that lord is he
Of fortune ave, that naught wol of her retch,
And sie ne daunteth no wight but a wretch.

" And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Or Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Lion passe out of this Arite,
I wol been bere, withouten any wene,
I meane, as helps me Juno, Heavens quene,
The tenth day, but if that death me assaile,
I wold you seene, withouten any faile."

" And now so this be sooth?" (quod Troilus)
" I shall well suffer unto the tenth day,
Sens that I see that nede it mote ben thus,
But for the love of God, if he it may,
So let us stealen prively away:
For ever in one, as for to live in rest,
Mine herte saieþ that it will be the best."

" O mercy God, what life is this?" (quod she)
" Alas, ye gles me thus for very tepe,
I see well now that ye mistrusten me,
For by your wordes it is well icene:
Now for the love of Scinthis the shene,
Mistrust me nat thus causelesse for routh,
Sens to be true I have you plight my trowth.

" And thinketh well, that sometimes it is wit
To spend a time, a time for to win,
Ne parde lorne am I nat for you yet,
Though that we ben a day or two atwin:
Drive out the fantasies you within,
And trusteth me, and leaveth eke your sorow,
Or here my trowth, I wol nat live til morow.

" For if ye wist how sore it doth me smart,
Ye wold cease of this, for God thou wost
The pure spirit weepeth in mine herte
To seem you weepen, which that I love most,
And that I mote gone unto the Greekes host,
Ye, nere it that I wist a remedy
To com ayen, right here I wolde dy,

" But certes I am not so nice a wight,
That I ne can imaginen a way
To come ayen that day that I have bight,
For who may holden a thing that wold away,
My father naught, for all his queint play,
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troy
Another day shall tourne us all to joy.

" Forthy, with all mine berte I you beseke,
If that you list done aught for my prayer,
And for the love which that I love you eke,
That ere I departe fro you here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bring at rest
My herte, whiche is at point to brest.

" And over all this I pray you," (quod she tho)
" My owne hertes soothfast suffraunce,
Sith I am thine all hole withouten mo,
That while that I am absent, no pleasaunce
Of other, do me fro your remembrance:
For I am ever agast, for why? men rede,
That love is thing aye full of busie drede.

" For in this world there liveth lady none,
If that ye were untrue, as God defend,
That so betrayed were, or wo begon,
As I, that all trowth in you entend:
And doubtlesse, if that iche other wend,
I nere but dead, and ere ye cause find,
For Goddes love, so beth ye nat unkind."

To this answered Troilus and seide,
" Now God to whom there nis no cause (wre,
Me glad, as wis I never unto Creseide,
Sith thilke day I saw her first with eye,
Was false, ne never shall till that I die,
At short wordes, well ye may me leuse,
I can no more, it shall be found at preue."

" Graunt mercy, good herte mine, wis" (quod she)
" And blisful Venus let me never sterre,
Er I may stonde of pleasaunce in degre,
To quite him well, that so well can deserve:
And while that God my wit will me conserve
I shall so done, so true I have you found,
That sie honour to meward shall rebound.

" For trusteth well, that your estate royall,
Ne vain delite, nor oonly worthincome
Of you in werre or turnay marciall,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eke richesse:
Ne made me to rue on your distresse,
But moral vertue, grounded upon trowth,
That was the cause I first had on you routh.

" Eke gentle herte, and manhood that ye had,
And that ye had (as me thought) in despite
Every thing that sowned in to bad,
As rudenesse, and peoplish appetite
And that your reason bridled your delite,
This made aboven every creature.
That I was yowre, and shall while I may dure.

" And this may length of yeres nat forde,
Ne remuabest fortune deface,
But Iupiter, that of his might may do
The sorrowfull to be glad, so yere vs grace,
Er nightes tenne to weten in this place,
So that it may your berte and mine suffice,
And fareth pow well, for time is that ye tise."

And after that they long yplained had,
 And oft iust, and straits in armes fold,
 The day gan rise, and Troilus him clad,
 And ruefully his lady gan behold :
 As he that felt deathes cares cold,
 And to her grace he gan him recommaund,
 Where he was wo, this hold I no demand.

For mannes helde imaginen ne can,
 Ne ententement consider, ne tongue tell
 The croell paines of this sorowfull man,
 That passeth every torment doune in Hell :
 For whan he sawe that she ne might dwell,
 Which that his soule out of his herte rent,
 Withouten more, out of the chamber he went.

INCIPIT LIBER QUINTUS.

Amocaus gan the fatall destine,
 That Joves hath in disposicion,
 And to you angry Parcas syster thre,
 Committech to done execucion,
 For which Creseide must out of the towe,
 And Troilus shall dwell forth in pine,
 Till Lachesis his threde no longer twine.

The golden treimed Phoebus high on loft,
 Thise had all with his beames clere
 The snowes molte, and Zephirus as oft
 Brought ayen the tender leaves grene :
 Sene that the sonne of Ecobus the queene
 Began to love her first, for whom his sorrow
 Was all, that she departe should a morow.

Fall redy was at prime Diomedes,
 Creseide unto the Grekes hoste to lede,
 For sorow of which, she felt her herte blede,
 As she that niste what was best to rede :
 And truly, as men in bolkes rede,
 Men wiste never woman have the care,
 He was so loche out of a toune to fare.

This Troilus withouten rede or lore,
 As man that hath his joies eke forelore,
 Was waiting on his lady evermore,
 As she that was sothfast crophe and more,
 Of all his lust or joyes here before :
 But Troilus, now farewell all thy joye,
 For shalt thou never seen her eft in Troie.

Soth is, that while he bode in this manere,
 He gan his wo full manly for to hide,
 That well vnepeth it seen was in his chere,
 But at the yate there she should out ride,
 With certain folke he hovey her to abide,
 So wo bigon, all would he not him plain,
 That on his horse vnepeth he sate for pain.

For we he quoke, so gan his herte grow,
 Whan Diomedes on horse gan him dight,
 And sayd unto himselfe this ilke saw,
 " Alas," (quod he) " thus foule a wretchednesse
 Why suffre I it? Why nill I it redresse?
 Were it nat bet at ones for to die,
 Than evermore in langour thus to crie?"

" Why nill I make at ones rich and poore,
 To have enough to done er that she go?
 Why nill I bring all Troie vpon a roore?
 Why nill I slaine this Diomedes also?
 Why nill I rather with a man or two,
 Steale her away? Why wold I this endure?
 Why nill I helpen to mine owne cure?"

But why he nolde done so fell a deede,
 That shall I tain, and why him list it spare,
 He had in herte alway a maner drede,
 Lest that Creseide, in ramour of this fare,
 Should have ben slain, so this was al his care,
 And eles certain, as I sayed yore,
 He had it done withouten wordes more.

Creseide whan she redy was to ride,
 Full sorowfully she sighed, and sayd " Alas,"
 But forth she mote, for aught that may betide,
 And forth she rideth full sorowfully apace :
 There is no other remedy in this case :
 What wonder is, though that her sore smart
 Whan she forgoeth her owne swete herte?

This Troilus in gise of curtesie,
 With haunce on hond, and with an huge rout
 Of knyghtes, rode and did her companie,
 Passing all the valey ferre without,
 And fether would have ridden out of doubt,
 Full fainc, and wo was him to gone so soone,
 But tourne he must, and it was eke to done.

And right with that was Antenor icome,
 Out of the Grekes hoste, and every wight
 Was of him glad, and sayd he was welcome,
 And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
 He pained him, with all his full might
 Him to with hold of weping at least,
 And Antenor he kist, and made feast,

And therewithal he must his leave take,
 And cast his eye vpon her pitously,
 And nere he rode, his cause for to make,
 To take her by the honde al soberly :
 And Lorde so she gan wepen tenderly,
 And he full soft and slightly gan her see,
 " Now hold your day, and doe me put to deie."

With that his courser tourned he about,
 With face pale, and vnto Diomedes
 No words he spake, ne none of all his rout,
 Of which the sonne of Tidesus toke hede,
 As he that kouthes more than the credes,
 In soche a craft, and by the rain her hent,
 And Troilus to Troie homewardes went.

This Diomedes, that lad her by the bridell,
 Whan that he saw the folke of Troy away,
 Thought, " All my labor shall not been on idell,
 If that I may, for somewhat shall I say :
 For at the worst, it short maie our way,
 I have heard say eke, times twice twelve,
 He is a fool that wold foryete him seive."

But nathelesse, this thought he well enough.
 That " certainly I am about naught,
 If that I speake of love, or make it to tought,
 For doubtlesse, if she have in her thought,
 Him that I gesse, he may not been brought
 So soone away, but I shall find a meane,
 That she nat yet wete shall what I meane."

This Diomedes, as he that could his good,
 When this was done, gan fallen forth in spech
 Of this and that, and sake why she stood
 In such disease, and gan her eke beseech
 That if that he excusance might or eke
 With any thing her ease, that she should
 Commaunde it him, and said he done it would.

For truly he swore her as a knight,
 That ther nas thing, with which he might her please
 That he nolde done his pain, and al his might
 To done it, for to done her herte an ease:
 And prayed her she would her sorrow appease,
 And said, "Iwis we Greekes can have joy
 To honouren you, as well as folke of Troy."

He said eke thus, "I got you thinketh strange,
 No wonder is, for it is to you new,
 Thacquaintance of these Trojans to change
 For folke of Grece, that ye never knew:
 But would never God, but if as true,
 A Greeke ye should among us all find,
 As any Trojan is, and eke as kind,

"And because I swore you right now,
 To ben your frende, and helply to my might,
 And for that more acquaintance eke of you
 Have I had, than an other straunger wight:
 So for this forth, I pray you day and night,
 Commaundeth me, how sore that me smart,
 To done all that may like unto your herte.

"And that ye me wold, as your brother treat,
 And taketh not my frendship in dispite,
 And though your sorowes been for thiuges gret,
 Not I nat why, but out of more respite,
 Mine herte hath for to amend it great delite,
 And if I may your hartes nat redress,
 I am right sory for your heavynesse.

"For though ye Trojans with us Greekes wroth
 Have many a day been, alway yet parde,
 O god of love, in sothe we serve bothe:
 And for the love of God my lady free,
 Whom so ye hate, as beeth not wroth with me,
 For truly there can no wight you serve,
 That half so loth your wrathe would deserve.

"And now it that we been so nere the tent
 Of Calcas, which that seen us bothe may,
 I wold of this you tell all mine entent,
 But this concealed till an other day:
 Yeve me your honde, I am and shall be sie,
 God helpe me so, while that my life may dure,
 Your owne, above every creature.

"Thus said I never er now to woman borne,
 For God mine herte as wisely glad so,
 I loved never woman here before,
 As paramours, ne never shall no mo:
 And for the love of God be not my fo,
 All can I get to you, my lady dere,
 Complain a right, for I am yet to lere.

"And woodreth nought, mine owne lady bright,
 Though that I speake of love to you thus blive,
 For I have heard of this of many a wight,
 Hath loved thing he never saw his live:
 Eke I am not of power for to strive
 Aynst the god of love, but him obey
 I wold alway, and mercy I you pray.

"There beeth so worthy knightes in this place,
 And ye so faire, that everiche of hem all
 Woll pain him to stonden in your grace,
 But might to me so faire a grace fall
 That ye me for your servaunt would call,
 So lowly, ne so truly you serve,
 Nill none of hem, as I shall till I serve."

Cresseide unto that purpose lite answerde,
 As she that was with sorow oppressed so,
 That in effect she naught his tales herde,
 But here and there, now here a word or two:
 Her thought her sorowfull harte brest a two,
 For when she gan her father ferre espie,
 Well nigh doune of her hors she gan to sie,

But nathelesse she thinketh Diomedes,
 Of all his travaile and his good chere,
 And that him list his frendship to her bede,
 And she accoepeth it in good manere,
 And wold do fain that is him left and dere,
 And trusten him she wold, and well she might,
 As said she, and from her hors she alight.

Her father hath her in his armes nome,
 And twenty times he kist his daughter swete,
 And said: "O dere daughter mine, welcome,"
 She said eke, she was fain with him to mete:
 And stode forth muet, milde, and meassette,
 But here I leave her with her father dwell,
 And forth I wold of Troilus you tell.

To Troy is come this wofull Troilus,
 In sorowe above all sorowes smart,
 With felon loke, and face dispitour,
 Tho sodainly doune from his hors he stert,
 And through his paleis with swolne herte,
 To chamber he went, of nothing toke he heed
 Ne none to him dare speke o worde for drede.

And there his sorowes that he spert had,
 He yave an issue large, and death be orde,
 And in his throwes, frenetike and mad
 He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide,
 He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cypride,
 His birth, himselfe, his fate, and eke nature,
 And save his ladie, every creature.

To bed he goth, and weileth there and turneth,
 In furie, as doeth he Ixion in Hell,
 And in this wise he nigh till day sojourneth,
 But the began his herte alite vuswell,
 Through tores, which that gowen vp to wele,
 And pitiously he cried upon Cresseide,
 And to him self right thus he spake and seide.

"Where is mine owne lady lefe and dere?
 Where is her white brest, where is it, where?
 Where been her armes, and her iyeu clere
 That yesterday this time with me were?
 Now may I wepe alone many a teare,
 And grame about I may, but in this place
 Save a pillow, I find naught to embrace.

"How shal I doen? what shal she come again?
 I not alas, why let I her to go?
 As wold God I had as tho be slain:
 O herte mine Cresseide, O swete fo,
 O lady mine, that I love and no mo,
 To whom for ever more mine herte I love,
 Espie how I die, ye nill me not redress.

"Who seeth you now, my right bedesterrè?
Who sitteth right now in your presence?
Who can comforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
Who speaketh for me right now in my absence?
Aks no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wote I, as evill as I ye fare.

"How should I thus ten daies full endure,
When I the firste night have all this tene?
How shall she eke sorrowfull creature,
For tendernesse, how shall she this sustene,
Sche wo for me? a pitous, pale, and grene,
Shall been your freshe womanly face,
For langour, or ye toirme vnto this place."

And when he fill in any slombinges,
Aam begin he shoulde for to grooe,
And dremzen of the dreadfullist thinges
That might been: as mote be were alone
In place horrible, making aie his mome,
Or meten that he was emonges all
His enemies, and in his boundes fall.

And therewithall his bodie should start,
And with the start all sodainly awake,
And soche a tremour fele about his herte,
That of the feare his bodie shoulde quake:
And therewithall he should a noise make,
And seme as though he should fall depe,
From high slofe, and than he would wepe,

And rewe on himselfe so pitously,
That wonder was to here his fantasie,
An other time he shoulde mightly
Comfort himselfe, and saie it was folie,
So causelesse, soche drede for to drie,
And oft begin his aspre sorrowes new,
That every man might on his paines rew.

Who could tell all, or fully descrive
His wo, his plaint, his langour, and his pine?
Nat all the men that han or been on live,
Thou reader mayest thy self full well devine,
That soche a wo my wit can not define,
Deidell for to write it should I swinke,
When that my wit is werie k to thinke.

On Heaven yet the starres weren seen
Although full pale iwosen was the Mone,
And whiten gas the orisont shene,
All eastward, as it was wont to done,
And Phebus with his rosie carte sone,
Gas after that to dresse him vp to fare,
When Troilus hath sent after Pandare.

This Pandare, that of all the day before
He might him comen this Troilus to se,
Although he on his hedde it had sworne,
For with the king Priam alday was he,
So that it lay nat in his liberte,
No wher to gon, but on the morow he went
To Troilus, when that he for him sent.

For in his herte he could well devine,
That Troilus at night for sorow woke,
And that he would tell him of his pine,
This knew he well enough without boke:
For which to chamber streight the way he toke,
And Troilus tho soberly he gette,
And on the bedde full sone be gan him sette,

"My Pandarus," (quod Troilus) "the sorow
Which that I drie, I may not long endure,
I trowe I shall not liven till to morow,
For which I would alwaies on aventure
To thee devisen of my sepulture:
The forme, and of my movable thou disposen
Right as thee semeth best is for to doen.

"But of the fire and flambe funeral,
In which my body brennen shall to gleds,
And of the feast and plaies palestrall,
At my vigile, I pray thee take good bade
That that be well: and offer Mars my stede,
My sword, mine helme: and leve brother dere,
My shelde to Palas yeve, that shineth clere.

"The poude in which min herte ibread shal turn
That pray I thee thou take, and it conserve
In a vessel that men clepeth an vras
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thou pitously I sterve,
So yeve it her, and doe me this pleasaunce,
To praien her to kepe it for a remembrance.

"For well I fele by my maladie,
And by my dreames, now and and yore ago,
All certainly, that I mote nedes die:
The oule eke, which that hight Ascapthie,
Hath after me shright, all these nightes two,
And god Mercurie, now of the wofull wretch
The soule guide, and when thee list it fetch."

Pandare answerde and saide, "Troilus,
My dere frende, as I have told thee yore,
That it is folie for to sorrowen thus,
And causelesse, for which I can no more:
But who so woll not trowen rede se here,
I can not seen in hita no remedie,
But let him worchon with his fantasie.

"But, Troilus, I pray thee tell me now,
If that thou trowe er this that any wight,
Hath loved paramours as well as thou,
Ye, God wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his ladie gon a fourteenight,
And he nat yet made halvendele the fare,
What nede is the to maken all this care?"

"Sens day by day thou maist thy selven see
That from his love, or eles from his wife
A man mote twinen of necessitie,
Ye though he love her as his owne life:
Yet nil he with himself thus maken strife,
For well thou wost, my leve brother dere,
That alway frendes may not been ifere.

"How done this folke, that seen hir leves wedded
By frendes might, as it betideth full oft,
And seen hem in hir spouses bedde ibodded?
God wote they take it wisely faire and soft:
For why, good hope halt vp hir herte aloft,
And for they can a time of sorow endure,
As time hem hurteth, a time doth hem cure.

"So shouldest thou endure, and lettes slide
The time, and foode to been glad and light,
Ten dayes nis not so long to abide,
And sena she to comen thee hath behight,
She nil her hert broken for no wight,
For drede thee not, that she nil fnde way
To come ayen, my life that durst i say.

" Thy sweennes eke, and all soch fantasie
Drive out, and let hem faren to mischaunce,
For they procede of thy melancolie,
That doth thee fele in slepe all this penaunce:
A straw for all sweennes signifaunce,
God helpe me so, I count hem not a bean,
There wot no man aright what dremes mean.

" For priestes of the temple tellen this,
That dremes been the revelacions
Of Goddes, and als well they tel iwis,
That they been infernalles illusious
And leches saine, that of conceptions
Proceden they of fast, or glotonie,
Who wot in sothe thus what they signifie ?

" Eke other saine, that through impressions,
As if a wight hath fast a thing in mind,
That thereof cometh soche avisions:
And other sain, as they in bokes find,
That after times of the yere by kind,
Men dreme, and that thefect goth by the Moone,
But leve no dreme, for it is nat to done.

" Wel worth of dremes are these old wives,
And truly eke, agurie of these foules,
For feare of which, men wenen lese hir lives,
As ravens qualm, or schrieking of these oules:
To trowen on it, bothe false and foule is,
Alas, alas, that so noble a creature
As is a man, should drede such ordure.

" For which with al mine herte I thee beseeche,
Unto thy self, that all this thou foryeve,
And rise now vp, withouten more speche,
And let vs cast how forth my best be driven
The time, and eke how freshly we may liven,
When she cometh, the which shall be right noon,
God helpe me so, the best is thus to done.

" Rise, let vs speake of lustie life in Troy
That we have lud, and forth the time drive,
And eke of time coming vs rejoy,
That bringen shall our blisse now to blive,
And langour of these twise daies five
We shall therewith so forget or oppresse,
That well vaneth it doce shall vs duresse.

" This toun is full of lordes al about,
And truce lasten all this meane while,
Go we plaien vs in some lustie rout,
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a mile,
And thus thou shalt the time well beguile,
And drive it forth ynto that blisfull morow,
That thou her see, that cause is of thy sorow.

" Now rise, my dere brother Troilus,
For certes it non honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bedde to rouken thus,
For truly of o thing trust to me,
If thou thus ligge, a day, two or three,
The folke wolle wene, that thou for cowardise,
Thee faintest sick, and that thou darst not rise."

This Troilus answerde: " O brother dere,
This folke know that have isuffed pain,
That though be wepe, and make sorowful chere
That feeleth harme and smart in every vein,
No wonder is; and though I ever plain
Or alway wepe, I am nothing to blame,
Sens that I have lost the cause of all my game.

" But sens of five force I mote arise,
I shall arise, as soon as ever I may,
And God, to whom mine herte I sacrifice,
So send vs hastily the tenth day:
For was there never foule so faire of May
As I shall ben, when that she cometh in Troie,
That cause is of my tourment and my joye.

" But whider is thy rede," (quod Troilus)
" That we may play vs best in all this toun "
" By God my counsaile is," (quod Pandarus)
" To ride and play vs with king Sarpedoun."
So long of this they speaken vp and down,
Till Troilus gan at the last assent
To rise, and forth to Sarpedon they went.

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was ever his live, and full of his prowess,
With all that might inserved been on table,
That deintie was, all ooste il great richesse,
He feilde hem day by day, that such noblesse
As saiden both the most and eke the least,
Was never er that day wiste at any feast.

Nor in this world there is none instrument,
Delicious, through winde, or touche on corde,
As ferre as any wight hath ever went,
That tonge tell, or herte may recorde,
But at that feast, it was well heard recorde:
Ne of ladies eke so faire a companie,
On daunce er tho, was never iseen with eye.

But what availeth this to Troilus,
That for his sorow, nothing of it rough,
But ever in one, as herte pitous,
Full busily Cresside his lady sought:
On her was ever al that his herte thought,
Now this, now that, so fast imagining,
That glad iwis can him no feasting.

These ladies eke, that at this feast been,
Sens that he saw his lady was away,
It was his sorow upon hem for to seem,
Or for to heare on instrumentes play:
For she that of his herte hath the key,
Was absent, lo this was his fantasie
That no wight shulde maken melodie.

Nor there nas houre in al the day or night,
When he was ther as no man might him herte,
That he ne sayd, " O lovesome lady bright,
How have ye faren sins that ye were there?
Welcome iwis mine owne lady dere.
But walaway, all this nas but a masse,
Fortune his hove extended bet to glasse."

The letters eke, that she of olde time
Had him isent, he would alone rede
An hundred sith, atwixt noone and prime,
Resfiguring her shape, and her womanhede,
Within his herte, and every worde and dede
That passed was, and thus he drove to an end,
The fourth day, and saide he wol wend.

And said " Lere brother Pandarus,
Intend thou that we shall here bieve,
Til Sarpedon woll forth conveyen us,
Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve:
For Goddes love, let us now soone at reve
Our leave take, and homeward let us turpe,
For trowely I sill nat thus sojourn."

Pandare answerde, " Be we comen hither
To fetchen fire, and redden home agayne?
God helpe me so, I can nat tellen whither
We might gone, if I shall sothy saine:
There any wight is of us more faine
Than Sarpedon, and if we hence he
Thus sodainly, I bold it wilanie.

" Whan that we asiden we would bleve
With him a weke, and now thus sodainly
The fourth day to take of him our leve,
He would wondren on it trewly:
Let us holden forth our purpose fermely,
And see that ye behighten him to abide,
Hold forward now, and after let us ride."

The Pandarus, with all pine and wo
Made him to dwell, and at the wekes end,
Of Sarpedon they toke hir leave tho,
And on hir way they speden hem to wend:
(Quod Troilus) " Now Lordie me grace send,
That I may find at mine home comyng,
Creseide comen," and therwith gan he sing.

" Ye baselwode," thought this Pandare,
And to himselfe ful softly he seide,
" God wotte refroiden may this hotte fare,
Er Calcas sende Troilus Creseide:"
But nathelesse he yaped thus and seide,
And swore iwis, his herte him wel behight,
She wolde come as soon as ever she might.

Whan they unto the paleis were ycomen,
Of Troilus, they doun of horse alight,
And to the chambrs hir way have they comen,
And unto tyme that it gan to night,
They speken of Creseide the lady bright,
And after this, whan hem bothe lust,
They spede hem fro the supper unto rest.

On morow as soon as day began to clere,
This Troilus gan of his slepe to abride,
And to Pandarus, his own brother dere,
" For loue of God," full pitously he seide:
" As go we seeke the paleis of Creseide,
For seem we yet may have no more feest,
So let us seeke her paleis at the leest."

And therewithall his meins for to blende,
A cause he foude in tounes for to go,
And to Creseides house they gan wende,
But Lordie this sely Troilus was wo,
Him thought his sorowful herte brast awo,
For when he saw her doores sparred all,
Well nigh for sorow adoun he gan to fall.

Therwith whan he was ware, and gan behold
How shet was every window of the place,
As frost him thought his herte gan to cold,
For which with changed deedly pale face,
Withouten worde, he forth by gan to pace,
And as God would, he gan so faste ride,
That no wight of his countenance aspide.

Thus said he thus: " O paleis demolate,
O house of houses, whilom best light,
O paleis empty and disconsolate,
O thou lantern, of which queint is the light,
O paleis whilom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtest thou to fall, and I to die,
Seen she is went, that went was us to gie.

" O paleis whilom crowne of houses all,
Eclumined with Sonne of all blisse,
O ring, of which the rubie is out fall,
O cause of wo, that cause hast ben of blime:
Yet sens I may no bet, fain would I kisse
Thy colde doores, durst I for this rout,
And farewell shrive of which the saint is out."

Therwith he cast on Pandarus his oie,
With changed face, and pitous to behold,
And whau he might his time aright aspide,
Aie as he rode, to Pandarus he told
His new sorow, and eke his joyes old.
So petously, and with to deed an hew,
That every wight might on his sorow rew.

Fro thence-forth he rideth vp and doun,
And every thing came him to remembrance,
As he rode forth by the places of the toun,
In which he whilom had all his pleasure:
" Lo, yonder saw I mine owne lady daunce,
And in that temple with her eien clere,
Me caught first my right lady dere.

" And yonder have I herde full lustely
My dere herte laugh, and yonder play
Saw I her ones eke ful blisfully,
And yonder ones to me gan she say
' Now good sweete love me well I pray,'
And yonde so goodly gan she me behold,
That to the death mine herte is to her hold.

" And at the corner in the yonder house,
Herde I mine alderlevest lady dere,
So womanly, with voice melodious,
Sungen so wel, so goodly and so clere,
That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
The blisful sowne, and in that yonder place
My lady first me toke unto her grace."

Than thought he thus, " O blisful lord Cupide,
Whan I the processe have in memory,
How thou me hast wried on every side,
Men might a booke make of it like a story:
What nede is thee to seeke on me victory,
Sens I am thine, and holly at thy will,
What joy hast thou thine owne folke to spill?"

" Wel hast thou, lord, iwroke on me thine ire,
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve,
Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
Thy grace most, of all lustes leve,
And live and die I wol in thy beleve,
For which I ne aske in guerdon but a bone,
That thou Creseide ayen me sende sone.

" Distraine her herte as fast to returne,
As thou dost mine to longen her to see,
Than wote I wel that she nil nat sojourne:
Now blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Unto the blood of Troy, I praije thee,
As Juno was unto the blode Thebane,
For which the folke of Thebes caught hir bene."

And after this he to the yates went,
There as Creseide out rode, a full good pass,
And vp and doun there made he many a went,
And to him selfe ful oft he said, " Alas,
Fro hence rode my blisse and my solas,
As wuld blisful God now for his joie,
I might her see ayen come to Troie,

" And to the yonder hil I gan her guide,
Alas, and there I toke of her my love,
And yonde I saw her to her father ride,
For sorow of which mine herte shal to clove:
And hither home I come when it was eve,
And here I dwell, out east from all joie,
And shal, til I may seee her eft in Troie."

And of him selfe imagined he oft,
To ben defaite, pale, and woxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men saiden soft,
" What may it be? who can the sothe gesse,
Why Troilus hath al this hevynesse?"
And al this nas but his melancholie,
That he had of him selfe such fantasie.

Another time imagined he would,
That every night that went by the way,
Had of him rooth, and that they saine shold,
" I am right sorry, Troilus wol dey:"
And thus he drove a day yet forth or twey,
As ye have herde, such life gan he lede,
As he that stode betwixen hope and drede.

For which him liked in his songes shews
Themselven of his wo, as he best might,
And made a songe, of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his wofull herte for to light:
And when he was from every mannes sight,
With softe voice, he of his lady dere,
That absent was, gan sing as ye may here.

" O stern, of which I lost have all the light,
With herte sore, wel ought I to bewaile,
That ever derke in turment, night by night
Toward my deth, with winde I stare and saile:
For which the tenth night, if that I faile,
The guiding of thy busnes bright an hoore,
My ship and me Caribdes woll devour."

This song when he thus songen had some,
He fel ayen into his sightes old,
And every night, as was he wont to done,
He stode the bright Moone to behold:
And al his sorow he to the Moone told,
And said, " Iwis when thou art horned new,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trew."

" I saw thine hornes old eke by that morow,
Whan hence rode my right lady dere,
That cause is of my turment and my sorow,
For whiche, O bright Lucina the clere,
For love of God ren fast about thy sphere,
For whan thine hornes newe ginnen spring,
Than shall she come that may my blisse bring."

The day is more, and lenger every night
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho,
And that the Sunne went his courte wright,
By lenger way than it was wont to go,
And said, " Iwis, I drede me evermo
The Sunnea sounne Pheton be on live,
And that his fathers cart amisse he drive."

Upon the walles fast eke would he walke,
And on the Greekes host he would see,
And to himselfe right thus he would talke:
" Lo, yonder is mine owne lady free,
Or else yonder, there the tents be,
And thence comeneth this aire that is so soote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me boote."

" And hardily, this wind that more and more
Thus stoundeale encrooseth in my face,
Is of my ladies deepe sighes sore,
I preve it thus, for in none othre space
Of all this tounne, save only in this place,
Feele I no wind, that someth so like paine,
It saith, " Alas, why twined be we twaine."

This longe time he drivoth forth right thus,
Till fully passed was the ninthe night,
And aye beside him was this Pandarus,
That busily did all his full might
Him to comfort, and make his herte light,
Yeving him hope alway the tenth morow,
That she shal comen, and stinten all his sorow.

Upon that other side eke was Cresseide
With women few among the Greekes strong,
For which full oft a day, " Alas" she seide
" That I was borne, well may mine herte long
After my death, for now live I too long
Alas, and I ne may it not amend,
For now is worse than ever yet I wend."

" My father nil for nothing doe me grace
To gone ayen, for ought I can him queme,
And if so be that I my terme pace,
My Troilus shall in his herte deme
That I am false, and so it may well seme,
Thus shall I have vothoonke on every side,
That I was borne so wela way the tide."

" And if that I me put in jeopardie,
To steale away by night, and it befall
That I be caught, I shall be hold aspie,
Or else lo, this drede I most of all,
If in the bonds of some wretch I fall,
I nam but lost, all be mine herte trow:
Now mightie God, thou on my sorow rev."

Full pale iwozen was her bright face,
Her limmes loone, as she that all the day
Stode when she durst, and loked on the place
There she was borne, and dwelt had aye,
And all the night weeping alas she lay,
And thus disperied out of all cure
She lad her life, this wofull creature.

Full oft a day she sighed eke for distresse,
And in her selfe she went aye purtraying
Of Troilus the great worthinesse,
And all his goodly wordes recording,
Sens first that day her love began to spring,
And thus she set her wofull herte afire,
Through remembrance of that she gan desire.

In all this world there nis so cruell herte,
That her had heard complainen in her sorow,
That nold have wepten for her paines smart,
So tenderly she wept, both eve and morow,
Her needed no teares, for to borrow,
And this was yet the worst of all her paine,
There was no wight, to whom she durste plain.

Full rewfully she loked upon Troie,
Beheld the toores high, and eke the halles,
" Alas," (quod she) " the pleasaunce and the joye,
The which that now all turned into gail is,
Have I had ofte within yonder walles.
O Troilus, what doest thou now?" she seide,
" Lord, whether thou yet thinke upon Cresseide."

" Aias that I ne had itrowed on your love,
And went with you, as ye me redde ere this,
Than had I now not sighted halfe so sore:
Who might have said, that I had done amis
To steale away with such one as he is?
But all too late cometh the lectuarie,
Whan men the corae vnto the greue carie.

" Too late is now to speke of that matere,
Prudence, alas, one of thine eyen thres
Me lacked alway, ere that I came here:
For on time passed well remembred mee,
And present time eke could I well see,
But fature time, ere I was in the snare,
Could I not see, that causeth now my care.

" But nathelesse, beside what betide,
I shall to morow at night, by east or west,
Out of this hoast steale, on some side,
And gooe with Troilus, where as him lest,
This purpose woll I hold, and this is the best,
No free of wicked tongues jonglerie,
For ever on love have wretches had envie.

" For who so woll of every word take bede,
Or rule hem by every wightes wit,
He shall be never thriuen out of drede,
For that that some men bliamen ever yet,
In other manner folke commenden it,
And as for me, for all such variance,
Pecunie clepe I my suffiance.

" For which, withouten any wordes mo,
To Troy I woll, as for conclusion."
But God it wote, ere fully moneths two,
She was full ferre fro that entencion,
For bothe Troilus and Troie toun
Shall knotlesse throughout her herte slide,
For she woll take a purpose for to abide.

This Diomedes, of whom I you tell gan,
Goth now within himseife aye arguing,
With all the sleight and all that ever he can,
How he may best with shortest tarying,
Loo his nette Creseiden herte bring,
To this extent he couthe never fine,
To saven her, he laid out booke and line.

But nathelesse, well in his herte he thought,
That she nas nat without a love in Troy,
For never sithen he her thence brought,
He couthe he seeze her laugh, or maken joy,
He nist how best her herte for taccioie,
But for tanssey, he said nought it ne greveth,
For he that naught amaieeth, naught atcheveth.

Yet said he to himseife vpon a night,
" Now am I nat a foole, that wote well how
Her wo is, for love of another wight,
And hereupon to gooe assay her now,
I may well wete, it nill nat ben my prow,
For wise folke in bookes it esprese,
Men shall nat wove a wight in hevynesse.

" But who so might wimmen such a flour
Pro him, for whom she mourneth night and day,
He might saie he wore a conquerour:
And right anone, as he that bold was aye,
Thought in his herte, hap bow bep may,
All shoud I dye, I woll her herte sech,
I shall no more lesen but my spech."

This Diomedes, as bookes us declare,
Was in his nedes preat and courageous,
With eterne voice, and mighty limmes square,
Hardy, testife, strong, and chevalrous
Of dedes like his father Tideus,
And some men saie he was of tonge large,
And haire he was of Calcidony and Arge.

Creseide meane was of her stature,
Thereto of shape, of face, and eke of chere,
There might ben no fairer creature,
And ofte time this was her manere,
To gooe itressed with her haire clere
Downe by her colere, at her backe behind,
Which with a threde of gold she would bind.

And save her browes joyned en fere,
There nas no lacke, in ought I can espie,
But for to speken of her eyen clere,
Lo, truly they writen that her seien,
That Paradis stood formed in her sien,
And with her riche beauty evermore
Strove love in her, aie which of hem was more.

She sobre was, eke simple, and wise withall,
The best inowised eke that might see,
And goodly of her spech in generall,
Charitable, estate, lusty, and free,
Ne nevermore, ne lacked her pitee,
Tender hearted, sliding of corage,
But truly I cannot tell her age.

And Troilus well woxen was in bight,
And complete formed by proportioun,
So well that kind it naught amenden might,
Young, fresh, strong, and hardy as lioun,
Trew as steele, in ech condition,
One of the best enteched creature,
That is or shall, while that the world may dure.

And certainly, in story as it is found,
That Troilus was never unto no wight
As in his time, in no degree second,
In daring do that longeth to a knight,
All might a gisant passen him of might,
His herte aye with the first and with the best,
Stood perregall to dare done what him lest.

But for to tellen forth of Diomedes,
It fill, that after on the tenth day,
Sens that Creseide out of the city yede,
This Diomedes, as fresh as braunch in May,
Came to the tente there as Calcas lay,
And fained him with Calcas have to done,
But what he ment, I shall you tellen some.

Creseide at shorte wordes for to tell,
Welcomed him, and downe him by her sette,
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwel,
And after this, withouten longe lette,
The spices and the wine men forth hem fette,
And forth they speke of this and that ifere,
As friendes done, of which some shall ye here.

He gan first fallen of the warre in spech
Betwixen hem and the folke of Troy toun,
And of thasiege he gan eke her beseech,
To tellen him what was her opinioun:
Pro that demaund he so distendeth down,
To asken her, if that her straunge thought
The Greekes gise, and werkes that they wrought?

And why her father tarieth so long
To wedden her unto some worthy wight?
Cresseide that was in her paines strong,
For love of Troilus her owne knight,
So ferforth as she cunning had or might,
Answerde him tho, but as of his entent,
It seemed nat she wiste what he ment.

But nathelesse, this ilke Diomeide
Gan on himselfe assure, and thus he seide:
" If I aught have taken on you hede,
Methinketh thus, O lady mine Cresseide,
That sene I first hond on your bridle leide,
Whan I out came of Troy by the morrow,
Ne might I never seeue you but in sorrow.

" I can nat saine what may the cause be,
But if for love of some Trojan it were,
The which right sore would a thinken me,
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there,
Shoulden spill a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously your selven so begile,
For dredelesse it is nat worth the while.

" The folke of Troy, as who saith all and some,
In prison ben, as ye your selven see,
Fro thence shall nat one on live come,
For all the gold atwisen sunne and see,
Trusteth well, and understondeth mee,
There shall nat one to mercy goue on live,
All were he lord of worldis twice five.

" Such wrech on hem for fetching of Heleine
There shall be take, ere that we hence weid,
That Maunes, which that goddes ben of peine,
Shall ben agast that Grekes wol hem sheid,
And men shall drede unto the worldis end
Fro henceforth to ravishen any queene,
So cruell shall our wreche on hem be seene.

" And hat if Calcas lede us with ambages,
That is to saine, with double wordes slic,
Such as men clepen a word with two vi-ages,
Ye shall well knowen that I nat ne lie,
And all this thing right sene it with your eie,
And that anon, ye nil nat trow how soone,
Now taketh hede, for it is for to doone.

" What wene ye your wise father would
Have yeven Antenor for you anone,
If he be wise that the city should
Destroyed ben? why may so mote I gone,
He knew full well there shall nat scapen one
That Trojan is, and for the greates fere
He durste nat that ye dwelt lenger there.

" What woll ye more, O lovesome lady Gire,
Let Troy and Troians fro your herte passe,
Drive out that bitter hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayen the beaute of your face,
That ye with salte teares so deface,
For Troy is brought in such a iopardie,
That it to save is now no remedie.

" And thinketh well, ye shall in Grekes find
A more perfite love, ere it be night,
Than any Trojan is, and more kind,
And bet to serven you woll done his might,
And if ye vouchsaufe my lady bright,
I woll ben he, to serven you my selve,
Ye lever than be lord of Greces twelve."

And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
And in his speech a little while he quoke,
And cast aside a little with his heed,
And stunt a while, and afterward he woke,
And soberly on her he threw his loke,
And said, " I am, albeit to you no joy,
As gentill a man as any wight in Troy.

" For if my father Tideus" (he seide)
" Ilived had, I had been ere this,
Of Calcidonic and Arge a king, Cresseide,
And so hope I that I shall be iwis:
But he was slaine alas, the more harme is,
Unhappily at Thebes all to rathe,
Polimite, and many a man to scathe.

" But herte mine, sith that I am your man,
And ben the first, of whom I seeke grace,
To serve you as heartely as I can,
And ever shall, while I to live have space,
So that, ere I depart out of this place,
Ye woll me graunte, that I may to morow
At better laiser tell you of my sorow."

What shuld I tell his wordes that he seide?
He spake ynough for o day at the most
It preveth well he spake so, that Cresseide
Graunted on the morrow at his request
For to speake with him at the least,
So that he nolde speake of such matere,
And thus she to him said, as ye mowe here.

As she that had her herte on Troilus
So fast, that there may it none arace,
And straungely she spake, and saide thus:
" O Diomeide, I love that ilke place
There was I borne, and Joves of thy grace
Deliver it soome of all that doth it care,
God for thy might so leve it well to fare.

" That Grekes wold hir wrath on Troie wreke
If that they might, I know it well iwis,
But it shall naught befallen as ye speke,
And God toforme, and farther over this,
I wote my father wise and ready is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me told,
So dere am I the more unto him bold.

" That Grekes ben of high condition,
I wote eke well, but certaine men shall find
As worthie folke within Troie toun,
As coning, as perfite, and as kinde,
As ben betwixe Orcades and Inde,
And that ye coulde well your lady serve
I trow eke well, her thanke for to deserve.

" But as to speake of loue, iwis" (she seide)
" I had a lord, to whom I wedded was,
His whose mine herte was all till he deide,
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
There in mine herte nis, ne never was,
And that ye ben of noble and high kinrede,
I have well herde it tellen out of drede.

" And that doth me to have so great a wooder,
That ye woll scormen any woman so,
Eke God wote, love and I ben fer asonder,
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Unto my death plaine and make we so;
What I shall after doo, I can not say,
But truly as yet me list nat play.

" Mine herte is now in tribulacion,
And ye in armes busie day by day,
Hereafter when ye wouen have the toun,
Paraventure that, so it happen may,
That when I see that I never ere say,
Then woul I warka that I never ere wrought,
This word to you ynough suffices ought.

" To morow eke wol I speken with you faime,
So that ye touchen naught of this matere,
And when you list, ye may come here againe,
And ere ye gone; thus much I say you here,
As helpe me Pallas, with her hairens clere,
If that I should of any Greeke have rooth,
It shalde be your selven by my trowth.

" I thynke therefore that I woul you love,
Ne say nat say, but in conclusioun,
I meane well by God that sit above:"
And therewithall she cast her eyen down,
And gan to sigh, and said, " Troilus and Troy toun
Yet hidde I God, in quiet and in rest
I may you seme, or do mine herte breast."

But in effect, and shortly for to say,
This Diomedes all freshly new againe
Gan plesse on, and fast her mercy pray,
And after this, the soothe for to saine,
Her glorie he toke, of which he was full faime,
And finally, when it was woxen eve,
And all was well, he roose and toke his leve.

The bright Venus followed and aie taught
The way there brode Phebus doune alight,
And Cithera her chare horse over rought,
To whirle out of the Lion, if she might,
And Signifer his candles sheweth bright,
When that Creside vnto her bod went,
Within her fathers faire bright tent.

Retourning in her soole aye vp and down
The wordes of this suddaine Diomedes,
His great estate, and perill of the toun,
And that she was alone, and had nede
Of frendes help, and thus began to brede
The cause why, the soothe for to tell,
She toke fully purpose for to dwell.

The morow came, and ghostly for to speke,
This Diomedes is come vnto Creside,
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
So well he for himselfe spake and seide,
That all her sighes sore doune he leide,
And finally, the soothe for to saine,
He reth her the great of all her paine.

And after this, the story telleth vs,
That she him yave the faire bey stede,
The which she ones wan of Troilus,
And eke a brooch (and that was little nere)
That Troilus was, she yave this Diomedes,
And eke the bet from sorow him to releve,
She made him weare a pencell of her leve.

I find eke in stories elsewhere,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomedes
Of Troilus, she wept the many a tere,
When that she saw his wide woundes blede,
And that she tooke to kopen him good hede,
And for to heulen him of his smart,
Men saine, I not, that she yave him her herte.

But truly the storie telleth vs,
There made never wouan more wo
Than she, when that she falsed Troilus,
She said " Alas, for now is clene ago
My name in trowth of love for evermo,
For I have falsed one the gentlest
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

" Alas, of me vnto the worldes end
Shall neither ben i written or isong
No good wordes, for these bokes woul me shend:
Irolled shall I been on many a tong,
Throughout the world my bell shall be rong,
And woumen most woul hate me of all,
Alas, that such a caas me should fall.

" They woul saine, in as much as in me is,
I have hom done dishonour welaway;
All be I not the first that did amis,
Whet helpeth that, to done my blame away,
But sene I see there is no better way,
And that too late is now for me to rue,
To Diomedes I woul algate be true.

" But, Troilus, sene I no better may,
And sene that thus departen ye and I,
Yet pray I God so yeve you right good day,
As for the gentlest knight truly
That ever I saw, to serven faithfully,
And best can eye his ladies honour kepe,"
And with that word she braast anon to wepe.

" And certes, you ne haten shall I never,
And frendes love, that shall ye have of me,
And my good word, all should I liven ever,
And truly I woul right sorrie be,
For to sene you in advernite,
And guiltesse I wot well I you leave,
And all shall passe, and thus take I my leave."

But truly how long it was bitwene,
That she forsoke him for this Diomedes,
There is none authour telleth it I wene,
Take every man now to his bookes hede,
He shall no terme finden, out of drede,
For though that he began to wowe her sone,
Ere he her wan, yet was there more to done.

Ne me ne list this sillie woman chide
Fether than the storie woul devise,
Her name atas is published so wide,
That for her gilt it ought ynough suffice,
And if I might excuse her in any wise,
For she so sorrie was for her vntrowth,
I wis I woul excuse her yet for rooth.

This Troilus, as I before have told,
Thus driveth forth, as wel as he hath might,
But ofte was his herte hote and cold,
And namelye that ilke ninthe night,
Which on the morrow she had him beight
To come ayen, God wote full little rest
Had he that night, nothing to slepe him lest.

The laurer crowned Phebus, with his heat
Gan in his course aie upward as he went,
To warnen of the east sea the waves wete,
And Circes daughter song, with fresh entent,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sent,
And on the walles of the towne they pleide,
To looke, if they can see-ne ought of Creside.

Till it was noon, they stoden for to see
Who that there came, and every maner wight
That came fro ferre, they saiden it was shee,
Till that they coulden knowen him aright:
Now was his herte dull, now was it light,
And thus beyaped stoden for to stare
About naught, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus the seide
"For aught I wot, before noonne sikerly,
Into this tounne ne cometh not here Creseide,
She hath ynough to doon hardoly
To wismen from her father, so trow I,
Her olde father wold yet make her dine
Ere that she go, God yere his herte piise."

Pandarus answerd, "It may well been certain
And fortyeth let vs dine, I thee beseech,
And after noonne than maist thou come aguin:"
And home they go, without more speech,
And comen ayen, but long may they seech,
Ere that they finde that they after gaze,
Fortune hem bothe thinketh for to yape.

(Quod Troilus) "I see well now that she
Is tariyd with her old father so,
That ere she come, it wold nigh even be.
Come forth, I wold vato the yate go,
These portars ben vnknowing evermo,
And I wold done ben holden vp the yate,
As naught ne were, although she come late."

The day goth fast, and after that came eve,
And yet came nat to Troilus Creseide,
He looketh forth by hedge, by tree, by greve,
And ferre his head over the wall he leide,
And at the last he touned him, and seide,
"By God I wote her meaining now Pandare,
Almost iwis all now was my care.

"Now doubtlesse this lady can her good,
I wote she commeth ridyng prively,
I commend her wisdom by mine hood,
She wold nat maken people nicely
Goure on her when she commeth, but softly
By night into the tounne she thinketh ride,
And, dere brother, thinke nat long to abide.

"We have naught else fur to done iwis,
And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowen me,
Have here my trouth, I see her, yond she is,
Heave up thine eyen man, mayst thou nat see?"
Pandare answerde, "Nay, so wote I thee,
Al wrong by God, what saist thou man, wher art,
That I see yonde afarre, nis but a cart."

"Alas thou sayst right sooth," (quod Troilus)
"But hardely it is not all for nougth,
That in mine herte I now joycece thus,
It is ayenat some good, I have a thought,
Not I nat how, but sene that I was wrought,
Ne felt I such a comfort dare I say,
She cometh to night, my life that darst I lay."

Pandarus answerde, "It may be well ynough,"
And held with him of all that ever he saide,
But in his herte he thought, and soft he lough,
And to himselfe full soberly he saide,
"From basell wood, there jolly Robin plared,
Shall come all that thou abidest here,
Ye, farwell all the mow of ferre yere."

The wardain of the yates gan to call
The folk, which that without the yates wote,
And had been driven in his beastes all,
Or all the night they must bleven there,
And ferre within the night, with thany a tere,
This Troilus gan homeward for to ride,
For well he seeth it helpeth nat to abide.

But nathelesse, he gladded him in this,
He thought he miscompood had his day,
And saide, "I understand have all amiss,
For thilke night I leest Creseide say,
She sayd, 'I shall ben here, if that I may,
Ere that the Moone, O dere herte swete,
The Lion passe out of this Ariste."

"For which she may yet hold all her behest,"
And on the morrow unto the yate he went,
And up and doune, by west and eke by east
Upon the walles made he many a went,
But all for naught, his hope alway him bles,
For which at night, in sorow and sighe sore,
He went him home, withouten any more.

This hope all cleave out of his herte fled,
He ne hath wheroun now longer for to hang,
But for the paine him thought his herte bled,
So were his throwes sharp, and wonder strang,
For whan he saw that she abode so long,
He mist what he judgen of it might,
Sene she hath broken that she hizz beight.

The thirde, fourth, fift, and sixt day
After the dayes tenne, of which I told,
Betwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somewhat trustyng on her hertes old,
But whan he saw she tolde her terme hold,
He can now sene none other remedie,
But for to shape him sone for to die.

Therwith the wicked spirit, God us blesse,
Which that men clepen woode jealousye,
Gan in him crepe, in all this hevynesse,
For which because he wold some die,
He ne eat ne dronke fur his melancholie,
And eke from every company he fled,
This was the life that all this tyme he led.

He se defaite was, that no maner man,
Unmeth he might knowen there he went,
So was he leane, and thereto pale and wan,
And feeble, that he walketh by potent,
And with his ire he thus himselfe shent:
But who so asked him wherof him smart,
He sayd, his harme was all about his herte.

Priam full oft, and eke his mother dere,
His bretherne and his susteren gan him frais
Why he so sorrowfull was in all his chere,
And what thing was the cause of all his pain?
But all for naught, he nolde his cause plain,
But sayd, he felt a grievous maladie
About his herte, and faise he wold die.

So on a day he laid him down to slepe,
And so befell, that in slepe him thought,
That in a forrest fast he walked to wepe
For love of her that him these paines wrought,
And up and doune as he that forrest sought,
He met he saw a bore, with tuskes great,
That slept ayenst the bright Sennes heat.

And by this bore, fast in her armes fold
Lay kissing aye his lady bright Creseide,
For sorrow of which, whan he it gan behold,
And for despite, out of his slepe he breide,
And louds he cried on Pandarus, and seide,
"O Pandarus, now know I crop and root,
I am but dead, there nis noon other boot.

"My lady bright Creseide hath me betrayed,
In whom I trusted most of any wight,
She elsewhere hath now her herte apaid,
The blisfull goddes, through hir greaite might,
Have in my dreame ishowed it full right,
Thus in my dreame Creseide have I behold,"
And all this thing to Pandarus he told.

"O my Creseide, alas, what subtilite?
What news lost? what beauty? what science?
What wrath of juste cause have ye to me?
What guilt of me? what fell experience?
Beth me rafte alas thine advertence?
O trust, O faith, O depe assurance,
Who hath me raft Creseide, all my pleasance?"

"Alas, why let I you from hence go?
For which well nigh out of ray wit I breide,
Who shall now trow on any othes mo?
God wote I wend, O lady bright Creseide,
That every word was gospel that ye seide,
But who may bet beguile, if him list,
That be on whom men women best to trist?"

"What shall I done, my Pandarus, alas?
I fele now so sharpe a nerve paine,
Sens that there is no remedy in this case,
That bet were it I with mine bondes twaine
My selven slow thus alway thus to plaime,
For throgth the death my wo shuld have an end,
There every day with life my self I shand."

Pandarus answerde and said, "Alas the while
That I was borne, have I nat aied er this,
That dreames many a manner man beguile?
And why? For folke expounden hem amis:
How darest thou saine that false thy lady is,
For aye dreame, right for thine own drede,
Let be this thought, thou canst no dreames rede."

"Peraventure there thou dreamest of this bore,
It may so be that it may signide
Her father, which that old is and ake bore,
Aye the sunne lieth on point to die,
And she for sorow ginneth wepe and drie,
And kneeth him, there he lieth on the ground,
Thus shuldest thou thy dreame aright expound."

"How might I then doon?" (quod Troilus)
"To know of this; yea were never so lite?"
"Now sayst thou wisely?" (quod this Pandarus)
"My rede is this, sens thou canst well endite,
That hastily a letter thou her write,
Through which thou shalt well bringen about
To know a sooth of that thou art in dout."

"And see now why: for this dare I well saiz,
That if so is, that she untrue be,
I cannot trowen that she will write again,
And if she write, thou shalt full soon see,
As whether she hath any liberte

To come ayen, or els in some clause
If she be let, she wolle assigne a cause.

"Thou hast not written to her sens she went,
Nor she to thee, and this I durst lay,
There may such cause ben in her entent,
That hardly thou wolt thy selven say,
That her abode the best is for you tway:
Now write her than, and thou shalt fele some
A sooth of all, there is no more to done."

THE COPY OF THE LETTER.

"Right fresh flour, whose I have ben and shall,
Withouten part of elsewhere servise,
With herte, body, life, lust, thought, and all,
I wofull wight in every humble wise
That tong can tell, or herte may devise,
As oft as matter occupieth place,
Me recommaund unto your noble grace.

"Liketh it you to weten, sweete herte,
As ye well know, how long time agoon
That ye me left in aspre paines smart,
Whan that ye went, of which yet bote now
Have I nou had, but ever worse bigon,
Pro day to day am I, and so mote dwell,
While it you list, of wele and wo my well.

"For which to you, with dredefull herte trow,
I write (as he that sorrow driveth to write)
My wo, that every honre encreasech now,
Complaing as I dare, or can excite,
And that defaced is, that may ye wite,
The teares, which that from mine eyes rain,
That wulden speke, if that they durst, and plain.

"You first beseech I, that your eyen elere
To looke on this defouled ye nat bokl:
And over all this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wolle vouchsafe this letter to behold,
And by the cause eke of my cares cold,
That sleeth my wit, if sought amis me start,
Foryeve it me, mine owne sweet herte."

"If any servaunt durst or ought of right
Upon his lady pitoually complaine,
Than wene I that I ought be that wight,
Considred this, that ye these monthes twaine
Have taried, there ye saiden sooth to saine,
But terme daies ye nolde in hoste sojourne,
But in two monthes yet ye not retourne."

"But for as much as me mote nedes like
All that you list, I dare nat plaime more,
But humbly, with sorowfull sighes sike,
You right I mine vurestie sorowes sore,
Pro day to day, desiring evermore
To knowen fully, if your will it were,
How ye have fared and don while ye be there."

" Whome welfare and heale eke God increas
In honour such, that upward in degree
It grow alway, so that it never cease,
Right as your herte eye can, my lady free,
Devise, I pray to God so mote it be,
And graunt it, that you soone vpon me rew,
As wisely as in all I am to you trew.

" And if you liketh knownen of the fare
Of me, whose wo ther may no wight discrive,
I can no more, but chest of every care,
At writing of this letter I was on live,
All redy out my wofull ghost to drive,
Which I delay, and hold him yet in bond,
Upon the sight of matter of your soond.

" Mine eyen two, in valne with which I see,
Of sorowfull teres salt arne wosen wellis,
My song in plaint of mine adversite,
My good in harm, mine ease eke wosen Hell is,
My joy in wo, I can sey now nought ellis,
But tourned is, for which my life I warie,
Every joy or ease in his contrarie.

" Which with you coming home ayen to Troy
Ye may redresse, and more a thousand sith,
Than ever I had increasen in me joy,
For was there never herte yet so blithe
To save his life, as I shall ben as swithe
As I you see, and though no manner routh
Can mesen you, yet thinketh on your trowth.

" And if so be my gilt bath death deserved,
Or if you list no more vpon me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Beseech I you, mine owne lady free,
That hereupon ye woulde write me
For love of God, my right lodesterre,
That death may make an end of al my werra.

" If other cause might doth you for to dwell,
That with your letter ye may me recomfort,
For though to me your absence is an Hell,
With patience I wolle my wo comfort,
And with your letter of hope I wolle disport:
Now writeth, swete, and let me thus nat plaine,
With hope or death delivereth me fro paine.

" Iwis, mine owne dere herte trew,
I wote that whan ye next vpon me see,
So lost have I mine heale and eke mine hew,
Creseide shall not come knownen me,
Iwis, mine hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth aye mine herte to behold
Your beaute, that vnneth my life I hold.

" I say no more, all have I for to sey
To you well more than I fell may,
But whether that ye do me live or dey,
Yet pray I God so yere you right good day,
And fareth well, goodly faire fresh May,
As ye that life or death me may commaund,
And to your trowth aye I me recommaund.

" With heale such, that but ye yepen me
The same heale, I shall none heale have,
In you lieth, whan you list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shal my grave,
And in you my life, in you might for to save
Me fro disease of all my pynes smart,
And fare now well, mine owne sweet herte.

" La' voster T."

This letter forth ~~was~~ sent vnto Creseide,
Of which her answer in effect was this,
Full pitously she wrote ayen, and seide,
That all so soome as she might wis,
She woulde come, and ameed all that was said,
And finally, she wrote and said thus,
She woulde come, ye, but she mist whan.

But in her letter made she such feints,
That wonder was, and swore she loved him best,
Of which he found but bottomlesse bents.
But Troilus thou mayst now east and west
Pipe in an iuie leafe, if that thou list:
Thus goth the world, God shild vs fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meaneth trowth avoide.

Excresen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for tarryng of Creseide,
And leasen gan his hope and eke his might,
For which all doon he in his bedde him leide,
He ne eat, dronke, ne slept, ne worde seide,
Imagining aye that she was unkind,
For which wel nigh he went out of his mind.

This dreme, of which I told have she before,
May never come out of his remembrance,
He thought aye well he had his lady love,
And that loves, of his purveyaunce,
Him shewed had in sleepe the signifaunce
Of her vntrowth, and his disaventure,
And that the bore was shewed him in figure.

For which he for Sibilis his suster went,
That called was Cassandra eke all about,
And all his dreame he told her ere he stent,
And her besought assoilen him the doot
Of the strong bore, with trakes stout,
And finally, within a little stound,
Cassandra him gan thus his dreame expound.

She gan first smile, and said, " O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this dearest to know,
Thou must a fewe of old stories here,
To purpose how that fortune overthrow
Hath kerdie old, through which within a thow
Thou shalt this bore know, and of what kind
He comen is, as men in bookes find.

" Diane, which that wroth was and in ire,
For Greekes nolde done her sacrifice,
Ne incens vpon her altar set on fire,
She for that Greekes gon her so dispise,
Wrake her in a wonder cruelle wise,
For with a bore as great as one in stall
She made vp frets her come and vines all.

" To slea the bore was all the country rained,
Among whiche there came this bore to us
A maid, one of this world the best prained,
And Meleager, lord of that countre:
He loved so this freche maiden free,
That with his manhood, ere he woulde stent,
This bore he slough, and her the hed he sent.

" Of whiche, as old bookes tellen vs,
There rose a conteke and a great cavie,
And of this lord descended Tereus
By line, or els old bookes he:
But how this Meleager gan to die
Through his mother, wolle I you not tell,
For all too long it were for to dwell."

She told eke how Tidesus, ere she stent,
Unto the strong cite of Thebes
(To claimen kingdome of the cite) went
For his fellowe dan Polinices,
Of which the brother dan Ethiocles
Full wrongfully of Thebes held the strength.
This told she by processe all by length.

She told eke how Hemonides start,
Whan Tidesus slough fiftie knightes stout,
She told eke all the prophesies by herte,
And how that seven kinges with hir rout
Besieged the cite all about,
And of the holy serpent, and the well;
And of the furies all she gan him tell.

Associat profugus Tidesus primo Polynicem,
Tidesus ligatum docet insidiasque secundo,
Tertius Hemoniden canit, et vatem latitantem,
Quartus habet reges incuntes prælia septem,
Lemniadum furie quinto narratur et anguis,
Archemori bustum sexto ludique sequuntur.
Dat Thebis vatem Graiorum septimus umbris,
Octavo cecidit Tidesus, æges, vita Pelagum,
Hippomedon nono moritur cum Parthenopeo,
Palaine percussus decimo Capeneus superatur,
Undecimo perimunt sese per vulnera fratres,
Argivam sententiam, narrat duodenus et ignem.

Of Archimorice burying, and the plaies,
And how Amphionar fill through the ground,
How Tidesus was alaine, lord of Argis,
And how Hippomedon in a little stound
Was drest, and dead Parthenope of wound,
And also how Campanus the proud
With thunder dint was alaine, that cried loud.

She gan eke tell him how that either brother
Ethiocles and Polinices also
At a scarmishe eke of hem slouth other,
And of Argives weeping and her mo,
And how the toun was brent she told eke this,
And the descended down from icesse old
To Diomedes, and thus she spake and told.

" This ilke bore betokeneth Diomedes,
Tidesus son, that down descended is
Fro Meleager, that made the bore to blede,
And thy lady, where so she be wis,
This Diomedes her herte hath, and she is his:
Weep if thou wilt, or leave, for out of dout
This Diomedes is in, and thou art out."

" Thou sayst not sooth," (quod he) " thou sorceresse,
With all thy fals ghost of prophesie,
Thou weneest been a great devineresse,
Now seest thou nat this foole of fantasie,
Paimen her on ladies for to lie,
Away," (quod he) " there Joves yve the sorow,
That shalt be fals peraventure yet to morow."

" As well thou mightest lien on good Alceste,
That was of creatures (but men lie)
That ever wera, kindest, and the best,
For whan her husband was in jeopardy
To die himselfe, but if she would die,
She chose for him to die, and gon to Hell,
And starfe anon, as us the bookes tell."

Cassandre goeth, and he with cruel herte
Foryate his wo, for anger of his spech,
And fro his bedde all suddainly he start,
As though a hole him had I made a leech,
And day by day he can requaire and sech
A sooth of this, with all his full cure,
And thus he driveth forth his aventure.

Fortune which that permutacion
Of all things hath, as it is her committed,
Through purveyaunce and disposition
Of high Jove, as reignes shall ben fitted
Fro folk to folk, or whan they shad ben smitted,
Gan pull away the feathers bright of Troy
Fro day to day till they ben bare of joy.

Among all this, the floe of the leopardie
Of Hector gan approchen wonder blive,
The fate would his soule shoulde vnbodie,
And shapen had a meane it out to drive,
Ayenest which fate him helpeth not to strive,
But on a day to fighten gan he wend,
At which alas, he caught his lives end.

For which me thinketh every maner sight
That hauntheth armes, ought to bewailé
The death of him that was so noble a knight:
For as he drough a king by thausentaile
Unware of this, Achilles through the maile
And through the bodie gan him for to rive,
And thus the worthy knight was rest of live.

For whom, as old bookes tellen us,
Was made such wo, that tong it may nat tell,
And namely, the sorow of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse the well,
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwell,
That what for sorow, love, and for unrest,
Full oft a day he had his herte brest.

But nathelesse, tho he gon him despaire,
And drede aye that his lady was untrue,
Yet aye on her his herte gan repaire,
And ad these lovers done, he sought aye new
To get ayen Creseide bright of hew,
And in his herte he went her excusing,
That Calcas caused all her tarying.

And oft time he was in purpose great,
Himselven like a pilgrime to disguise,
To seeme her, but he may not counterfeit,
To ben unknowen of folke that wera wise,
Ne find excuse aright that may suffice,
If he among the Grekes knowen wera,
For which he wept full oft many a tere.

To her he wrote yet oft time all new,
Full pitously, he left it nat for slouth,
Beseeching her, sens that he was true,
That she wol coma ayen, and hold her trowth,
For which Creseide upon a day for routh,
I take it so, touching all this matere,
Wrote him ayen, and said as ye may here.

" Cupides sonne, ensample of goodlihed,
O swerde of knighthood, soars of gentilesse,
How might a wight in torment and in drede,
And heilelesse, you send as yet gladnesse,
I hertelesse, I sicke, I in distresse,
Sens ye with me, nor I with you may deale,
You neither send I herte may nor heale."

" Your letters fill the paper all iplained,
Conceivd hath mine hertes pite,
I have eke scene with teares all depainted,
Your letter, and how that ye requiren me
To come ayen, which yet ye may not be,
But why, leest that this letter founden were,
No mention ne make I now for fere.

" Grevous to me (God wote) is your unrest,
Your hast, and that the Goddess ordinance
It seemeth nat ye take it for the best,
Nor other thing nis in your remembrance,
As thinketh me, but only your pleasure,
But both not wroth, and that I you beseech,
For that I tary is all for wicked spech.

" For I have heard well more than I wend
Touching us two, how thinges have istond,
Which I shall with disingling amend,
And both nat wroth, I have eke understond,
How ye ne do but holden me in bond,
But now no force, I can nat in you gesse,
But all trouthe and all gentleness.

" Come I wold, bot yet in such disjout
I stond as now, that what yere or what day
That this shall be, that can I nat appoint,
But in effect I pray you as I may
Of your good word, and of your friendship eye,
For truly while that my life may dure,
As for a friend ye may in me assure.

" Yet pray I you, no evill ye ne take
That it is short which that I to you write,
I dare nat there I am well letters make,
Ne never yet ne could I well endite,
Eke great effect, men write in place lite,
Thought is all, and nat the letters space,
And fareth well, God have you in his grace.

" *La vostra C.*"

This Troilus thought this letter all straunge
Whan he it saw, and sorrowfully he sight,
Him thought it like a kensels of escheunge,
But finally he full ne trowen might,
That she ne would him holden that she hight,
For with ful evell will list him to leve,
That loveth well in such case, though him greve.

But nathelesse, men seine that at the last,
For any thing, men shall the sootbe see,
And such a case betide, and that as fast,
That Troilus well understood that she
Was nat so kind as that her ought to be,
And finally, he wote now out of dout,
That all is lost that he hath ben about.

Stood on a day in his melancholy
This Troilus, and in suspeticoun
Of her, for whom he wend to dye,
And so befell, that throughout Troie town;
As was the guise, iborne was up and down
A manner cote armoure, as with the story,
Beforus Deiphebe, maigrie of his victory.

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollins,
Deiphebe it hath rent fro Diomedes
The same day, and whan this Troilus
It saw, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avising of the length and of the brede,
And all the werke, but as he gan behold,
Full sodkinly his herte geh to cold.

As he that on the coler found withis
A brooch, that he Cresseide yave at morow
That she from Troy must nedes twin,
In remembrance of biht, and of his sorow,
And she him laid ayen her faith to borow,
To keepe it aye: but now full well he wist,
His lady nas no longer on to trist.

He goth him home, and gan full soome soad
For Pandarus, and all this newe chaunce,
And of this brooch, he told him wode and end,
Complaining of her hertes variance,
His longe love, his trouthe, and his pemaunce,
And after Death, without words more,
Full fast he cried, his rest him to restore.

Than spake he thus, " O lady mine Cresseide,
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
Where is your love, where is your trouthe?" he seide,
" Of Diomedes have ye now all the fast?
Alas, I would have trowed at the least,
That sene ye nolde in trouthe to me stond,
That ye thus nolde have holden me in bond.

" Who shall now trowen on any othes me?
Alas I never would have wend ere this,
That ye, Cresseide, could have changed so,
Ne bot I had aght, and done amis;
So cruell wend I nat your herte wis,
To ales me thus, alas your name of trouthe
Is now fordone, and that is all my routh.

" Was there none other broche you list lete,
To feast with your new love," (quod he)
" But thilke broche that I with teres wete
You yave, as for a remembrance of me?
None other cause alas, ne had ye,
But for dispite, and eke for that ye ment
All utterly to shewen your entent.

" Through which I see, that cleue out of your mind
Ye have me cast, and I ne can nor may
For all this world within mine herte find,
To unloven you a quarter of a day:
In cursed time I borne was, welaway,
That you that done me all this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

" Now God" (quod he) " me sende yet the grace,
That I may meten with this Diomedes,
And truly, if I have might and space,
Yet shall I make I hope his sides blede:
Now God" (quod he) " that oughtest taken hede
To forthren trouthe, and wronges to prouice,
Why nilt thou don a vengeance of this vice.

" O Pandarus, that in dremes for to trist
Me blamed hast, and wost art oft upreide,
Now mayst thou seen thy self, if that the list,
How trow is now thy noon, bright Cresseide:
In suodry formes (God it wote)" he seide,
" The gods shewen both joy and tene
In slepe, and by my dreame it is now sene.

" And certainly, withouten more spech,
From henceforth, as ferforth as I may,
Mine owne death in armes wold I seech,
I retche nat how soone be the day,
But truly Cresseide, sweet Maie,
Whom I have with all my might served,
That ye thus done, I have it nat deserved."

This Pandarus, that all these things herd,
And wiste well he said a sooth of this,
He nat a word ayes to him answerd,
For sorie of his friends sorrow he is,
And shame for his pece hath done amis,
And stant astonied of these causes twey,
As still as stone, o word he could be sey.

But at the last, thus he speake and seide,
" My brother dere, I may do thes no more,
What should I seime, I hate iwis Creseide,
And God it wote, I wull hate her evermore :
And that thou use besoughtest done of yore,
Having unto mine honour ne my rest
Right no regard, I did all that thee lest.

" If I did aught that might liken thee,
It is me lefe, and of this treason now,
God wote that it a sorrow is to me,
And dredelesse, for heres ease of you,
Right false I would amend it, wist I how :
And fro this world, Almighty God I pray
Deliver her soone, I can no more say."

Great was the sorow and plaint of Troilus,
Bet forth her course fortune aye gan hold,
Creseide loveth the some of Tideus,
And Troilus mote wepe in cares cold,
Sach is this world, who so it can behold,
In eche estate is little heres rest,
God leve vs to take it for the best.

In many cruell bataile out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
(As men may in these old bookes rede)
Was seen his knighthood and his great might,
And dredelesse his ire day and night
Fell cruelly the Grekes aye about,
And alway most this Diomed, he sought.

And oft time (I finde) that they mette
With bloody strokes, and with wordes great,
Assaying how hir speakes were whette,
And God it wote, with many a cruell heat
Gan Troilus vpon his belme to beat,
But nathelesse, fortune it naught he would
Of others hand that either dien should.

And if I had itaken for to write
The armes of this ilke worthy soan,
Then would I of his batailles endite,
And for that I to written first began
Of his lye, I have said as I can
His worthy deedes, who so list hem bere,
Rede Dares, he can tell hem all here.

Beauchamp every lady bright of hew,
And every gentil woman, what she be,
Albeit that Creseide was untrew,
That for that gilt ye be nat wroth with me,
Ye sey her gilt in other bookes see,
And gladder I would write, if you list,
Penelope trowth, and good Alcote.

He sey I nat this all onely for these men,
But most for women that betrayed be
Thurgh false folk, God yeve hem sorow, amen,
That with hir great wit and subtilite
Betraye you : and this meveth me
To speake, and in effect you all I pray
Bet) were of men, and beauchamp what I say.

Go, little booke, go, my little tregedie,
There God my maker yet ere that I die,
So send me might to make some comedie :
But little booke, make thou none envie,
But subject beo unto all poesie,
And kisse the steps whereas thou seest page
Of Uergil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, and Stace.

And for there is so great diversite
In English, and in writing of our tong,
So pray I to God, that none miswrite thee,
Ne the misse metre, for default of tong :
And redde where so thou be, or eles song,
That thou be vnderstand, God I beseech,
But yet to purpose of my rather speech.

The wrath (as I began you for to sey)
Of Troilus, the Greekes boughten dere,
For thousandes his houes madden day,
As he that was withouten any pere,
Save in his time Hector, as I can here,
But welaway, save onely Goddes will,
Dispitously him slough the fierce Achill.

And when that he was slain in this manere,
His light ghoete full blisfully is went
Up to the hollownesse of the seventh sphere,
In his place leting everiche element,
And there he saw with full avisement
The errantle starres, herkening armonie,
With sowmes full of Hevrens melodie.

And down from thence, fast he gan arise
This little spot of earth, that with the see
Embraced is, and fully gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanite
To respect of the plaine felicitye
That is in Heaven above : and at the last,
There he was slaine, his looking down he cast.

And in himselfe he lough, right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his death so fast,
And damped all our werkes that followeth so
The blinde lust, whiche that may nat last,
And shoulden all our herte on Heaven cast,
And forth he went, shortly for to tell,
There as Mercurie sorted him to dwell.

Such fine hath to this Troilus for love,
Such fine hath all his great worthinesse,
Such fine hath bis estate royall above,
Such fine his lust, such fine hath his noblesse,
Such fine hath false worldes brutelnesse,
And thus began his loving of Creseide,
As I have told, and in this wise he seide.

O young fresh falkes, he ov' the,
In which that love vp groweth with your age,
Repairth home from worldly vanite,
And of your hertes vp casteth the visage
To thilke God, that after his image
You made, and thinketh all us but a faire,
This world, that passeth gone, as fowres faire.

And loveth him the which that right for love
Upon a croose our soules for to by,
First starfe and rose, and sit in Heven above,
For he nil falsen no wight dare I sey,
That wol his herte all wholly on him ley,
And sent he best to love is and most mecke,
What needeth fained loyes for to seeke.

Lo here of painems cursed olde rites,
Lo here what all hir goddes may availe,
Lo here this wretched worldes appetites,
Lo here the fine and guerdon for travaile,
Of Jove, Apollo, of Mars, and such raskalle,
Lo here the forme of olde clerkes spech
In poetrie, if ye hir bookes seech.

O morall Gower, this booke I direct
To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchsafe there need is, to correct,
Of your benignities and zeales good,
And to the soothfast Christ that starfe on rood,
With all mine herte of mercy ever I pray,
And to the Lord aright, thus I speake and say,

Thou one, two, and three, eterne on live,
That reignest aje in thre, two, and one,
Uncircumscrip, and all maist circumscribe,
Us from visible and invisible fone
Defend, and to thy mercy everichone,
So make vs, Jesus, to thy mercy digne,
For love of maide, and mother thine benigne.

THE END OF THE FIFTH AND LAST BOOKE OF TROILUS.

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESEIDE.

A sowl season till a carefull dite,
Should correspond, and be equivocal,
Right so it was when I began to write
This tragedy, the weder right fervent,
When Aries in middes of the Leat,
Showres of hail gan fro the north discepd,
That scantly fro the cold I might me defend.

Yet nevertheless within mine orature
I stode, when Titan had his beames bright
Withdrawen down, and scyled vnder cure,
And faire Venus the beaute of the night,
Upraise, and sette vnto the weate ful right,
Her golden face, in opposition
Of god Phebus, direct descending doyn.

Throughout the glasse her beames brast so faire,
That I might see on every side me by,
The northren winde had purified the aire,
And shodde his misty cloudes fro the skie:
The froste frosed, the blastes bitterly
Fro pole Artike come whisking loud and shrill,
And caused me remove ayenat my will.

For I trusted that Uenus, loves quene,
To whom sometime I hight obedience,
My faded herte, of love she would make grece,
And ther vpon with humble reverence,
I thought to pray her high magnificence,
But for great coide as than I letted was,
And in my chambre to the fire can pas.

Though love be hote, yet in a man of age,
It kindleth nat so soone as in youthhed,
Of whom the blood is flowing in a rage,
And in the old, the courage dull and dead,
Of which the fire outward is best reseed,
To help by phisike where that nature failed,
I am expert, for both I have assailed.

I made the fire, and beaked me aboute,
Than toke I drinke my spirites to comfort,
And armed me wel fro the colde theroute;
To cutte the winter night and make it short
I toke a queare, and left all other sport,
Written by worthy Chaucer glorious,
Of faire Creseide, and lusty Troilus.

And there I found, after that Diomedes
Received had that lady bright of bewe,
How Troilus nere out of his witta abroad,
And wepte sore, with visage pale of bewe:
For which wanhope his teares gan renewe,
While Esperus rejoysed him againe:
Thus while in joy be lived, and while in paine.

Of her behest he had great comforting,
Trusting to Troy that she wold make retour,
Which he desired most of al earthly thing,
For why she was his onely paramour:
But when he saw passed both day and hour
Of her gainescome, in sorow can oppress
His wofull herte, in care and hevinesse.

Of his distresse me needeth nat reberse,
For worthy Chaucer in that same booke,
In goodly termes, and in joly verse,
Compiled hath his cares, who wil looke:
To breke my sleepe another queare I toke,
In which I founde the fatal destiny
Of faire Creseide, which ended wretchedly.

Who wote if al that Chaucer wrote, was true?
Nor I wote nat if this narracion
Be authorised, or forged of the newe,
Of some poete by his invencion,
Made to report the lamentacion,
And wofull end of this lusty Creseide,
And what distresse she was in or the deide.

When Diomedes had al his appetite
And more fulfilled of this faire lady,
Upon another sette was all his delite,
And send to her a libel repudy,
And her excluded fro his company:
Then desolate she walked up and downe,
As some men saine, in the court as courtoise.

O fair Creseide, the flour and a per se
Of Troy and Grece, how were thou fortunat,
To change in filth all thy feminite,
And be with fleshy lust so maculate,
And go among the Grekes early and late,
So gijotlike, taking thy foul pleasaunce?
I have pite thee should fall such mischaunce.

Yet nevertheless, what ever men deme or say
In scornfull language of thy brutelnesse,
I shal excuse, as ferforth as I may,
Thy womanhed, thy wisdom and fairnesse:
The which fortune hath put to such distresse,
As her pleased, and nothing through the gilt
Of thee, through wicked laggage to be spik.

This faire lady on this wise destinate
Of al comfort and consolacion,
Right prively without fellowship or refute,
Disheelde, passed out of the town
A mile or two vnto a mansoun,
Billed full gale, wher her father Calcas
Which than among the Grekes dwelling was.

When her he saw, the cause he gan enquire
Of her coming: she said sighing full sore,
" Fro Diomedes had gotten his desire,
His woe very and would of me no more."
Good Calcas, " Daughter, weep thou nat therefore,
Peraventure al cometh for the best,
Welcome to me thou art full dere a guest."

This old Calcas, after the law was tho,
Was keeper of the temple as a priest,
In which Venus and her sonne Cupido
Were honoured, and this chambre was best,
To which Creseide with hale enewed in best,
Used to passe, her prayers for to say,
While at the last vpon a solempne day,

As custome was, the people ferre and nere
Before the noote vnto the temple went,
With sacrifice devout in their manere,
But still Creseide hies in her entent,
Into the church would nat her selfe present,
For giving of the people any deeming,
Of her expulse fro Diomedes the king.

But passed into a secrets oratore,
Where she might wepe her wofull deathie,
Behind her backe she closed fast the dore,
And on her knees bare fel doune in hir,
Upon Venus and Cupide angerly
She cried out, and said in this wise,
" Alas that ever I made you sacrifice.

" Ye gave me ones a divine responsaile,
That I should be the floure of love in Troy,
Now am I made an unworthy outwaile,
And al in care translated is my joy:
Who shal me guide, who shal me now conioice,
Sith I fro Diomedes, and noble Troitans
Am cleere excluded, as abiect, odious?"

" O false Cupide, none is to wite but thou
And the mother of love, that blind goddece,
Ye caused me vnderstand alway and trow
The seede of love was sowne on my face,
And aie grow geue through your sople grace;
But now alas, that seede with frost is Elaine,
And I fro lovers left and all foraine."

When was this said, down in an extasie,
Rasheed in spirite, in a dreame she fell,
And by appurance herde where she did lie,
Cupide the king tinging a silver bell,
Which men might here fro Heven into Hell:
At whose sound before Cupide aperes
The seven planets descending fro their speres,

Whiche hath power of al thing generable,
To rule and sters by their great influence,
Weder and winde, and course variable:
And first of all Saturne gave his sentence,
Which gave to Cupide liuel reverensce,
But as a boistous chorle in his manere,
Came crabbedly with anstrime lake and chere.

His face frowned, his lere was like the ledc,
His teeth chattered, and shenored with the chip,
His eien drooped hole soaken in his heed,
Out at his nose the mildrop fast gan rin,
With lippen blo, and chokes leane and thin,
The mecheles that fro his hear down hong
Was wonder great, and as a spere as tong.

Attour his belte his liart lockes laie,
Feltred vufaire, over fret with frostes hooce,
His garment and his gate ful gay of graie,
His widdred wede fro him the wind out wore,
A boistous bowe within his honde he bore,
Under his girle a fashe of felowc baine,
Foddred with ire, and heeded with holstaine.

Then Jupiter right faire and amiable,
God of the sterres in the firmament,
And norice to all thing generable,
Fro his father Saturne farre different,
With burly face, and browes bright and brest,
Upon his heed a garland wooders gair,
Of flours faire, as it had been in Maie.

His voice was clere, as cristal was his eien,
As golden wier so glittering was his beare,
His garment and his gate ful gay of greie,
With golden listes gilts on every gear,
A borly brande about his middle he beare,
And in his right hand he had a grouden spere,
Of his father, the wrothe fro vs to bere.

Next after him came Mars, the god of ire,
Of strife, debate, and all discensioun,
To chide and fight, as fierce as any fir,
In harde harness hewmonde and habergoun,
And on his haunch a rusty fel fauchoun,
And in his hand he had a rusty sword,
Writhing his face, with many angry word.

Shaking his brande, before Cupide he come
With reed visage, and grisly glowing eien,
And at his mouth a blubber stode of forme,
Like to a bore, whetting his tuskes keene,
Right talsure like, but temperance in tene,
An borne blew with many boustous bragge,
Which al this world with war hath made to wagge.

Then fair Phebus, lanterns and lamps of light,
Of man and beast, both fruit and flourishing,
Tender norice, and banisher of night,
And of the world, causing by his moving
And influence, life in al earthly thing,
Without comfort of whom of force to naught
Must go die, that all this worlde hath wrought.

As king royall, he rode vpon a chare,
The which Phiton sometime gided varight,
The brightnesse of his face when it was bare,
Non might behold, for peruing of his sight:
This golden carts with fyre beames bright,
Foure yoked stades full different of hewe,
Bout bait or tiring, through the spheres drew.

The first was sord, with mane as reed as rose
Called Eoye into the Orient,
The second stode to name, hight Ethiose,
Whitely and pale, and somdele ascendent,
The third Furnes, right hote and eke fervent,
The fourth was blacke, called Phlegone,
Which rolleth Phebus down into the see.

Venus was there present, that goddes gay,
Her soomes quarrel to defend, and make
Her owne complaint, cladde in a nice aray
The one half greene, thother half sable blake
White beey as gold, kombet and shode abake,
But in her face seemed great variance,
While partie truth, and whiles inconstaunce,

Under smiling she was dissimulate,
Provocative with blinkes amorous,
And sodainly chaunged and alterate,
Angry, as any serpent venomous :
Right pangitive with wordes odious,
Thus variant she was who liste take kepe,
With one eie laugh, and with the other wepe :

In tokening that all fleshy paramour,
Which Venus hath in rule and governaunce,
Is sometime swete, sometime bitter and sour,
Right vnstable and ful of variaunce,
Minged with careful joy and false pleasaunce,
Now hote, now cold, now blith, now ful of wo,
Now grene as lefe, now wided and ago.

With boke in hand, than come Mercurious
Right eloquent and ful of rethorice,
With polite termes and delicious,
With penne and iuke to report al medie,
Setting songes, and singing merely,
His hode was reed beclad attour his crown,
Like til a poete of the old famous.

Boxes he bare with fine electuaris,
And sugred siropes for digestion,
Spices belonging to the potiquares,
With many holsome swete confection :
Doctor in phisike cleide in a scarlet gown,
And furred well as such one ought to be,
Honest and good, and nat a wordis cooth lip.

Next after him come lady Sinthis,
The last of all, and swiftest in her sphere,
Of colour blake, besked with hornes twa,
And in the night she listeth best tapere,
Have as the lerd, of colour nothing clere,
For al the light she boroweth at her brother
Titan, for of her self she hath none other.

Her gite was gray and ful of spottes blake,
And on her brest a charke painted full green,
Bearing a busbe of thornes on his baka,
Which for his theft might crime no ner the Heven :
Thus when they gadred were the goddes seven,
Mercurius they chased with one assent,
To be forespaker in the parliament.

Who had ben there and liking for to here
His faconde tongue and termes exquisite,
Of rethorike the practike he might here,
In brefe sermon, a pregnant sentence write :
Before Cupide valing his cappe a lite,
Spex is the cause of that vocacion,
And he anon shewde his entencion.

"Lo," (quod Cupide) "who wol blaspheme the name
Of his owne god, either in word or dede :
To all goddes he doeth both losse and shame
And should have bitter paines to his mede :
I saye this by yonder wretch Cresside,
The which through me was sometime flour of love ;
Me and my mother she statoly can reprove.

"Saying, of her great infelicité
I was the cause, and my mother Venus
She called a blinde goddes and might nat se,
With sclauder and defame injurious ;
Thou a her living vniciane and lecherous,
She would retorte in me and my mother,
To whom I sherde my grace above al other.

"And sithe ye are al seven delicate,
Partecipant of divine sapience,
This great injury don to our bis estate,
Me think with pain we should make recompense ;
Was never to goddes done such violence,
As wel for you as for my selfe I say,
Therefore go helpe to revenge I you pray."

Mercurius to Cupide gave answers
And said, "Sir king, my counsaile is that ye
Refferre you to the best planet here,
And take to him the lowest of degre,
The paine of Cresside for to meddle,
As god Saturne with him take Sinthis,"
"I am content," (quod he) "to take they twa."

Than thus proceeded Saturne and the Moon,
When they the mater ripely had degest,
For the despite to Cupide that she had done,
And to Venus open and manifest,
In all her lyfe with payne to be oprest,
And torment sore, with sicknesses incurable,
And to all lovers be abhominable.

This doleful sentence Saturne take in hand,
And passed down where careful Cresside lay,
And on her heed he laide a frosty waide,
Than lawfully on this wise gan he say,
"Thy great fairnesse, and al thy beauty gay,
Thy wanton blood, and eke thy golden heere,
Here I exclude fro thee for evermore.

"I chaunge thy myrthe into melancholy,
Which is the smother of all pesiveness,
Thy moyster and thy hote, into coole and dry,
Thine insolence, thy play, and thy wantonnesse,
To great disease, thy pompe and thy richesse,
Into mortall sede and great pesurie,
Thou suffre shalt, and as a begger die."

O cruel Saturne, froward and angry,
Harde in thy deeme, and too malicious,
Of faire Cresside why hast thou no mercy,
Which was so swete, gentil and amorous ?
Withdraw thy sentence and be gracious,
As thou were never, so sheweth through thy dole,
A wrekeful sentence given on Cresside.

Than Sinthis, when Saturne past away,
Out of her seate descended down blyve,
And rood a bill on Cresside where she lay,
Containing this sentence diffinitive :
"Fro heale of body here I thee deprive,
And to thy sicknesses shal be no reouse,
But in dolour thy dayes to endure.

"Thy christal yens menged with blood I mak,
Thy voice so clere, vncpleasant heer and here,
Thy lusty loe overspred with spots blake,
And lumpes have appering in thy face,
Where thou comest eche man shall see the place,
Thus shalt thou go begging fro heere to heere
With cuppe and chapper like a Lazarus."

This doleful dreame, this vgly visoun
Brought till an end, Cresside fro it awoke,
And all that court and convocacion,
Unwashed away : than rood she vp and toke
A polished glass, and her shadow couth like,
And when she saw her visage so deformed,
If she in herte were wo, I me wite God wote.

Weping full sore, "Lo, what it is, (quod she)
With froward langage to more and sterc
Our crabbed goddes, and so is seen on me;
My blaspheming now have I bought full dere,
All yearthly joy and mirthe I set arere,
Alas this day, alas this wofull tide,
Whan I began with my goddes to chide."

Be this was sayd, a child came fro the hall
To warne Creseide the supper was redie,
First knocked at the doore, and eft couth cal,
"Madame, your father biddeth you cum in hie;
He hath marveille so long on grofe ye lie,
And saith your beades bethe to long sounde,
The goddes wote all your entent full wele."

(Quod she) "Faire child, go to my father dere
And pray him come to speake with me anon,"
And so he did, and sayd "Daughter, what chere?"
"Alas," (quod she) "father, my mirthe is gon,"
"How so?" (quod he) and she can all expone,
As I have told, the vengeance, and the wrake,
For her trespass, Cupide on her couth take.

He looked on her vgly lepers face,
The which before was white as lady floure,
Wringing his hands, oft times sayd alace
That he had lived to see that wofull houre:
For he knew well that there was no succour
To her sickness, and that doubled his pain:
Thus was ther care inow betwixt hem twin.

Whan they togider mourned had ful lang,
(Quod Creseide) "Father, I would nat be kend,
Therefore in secrete wise ye let me gang
To you hospitall at the toones end:
And thider some meate for charite me send,
To live vpon, for all mirthe in this yearth
Is fro me gone, such is my wicked wearch."

Whan in a mantill, and a bever hat,
With cuppe and clapper, wonder prively,
He opened a secrete gate and out therout
Conveid her, that no man shoud espie,
There to a village halfe a mile thereby,
Delivered her in at the spittell hous,
And daily sent her part of his almous.

Sum knew her well, and sum had no knowlege
Of her, because she was so deformate,
With biles blake overspred in her visage,
And her fayre colour faded and alterate:
Yet they presumed for her hie regrate,
And stil mourning, she was of noble kin,
With bitter will there they took her in.

The day passed, and Phebus went to rest,
The cloudes blake overheded all the skie,
God wote if Creseide were a sorrowfull guest,
Seing that vacouth fare and herborie:
Bot meate or drinke, she desired her to lie
In a darke corner of the hous skene,
And on this wise weping she made her mane.

THE COMPLAINT OF CRESEIDE.

"O sorre of sorrowe sonken into care,
O caitife Creseide now and evermore,
Gon is thy joy and all thy mirthe in yearth,
Of all blithnesses now art thou blake and bare
There is no salve may helpe thy sare,
Fell is thy fortune, wicked is thy werth,
Thy blisse is vanished and thy bale vnderde,
Under the great God if I graven ware,
Where men of Grece ne yet of Troie might herd.

"Where is thy chamber wantonly besoun,
With burly bedde and bankers brouded been,
Spices and wine to thy colation,
The cuppes all of gold and silver shene,
Thy swete meates served in platos cene,
With savery sauce of a good fashion,
Thy gay garments with many goodly gown,
Thy plemont larme pinned with golden penne?
All is arere thy great royall renoun.

"Where is thy garden with thy greces gay
And freshe floures, which the queene Floray
Had painted pleasantly in every way,
Where thou were wont full merrily in May
To walke, and take the dewe by it was day,
And heare the Merie and Mawise many one,
With ladies faire in carroling to gone,
And see the royall renkes in their ray?

"This leper lege take for thy goodly houre,
And for thy bed, take now a bonche of stro,
For wailed wise and meates thou had tho,
Take moulded bread, pirate, and silder course,
But cuppe and clapper is all now ago.

"My clere voice and my courtly carroling,
Is ranke as roke, full hidous heer and hacc
Deformed is the figure of my face,
To loke on it no people hath liking,
So sped in sight, I say with sore sighing
Lying emoug the leper folke alas.

"O ladies faire of Troy and Grece, attend
My fraile fortune, mine infelicitie,
My great mischief, which no man can amend,
And in your mind a mirror make of me:
As I am now paraventure that ye,
For all your might may come to the same end,
Or else worse, if any worse may be,
Beware therefore approches nere your end.

"Nought is your fairnesse but a fading floure,
Nought is your famous laude and his honour,
But winde infate in other memens cares,
Your rising redde to rotting shalt retoure,
Exemple make of me in your memore:
Which of such thinges wofull witness beares,
Al welth in yearth, as wind-away it weares,
Beware therefore approches nere your hour."

Thus chiding with her dreary distany,
Weping, she woke the night fro end to end,
But all in vaine her dole, her careful cry
Might not remedy, ne yet her mourning mend:
A leper lady rose, and to her wend,
And sayd, "Why spurnes thou again the wall,
To sice thy selfe, and mende nothing at all?"

" Sith that thy weping but doubleth thy wo,
I counsaile thee make vertue of a yede,
Go learne to clappe thy clapper to and fro,
And learne after the lawe of lepers lede."
There was no bote, but forthwith than she yede
Fro place to place, while cold and hunger sore
Compelled her to be a ranke beggore.

That same time of Troy the garnisoun,
Which had the chieftain worthy Troilus
Through jeopardy of warre had striken down,
Knights of Grece in nombre marvellous,
With great triumph, and laude victorious,
Again to Troy right royally they rode,
The way where Creseide with the leper stode.

Seeing that company come, al with o stevin
They gave a cry, and shoke cupps, " God spede,
Worthy lorde, for Goddes love of hevyn,
To us leper, part of your almose dede:"
Then to hir cry noble Troilus toke hede,
Having pite, nere by the place gan pas,
Wher Creseide sat, nat weting what she was.

Than ypon him she kest vp both her yezn,
And with a blinke it come in til his thought,
That he sometime her face before had sein,
But she was in such plite he knew her nought,
Yet than her loke into his minde he brought,
The swete visage, and amorous blenking,
Of faire Creseid, sometime his owne derling.

No wonder was, suppose in mind that he
Toke her figure so sope, and lo now why,
The idol of a thing in case may be
So depe enprinted in the fantasie,
That it deludeth the wittes outwardly,
And so apereth in forme and like estate,
Within the mynde, as it was figurate.

A spark of love than til his herte cooth spring,
And kindeled his body in a fire,
With hote fener, in swette, and trembling
Him tooke, while he was readie to expire,
To heare his shield his breast began to tere,
Within a while he changed many a hewe,
And nevertheles nat one an other knew.

For knightly pite and remorie
Of faire Creseide, a girdel gan he take,
A purs of gold and many a gait Jewell,
And in the skirt of Creseide down gan shake:
Then rode away, and nat a word he spak,
Pensive in herte while he came to the tounce,
And for great care oft sith almost fall doune.

The lepre folke to Creseide than couth draw,
To see she equal distributioun
Of the almose, but when the gold they saw,
Ech one to other pryncely gan soune,
And saide, " Yon lord hath more affectioun,
How ever it be, vnto yon Lazarous
Than to vs al, we know by his almous."

" What lord is you," (quod she) " have ye no fele,
That doeth to vs so great humanite?"
" Yes," (quod a lepre man) " I know him wele
Sir Troilus it is, a knight gentle and free."
Whan Creseide vnderstood that it was hee,
Stiffer than stele there sterte a bitter stound
Throughout her herte, and fill down to the ground.

Whan she, overcome with sighing sore and sad,
With many a carefull crië and cold nose,
" Now is my brest with stormy stoundes stad,
Wrapped in wo, wretchfull will of sue,"
Than fell in swoon ful oft or she would fone,
And ever in her swooning cried she thus,
" O false Creseide, and true knight Troilus.

" Thy love, thy laude, and all thy gentleness,
I counted small in my prosperite,
So effated I was in wantounesse,
And clambe ypon the sickell whele so bis,
All faith and love I promitted to thee,
Was in thy selfe fekkell and furious,
O false Creseide, and true knight Troilus.

" For love of me thou kept countenance,
Honest and chaste in conuersacion,
Of all women protectour and defence
Thou were, and helped their opinion:
My minde and fleshy foole affection
Was enclined to lustre lecherous,
Fie false Creseide, O true knight Troilus.

" Lovers, beware, and take good tede about
Whom that ye love, for whan ye suffre pain,
I let you wit there is right few thoroughout,
Whom ye may trust to have true love again,
Prose whan ye woll your labour is in vain,
Therefore I rede ye take them as ye find,
For they are sad as wederoocke in wind.

" Because I know the great vnstableness,
Brittle as glasse, vnto my self I say,
Trusting in other as great brutelnesse,
As inconstaunt, and as vntrooe of fay:
Though some be true, I wot right few ar they,
Who findeth truth, let him his lady ruse,
None but my self as now I woll accuse."

Whan this was said, with paper she sat doue
And in this maner made her testament:
" Here I bequethe my corse and curous,
With wormes and with toodes to be rent,
My cuppe, my clapper, and mine ornament,
And all my gold, these lepre folke shall have,
Whan I am dedde, to bury me in grave.

" This roiall ring set with this rubie redde,
Which Troilus in dowrie to me send,
To him again I leue it whan I am dedde,
To make my careful death vnto him bad:
Thus I conclude shortly and make an end,
My spirit I leue to Diane where she dwelth,
To walke with her in vntayn wyles and welth.

" O Diomede, thou þart both broche and bell,
Which Troilus gauë me, in tokeuing
Of his true love," and with than worde she swelth,
And soune a leper man toke off the ring,
Than buried her withouten taryng:
To Troilus forthwith the ring he burr,
And of Creseide the death he gan declare.

Whan he had heard her great infrinite,
Her legacie, and lamentacioun,
And how she ended in such povertie,
He swelt for wo and fell doune in a swoon,
For sorow his herte to brast was boune,
Sighing full sadly said, " I can no more,
She was vntrooe, and wo is me therefore."

Some with he made a tombe of marbyle gray,
 And wrote her name and superscripcion,
 And layd it on her grane whereas she lay,
 In golden letters, containing this reason:
 "Lo, faire ladies, Creseide of Troie toun,
 Somtyme counted the flour of womanhod,
 Under this scoone, late leper lieth dedde."

Now worthy women in this balade short,
 Made for your worship and instructioun,
 Of charite I monish and exhort,
 Minge nat your love with false disceptioun:
 Bearer in your mind this sone conclusioun
 Of faire Creseide, as I have sayd before,
 Sith she is dedde, I speake of her no more.

THE

LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

For that some ladies in the court took offence at
 Chancers large speeches against the untruth of
 women, the queen enjoyed him to compile this
 book in the commendation of sundry maidens
 and wives, who shewed themselves faithful to
 faithless men.

A THOUSAND times I have heard men tell,
 That there is joy in Heaven, and pain in Hell,
 And I accord it wele that it is so,
 But nathelesse yet wote I wele also,
 That there nis non dwelling in this countre,
 That either bath in Heaven or in Hell ibe,
 Ne may of it none other waies witten,
 Bot as he heard sayed, or found it written,
 For by assay there may no man it preve.

Bot God forbede but men should love
 Wel more thing than they have seen with eye,
 Men shall nat wenen every thing a lie
 Bot if himself it seeth, or eis it dooth,
 For God wote thing is never the leme soth,
 Though every wight no may it not see.
 Bernarde the monke ne saugh all parde,
 Than mote we to bookes that we find,
 (Through which that old things ben in mind)

And to the doctrine of the old wise,
 Yere credence, in every skilful wise,
 That telles of the odd appoynted stories,
 Of holines, of reignes, of victories,
 Of love, of hate, and other sondry things,
 Of which I may not make rehearsing:
 And if that old bookes were away,
 Howe were of all remembrance the key.

Well ought vs than, honouren and beleve
 These bookes, there we han none other preve.
 And as for me, though that I can but lise,
 On bookes for to rede I me delite,

And to hem yere I faith and full credence,
 And in mine herte have hem in reverence
 So bertely, that there is game none,
 That fro my bookes maketh me to gone,
 But it be seldome on the holy daie,
 Save certainly, when that the month of May
 Is comen, and that I heare the foules sing,
 And that the soores ginnen for to spring,
 Farwell my booke, and my deuocioun,
 Now have I than eke this condicion,

That of all the floures in the mede,
 Than love I most these floures white and rede,
 Soch that men calles daisies in our toun,
 To hem I have so great affection,
 As I sayd erst, when comen is the Maie,
 That in my bedde there daweth me no daie,
 That I nam vp and walking in the mede,
 To seen this floure ayenst the Sonne sprede,
 When it vp riseth early by the morrow,
 That blisfull sight softeneth all my sorow,
 So glad am I, when that I have presence
 Of it, to dope it all reverence,
 As she that is of all floures the flour,
 Fulfilled of all vertue and honour,
 And every lilke faire, and fresh of hewe,
 And ever I love it, and ever lilke newe,
 And ever shall, till that mine herte die,
 All swere I mot, of this I wot not lie.

There loved no wight better in his life,
 And when that it is eve I reome bliithe,
 As sone as ever the Sonne ginnech west,
 To seen this floure, how it wot go to rest,
 For fears of night, so hateth she dertkenes,
 Her chere is plainly spred in the brightnesse
 Of the Sonne, for there it wot vnlose:
 Alas that I ne had English rime, or prose
 Suffisaunt, this floure to praise aright,
 Bot helpeth ye, that han conning and might,
 Ye lovers, that can make of contemem,
 In this case ought ye be diligent,
 To forthren me somewhat in my labour,
 Whether ye been with the lefe or with the flour,
 For well I wote, that ye han bere before
 Of making ropen, and had alway the corne,
 And I come after; gleneyng here and there,
 And am full glad, if I may find an eare,
 Of any goodly worde that ye han left,
 And though it happen me to rehearsen eft,
 That ye han in your freshe songs sayd,
 Forbareth me se, and beth not euill apayd,
 Sith that ye se, I doe it in the honour
 Of love, and eke of service of the flour,
 Whom that I serve, as I have wit or might,
 She is the charynesse and the very light,
 That in this derke world me wint and ledeth
 The herte within my sorrowful brest you dredeth,
 And loveth so sore, that ye ben verily
 The maistres of my wit, and nothng I,

My word, my workes, is knit so in your bounde
That as an harpe obiecth to the hoonde,
And make it soune after his fingering,
Right so mowe ye out of mine herte bring,
Soch voice, right as you list, to laugh or pain;
Be ye my guide, and lady socerain:
As to mine yearthly God, to you I call,
Both in this werke, and my sorowes all.
But wherefore that I spake to yere credence
To old stories, and done hem reverence,
And that men musten more thing bileve
That men may seen at iye or els preve,
That shall I sein, when that I see my tyme,
I may nat all atones speake in ryme;
My busie ghost, that thirsteth alway new,
To seen this flour so yong, so fresh of hew,
Constrained me, with so gredy desire,
That in my herte I fele yet the fire,
That made me rise ere it were day,
And this was now the first morow of Maie,
With dreadfull herte, and glad deuocion
For to been at the resurrection
Of this flour, when that it should vnclouse
Again the Sunne, that rose as redde as rose,
That in the brest was of the best that day,
That Angewores daughter laddes away:
And downe on knees spoua right I me sette,
And as I could, this fresh flour I grette,
Kneeling alway, till it vncloused was,
Upon the small, soft, swete gras,
That was with floures swete embroded all,
Of such swetesme, and such odour ever all,
That for to speake of gomme, herbe, or tree,
Comparison may not imaked be,
For it surmounteth plainly all odoures,
And of riche beastes of floures:
Forgotten had the yearth his pance estate
Of Winter, that him naked made and matre,
And with his sword of cold so sore greded;
Now hath the attempere sunne al that relaxed
That naked was, and clad it new againe;
The small foules of the season fain,
That of the penter and the net been escaped,
Upon the foules, that hem made awlaped
In Winter, and destroyed had her brood,
In his dispite hem thought it did hem good
To sing of him, and in her song dispise
The foule chorie, that for his countise,
Had him betrayed, with his sophistrie,
This was her song, "The fouler we defie,
And all his craft:" and some songen clere,
Laies of love, that joy it was to here,
In worshipping and praying of hir make,
And for the new-hisfall Somers sake,
Upon the braunches full of blossomes soft,
In hir dilite, they turned hem ful oft,
And songen, "Blissed be saint Ulentime,
For on his day I chese you to be mine,
Withouten repenting some herte swete,"
And therewithall hir bekes gowen mete,
Yelding honour, and humble obeisance
To love, and didden hir other obseruance
That longeth vnto love, and vnto nature,
Constrewe that as you list, I do no care:
And the that had done wakidnesse,
As doeth the tidife, for new fangleness,
Besought mercy of hir trespassing,
And humbly song hir repenting,
And sworn on the blossomes to be true,
So that hir makes would vpon hem rue,

And at the last makes hir acorde,
All found they Daunger for the tyme a lord,
Yet Pite, through his strong gentill might,
Forgave, and made Mercy passen right
Through innocence, and ruled Curteisie:
But I ne cleupe it nat innocens folie,
Ne false pite, for vertue in the meane,
As etioke sayth, in soch maner I meane.
And thus these foule, voide of all malice,
Accordeden to love, and laften vice
Of hate, and song all of one acorde,
"Welcome Sommer, our governour and lord."
And Zephirus, and Flora gentelly,
Yave to the floures soft and tenderly,
Hir swote breth, and made hem for to sprede,
As god and goddess of the floure Mede,
In which me thoughte I might day by day,
Dwellen alway, the joly mouth of Maie,
Withouten slepe, withouten meat or drinke:
Adowce full softly I gan to sinke,
And leaning on my elbow and my side,
The lung day I shope me for to abide,
For nothing els, and I shall nat be,
But for to looke vpon the daisie,
That well by reason men it call may
The daisie, or els the iye of the day,
The emprise, and flour of floures all,
I pray to God that faire mote she fall,
And all that loven floures, for her sake:
But nathelesse, we wene nat that I make
In praising of the flour againe the lefe,
No more than of the corpe againe the shefe:
For as to me nis lever noon ne luber,
I nam withholden yet with never nother,
Ne I not who seroeth lefe, ne who the flour,
Well brouken they hir service or labour,
For this thing is all of another tonne,
Of old storie, or such thing was begonne.
When that the Sunne out the south gan west,
And that this flour gan close, and gan to rest,
For derkes of the night, the which she dred,
Home to mine house full swiftly I me sped
To gone to rest, and carely for to rise,
To seeke this flour to sprede, as I devise,
And in a little herber that I have,
That benched was on turres fresh igrave,
I had men aboute me my couche make,
For demite of the newe Somers sake,
I had hem straws floures on my hedde;
When I was laid, and had mine iyen hedde,
I fell a slepe, and slept an houre or two,
Me met how I lay in the meadow tho,
To seen this flour, that I love so and dred,
And from a ferre came walking in the Mede
The god of love, and in his hand a queene,
And she was clad in royall habite grane,
A fret of golde she had next her heare,
And vpon that a white croune she beare,
With flourous small, and I shall not ce,
For all the world right as a daisie
Icrouped is, with white leaves lite,
So were the flourous of hir croune white,
For of q perie fine orientall,
Her white croune was imaked all,
For which the white croune above the grece
Made her like a daisie for to seme,
Considered eke her fret of gold above:
Iclothed was this mighty god of love
In silke embroded, full of grane greves,
In which a fret of redde rose lewes,

The freshest sense the world was first begon;
His gilt heere was crowned with a son,
In stede of gold, for hermitage and weight,
Therwith me thought his face shone so bright
That well vnderste might I him behold,
And in his hand, me thought I saw him hold
Two Erie darters, as the gledes rede,
And angelike his wings saw I sprede:
And all he that men seie, that blind is he,
Algate me thought that he might se,
For stercely on me he gas behold,
So that his looking doeth misse herte cold,
And by the hand he held this noble queene,
Crowned with white, and clothed all in greene,
So womanly, so benigwe, and so meke,
That in this worlde though that men-wold seke,
Half her beaute should they not fonde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
And therefore may I seim as thinketh me,
This song in praising of this lady fre.

Hede, Absolon, thy gilts tresses clere,
Hester, lay thou thy sweetnesse all adoun,
Hede, Jonathan, all thy frendly manere,
Penelope, and Marcia Catoun,
Make of your wifehode no comparison,
Hede your beauties, Isoude and Helein,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

Thy faire body let it not appere,
Lavine, and thou Lacrece of Rome trau,
And Polixene, that boughten love so dere,
And Cleopatras, with all thy passion,
Hede your trouthe of love, and your renoun,
And thou Tube, that hast of love such pain,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

Ero, Dido, Laodamia, al ifere,
And Phillis, hanging for Demopboun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Hepiphile betrayed with Jasous,
Maketh of your trouthe neither boate ne soune,
Nor Hipermitre, or Ariadne, ye trawin,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

This balade may full well isongen be,
As I have sayd erst, by my lady fre,
For certainly, all these mowe not suffice,
To appere with my lady in no wise,
For as the Sunne wold the fire distain,
So passeth all my lady soverain,
That is so good, so faire, so debonaire,
I pray to God that ever fall her faire,
For nad comforte ben of her presence,
I had ben dead, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes, and his chere,
As when time is, hereafter ye shall here.

Behind this god of love yon the grene,
I saw ceasing of ladies nactene,
In roiall habit, a full casse pace,
And after hem came of women such a troce,
That was that God Adam had made of yerth,
The third part of mankinde, or the firth,
Ne wende I nat by possibillite,
Had ever in this wide world ibe,
And true of love, these women were echon:
Now whether was that a wonder thing or non,
That right anon, as that they goume espie
This flour, which that I clepe the daim,

Full sodainly they stetes all at ones,
And kneled doune, as it were for the nones,
And songen with o voice, "Heale and honour
To trouthe of womanhede, and to this flour,
That beareth our alderprise in figuring,
Her white croune beareth the witnessing,"
And with that word, a compass environ,
They sitten hem ful softly adoun:
First sat the god of love, and sith his queene,
With the white croune, clad all in grene,
And sithen al the romaunt by and by,
As they were of estate, full curtealy,
Ne nat a wordo was spoken in the place,
The mountaunce of a furlong way of space.

I kneeling by this flour, in good entent
Abode to knowen what this people meit,
As still as any stone, till at the last
This god of love, on me his iyen cast,
And said, "Who kneleth there?" and I answerde
Unto his asking, when that I it herde,
And sayd, "Sir it am I," and come him nere,
And salved him: (quod he) "What doest thou here,
So nigh mine owne flour, so boldly?
It were better worthy truly,
A worsse to nighen nere my flour than thou."
"And why sir," (quod I) "and it like you?
"For thou" (quod he) "art therto nothing able,
It is my relike, digne and delitable,
And thou my fo, and all my folke werriest,
And of mine old servaunts thou mismaiest,
And hindrest hem, with thy translation,
And lettest folke from hir devocion,
To serve me, and holdest it folie
To serve Love, thou mayest it nat denie,
For in plain text, withouten neede of glase,
Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the Rose,
That is an heresie ayens my law,
And makest wise folke fro me withdraw;
And of Cresseide, thou hast said as the list,
That maketh men to women lame trist,
That ben as trewe as ever was any stek:
Of thine answer a wise thee right wele,
For though thou remeid hast my lay,
As other wretches have done many a day,
By saint Venas, that my mother is,
If that thou live, thou shalt repenten this,
So cruelly, that it shall well be se."

The speke this lady, clothed all in greene
And saied, "God, right of your curtesie,
Ye wote herken if he can replie
Ayens all this that ye have to him moved;
A God ne shulde nat be thus agreed,
But of his deite he shal be stable,
And there gracious and spaciabill:
And if ye nere a God that knowen all,
Than might it be as I you telles shall,
This man to you may falsely ben accused,
That as by right him ought ben excused,
For in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queinte totoler accusour,
That tabouren in your cares many a soune,
Right after hir imagination,
To have your daisaunce, and for envie,
These ben the causes, and I shall nat lie,
Errie is lavender of the court away,
For she ne parteth neither night ne day,
Out of the bones of Cesar, thus saith Dant,
Who so that goeth algate she wol nat want.
"And eke perauunter for this man is nice,
He might done it, gessing no malice,

But for he vselh thinges for to make,
 Him recketh nought of what mater he take,
 Or him was boden make thilke twey,
 Of some persone, and durst it nat withsey:
 Or him repenteth vterly of this,
 He ne hath nat done so greuously amis,
 To translaten that old clerkes witten,
 As though that he of malices would eaditen,
 Dispite of Love, and had himselfe it wrought:
 This shold a rightwise lord have in his thought,
 And nat be like tiraunts of Lombardie,
 That han no reward but at tyrannic,
 For he that king or lorde is naturell,
 Him ought nat be tiraunt ne cruell,
 As is a fermour, to done the harme he can,
 He must thinke it is his liege man,
 And is his tresour, and his gold in coffer,
 This is the sentence of the philosophour:
 A king to kepe his lieges in justice,
 Withouten doute that is his office,
 All will he kepe his lordes in hir degree,
 As it is right and skil, that they beo
 Enhaunsed and honoured, and most dere,
 For they ben halfe goddes in this world here,
 Yet mote he done both right to poore and riche,
 All be that hir estate be nat both illiche,
 And have of poore folke compassion,
 For lo, the gentill kinde of the lion,
 For whan a fie offendeth him or biteth,
 He with his taile away the fie smiteth,
 Al easily, for of his gentrie
 Him deineth nat to wreke him on a fie,
 As doeth a curie, or els another best;
 In noble courage ought ben arest,
 And waiken every thing by equite,
 And ever have regard vnto his owne degree:
 For, sir, it is no maistrie for a lord
 To dampne a man, without answer of word,
 And for a lorde, that is full foule to vs;
 And it so be, he may him nat excuse,
 But asketh mercy with a dreadfull herte,
 And profereth him, right in his bare sherte
 To ben right at your owne judgement;
 Than ought a God by short avancement,
 Consider his owne honour, and his trespass,
 For sith no cause of death lieth in this case,
 You ought to ben the lightlier merciable,
 Letteth your ire, and bethe somewhat trefable:
 The man hath served you of his cominges,
 And forthred well your law in his makinges,
 All be it that be can nat well eodite,
 Yet hath he made leude folke delite
 To serve you, in praising of your name,
 He made the boke, that bight, the House of Fame,
 And eke the Death of Blanche the Duchesse,
 And the Parliament of Fountes, as I gesse,
 And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
 Of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lye,
 And many an himpoe, for your holy daies,
 That brighten Balades, Rondels, Viralaies:
 And for to speake of other holinesse,
 He hath in prose translated Boece,
 And made the Life also of Saint Cecile:
 He made also, gone is a great while,
 Origines vpon the Mandelaine:
 Him ought now to have the lesse paine,
 He hath made many a ley, and many a thing.

"Now as ye be a God, and eke a king,
 I your Alceste, whilom queene of Trace,
 I aske you this man right of your grace,

That ye him never hurt in al his live,
 And he shal swaeren to you, and that bliue,
 He shal never more agiten in this wise,
 But shal maken, as ye woll devise,
 Of women trewe in loving al hir life,
 Where so ye woll, of maiden or of wif,
 And forthren you as much as be misseide,
 Or in the Rose, or eles in Cresseide."

The god of love answerde her thus anon,
 "Madame, (quod he) "it is so long agoon,
 That I you knew, so charitable and trewe,
 That never yet, seen the world was newe,
 To me ne found I better none than ye,
 If that I woll save my degree:
 I may nor woll nat werne your request,
 Al lieth in you, doth with him as you list.

"I al foryeve withouten longer space,
 For who so yeveth a yefte or doth a grace,
 Do it betime, his thanke shall be the more,
 And demeth ye what ye shal do therfore.

"Go thanke now my lady here," (quod he.)
 I rose, and doun I set me on my knee,
 And said thus: "Madame, the God above
 For yelde you that the god of love
 Have makid me his wrath to foryeve,
 And grace so long for to live,
 That I may know sothely what ye be,
 That have me hoipen, and put in this degre:
 But trewly I wende, as in this case
 Nought have a gilte, ne done to love trespas,
 For why? a trewe man withouten drede
 Hath out to parten with a theves drede.

"Ne a trewe lover ought me nat to blame,
 Though that I speke a false lover some shame:
 They ought rather with me for to hold,
 For that I of Cresseide wrote or told,
 Or of the rose, what so mine author ment,
 Algate God wotte it was mine entent
 To forthren trowth in love, and it cherice,
 And to ben ware fro falsnesse and fro vice,
 By which example, this was my meaning."

And she answerde, "Let be thine arguing,
 For love ne wol not counterplected be,
 In right ne wrong, and terme that of me:
 Thou hast thy grace, and hold the right therfore:
 Now woll I saine what penance thou shalt do
 For thy trespass, understand it here:
 Thou shalt while that thou livest yere by yere,
 The most partie of thy time spende,
 In making of a glorious legende,
 Of good women, maidenes, and wives,
 That weren trewe in loving all hir lives,
 And tell of false men that hem betraien,
 That al hir life ne do nat but assaien
 How many women they may done a shame,
 For in your world that is now hold a game:
 And though thes like nat a lover be,
 Speke wel of love, this penance yere I thes,
 And to the god of love I shal so pray,
 That he shal charge his servaunts by any way,
 To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quic,
 Go now thy waie, this penance is but lize:
 And whan this boke is made, yeve it the queene
 On my behalle, at Eltham, or at Sheene."
 The god of love gan smile, and than he said:
 "Wost thou," (quod he) "where this be wifer said,
 Or queene, or countesse, or of what degree,
 That hath so littell penance yeven thee,
 That hast deserved sore for to smart,
 But pite remeth some in gentile herte:

That maist thou see, she kitheth what she is."

And I answerde, "Nais, sir, so have I bliss,
No more, but that I see well she is good."

"That is a trewe tale by mine hood,"
(Quod Love) "and thou knowest wel parde,
If it be so that thou advise the:

Hast thou nat in a booke in thy cheste,
The great goodnesse of the queene Alceste,
That turned was into a daiesie,
She that for her husband chese to die,
And eke to gone to Hell; rather than be,
And Hercules rescued her parde,
And brought her out of Hel againe to bis?"

And I answerde againe, and said "Yes,
Now know I her, and is this good Alceste,
The daiesie, and mine owne hertes reste?
Now seie I well the goodnesse of this wife,
That both after her death, and in her life,
Her great bounte doubleth her rencous,
Wel bath she quit me mine affection,
That I have to her flours the daiesie,
No wonder is though Jove her stilliffe,
As telleth Agaton, for her great goodnesse,
Her white cotowse beareth of it witness:
For all so many vertues had she,
As smal sorowes in her corowne be,
In remembrance of her, and in honour,
Cibilla made the daiesie and the floure,
As crownd al with white, as men may se,
And Mars yave to her a corowne reed parde,
In stede of rubies set among the white:"

Therewith this queene woxe reed for shame alite,
When she was prayd so in her presence,
Then said Love, "A full great negligence
Was it to thee, that ilke time thou made,
(Hide Absolou thy tresses) in balade,
That thou forget in thy souge to sette,
Sith that thou art so greatly in her dette,
And wost well that kalender is she
To any woman, that will lover be:
For she taught all the craft of trewe loving,
And namely of wifehode the living,
And all the bondes that she ought keepe;
Thy lial wite was thilke time a sleepe:
But now I charge thee vpon thy life,
That in thy legende make of this wife,
When thou hast otheer smale made before:
And fare now well, I charge thee no more,
But er I go, thus much I will the tell,
Ne shal no trewe lover come in Hell.

"These other ladies sitting here a rowe,
Ben in my balade, if thou coust hem know,
And in thy bokes, al thou shalt hem find,
Have hem now in thy legende al in floud,
I meane of hem that ben in thy knowing,
For here ben twenty thousand no sitting
Than thou knowest, good women all,
And trewe of love, for ought that may befall:
Make the metres of hem as the best,
I mote gone home, the Sonne draweth west,
To Paradis, with all this companie,
And serve alway the fresh daiesie.
At Cleopatras I woll that thou begin,
And so forth, and my love so shalt thou wis,
For let ses now what man that lover be,
Wol done so strong a paine for love as she.
I wote well that thou maist nat all it rime,
That soche lovers did in hir time:
It were too long to reden and to here,
Sithmeth me thou make in this manere,

That thou reberce of al her life the great;
After these old authours listen for to treat,
For who so shall so many a story tell,
Sei shortly or he shall to long dwell:"
And with that worde my booke gan I take,
And right thus on my legende gan I make.

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE LEGENDE OF CLEOPATRAS
QUEENE OF EGYPT.

AFTER the death of Ptholome the king,
That all Egypt had in his governing,
Reigned his queene Cleopatras,
Till on a time bifel there such a case,
That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
For to conquer realmes and honour,
Unto the toune of Rome, as was vsuance,
To have the world at her obeisance,
And soth to say, Antonius was his name,
So fil it, as fortune him ought a shame,
When he was fallen in prosperite,
Rebel vnto the toune of Rome is he,
And over al this, the suster of Cesare
He left her falsely, er that she was ware,
And would algates han another wife,
For which he toke with Rome and Cesare strife.

Nathiesse, forsoth this ilke senatour,
Was a full worthy gentill werriour,
And of his deth it was full great damage,
But Love had brought this man in such a rage
And him so narrow bounden in his lass,
And all for the love of Cleopatras,
That al the world be set at no value,
Him thought there was nothing to him so due,
As Cleopatras, for to love and serve,
Him thought that in armes for to sterve
In the defence of her, and of her right.

This noble queene, eke loved so this knight,
Through his desert, and for his chevalrie,
As certainly, but if that bokes lie,
He was of person, and of gentlinesse,
And of discretion, and of hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may,
And she was faire, as is the rose in Maie:
And, for to maken shorte is the best,
She wote his wife, and had him as her lest.

The wedding and the feast to devise,
To me that have itake such empirie,
And so many a storie for to make,
It were to longe, lest that I should slake
Of thing that beareth more effect and charge,
For men may overlade a ship or barge,
And forthy, to effect than woll I skippe,
And al the remaunt I woll let it slippe.

Octavian, that wood was of this dede,
Shope him an hooste on Antony to lede,
Al viterly for his distruction,
With stoute Romaines, cruell as lion;
To ship they went, and thus I let hem sail.

Antonius was ware, and woll nat faile
To meten with these Romaines, if he may,
Toke eke his rede, and both vpon a day
His wife and he, and all his host forth went
To ship anon, no longer they ne stant,

And in the see it happed hem to mete;
Up gooth the trampe, and for to shoute and
shete,

And painen hem to set on with the Sonne,
With grisly soun out gooth the great gunne,
And hartely they hartlen in all at ones,
And fro the top doune cometh the great stones,
In gooth the grapnel so full of crokes,
Among the ropes ran the shering hokes,
In with the polaxe preaseth he and he;
Behind the maste beginneth he to see,
And out againe, and driveth him over borde,
He sticketh him vpon his speares orde,
He rent the saile with bookes like a sith,
He bringeth the cup, and biddeth hem be blith,
He poureth pessen vpon the batches elder,
With pottes full of hime, they gone togider,
And thus the longe day in fight they spend,
Till at the last, as every thing hath end,
Antony is shent, and put him to the flight,
And all his folke to go, that best go might,
Fleeth oke the queene, with all her purple
saile,

For strokes which that went as thicke as hails,
No wonder was, she might it nat endure:
And when that Antony saw that aventure,
" Alas" (quod he) " the day that I was borne,
My worship in this day thou have I lorne,"
And for despise out of his wit he start,
And rofe himselfe anon throughout the herte,
Ere that he farther went out of the place:
His wife, that could of Cesar have no grace,
To Egypt is fled, for drede and for distresse,
But herkeneth ye that spoken of kindnessse.

Ye men that falsly sworen many an oth,
That ye wold die, if that your love be wroth,
Here may ye see of women such a treuth.
This woful Cleopatra had made such ruth,
That there nis tonge none that may it tell,
But on the morow she wold no longer dwell,
But made her subtil workmen make a shrine
Of all the rubies and the stones fine
In all Egypt that she coude finde,
And put full the shrine of spices,
And let the curse embasme, and furth she fette
This dead curse, and in the shrine it shette,
And next the shrine a pit there doth she grave,
And all the serpentes that she might have,
She put hem in that grave, and thus she said:
" Now love, to whom my sorowfull herte obaid,
So forforthly, that fro that blisful hour
That I you swore to ben all freely your,
I meane you, Antonius my knight,
That never waking in the day or night,
Ye nere out of mine hertes remembrance,
For wele or wo, for carole, or for daunce,
And in my selfe this covenant made I tho,
That right such as ye felten wele or wo,
As forforth as it in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wifehood eye,
The same wold I felten, life or death,
And thiike covenant while me lasteth breath
I wold fulfill, and that shall well be seeme,
Was never unto her love a trauer queene:"
And with that word, naked with full good herte,
Among the serpents in the pit she start,
And there she chose to have her burying.
Among the neders goume her for to sting,
And she her death receiveth with good chere,
For love of Antony that was her so dere.

And this is storiall, acoth it is no fable:
Now ere I find a man thus true and stable,
And wold for love his death so freely take,
I pray God let our hedes never ake.

THELEGEND OF TISBE OF BABILON.

At Babeloine whylome fill it thus,
The whichen turn the queen Simeranus
Let dichehal about, and walle make
Full his, of harde tiles well ibake:
There were dwelling in this noble toune,
Two lordes, which that were of great renowne,
And woueden so high vpon a grene,
That ther was but a stone wal hem betwene,
As oft in great townes is the wone:
And sothe to saine, that one man had a sone,
Of all that loud one of the lustiest,
That other had a daughter, the fairest
That estward in the world was tho dwelling:
The name of everiche, gas to other spring.
By wome that were neighbours aboute,
For in that countre yet withouten doute,
Maidenes ben kept for ioloune
Ful straitte, lest they didden some fele.

This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
Thise hight the maide, (Naso saith thus)
And thus by report was hir name ishowe,
That as they wone in age, so wone hir love:
And certaine, as by reason of hir age,
Ther might have ben betwixt hem mariage,
But that hir fatheris nolde it nat assent,
And bothe in love ilike were they bent,
That none of all hir frendes might it lette,
But prively sometime yet they mette
By sleight, and spoken some of hir deure,
As wrie the glede and hotter is the fire,
Forbid a love, and it is ten times so wode.

This wal, which that bitwixt haue both stod;
Was cloven awye, right fro the top adoun,
Of old time, of his fundatioun,
But yet this clift was so narrow and lise
It was nat seeme, dere enough a saile,
But what is that, that love cannot espie?
Ye lovers two, if that I shall not lie,
Ye founden first this little narrow clift,
And with a sound, as soft as any schift,
They let hir wordes through the clifte pass,
And tolden, while that they stoden in the place,
All hir complaints of love, and all hir wo,
At every time when they durst so.

On that one side of the wall stod he,
And on that other side stod Tisebe,
The sweet soun of other to receive,
And thus hir wardens woude they deceave,
And every daie this wall they woude threth,
And wish to God that it were doune ibete,
Thus wold they saie, " Alas, thou wicked wikk,
Through thine cause thou vs lettost alle,
Why nist thou cleave, or fallen all awye,
Or at the least, but thou woudest so,
Yet woudest thou but open let vs mete,
Or ones that we might kimen swete,
Than were we curd of our cares cold,
But nathelese, yet be we to thee hokl,

In as much as thou suffrest for to gone,
 Our words through thy lime and eke thy stone,
 Yet ought we with thee ben well apaid."
 And whan these idle wordes weren said,
 The cold wall they wouiden kisse of stone,
 And take hir leave, and forth they wolden gone,
 And this was gladly in the eventide,
 Or wonder esly, least men it espide.
 And long time they wrought in this manere,
 Till on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
 Awoken with the streemes of her hete,
 Had dried vp the dew of herbes wete,
 Unto this clift, as it was won. . . be,
 Came Piramus, and after come Tisbe,
 And plighted trouthe fully in hir faie,
 That ilke sature night to steale awaie,
 And to beguile hir wardens everychone;
 And forth out of the cite for to gone,
 And for the feldeas ben so brode and wide,
 For to spote in o place at o tide,
 They set markes, hir meetings should be
 There king Ninus was granen, under a tree,
 For old painours, that idoles heried,
 Unless tho in fields to ben buried,
 And fast by his grave was a well,
 And shortly of this tale for to tell,
 This ovcnment was affirmed wonder fast,
 And long hem thought that the Sonne last,
 That it nere gone under the see adoun.
 This Tisbe hath so great affection,
 And so great liking Piramus to see,
 That whan she saw her time might be,
 At night she stole away full prively,
 With her face iwimpled subtelly,
 For all her friends (for to save her trouthe)
 She hath forsake alas, and that is routhe,
 That ever woman woude be so trow,
 To trosten man, but she the bet him knew:
 And to the tree she goeth a full good pace,
 For love made her so hardy in this case,
 And by the well adoun she gan her dresse,
 Alas, than cometh a wild lionesse
 Out of the wood, withouten more arrest,
 With bloody mouth, strangling of a beast,
 To drinken of the well there as she sat,
 And whan that Tisbe had espied that,
 She rist her vp, with a full dreery herte,
 And in a case, with dreadfull foot she start,
 For by the Moone she saw it well withall.
 And as she ran, her wimple let she fall,
 And toke some hede, so sore she was a whaped,
 And eke so glad that she was escaped,
 And that the cat, and lurketh wonder still:
 Whan that this lionesse hath dronke her fill,
 About the well gas she for to wind,
 And right anon the wimple gan she find,
 And with her bloody mouth it all to rent,
 Whan this was done, no longer she ne stant,
 But to the wood her way than bath she nome.
 And as the last this Piramus is come,
 But all too long (alas) at home was hee,
 The Moone shone, men might well see,
 And in his way, as that he come full fast,
 He eyen to the ground adoun be cast,
 And in the soode, as he beheld adoun,
 He saw the stepper brode of a lion,
 And in his herte he suddainly agrose,
 And pale he went, therwith his herte arose,
 And nere he came, and found the wimple torne,
 "Alas" (quod he) "the day that I was borne,
 VOL. I.

This o night wold both vs lovers see,
 How should I asken mercy of Tisbe,
 Whan I am he that have you slaine, alas,
 My bidding hath you slaine in this case,
 Alas, to bidde a woman gone by night
 In place theeres perill fallen might,
 And I so slow, alas I ne had be
 Here in this place, a furlong way ere ye,
 Now what lion that is in this Forrest,
 My body mote be rente, or what beast
 That wild is, gnawen mote be mine herte,"
 And with that word he to the wimple start,
 And kist it oft, and wept on it full sore,
 And said, "Wimple, alas, there nis no more,
 But thou shalt feele as well the blood of me,
 As thou hast felt the bleeding of Tisbe:"
 And with that word he smote him to the herte,
 The blood out of the wound as broad start,
 As water, whan the conduit broken is.
 Now Tisbe, which that wist nat this,
 But sitting in her drede, she thought thus,
 "If it so fall out that my Piramus
 Be comen hither, and may me nat find,
 He may me holden false, and eke unkind,"
 And out she cometh, and after him gan espie,
 Both with her herte, and with her eien,
 And thought, "I wold him tellen of my drede,
 Both of the lionesse and of my dede."
 And at the last her love than hath she found,
 Beating with his heeles on the ground,
 All bloody, and therewithall abacke she start,
 And like the waves, quappe gan her herte,
 And pale as boxe she woxe, and in a throw
 Advised her, and gan him well to know,
 That it was Piramus her herte dere.

Who could write whiche a deadly cheere
 Hath Tisbe now, and how her haire she rent,
 And how she gan her selfe to turment,
 And how she lieth and swooneth on the ground,
 And how she wept of teares full his wound,
 How medleth she his blood with her complaint,
 How with her blood her selven gan she paint,
 How clippeth she the red corse, alas,
 How doth this wofull Tisbe in this case,
 How kiseth she his frosty mouth so cold:
 "Who hath don this? and who hath ben so bold
 To steen my left? o speake Piramus,
 I am thy Tisbe, that thee calleth thus,"
 And therewithall she lifeth vp his head.

This wofull man that was nat fully dead,
 Whan that he herd the name of Tisbe crie,
 On her be cast his heavy deadly eyen,
 And doun againe, and yeeketh vp the ghost.

Tisbe rist vp, withouten noise or boist,
 And saw her wimple and his empty sheath,
 And eke his sword, that him hath done to death,
 Than spake she thus, "Thy wofull hand" (quod she)
 "Is strong ynough in such a werke to me,
 For love shall yere me strength and hardinesse,
 To make my wound large ynough I gesse,
 I wold thee followen dead, and I wold be
 Felaw, and cause eke of thy death." (quod she)
 "And though that nothing save the death only,
 Might thee fro me depart trowly,
 Thou shalt no more departe now fro me
 Than fro the death, for I wold go with thee.

"And now ye wretched jelous fathers our,
 We that weren whylome children your,
 We prayen you, withouten more suair,
 That in o grave we moten lie,

Sens love hath brought vs to this pitous end,
 And right wise God, to every lover send,
 That loveth trewly, more prosperite
 Than ever had Piramus and Tisbe,
 And let no gentill woman her assure,
 To putten her in such an aventure,
 But God forbid but that a woman can
 Ben as true and loving as a man,
 And for my part I shall anon it kithen:"
 And with that word, his swerde she toke withen,
 That warme was of her loves blood, and hote,
 And to the herte she her selven smote.

And thus are Tisbe and Piramus ago,
 Of true men I find but few mo
 In all my booke, save this Piramus,
 And therefore have I spoken of him thus ;
 For it is deintie to vs men to find
 A man that can in love be true and kind.
 Here may ye see, what lover so he be,
 A woman dare, and can as well as he.

THE LEGEND OF DIDO,

GOVERNE OF CARTAGE.

Glorie and honour, Virgile Mantuan,
 Be to thy name, and I shall as I can
 Follow thy lantern, as thou goest before,
 How Eneas to Dido was forsworne,
 In thine Eneide, and Naso will I take
 The tenour and the great effects make,
 When Troy brought was to destruction
 By Grekes sleight, and namely by Sinon,
 Faining the horse offered unto Minerve,
 Through which that many a Trojan must sterve,
 And Hector had after his death spered,
 And fire so wood, it might nat ben stered,
 In all the noble toure of Ilion,
 That of the cite was the cheefe dungeon,
 And all the country was so low brought,
 And Priamus the king fordone and nought,
 And Eneas was charged by Venus
 To fien away, he toke Ascanius
 That was his son, in his right hand and led,
 And on his backe he bare and with him led
 His old father, cleped Anchises,
 And by the way his wife Creusa he leas,
 And moeked sorrow had he in his mind,
 Ewe that he coulde his fellowshipp find :
 But at the last, when he had ben found,
 He made him vedy in a certayne stound,
 And to the sea full fast he gan him fien,
 And sailth forth with all his companie
 Towards Italie, as world destine :
 But of his adventures in the see,
 Nis nat to purpose for to speke of here,
 For it accordeth nat to my matere,
 But as I said, of him and of Dido
 Shall be my tale, till that I have do.

So long he sailed in the salt see,
 Till in Libie vnneth arrived he,
 So was he with the tempest all to shake,
 And when that he the haven had take,
 He had a knight was called Achates,
 And him of all his fellowship he chos,
 To goze with him, the country for temple,
 He toke with him no more companie,

But forth they gon, and left his shipps ride,
 His feere and he, withouten any guide.

So long he walketh in this wilderness,
 Till at the last he met an hunteresse,
 A bow in hand, and arrowes had she,
 Her clothes cotted were vnto the knee,
 But she was yet the fairest creature
 That ever was formed by nature,
 And Eneas and Achates she gret,
 And thus she to hem speke, when she hem met.

" Saw ye?" (quod she) " as ye han walked wide,
 Any of my suster walken yon beside,
 With any wild bore or other best,
 That they have hunted into this Forrest,
 Itucked vp with arrowes in her case?"
 " Nay sotthly lady" (quod this Eneas)
 " But by thy beaute, as it thinketh me,
 Thou mightest never yearlyth woman be,
 But Phebus suster art thou, as I gesse,
 And if so be that thou be a goddesse,
 Have mercy on our labour and our we."

" I nam no goddesse sotthly" (quod she tho)
 For maidens walken in this country here,
 With arrows and with bow, in this manere :
 This is the realme of Libie there ye been,
 Of which that Dido lady is and queen,"
 And shortly told all the occasion
 Why Dido came into that region,
 Of which as now me listeth nat to rite,
 It needeth nat, it nere but losse of time,
 For this is all and some, it was Venus
 His owne mother, that spake with him this,
 And to Cartage she bade he should him fight,
 And vanished anon out of his sight.
 I could follow word for word Vergile,
 But it would lasten all to long while.

This noble queen, that cleped was Dido,
 That whylom was the wife of Sicheo,
 That fairer was than the bright Sonne,
 This noble toune of Cartage hath begonne,
 In which she reigneth in so great honour,
 That she was hold of all queenes flour,
 Of gentillnesse, of freedome, and of beaute,
 That well was him that might her oyes se,
 Of kings and lordes so desired,
 That all the world her beaute had idred,
 She stood so well in every wights grade.

When Eneas was come vnto the place,
 Unto the maister temple of all the toune,
 There Dido was in her detocioun,
 Full prively his way than hath he nome :
 When he was in the large temple come,
 I cannot saie, if that it be possible,
 But Venus had him made invisible,
 Thus sayth the booke, withouten any les.
 And when this Eneas and Achates
 Hadden in this temple ben over all,
 Than found they depainted on a wall,
 How Troy and all the land destroyed was,
 " Alas that I was borne" (quod Eneas)
 " Through the world our shame is hid so wide,
 Now it is painted vpon every side :
 We that werten in prosperite,
 Ben now disclaudred, and in such degre,
 No lenger for to fien I we kepe,"
 And with that word he brist out for to wepe
 So tenderly that rooth it was to seebe.

This fresh lady, of the cite queen,
 Stood in the temple, in her estate roun,
 So richely, and eke so faire withall,

So young, so luttie, with her eyes gladd,
That if that God that Heaven and yearth made,
Would have a love, for beauty and goodnesse,
And womanhede, truth, and semelimesse,
Whom should he lovea but this lady swete?
There is no woman to him halfe so mete:
Fortune, that hath the world in governance,
Hath sodainly brought in so new a chance,
That never was there yet so frend a case,
For all the company of Eneas,
Which that we wend have lorne in the see,
Arrived is nought ferre fro that citee,
For which the greatest of his lords, some
By aventure ben to the citee come
Unto that same temple for to seeke

The queene, and of hir socour her beseeke,
Such renowne was ther sprong of her goodnesse.
And when they had tolde all hir distresse,
And all hir tempest and all hir hard case,
Unto the queene appeared Eneas,
And openly beknew that it was he,
Who had joy than, but his meyne,
That hadden found hir lord, hir gouverneur.

The queene saw theyr did him such honour,
And had heard of Eneas, ere the,
And in her herte had routh and wo,
That ever such a noble man as he
Shall ben disherited in such degre,
And saw the man, that he was like a knight,
And sufficient of person and of might,
And like to ben a very gentilman,
And well his words he beset can,
And had a noble visage for the women,
And formed well of browe and of bones,
And after Venus had such fairenesse,
That no man might be halfe so faire I guess,
And well a lord him seemed for to be,
And for he was a stranger, somewhat she
Liked him the bet, as God doe hote,
To some folke often new thing is note,
Seen her herte hath pitie of his wo,
And with pitie, love came also,
And thus for pitie and for gentilnesse,
Refreshed must be ben of his distresse.

She said, certes, that she sorry was,
That he hath had such perill and such case,
And in her friendly spech, in this manere
He to him spake, and sayd as ye may here.

"Be ye nat Venus sone and Anchises,
In good faith, all the worship and accours
Your ships and your meine shall I save,"
And many a gentle word she spake him to,
And commended her messengers to go
The same day withouten any faille
His ships for to seeke and hem vitaille,
And many a heart she to the ships sent,
And with the wine she gan hem to present,
And to her round paleis she her sped,
And Eneas she alway with her led.

What needeth you the feastes to deriver,
He never better at ease was in hie,
And was the feast of dainties and richenesse,
And instruments, of song, and of gladnesse,
And many an amorous looking and derisive.

This Eneas is come to Paradise
Out of the wroldes of Hail and thus in joy
Combreth him of his estate in Troy,
In changing chambers full of paraments,
Rich beds, and of pavements,

This Eneas is lodde after the meat,
And with the queene when that he had seat,
And spices parted, and the wine agon,
Unto his chamber was he lad soon
To take his ease, and for to have his rest
With all his folke, to done what so him lest.

There nas courser well ibridled nose,
Ne stede for the justing well to gone,
Ne large palfrey, easie for the nomet,
Ne jewell fret full of rich stones
Ne sakes full of gold, of large wight,
Ne rubie none that shineth by night,
Ne gentil hautes fankon hereoore,
Ne hound for hart, wild bore, or dere,
Ne cup of gold, with florens new ibette,
That in the lood of Libie may ben gette,
That Dido ne hath Eneas it sent,
And all is payed, what that he hath spent:
Thus can this honorable queene her gasta call,
As she that can in freedom passen all.

Eneas sothly eke, without leas,
Hath sent to his shippe by Achates
After his sone, and after rich things,
Both scepter, clothes, brooches, and eke rings,
Some for to weare, and some to present
To her, that all these noble things him sent,
And had his sone bow that he should make
The presenting, and to the queene it take.

Repaired is this Achates againe,
And Eneas full blissfull is and faire,
To seeke his yong sone Ascanius,
For to him it was reported thus,
That Cupido, that is the god of love,
At prayer of his mother high above,
Had the likenesse of the child itake,
This noble queene enamoured for to make
On Eneas: but of that scripture
Be as he may, I make of it no cure,
But soth is this, the queene hath made such chere
Unto this child, that wonder was to here,
And of the present that his father sent,
She thanked him oft in good entent.

Thus is this queene in plessaunce and joy,
With all these new luttie folk of Troy,
And of the deede hath she more enquired
Of Eneas, and all the story lered
Of Troy, and all the long day they tway
Entendeden for to speake and for to play,
Of which there gan to breeden such a fire,
That silly Dido hath now such desire
With Eneas her new guest to deale,
That she lost her bow and eke her heale.

Now to theeffect, now to the fruit of all,
Why I have told this story, and telleth shall.

Thus I begin, it fell upon a night,
When that the Mone vpreised had her light,
This noble queene unto her rest went,
She sighed sore, and gan her selfe torment,
She walketh, waleweth, and sende many braid,
As done these lovers, as I have heard sayd,
And at the last, unto her suster Amc
She made her meane, and right thus spake she thus.

"Now dare suster mine, what may it be
That see agasteth in my dreame" (quod she)

"This like new Treiton is so in my thought,
For that me thinketh he is an well revought,
And eke so likely to ben a man,
And therewith so mikoll good he can,
That all my love and life lieth in his cure,
Have ye nat heard him tell his aventure?"

" Now certan Anne, if that ye rede me,
I wold faine to him iwedded be,
This is the effect, what shoud I more seine,
In him lieth all, to do me live or deine."

Her suster Anne, as she that coude her good,
Said as her thought, and somdele it withstood,
But hereof was so long a sermoung,
It were to long to make rehearsing;
But finally, it may not be withstode,
Love wold love, for no wight wold it wode.
The dawning vp rist out of the see,
This amorous queene chargeth her meine,
The nettes dreese, and speres brode and keene,
In bunting wold this lustie fresh queene,
So pricketh her this new jolly wo,
To horse is all her lustie folke go,
Unto the court the bondes been brought,
And vp on courser swift as any thought,
Her yong knights beven all about,
And of her women eke an huge rout,
Upon a thicke palfrey, paper white,
With saddle redden, embrouded with delite,
Of gold the barres, vp embowded high,
Sate Dido, all in gold and perrey wrigh,
And she is faire as is the bright morrow,
That healeth sick folkes of night sorrow:
Upon a courser, startling as the fire,
Men might tourne him with a little wire.

But Eneas, like Phebus to devise,
So was he fresh arrayed in his wise,
The fomic bridle, with the bitte of gold,
Governeth he right as himselfe hath wold,
And forth this noble queene, this lady ride
On hunting, with this Troian by her side,
The herd of hartes founder is anon,
With " Hey go bet, prickes thou, let gon let gon,
Why nil the lion comen or the beare,
That I might him ones meten with this spear,"
Thus saine this yong folke, and vp they kill
The wild hartes, and have hem at hir will.

Among all this, to romblen kan the Haven,
The thunder rood with a grisly steven,
Doun come the rain, with haile and sleet so fast,
With Heavens fire, that made so sore agast.
This noble queene, and also her meine,
That oche of hem was glad away to deie,
And shortly, fro the tempest here to save,
She fled her selfe into a little cave,
And with her went this Eneas also,
I not with hem if there went any mo,
The author maketh of it no mention:
And here began the deepe affection
Betwixt hem two, this was the first morrow
Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorrow,
For there hath Eneas kneeled so,
And told her all his hurt and all his wo,
And sworne so deepe to her to be true,
For wele or wo, and change for no new,
And as a false lover so well can paine,
That silly Dido rewed on his paine,
And toke him for husband, and became his wife
For evermore, while that hem last life,
And after this whan that the tempest stent
With mirth out as they came, home they went.
The wicked fume vp rose, and that anon,
How Eneas bath with the queene ignon
Into the cave, and demed as hem list:
And whan the king (that Yarus hight) it wist,
As he that had her loved ever his life,
And woud her to have her to his wife,

Such sorrow as he hath makid, and such chere,
It is a ruth and pitie for to bere,
But as in love, alday it happeth so,
That one shall laughe at anothers wo,
Now laughed Eneas, and is in joy,
And more richesse than ever was in Troy.

O silly woman, full of innocence,
Full of pitie, of truth, and continence,
What asketh you to men to trusten so?
Have ye such ruth vpon hir fained wo,
And have such old ensamples you before?
See ye nat all how they been forswore,
Where see ye one, that he ne hath left his lefe,
Or been unkind, or done her some mischefe,
Or pilled her or bosted of his dede,
Ye may, as well it seeme, as ye may rede.
Take hede now of this great gentylman,
This Troian, that so well her please can,
That faineth him so true and obising,
So gentill, and so privie of his doing,
And can so well done all his obeyssaunce
To her, at feasts and at daunce,
And whan she goeth to temple, and home again,
And fasten till he hath his lady sein,
And bearen in his devices for her sake,
Not I nat what, and songs would he make,
Justen, and done of armes many things,
Send her letters, tokens, brooches, and ring.

Now herketh how he shal his lady serve:
There as he was in perill for to sterve
For hunger and for mischefe in the see,
And desolate, and fled fro his countree,
And all his folke with tempest all to driven,
She hath her body and eke her realme yeres
Into his hond, there she might have been
Of other land than of Cartage a queene,
And lived in joy ough, what would ye more.

This Eneas, that hath thus deepe iswore,
Is wearie of his craft within a throw,
The hote earnest is all overblow,
And prively he doeth his ships dight,
And shapeth him to steale away by night.

This Dido bath suspicion of this,
And thought well that it was al unwise,
For in his bed he lieth a night and silith,
She asketh him anon, what him mislieth,
" My dere herte which that I love most."

" Certes" (quod he) " this night my fathers gnat
Hath in my slepe me so sore tormented,
And eke Mercury his message hath presented,
That needes to the cooquest of itaile
My destinie is soone for to saile,
For which me thinketh, bruston is mine herte:"
Therwith his false teares out they start,
And taketh her within his armes two.

" Is that in earnest" (quod she) " wold ye so,
Have ye nat sworne, to wife me to take,
Alas, what woman wold ye of me make?
I am a gentlewoman, and a queene,
Ye wold not for your wife thus foole been,
That I was borne alas, what shall I do?"

To telle in short, this noble queene Dido
She seeketh halloves, and doth sacrifice,
She kneleth, crieth, that rooth is to deie,
Condemneth him, and profereth him to be
His thrall, his servaunt, in the best degre,
She falleth him to foot, and swoereth there,
Discheule with her bright gilt heere,
And sayth, " Have mercy, let me with you ride,
These lordes, which that women me beside,

With Jason went the strong Hercules,
 And many another, that he with him ches,
 But who so asketh, who is with him gon,
 Let him rede Argonauts,
 For he wolle tell a tale king yough.
 Philoctetes anon the sail vp drough,
 When the wind was good, and gan him hie
 Out of his country, called Thessalie,
 So long they sayled in the salt see,
 Till in the isle of Lemnon arrived bee,
 All be this nat reboursed of Guido,
 Yet seieth Ovide in his Epistles so,
 And of this isle lady was and queene,
 The faire yong Hipsiphile the sheene,
 That whylom Thesea doughty was the king.

Hipsiphile was gone in her playing,
 And roming on the clevis by the see,
 Under a banke anon espied she
 Where lay the ship, that Jason gan arrive:
 Of her goodnesse adoune she sendeth blive,
 To weten, if that any strange wight
 With temper thider were iblow naight,
 To done him succour, as was her vnaunce,
 To furtheren every wight, and done plesaunce
 Of very bountie, and of courtesie.

This messenger adoune him gan to hie,
 And found Jason and Hercules also,
 That in a cogge to lond ware ige,
 Hem to refreshen, and to take the aire.
 The morning attempto was and faire,
 And in hir way this messenger hem mette,
 Full cunningly these lordes two he gette,
 And did his message, asking hem anon
 If that they were broken, or ought wo begon,
 Or had need of lodemen or vicaide,
 For succour they should nothing faile,
 For it was vterly the queenes will.

Jason answerde meekely and still:
 " My lady" (quod he) " thanke I bartely
 Of her goodnesse, vs needeth truly
 Nothing as now, but that wo weary be,
 And come for to play out of the see,
 Till that the wind be better in our way."

This lady rometh by the cliffe to play
 With her meise, sodlong the stound,
 And findeth this Jason and this other stound
 In speaking of this thing, as I you told.

This Hercules and Jason gan hahold
 How that the queene it was, and faire her grete,
 Anone right as they with this lady mete,
 And she toke heed, and knew by hir manere,
 By hir array, by wordes, and by chere,
 That it were gentill men of great degree,
 And to the castle with her ledoth she
 These strange folk, and doth hem great honour,
 And asketh hem of travaile and of labour
 That they have suffred in the salt see,
 So that within a day two or thre
 She knew by the folke that in his ships be,
 That it was Jason full of venomee,
 And Hercules, that had the great loce,
 That soughten the adventures of Coloc,
 And did hem honour more than before.
 And with hem dealed ever longer the more,
 For they ben worthy folke withouten loce,
 And namely most she spake with Hercules,
 To him her herte bare, he should be
 Sadde, wise, and true, of words avise,
 Withouten any other affection
 Of love, or any other imagination.

This Hercules hath this Jason praised,
 That to the Sunne he hath it vp raised,
 That halfe so true a man there nas of love
 Under the cope of Heaven, that is above,
 And he was wise, hardie, secret, and riche,
 Of these iii points, there nas none him like,
 Of freedom passed he, and lastie kend,
 All tho that live, or ben dead,
 Thereto so great a gentill man was he,
 And of Thessalie likely king to be,
 There nas no lacke, but that he was agest
 To love, and for to speake shamefast,
 Him had lever himselfe to murder and die,
 Than that men should a lover him espie,
 As would God that I had iyere
 My blood and flesh, so that I might live
 With the bones, that he had aught where a wif
 For his estate, for such a lustie life
 She shoulden lede with this lustie knight.
 And all this was compassed on the night
 Betwix him Jason, and this Hercules,
 Of these two here was a shroud loce,
 To come to house upon an innocent,
 For to bedote this queene was hir entent:
 And Jason is as coy as is a maid,
 He looketh pitously, but naught he sayd
 But freely yave he to her counsaillere
 Yafte great, and to her officers,
 As would God that I leaser had and time,
 By processe, all his wrong for to rime:
 But in this house, if any false lover be,
 Right as himselfe now doth, right so did he,
 With falsing, and with every subtil dede,
 Ye get no more of me, but ye wolle rede
 Thoriginall, that telleth all the case,

The sooth is this, that Jason wedded was
 Unto this queene, and toke of her substance
 What so him list, vnto his purveyaunce,
 And upon her begate children two,
 And drough his saile, and saw her never mo:
 A letter sent she him certayne,
 Which wore too long to wryten and to sint,
 And him reprovethe of his great retrooth,
 And praieth him on her to have some rooth,
 And on his children two, she sayd him this,
 That they be like of all thing ivis
 To Jason, save they conth nat beguile,
 And prayd God, or it were long white,
 That she that had his herte iroft her fro,
 Must finden him vntreue also:
 And that she must both her children spill,
 And all tho that suffreth him his will:
 And true to Jason was she all her life,
 And ever kept her chast, as for his wif,
 Ne never had the joy at her harte,
 But died for his love of sorrowes smart.

To Coloc come in this duke Jason,
 That is of love devouour and dragon,
 As native appeteth forms alway,
 And from forme to forme it passen may,
 Or as a well that were bottonles,
 Right so can Jason have no pees,
 For to desiren through his appetite,
 To done with gentlewomen his delite,
 This is his lust, and his felicitye,
 Jason is romed forth to the cite,
 That whylome cleped was Jasonico,
 That was the master toome of all Coloc,
 And hath told the cause of his coming
 Unto Otes, of that country king,

Praying him that he must done his assay
To get the seece of gold, if that he may,
Of which the king asseeth to his house,
And doth him honour, as it is doone,
So forth, that his daughter and his beire,
Medea, which that was so wise and faire,
That fairer saw there never man with eie,
He made her done to Jason companie
At meet, and sitte by him in the hall.
Now was Jason a seemely man withall,
And like a lord, and had a great renown,
And of his looke as royall as a lion,
And godly of his speech, and familiere,
And good of love all the craft and art pleure
Withouten booke, with everiche observaunce,
And as fortune her ought a foule mischaunce,
She was enamoured vpon this man.

"Jason," (quod she) "for ought I see or can,
As of this thing, the which ye bea about,
Ye and your selfe ye put in much dout,
For who so well this aventure atchave,
He may nat wele averten as I leve,
Withouten death, but I his helpe be,
Be sathesesse, it is my will," (quod she)
"To further you, so that ye shall nat die,
But turnen sound home to your Thessalie."
"My right lady," (quod this Jason) "tho,
That ye have of my death or my wo
Any regard, and dooe me this honour,
I wot well, that my might, as my labour,
I wot well, that my might, as my labour,
May nat deserve it my lives day,
God thanke you, there I we can no may,
Your man am I, and lowely you beseech
To bea my helpe, withouten more spech,
But certes for my death shall I not spare."

The gan this Medea to him declare
The perill of this case, fro point to point
Of his battaile, and in what desioit
He mote stande, of which no creature
Nere only she, ne might his life assure:
And shortly, right to the point for to go,
They bea accorded fully betwix hem two,
That Jason shall her wedde, as true knight,
And terme yset to come soone at night
Unto her chambre, and make there his othe
Upon the goddes, that be for lefe or lothe
He shalde her never falsen night ne day,
To bea her husband whyle he live may,
As be the that from his deeth him saved here,
And her vpon at night they mete yfere,
And doth his othe, and gothe with her to bedde,
And on the morow vpwand he him spedde,
For she hath taught him how he shall nat faile
The fees to winne, and stinten his battaile,
And saved him his life, and his honour,
And gave him a name, as a conquerour,
Right through the sleight of her enchantment,
Now hath Jason the seece, and home is went
With Medea, and treasours full great wounde,
But ravist of her father she is gonne
To Thessalie, with duke Jason her lefe,
That afterward hath brought her to mischeife,
For as a traytour he is from her go,
And with her left yow children two,
And falsely hath betrayed her, alas,
And ever in loye a cheefe traytour he was,
And wedded yett the thirde wife anon,
That was the daughter of king Creon,
This is the maende of loving and gremolon,
That Medea received of duke Jason

Right for her trooth, and for her kindnesse,
That loved him better than her selfe I gesse,
And left her father, and her heritage,
And of Jason this is the vasaillage,
That in his dayes nas never some yfound
So false a lover, going on the ground,
And therefore in her letter thus she said,
First whan she of his falsenesse him vpreid:
"Why liked thee my yellow haire to see,
More than the bounde of mine honestie?
Why liked me thy youth and thy fairenesse,
And of thy tong the infinite graciouslynesse?
O haddest thou in thy conquest dead ybe,
Full mikel vntrooth had there diede with thee."
Well can Ovide her letter in verse condite,
Which were as now too long for to write.

TVZ

LEGEND OF LUCRECE OF ROME.

Now mote I saine thequing of kygge
Of Rome, for his horrible doings
Of the last king Tarquinius,
As saith Ovid, and Titus Livius,
But for that cause tell I nat this storie,
But for to prayson, and drawn in memorie
The very wife, the very Lucrece,
That for her wifehood, and her stedfastnesse,
Nat only that the painemus her commend,
But that cleped is in our legend
The great Anstyn, that hath compassious
Of this Lucrece that starfe in Rome town,
And in what wise I wot but shortly treat,
And of this thing I touch but the great.

When Ardea besieged was about
With Romanes, that full sterne were and stout,
Full long lay the siege, and little wroughten,
So that they were halfe idle, as hem thoughten,
And in his play Tarquinius the yong,
Can for to yape, for he was light of tong,
And said, that "it was an idle life,
No man did there no more than his wife,
And let vs speke of wives that is best,
Praise every man his owne as him lest,
And with our spech let vs ease our herte."

A knight (that hight Collatin) vp stert,
And sayd thus, "Nay, sir, it is no neede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede:
I have a wife," (quod he) "that as I trow
Is holden good of all that ever her know,
Go we to Rome to night, and we shall see."
Tarquinius answerde, "That liketh mee."
To Rome they be comen, and fast hem dight
To Colatins house, and downe they light,
Tarquinius, and eke this Colatine,
The husband knew the efters well and fine,
And full prively into the house they gone.
Nor at the gate porter was there none,
And at the chamber dore they abide:
This noble wife sate by her beds side
Dischauced, for no mallice she ne thought,
And soft wood! sayth Linc, that she wrought,
To kepe her from slouth and idleness,
And had her servants done hir businesse,
And asketh hem, "What tidings heren ye?
How sayth men of the sieg, how shall it be?"

God would the wals were fallen adoun,
 Mine husband is too long out of this town,
 For which drede doth me sore to smert,
 Right as a sword it stingeth to mine herte,
 When I thinke on this or of that place,
 God save my lord, I pray him for his grace :"
 And therewithall so tenderly she gan wepe,
 And of her werke she took no more keepe,
 But meekely she let her eyen fall,
 And thilke semblant sate her well withall,
 And eke her teares full of heavynesse,
 Embelesed her wifely chastnesse.
 Her countenance is to her herte digne,
 For they acordeden in deed and signe,
 And with that word her husband Colatin,
 Or she of him was ware, came storting in,
 And said, " Drede thee nat, for I am here,"
 And she anoue vp rose, with blisfull chere,
 And kissed him, as of wives is the wounse.

Tarquinius, this proud kings sonne
 Conceived hath her beauteie and her chere,
 Her yellow haire, her bountie, and her manere,
 Her hew, her words, that she hath complained,
 And by no craft her beauteie was nat fained,
 And caught to this lady such desire,
 That in his herte he was in any fire,
 So woody, that his wit was all forgotten,
 For well thought he she should nat be gotten,
 And aye the more he was in dispaire,
 The more coveteth, and thought her faire,
 His blind lust was all his coveting.
 On morrow, when the bird began to sing,
 Unto the sieg he commeth full prively,
 And by himselfe he walketh soberly,
 The image of her recording alway new,
 Thus lay her hair, and thus fresh was her hew,
 Thus sate, thus span, this was her chere,
 Thus fair she was, and this was her manere :
 All this conceit his herte bath new itake,
 And as the see, with tempest all to shake,
 That after when the storme is all ago,
 Yet wolle the water quappe a day or two,
 Right so, though that her forme were absent,
 The pleasaunce of her forme was present,
 But nathelesse, nat pleasaunce, but delite,
 Or an vrichtfull talent with dispite,
 " For maugre her, she shall my lemman be :
 Hap helpeth hardy man alway," (quod he)
 " What end that I make, it shall be so,"
 And girt him with his sword, and gau to go,
 And he forthright, till to Rome he come,
 And all alone his way that he hath come,
 Unto the house of Colatin full right,
 Down was the Sonne, and day hath lost his light,
 And in he come, unto a privie halke,
 And in the night full theefely gan he stalke,
 When every wight was to his rest brought,
 Ne no wight had of treason such a thought,
 Whether by windpw, or by other gin,
 With swerd ydraw, shortly he commeth in
 There as she lay, this noble wife Lucrese,
 And as she woke, her bedde she felt presse :
 " What beast is that," (quod she) " that wayeth thus?
 " I am the kings sonne Tarquinius,"
 (Quod he) " but and thou crie, or any noise make,
 Or if thou any creature awake,
 By thilke God, that formed man of live,
 This swerd through thine herte shall I rive,"
 And therewithall unto her throte he stert,
 And set the swerd all sharpe on her herte :

No word she spake, she hath no might thereto,
 What shall she saie, her wit is all ago,
 Right as when a woffe findeth a lamb alone,
 To whom shall she complaine or make moone :
 What, shall she fight with an hardy knight,
 Well wote men a woman hath no might :
 What, shall she crie, or how shall she astert,
 That hath her by the throte, with swerd at herte?
 She asketh grace, and said all that she can.

" No wolt thou nat," (quod this croell man)
 " As wisely Jupiter my soule save,
 I shall in thy stable slea thy knave,
 And lay him in thy bed, and loud crie,
 That I thee find in such avoutrie,
 And thus thou shalt be dead, and also lese
 Thy name, for thou shalt nat chese."
 This Romans wives loveden so her name
 At thilke time, and dreden so the shame,
 That what for fere of slander, and drede of death
 She lost both at ones wit and breath,
 And in a sough she lay, and woxe so dead,
 Men mighten smite off her arme or head,
 She feleth nothing, neither foule ne faire.

Tarquinius, that art a kings boire,
 And shouldest as by lineage and by right
 Done as a lord, and a very knight,
 Why hast thou done despite to chivalrie ?
 Why hast thou done thy lady villanie ?
 Alas, of thee this was a villanous dede,
 But now to the purpose. in the story I rede,
 When he was gon, and this mischaunce is fall,
 This lady sent after her friendes all,
 Father, mother, and husband, all ifere,
 And discheveled with her haire clere,
 In habite such as women used tho
 Unto the burying of hir frends go,
 She sate in hall, with a sorowfull sight,
 Her friends asken what her aylen might,
 And who was dead, and she sate aye weping,
 A word for shame ne may she forth out bring,
 Ne vpon hem she durst nat behold,
 But at the last of Tarquiny she hem told
 This ruffall case, and all this thing horrible,
 The wo to tell were impossible
 That she and all her friendes make at ones,
 All had folkes hertes ben of stones,
 It might have naked hem vpon her cew,
 Her herte was so wifely and so trew,
 She said, that for her gilt ne for her blame
 Her husband should nat have the foule name,
 That would she nat suffren by no way :
 And they answerde all unto her fay,
 That they foryave it her, for it was right,
 It was no gilt, it lay nat in her might,
 And saiden her ensamples many one,
 But all for naught, for thus she said anoue :
 " Be as he may," (quod she) " of forgiuing,
 I will nat have no forgit for nothing,"
 But prively she cougth forth a knife,
 And therewithall she raft her selfe her life,
 And as she fell adowne she cast her looke,
 And of her clothes yet heed she took,
 For in her falling yet she had a care,
 Least that her feet or such things lay bare,
 So well she loved cleanness, and eke trowth,
 Of her had all the towne of Rome outh,
 And Brutus hath by her chast blood swore,
 That Tarquin shoud ybanished be therefore,
 And all his kinne, and let the people call,
 And openly the tale he told hem all,

And openly let carry her on a barge
Through all the town, that men may see and here
The horrible deed of her oppressions,
He never was there king in Rome town
Sense thilke day, and she was holden there
A mist, and ever her day yballowed dere,
As in hir law: and thus endeth Lucrece:
The noble wife, thus beareth witness:
I tell it, for she was of love so true,
Ne in her will she chaunged for no new,
And in her stable herte, sadde and kind,
That in these women men may all day find
There as they cast hir herte, there it dwelleth,
For well I wote, that Christ himselfe telleth,
That in Ieruel, as wide as is the lond,
That so great faith in all the lond he no fond,
As in a woman, and this is no lie,
And as for men, looke ye such tyrannie
They doen all day, assay hem who so list,
The trust is full beothell for to trist.

THE

LEGEND OF ARIADNE OF ATHENS.

Upon infernall Minos, of Crete king,
Now cometh thy let, thou comest on the ring,
Nat for thy sake only written is this storie,
But for to clype ayen vnto memorie,
Of Theseus the great vntrouth of love,
For which the gods of Heaven above
Ben wrath, and wrath have take for thy sinne,
Be red for shame, now I thy life beginne.

Minos, that was the mighty king of Crete,
That had an hundred cities strong and grete,
To schoole hath sent his sonne Androgeus
To Athens, of the which it happed thus,
That he was slaine, learning phylosophie,
Right in that cite, nat but for envie.

The great Minos, of the which I speke,
His sones death is come for to wreke,
Alcathoe he besieged hard and long,
But nathelesse, the walles he so strong,
And Nison, that was king of that cite,
So chivalrous, that litle dredeth he,
Of Minos or his hoast took he no care,
Till on a day befell an aventure,
That Nison daughter stood vpon the wall,
And of the siego saw the manner all:
So happed it, that at scurmbing,
She cast her herte vpon Minos the king,
For his beautie, and his cheualrie,
So sore, that she wende for to die,
And shortly of this p[ro]cure for to pace,
She made Minos witness thilke place,
So that the cite was all at his will,
To sauen whom him list, or eles spill,
But wickedly he quit her kindesme,
And let her drench in sorrow and distresse,
Here that the gods had of her pite,
But that tale were too long as now for me.
Athens was this king Minos also,
As Alcathoe, and other townes mo,
And thus the effect, that Minos hath so driven
Hem of Athens, that they more him yeven
Fro yere to yere her owne children dere
For to be slaine, as ye shall after here.

This Minos hath a monster, a wicked best,
That was so cruell, that without crest,
When that a man was brought into his presence,
He would him eat, there helpeth no defence:
And every third yere withouten dout,
They casten lots, as it came about,
On rich and poore, he must his sonne take,
And of his childe he trust present make
To Minos, to save him or to spill,
Or let his beast devour him at his will.
And this hath Minos done right in dispite,
To wroke his sonne was set all his delite,
And make hem of Athenes his thral!
Fro yere to yere, while he liuen shall.
And home he saileth when this tonn is was,
This wicked custom is so long yrou,
Till of Athenes king Egeus
Mote senden his owne sonne Theseus,
Bene that the lots is fallen him vpon
To ben deuoured, for grace is there non.
And forth is ladde this wofull yong knight
Unto the country of king Minos full of might,
And in a prison fattred fast is he,
Till the time he shoold yfreten be.

Well maist thou wepe, O wofull Theseus,
That art a kings sonne, and damned thus,
Me thinketh this, that thou art depe yhold:
To whom that saved thee fro cares cold,
And now if any woman helpe thee,
Well oughtest thou her serrault for to bee,
And ben her true lover yere by yere,
But now to come ayen to my matere.

The toure, there this Theseus is throw,
Down in the bottome dork, and wonder low,
Was joyning to the wall of a foraine,
Longing vnto the doughtren twico
Of Minos that in hir chambers grete
Dwelten above the maister strete
Of the towne, in joy and in solas:
Not I out how it happed percaas,
As Theseus complained him by night,
The kings daughter, that Ariadne hight,
And eke her suster Phedra, herden all
His complaint, as they stood on the wall,
And looked vpon the bright Moone,
Hem list nat to go to bed so sone:
And of his wo they had compassion,
A kings sonne to be in such prison,
And ben deuoured, thought hem great pite:
Than Ariadnes spake to her suffer free,
And said: "Phedra lefe suster dere,
This wofull lords sone may ye nat here,
How pitously he complaineth his kin,
And eke his povere estate that he is in?
And guiltlesse, certes now it is roth,
And if ye wolle assent, by my trouth,
He shall ben holpen, how so that we do."

Phedra answerde, "I wis me is as wo
For him, as ever I was for any man,
And to his helpe the best rede I can,
Is, that we done the gailer prively
To come and speke with vs hastily,
And done this wofull man with him to come,
For if he may this monster overcome,
Then were he quit, there is none other boot,
Let vs well taste him at his herte root,
That if so be that be a weapon have,
Where that he his life dare kepe or save,
Fighten with this fiend, and him defend,
For in the prison, here as he shall descend,

Ye wote well, that the best is in a place
That is not derke, and hath roume and ake space
To welden an axe, or swerde, staffe, or knife,
So that me thinketh he should save his life,
If that he be a man, he shall do so:
And we shall make him bailes eke also
Of weke and towe, that when he gapeth fast,
Into the beestes throte he shall hem cast,
To sleke his hunger, and encumber his teeth,
And right anon when that Theseus seeth
The best askeked, he shall on him lepe
To sleen him, or they comen more to kepe:
This weapen shal the gailer, or that tide,
Fall prively within the prison hide:
And for the house is crened to and fro,
And hath so quiet waies for to go,
For it is shapen as the mase is wrought,
Thereto have I a remedy in my thought,
That by a clewe of twins, as he hath gon,
The same way he may retourne anon,
Following alway the threde, as he hath come,
And when this best is overrome,
Than may he fien away out of this stede,
And eke the gailer may be with him lode,
And him avaunce at home in his countree,
Sens that so great a lords sonne is he."

This is my rede, if that ye dare it take.
What shold I leger sermons of it make,
The gailer cometh, and with him Theseus,
When these things ben accorded thus.

Downe saute Theseus upon his knee,
"The right lady of my life," (quod he)
"I sorrowfull man, ydamned to the deth:
Fro you, whyles that me lasteth breath,
I wol nat twyme, after this aventure,
But in your service, thus I woll endure,
That as a wretch vaknow, I woll you serve
For evermore, till that mine herte starve,
For sake I woll at home mine heringe,
And as I said, ben of your court a page,
If that ye vouchsafe that in this place,
Ye graunt me to have soche a grace,
That I may have nat but my meate and drinke,
And for my sustenance yet well I swinke,
Right as you list, that Minc ne no wight,
Sens that he saw me never with eyen sight,
Ne no man else shall me capte,
Sochly, and so well I shal me grie,
And me so wel disfigure, and so low,
That in this world there shall no man me know,
To have my life, and to have presence
Of you, that done to me this excellence,
And to my father shall I sende here,
This worthy man, that is your gaylore,
And him so gerdoun, that he shall well be
One of the greatest men of my countree,
And if I durst saime, my lady bright,
I am a kings sone and eke a knight
As wold God, if that it might be,
Ye wren in my country all thre,
And I with you, to heare you companie,
Than shuld ye sone if that I thesowf lie,
And if that I pesser you in love manere,
To ben your page, and serve you right here,
But if you serve as lowly in that place,
I pray to Mars to yove me such grace,
That shames death on me there wote fall,
And death and poverte to my frends all,
And that my sprite by night wote go,
After my death, and walk to and fro,

That I wote of traitour have a name,
For which my sprit wote go, to do me shame,
And if I clayme ever other degree,
But ye vouchsafe to yere it mee,
As I have said, of shames death I dyv,
And mercy, lady, I can naught else seyn."

A semely knight was this Theseus to see,
And yonge, but of twenty yere and thre,
But who so had yene his countenaunce,
He wold have wept, for routhe of his piteous:
For which this Ariadne in this manere,
Answerde to his piteous and to his chere.

"A kings sone, and eke a knight," (quod she)
"To ben my servaunt in so low degree,
God shilde it, for the shame of women all,
And lese me never such a case befall,
And sende you graace, and sleight of herte also
You to defend, and knightly to sleen your las,
And lece hereafter I may you find
To me, and to my suster here so kind,
That I ne repent nat to yere you life,
Yet were it better I were your wife,
Sith ye ben as gentill borne as I,
And have a realme nat but fast by,
Than that I suffred your gentillme to starve,
Or that I let you as a page serve,
It is no profite, as unto your kinrede,
But what is that, that man wot nat do for dred,
And to my suster sith that it is so,
That she wote gone with me, if that I go,
Or els suffre death as wel as I,
That ye unto your sone as truly,
Done her be wedded, at your house coming,
This is the final end of all this thing,
Ye swere it here, upon all that may be sworn!"

"Ye lady mine," (quod he) "or els to tyme
Wote I be with the Minotoure or to morrow,
And haveth here of mine herte blood to bove,
If that ye wote, if I had knife or spere,
I wouid it latten out, and therson swere,
For than at este, I wot ye wouid me lere
By Mars, that is chiefs of my belere,
So that I might liven, and nat faile
To morow for to taken my betaille,
I wolde never fro this place fien,
Till that ye should the very piteous seyn,
For now, if that the soth I shall you seyn,
I have loved you full many a day,
Though ye so wist nat, in my countree,
And aldermost desired you to see,
Of any earthly living creature,
Upon my truth I sweare and you assure,
This seven yere I have your servaunt be,
Now have I you, and also have ye me,
My dere herte, of Athens duchesse."

This lady smyleth at his stedfastnesse,
And at his hertely wordes, and at his chere,
And to her suster said in this manere:

"And sothly suster mine," (quod she)
"Now be we doobenes both I and ye,
And likerde to the regals of Athens,
And both hereafter likely to be queenen,
And saved fro his sleeth a kings sone,
As ever of gentill women is the woman,
To save a gentill man, and sith hir wight,
In honest cause, and surely in his right,
Me thinketh so wight ought vs herof blame,
Ne becom vs therefore as yvel name,"
And shortly of this matter for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leave ytake,

And every point was performed in dede,
As ye have in this covenant herde me rede,
His wepen, his cleve, his thing that I have said,
Was by the gailer in the house ylad,
There as the Minotaur bath his dwelling,
Right fast by the dore, at his entring,
And Theseus is had vnto his dethe,
And forth vnto this Minotaur he gethe,
And by the teaching of this Adriane,
He overcame this best, and was his bane,
And out he cometh by the clewe againe,
Fol prively, when he this best hath slaine,
And the gailer gotten hath a barge,
And of his wives treasure gun it charge,
And toke his wife, and eke her suster free,
And by the gailer, and with hem al three
H stole away out of the lond by night,
And to the countre of Eoupie him dight,
There as he had a frende of his knowing,
There feesten they, there dauncen they and sing,
And in his armes hath this Adriane,

That of the best bath kept him fro his bane,
And get him there a noble barge anon,
And of his country folke a ful great wode,
And taketh his leave, and homeward saileth hee,
And in an yle, amids the wilde see,
There as there dwelt creature none,
Save wild bestes, and that full many one,
He made his shippe a londe for to sette,
And in that yle halfe a day he lette,
And said, that on the londe he meet him rest.
His mariners have done right as him lest,
And for to tell shortly in this case,
When Ariadne his wife a slepe was,
For that her suster sayre was than she,
He taketh her in his honde, and forth goeth he
To slepe, and as a traitour stole away,
While that this Ariadne a slepe lay,
And to his country warde he sailed blive,
A twenty daye way, the winde him drive,
And found his father drenched in the see.
He list no more to speke of him parde,
These false lovers, poison be hir bane.

But I wol turne againe to Adriane,
That is with slepe for weynowse ytake,
Fol sorrowfully her herte may awake.

Alas, for thee mine herte hath pite,
Right in the dawning awaketh she,
And gropeth in the bed, and foold right nought:
"Alas," (quod she) "that ever I was wrought,
I am betrayed," and her heere to rent,
And to the stronde barefote fast she went,
And criad: "Theseus mine herte swote,
Where be ye, that I may nat with you meete?
And might them with bestes beon ykaine."

The bakow rockes answerde her againe,
No man she saw, and yet above the Moone,
And his vpon a rocke she went soone,
And sawe his barge sayling in the see,
Cold wuz her herte, and right thus said she:
"Mekere them ye find I the bestes wilde."
Hath be nat sinne, that he her thus begilde?
She cried, "O turne againe for routhe and sinne,
Thy barge hath nat all his meine in,"
Her kercheve on a pole stiked she,
Accusance he should it well see,
And him remembre that she was behind.
And turne againe, and on the stronde her find.

But all for naught, his way he is gone,
And downe she fel a swonne on a stone,

And up she riste, and kissed in all her care
The stepes of his feete, there he hath fare,
And to her bed right thus she speketh tho:
"Thou bed," (quod she) "that hast received two,
Thou shalt answer of two, and not of one,
Where is the greater parte, away gone?
"Alas, wher shal I wretched wight be come?
For though so be that wote none here come,
Home to my countrey dare I nat for drede,
I can my selfe in this case nat rede."

What should I tell more her complaining,
It is so long, it were an hevy thing?
In her epistle, Naso telleth all,
But shortly to the end tell I shall,
The goddess have her holpen for pite,
And in the signe of Taurus men may see,
The stons of her crowne shine clere,
I will no more speake of this matere,
But thus this false lover can begile
His trew love, the diel quite him his wife.

THE

LEGEND OF PHILOMENE.

Thou yever of the formes, that hast wrought
The fayre world, and bare it in thy thought
Eternally, er thou thy werke began,
Why madest thou vnto the slander of man,
Or all be that it was not thy doing,
As for that end to make such a thing,
Why suffrestest thou that Tereus was bore,
That is in love so false and so forswore,
That fro this world vp to the first Heven,
Corrupteth, when that folke his name seves!
And as to me, so grily was his dede,
That when that I this foule storie rede,
Mine iyen waxen foole, and sore also,
Yet lasteth the venime of so longe ago,
That enfecteth him that wolde behold
The storie of Tereus, of which I told,
Of Traco was he lord, and kin to Marte
The cruel god that stants with bloody darte,
And wedded had he with blisful chere
King Pandionis faire daughter dere,
That hight Progne, soure of her countre,
Though Jeno list not at the feast be,
Ne Himeneus, that god of wedding is,
But at the feast ready beon iwis,
The furies three, with all hir mortall bronde,
The oule all night above the bakkes woude,
That prophete is of wo, and of mischaunce.
This revell, full of song, and full of daunce,
Last a fourtsight, or litle lase,
But shortly of this storie her to passe,
(For I am weary of him for to tell)
Five yere his wife and he together dwell,
Till on a day she gun so sore long
To see her suster, that she saw not long,
That for desire she mist what to say,
But to her husband gun she for to pray
For Gods love, that she mote ones gone
Her suster for to see, and come ayen anon,
Or else but she mote to her wend,
She praied him that he wold after her send:
And this was day by day all her prayer,
With al humblenes of wifshood, word and chere.

This Tereus let make his ships yare,
 And into Grece himseife is forth ifare,
 Unto his father in law gan he pray,
 To vouchsafe, that for a moneh or tway,
 That Philomene his wives suster might
 Ou Progne his wife hut ones have a sight,
 "And she shall come to you again anon
 My selfe with her, I will both come and gon,
 And as my hertes life I will her kepe."

This old Pandion, this king gan wepe
 For tendernesse of herte, for to leve
 His daughter gon, and for to yave her leve,
 Of all this world he loved nothing so,
 But at the last, leave hath she to go,
 For Philomene with salt teares eke
 Gan of her father grace to beseeke,
 To seepe her suster, that her longeth so,
 And him embraceth, with her armes two,
 And there also yong and faire was she,
 That whan that Tereus saw her beaute,
 And of array, that there was none bez liehe,
 And yet of beauteis was she so to riche,
 He cast his ferie herte vpon her so,
 That he woll have her, how so that it go,
 And with his wiles kneled, and so praised,
 Till at the last Pandion thus saied.

"Now sone," (quod he) "that art to me so dere,

I thee betake my yong daughter dere,
 That beareth the key of all mine hertes life,
 And grete well my daughter, and thy wife,
 And yave her leave sometime for to pley,
 That she may seen me ones or I dese."
 And sothly he hath mede him riche feast,
 And to his folke, the most and eke the least,
 That with him came: and yave him yets great,
 And him conveyeth through the master strete
 Of Athenes, and to the sea him brought,
 And tourneth home, so malice he ne thought.
 The ores pulleth forth the vessel fast,
 And into Trace arriveth at the last,
 And vp is to a forest he her led,
 And to a cave prively he him sped,
 And in this darke cave, if her lest
 Or list nought, he had her fur to rest,
 Of which her herte agrose, and saied thus:

"Where is my suster, brother Tereus?"

And therewithall she wept tenderly,
 And quoke for feare, pale and pitiously,
 Right as the lambe, that of the wolfe is hitten,
 Or as the culver, that of the egre is smitten,
 And is out of his claws forth escaped,
 Yet it is aferde, and a waped,
 Lest it be hent of ones: so sate she,
 But vterly it may none other be,
 By force hath this traitour done a deede,
 That he hath rest her of her maidenhede,
 Mangre her head, by strength and by his might.
 Lo here a deede of men, and that aright.
 She crieth "Suster," with full loudes staven,
 And "Father dere, helpe me God in Heven:"
 All helpeth not, and yet this false thefe,
 Hath done this lady yet a more mischeffe,
 For feare lest she should his shame cris,
 And doné him openly a villanie,
 And with his swerd ber tong of kerfe be,
 And in a castell made her for to be,
 Full prively in prison evermore,
 And kept her to her vage end to his store,

So that she ne might never more astarte.
 O sely Philomene, wo is in thine herte,
 Huge been thy sorowes, and wonder smart,
 God wroke thee, and sode thee thy bone,
 Now is time I make an end sone,

This Tereus is to his wife icome,
 And in his armes bath his wife inome,
 And pitiously he wept, and shoke his bedde,
 And swore he, that he found her suster dedde,
 For which this selie Progne hath such wo,
 That nigh her sorowfull herte brake a two.
 And thus in teares let I Progne dwell,
 And of her suster furth I woll you tell.

This wofull lady learmed had in youth,
 So that she worken and embrauden outh,
 And weaven in stole the rade vore,
 As it of women bath be woved yore,
 And sothly for to saine, she bath her 6ll
 Of meate and drinke, of clothing at her wil,
 And outh the otre rode well inough and endite,
 But with a penne she could not writte,
 Set letters can she weave to end fro,
 So that by the yere was all agy,
 She had woven in a flames large,
 How she was brought fro Athens in a barge,
 And in a cave how that she was brought,
 And all the thing that Tereus wrought,
 She wote it wel, and wrote the storie above,
 How she was served for her susters love.
 And to a man a ring she yave anon,
 And praised him by signes for to gon
 Unto the queene, and bearen her that clothe,
 And by signe swore many an othe,
 She should him yave what she gotten might.

This man anon vnto the queene him dight,
 And toke it her, and all the maner told,
 And whan that Progne hath this thing behold,
 No worde she spake, for sorow and eke for rage,
 But fained her to gon on pilgrimage
 To Baccus temple, and in a little stound
 Her dome suster sitting bath she found
 Weeping in the castell her selfe alone,
 Alas the wo, constraint, and the mome
 That Progne vpon her dome suster maketh,
 In armes everich of hem other taketh,
 And thus I let been in hir sorow dwell,
 The remnant is no charge to tell,
 For this is all and sone, thus was she served
 That never agilt; he deserved
 Unto this cruell man, that she of wist.
 Ye may beware of men if that you list,
 For all be that be woll out for shame
 Doen as Tereus, to lose his name,
 Ne serve you as a murthurer or a knave,
 Full little while shall ye trow him have,
 That wol I saie, al were he now my brother,
 But it so be that he may have another.

THE

LEGENDE OF PHILLIS.

By prove, as well as by auctorite,
 That wicked fruicte cometh of a wicked tree,
 That may ye find, if that it liketh you,
 But for this end, I speake this as now,

To tell you of false Demophon,
 In love a falser heard I never non,
 But it were his father Theseus,
 God for his grace fro such one kepe vs,
 Then these women praien, that it here,
 Now to the effect tourne I of my matere.
 Destroyed is of Troie the citee,
 This Demophon came sayling in the see
 Toward Athenes, to his paleis large,
 With him came many a ship, and many a barge
 Full of folke, of which full many one
 Is wounded sore, and sick, and wo begone,
 And they have at the seige long ilaine,
 Behind him came a winde, and eke a ruine,
 That shofe so sore, his saile might not stonde,
 Him were lever than all the world a loode,
 So hunted him the tempest to and fro,
 So darke it was, he could no where go,
 And with a wave bristen was his stert,
 His ship was rent so lowe, in such manere,
 That carpenter could it not amende,
 The see by night as any torche brende,
 For wood, and posseth him vp and down,
 Till Neptune bath of him compassoun,
 And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they all,
 And madden him vp a loode to fall,
 Wherof that Phillis lady was and queene,
 Lyncurgus daughter, father unto seene
 Than is the floure again the bright Sonne,
 Cometh in Demophon to loode iwoone,
 Wenke and eke werie, and his folke forjined
 Of werinewe, and also enfastined,
 And to the death he was almost idriven,
 His wise folke counsaile have him yeven,
 To seken helpe and succour of the queene,
 And looken what his grace might bene,
 And maken in that lande some chesaventure,
 And kepen him fro wo, and fro mischaunce,
 For sicke he was, and almost at the death,
 Uneth might he speake, or draw breath,
 And lieth in Rhodopeia him for to rest,
 When he may walk, him thought it was best
 Unto the countrey to seeken for succour,
 Men knew him wele, and did him honour,
 For at Athenes duke and lord was he,
 As Theseus his father hath ibe,
 That in his time was great of renown,
 No man so great in all his regioun,
 And like his father of face and of stature,
 And false of love, it came him of nature,
 As doth the foxe Renarde, the foxes sounse,
 Of kind he could his old father woune
 Without love, as can a drake swimme
 When it is caught, and carried to the brimme:
 This honourable queen Phillis doth him chere,
 Her liketh well his sports and his manere,
 But I am agroted here beforene,
 To write of hem that in love been forsworne,
 And eke to haste me in my legende,
 Which to performe, God me grace sende,
 Therefore I passe shortly in this wise,
 Ye have well heard of Theseus the gise,
 In the betraying of faire Adriane,
 That of her pite kept him fro his bene,
 At short wordes, right so Demophon,
 The same way, and the same pathe hath gon
 That did his false father Theseus,
 For unto Phillis hath he avorne thus,
 To wedden her, and her his trowth plight,
 And pikid of her all the good he might,

When he was hole and sound, and had his rest,
 And doth with Phillis what so that him lest,
 As well I could, if that me list so,
 Tellen all his doing to and fro.

He sayd to his countrey mote him saile,
 For there he would her wedding appaile,
 As fill to her honour, and his also,
 And openly he took his leave tho,
 And to her swore he would not sojourne,
 But in a month again he would retourne,
 And in that loode let make his ordinaunce,
 As very lorde, and took the obeisaunce,
 Well and humbly, and his shippes dight,
 And home he goeth the next way he might,
 For unto Phillis yet came he nought,
 And that hath she so harde and sore ibought,
 Alas, as the storie doth us record,
 She was her owne death with a corde,
 When that she saw that Demophon her traied.
 But first wrote she to him, and fast him praied
 He would come, and deliver her of pain,
 As I rehearse shall a worde or twain,
 Me liste not vouchsafe on him to swinke,
 Dispenden on him a penne full of ynke,
 For false in love was he, right as his sire,
 The Devil set hir mules both on a fire,
 But of the letter of Phillis woll I write,
 A worde or twain, although it be but lite.

"Thine hostesse" (quod she) "O Demophon,
 Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon,
 Of Rhodopeie, vpon you mote complain,
 Over the terme set betwix vs twain,
 That ye no holden forward, as ye sayd:
 Your acre, which ye in our haven layd,
 Hight vs, that ye would comen out of doubt,
 Or that the Moone ones went about,
 But times fower, the Moone hath hid her face
 Sens thilke day ye went fro this place,
 And fower times light the world again,
 But for all that, yet shall I notly saie,
 Yet hath the streme of Scython not brought
 From Athenes the ship, yet came it nought,
 And if that ye the terme reken would,
 As I or other true lovers doe should,
 I plain not (God wot) before my day."
 But al her letter written I ne may,
 By order, for it were to me a charge,
 Her letter was right long, and therio large,
 But here and there, in rime I have it layd
 There as me thought that she hath wel sayd.

She sayd, "The sailes cometh not again,
 Ne to the word there nis no fey certain,
 But I wot why ye come not" (quod she)
 "For I was of my love to you so fre,
 And of the goddes that ye have swore,
 That hir vengeance fall on you therfore,
 Ye be not suffisaunt to heare the pain,
 To moche trusted I, well may I saie,
 Upon your linge, and your faire tong,
 And on your teares falsely out wrong,
 How cond ye wepe so by craft?" (quod she)

"May there soche teares fained be?
 "Now certes if ye would have in memory,
 It ought be to you but little glory,
 To have a selie maide thus betrayed,
 To God" (quod she) "pray I, and oft have prayed,
 That it be now the greatest price of all,
 And most honour that ever you shall befall,
 And when thine old sumpeters painted be,
 In which men may hir worthinesse see,"

Than pray I God, thou painted be also,
That folke may reden, forth by as they go.
" Lo this is he, that with his flattery
Betrayed hath, and done her villany,
That was his true love, in thought and drede.
" But sothly of a point yet may they rede,
That ye been like your father, as in this,
For he begiled Ariadne iwis,
With such an arte, and such subtilte,
As thou thy selves hast begiled me:
As in that point, although it be not feire,
Thou folowest certain, and art his heire.
But sens thus sinfully ye me begile,
My body mote ye see, within a while
Right in the haven of Athens fleeing,
Withouten sepulture and buryng,
Though ye been harder than in any stone."

And whan this letter was forth sent anon,
And knew how brutall and how false he was,
Sbe for dispaire fordid her selfe, alas,
Such sorow hath sbe, for she beset her so.
Beware ye womene of your subtile fo,
Sens yet this day man may ensample us,
And trusteth now in love no man but me.

THE

LEGENDE OF HYPERMESTRE.

In Grece whilom were brethren two
Of which that one was called Danao,
That many a son hath of his body wonne,
As such false lovers ofte come.

Among his sones all there was one,
That aldernost he loved of everychone,
And whan this child was borne, this Danao
Sbope him a name, and called him Lino,
That other brother called was Egiste,
That was of love as false as ever him liste,
And many a daughter gate he in his life,
Of which be gate upon his right wife,
A daughter dere, and did her for to call,
Hypermestra, yongest of hem all,
The which child of her nativite,
To all good thewes borne was she,
As liked to the goddess or she was borne,
That of the shefs she should be the corne,
The verdes that we clepen destine,
Hath shapen her, that she must needes be
Pitous, sad, wise, true as stele,
And to this woman it accordeth wele,
For though that Uenus yave her great beauty,
With Jupiter compownd so was she,
That consciens, trouth, and drede of abame,
And of her wifehode for to kepe her name,
This thought her was felicite as here,
And reed Mars, was that time of the yere
So feble, that his malice is him raft,
Repressed hath Uenus his cruell craft,
And what with Uenus, and other oppression
Of houses, Mars his venize is a dou,
That Hypermeestre dare not handle a knife,
In malice, though she should lose her life,
But nathelesse, as Heaven gan the turne,
Two bad aspectes hath she of Saturne,
That made her to die in prison,
And I shall after make mencion,

Of Danao and Egiste also,
And though so be that they were brethren two,
For thilke tyme nas spared no linage,
It liked hem to maken mariage
Betwixt Hypermeestre, and him Lino,
And casten such a day it shall be so,
And full accorded was it vtiarly,
The aray is wrought, the time is fast by,
And thus Lino hath of his fathers brother,
The daughter wedded, and ech of hem bath other,
The torches breanes, and the lamps bright
The sacrifice been full ready dight,
Thensence out of the fire reketh soote,
The flour, the leefe, is rent vp by the roote,
To maken garlandes and crownes hie,
Full is the place of sound of minstrelie,
Of songes amorous of mariage,
As thilke tyme was the plain wage,
And this was in the paleis of Egiste,
That in his hous was lord, right as him liste,
And thus that day they driven to an end,
The frendes taken leve, and homs they wend,
The night is come, the bride shall go to bed,
Egiste to his chamber fast him sped,
And prively let his daughter call,
Whan that the houses voided was of hem all,
He looked on his daughter with glad chere,
And to her spake, as ye shall after here.

" My right daughter, tresour of mine herte,
Sens first that day, that shapen was my short,
Or by the fatal suster had my dome,
So sie mine herte never thing ne come,
As thou Hypermeestre, daughter dere,
Take hede what thy father sayth thou here,
And werke after thy wisne ever mo,
For alderfirst daughter I love thee so,
That all the world to me nis halfe so lefe,
Ne noide rede thee to thy mischeffe,
For all the good vnder the cold Mone,
And what I meane, it shall be said right soone,
With protestacion, as main these wise,
That but thou doe, as I shall thee devise,
Thou shalt be ded, by him that all hath wrought,
At short wordes thou ne scapest nought
Out of my paleis, or that thou be deed,
But thou consent, and werke after my reed,
Take this to the fearful conclusioun."

This Hypermeestre cast her yeo down,
And quoke as doth the leefe of sabb grene,
Deed wert her hew, and like aben to sene,
And said: " Lord and father all your will,
After my might, God wote I will fulfill,
So it be to me no confusion."

" I nil!" (quod he) " have none excepcion."
And out he caught a knife, as rasour keene,
" Hide this!" (quod he) " that it be not issen,
And whan thine husband is to bed go,
While that he slepeth out his throta atwo,
For in my dreame it is warnod me,
How that my newere shall my bane be,
But which I not, wherfore I will be siber,
If thou say nay, we two shall have a biker,
As I have sayd, by him that I have sworn."
This Hypermeestre hath nigh her wit forlorn,
And for to passen harmelesse out of that place,
She granted him, there was none other grace:
And withall a costrell taketh he the
And sayd, " Hereof a draught or two,
Yeve him drinke, whan he goeth to rest,
And he shal slepe as long as ever thee last,

The narcolitas and aples been so strong,
 And go thy way, lest that him think to long."
 Out cometh the bride, and with full sobre chere,
 As is of maidens oft the manere,
 To chamber brought with revel and with song,
 And shortly, leste this tale be to long,
 This Linc and she beth brought to bed,
 And every wight out at the doore him sped,
 The night is wasted, and he fell asleepe,
 Full tenderly beginneth she to weepo,
 She riseth vp, and dreddfully she quaketh,
 As doth the braunch, that Zephirus shaketh,
 And husht were all in Aragono that citee,
 As cold as any frost now wezeth shee,
 For pite by the herte stralsheth her so,
 And drede of death doth her so moche wo,
 That thise doune she fill, in soche a weie,
 She riseth vp, and stakereth here and there,
 And on her hands fast looketh she,
 "Alas, shall mine hande bloude be,
 I am maide, and as by my nature,
 And by my semblant, and by my venture,
 Mine hande been not shapen for a knife,
 As for to reve no man fro his life,
 What devill have I with the knife to do?
 And shall I have my throte corve a two?
 Than shall I blede alas, and be shonde,
 And oodes this thing mote have an ende,
 Or he or I mote nedes lese our life,
 Now certes" (quod she) "stint I am his wife,
 And bath my faith, yet is bette for me
 For to be dedde, in wisely honeste,
 Than be a traitour living in my shame,
 Be us be may, for earnest of for gime,
 He shall awake, and rise and go his way
 Out at this gutter or that it be day:"
 And wept full tenderly vpon his face,
 And in her armes gan him to embrace,
 And him she joggeth, and awaketh soft,
 And at the window lepe he fro the loft,
 When she hath warned him, and done him bote:
 This Linc swift was and light of footo,
 And from her ran a full good pace.
 This setle woman is so weake, alas
 And helplesse, so that er she ferre went,
 Her cruell father did her for to hent,
 Alas Linc, why art thou so vnkind,
 Why be best thou remembered in thy mind,
 And taken her, and led her forth with thee,
 For when she saw that gone away was hee,
 And that she might not so fast go,
 Ne folowen him, she satte downe right tho,
 Untill she was caught, and fettered in prison
 This tale is sayd for this conclusion.

HERE ENDETH THE LEGENDE OF GOOD WOMEN.

A

GOODLY BALLADE OF CHAUCER.

MORRIS of morture, best beloved of all,
 And freshe floure, to whom good thrift God sende,
 Your child if it leste you me so to call,
 All be I vnable my selfe so to pretende,
 To your discrecion I recommede
 Mine herte and al, with every circumstance,
 All wholly to be under your governaunce.

Most desire I, and have and ever shal,
 Thing, which might your hertes ease amend:
 Have me excused, my power is but small,
 Nathelesse of right ye ought to commend
 My good will, which faine would extend
 To do you service, for all my suffiaunce
 Is holly to be under your governaunce.

Mank vn, in herte, which never shall apall,
 Aie freshe and new, and right glad to dispand
 My time in your service, what so befall,
 Besoching your excellence to defend
 My simplece, if ignoraunce offend
 In any wise, sith that mine affiaunce,
 Is holly to been vnder your governaunce.

Daisie of light, very ground of comfort,
 The Sunnes daughter (ye light) as I rede,
 For when he westreth, farwell your disport,
 By your nature anon right for pure drede,
 Of the rude night, that with his boistous wode
 Of darknesse, shadoweth our emspere,
 Than closen ye, my lives ladie dere.

Daunting the day, to his kind resort,
 And Phoebus your father, with his streames rede,
 Adorneth the morrow, consuming the sort
 Of mistie cloudes, that woulde overlede
 True humble hertes, with hir mistie hede,
 Nere comfort a daies, whan Iyan clere,
 Disclose and sprede my lives ladie dere.

Is vouldray: but great God disposeth
 And maketh casuy by his providaunce,
 Soch thing, as mans frele wit purposeth,
 All for the best, if that your ooncience
 Not grutche it, but in humble pacience
 It receive: for God saith without fable,
 A faithful herte ever is acceptable.

Cautels who so vseth gladly, gloseth,
 To eschewe soch it is right high prudence,
 What ye sayd ones, mine herte opposeth,
 That my writing yaper in your absence,
 Pleased you moch better than my presence:
 Yet can I more, ye be not excusable,
 A faithfull heste ever is acceptable.

Quaketh my penne, my spirit supponeth,
 That in my writing ye find woll some offence,
 Min herte weikneeth thus sone, anon it riseth,
 Now hotte, now colde, and eft in feruence:
 That misse is, is caused of negligence,
 And not of malice, therefore beth merciable,
 A faithfull herte ever is acceptable,

LENGOYE.

Forth complaint, forth lacking eloquence,
 Forth little letter of ending lame,
 I have besought my ladies sapience,
 Of thy behalfe, to accept in game,
 Thine inability, doe thou the same:
 Abide have more yet: ie serve Jouesse,
 Now forth I close thee in holy Venus name,
 Thee shall vnclose my hertes governaunce.

THE BOOK COMMONLY ENTITLED,
CHAUCER'S DREAM.

By the person of a mourning knight sitting under an oak, is meant John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, greatly lamenting the death of one whom he extremely loved, supposed to be Blanch the dutchesse.

I HAVE great wonder by this light,
 How I live, for day ne night
 I may not sleepe welnigh nought,
 I haue so many an idle thought,
 Purely for default of sleepe,
 That by my trowth I take no keepe
 Of nothing, how it cometh or gothe,
 To me nis nothing less nor lothe,
 All is yliche good to me,
 Joy or sorrow, where so it be:
 For I haue feeling in nothing,
 But as it were a massed thing,
 All day in point to fall adoun,
 For sorrowfull imaginacioun
 Is alway wholly in my mind.

And well ye wote, against kind
 It were to liuen in this wise,
 For nature would not suffice,
 To none earthly creature,
 Not long time to endure
 Without sleepe, and be in sorrow:
 And I so may ne night ne morrow
 Sleepe, and this melancolic
 And drede I haue for to die,
 Defaut of sleepe and heauinesse
 Hath shaine my spirit of quicenesse,
 That I haue lost all lustyhead,
 Such fantasies ben in mine head,
 So I not what is best to do:
 But men might aske me why so
 I may not sleepe, and what me is.

But nathelesse, who aske this,
 Length his asking truly,
 My selsen cannot tell why
 The smoth, but truly as I gema,
 I hold it be a sicknesse
 That I haue suffered this eight yere,
 And yet my boot is neuer the nere:
 For there is phisician but one,
 That may me heale, but that is done:
 Passe we ouer vnwill eft,
 That will not be, mote needs be left,
 Our first matter is good to keepe.

So when I saw I might not sleepe,
 Now of late this other night
 Upon my bed I sate vpright,
 And bade one reach me a booke,
 A romaunce, and be it me toke
 To rede, and drive the night away:
 For me thought it better play,
 Than either at chesse or tables.

And in this booke were written fables,
 That clerkes had in old time,
 And other poets put in rime,
 To rede, and for to be in mind,
 While men loued the law of kind.

This booke me spake but of such thing,
 Of queenes liues, and of kings,
 And many other things semele.
 Among all this I found a tale,
 That me thought a wonder thing.

This was the tale: There was a king
 That hight Seys, and had a wife,
 The best that might beare life,
 And this queene hight Alicone.
 So it befel, therewither soone
 This king woll wonden ouer see:
 To tellen shortly, when that he
 Was in the see, thus in this wise,
 Such a tempest gan to rise,
 That brake her mast, and made it fall,
 And cleft her ship, and dreint hem all,
 That neuer was found, as it tals,
 Bord, ne man, ne nothing els.
 Right thus this king Seys lost his life.

Now for to speake of Alicone his wife:
 This lady that was left at home,
 Hath wonder that the king ne come
 Home, for it was a long terme:
 Anon her herte began to yerne,
 And for that her thought euermo
 It was not welc, her thought so
 She longed to after the king,
 That certes it were a pitous thing
 To tell her heartely sorrowfull life,
 That she had, this noble wife,
 For him, alas! she loued alderbest,
 Anon she sent both east and west
 To seeke him, but they found him nought.
 "Alas" (quod she) "that I was wrought,
 Whether my lord my love be dead,
 Certes I nil neuer eat bread,
 I make a vow to my God here,
 But I moue of my lord here."

Such sorrow this lady to her tooke,
 That truly I that made this booke,
 Had such pitie and such routh
 To rede her sorrow, that by my trowth
 I farde the worse all the morrow
 After, to thinke on her sorrow.

So when this lady coude here no word,
 That no man might find her lord,
 Full oft she swowned, and said "Alas,"
 For sorrow full might wood she was,
 Ne she coude no rede but one,
 But downe on knees she sate anon,
 And wept, that pitie were to her.

"A mercy sweet lady dere"
 (Quod she) to Juno her goddesse,
 "Halpe me out of this distresse,
 And yeve me grace my lord to see
 Some, or wete where so he be,
 Or bow he fareth, or in what wise,
 And I shall make you sacrifices,
 And bolly yours become I shall,
 With good will, body, herte, and all;
 And but thou wolt this, lady swete,
 Send me grace to slepe and mete
 In my sleepe some certain sweven,
 Where through that I may know euen
 Whether my lord be quicke or dead."

With that word she king downe the head,
 And fell in a sworne, as cold as stone;
 Her women caught her up anon,
 And brought her in bod all naked,
 And she forweped and forwaked,

Was weary, and thus the dead sleepe
 Fell on her, or she toke keepe,
 Through Juno, that had heard her boone,
 That made her to sleepe some,
 For as she praiſe, right so was done
 Indeed, for Juno right anon
 Called thus her meſſengers
 To do her errand, and he come nere,
 When he was come, she had him thus.

"Go bet" (quod Juno) "to Morpheus,
 "Thou knowest him well the god of sleepe,
 Now vnderstand well, and take keepe,
 Say thus on my halfe, that hee,
 Go fast into the great see,
 And bid him that on all thing
 He take up Seis body the king,
 That hath full pale, and nothing rody,
 Bid him creepe into the body,
 And do it gome to Alcione
 The queene, there she lieth now,
 And shew her shortly, it is no way,
 How it was dreint this other day,
 And do the body speake right so,
 Eight as it was wonted to do,
 The whiles that it was alive,
 Go now fast, and bye thee blisse."

This messenger toke leue and went
 Upon his way, and neuer he stent
 Till he came to the darke valley,
 That stant betwene rockes troy,
 There neuer yet grew comen no grasse,
 Ne tree, ne naught that might was,
 Beest ne man, ne naught els,
 Soe that there were a few welde
 Came renning fro the cliffes adowne,
 That made a deadly sleeping sowne,
 And rissen downe right by a caue,
 That was under a rocke ygrane,
 Amid the valley wonder deepe,
 There these goddess lay asleepe,
 Morpheus and Eclimpestere,
 That was the god of sleepes heire,
 That slept, and did none other werke.

This caue was also as dorke:
 As Hall pitte, ouer all about,
 They had good leysur for to rowt,
 To eye who might sleepe best,
 Some hing hir chin vpon hir breast,
 And slept vpright hir head ybod,
 And some lay naked in hir bed,
 And slept whiles their daies last.

This messenger come renning fast,
 And cried "Ho, ho, awake anon."
 It was for nought, there heard him some,
 "Awake" (quod he) "who lieth there,"
 And blew his horne right in hir ear,
 And cried "Awaketh wonder bye."

This god of sleepe, with his one eye
 Cast vp, and asked "Who slepeth there,"
 "It am I" (quod this messenger)
 Juno bade thou shouldst gome,
 And told him what he should done,
 As I have told you here before,
 It is no need rehearse it more,
 And went his way when he had said:
 Anone this god of slope abraide
 Out of his sleepe, and gas to go,
 And did as he had bidde him do,
 Tooke vp the dead body some,
 And bare it forth to Alcione

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His wife the queene, there as she lay,
 Right euen a quarter before day,
 And stood right at her beds fete,
 And called her right as the bete
 By name and said: "My sweet wife
 Awake, let be your sorrowfull life,
 For in your sorrow there lyeth no rede,
 For certes sweet love I am but dede,
 Ye shall me neuer on liue ysee.
 But good sweet herte looke that yee
 Bury my body, for such a tide
 Ye mowe it find the see beside,
 And farewell sweet, my worlds blisse,
 I pray God your sorrow lisse,
 Too little while our blisse lasteth."

With that her eyen vp she casteth,
 And saw naught: "Alas" (quod she) for sorrow,
 And died within the third marrow.

But what she said more in that srowe,
 I may not tell it you as now,
 It were too long for to dwell,
 My first matter I will you tell,
 Wherefore I haue told you this thing,
 Of Alcione, and Seis the king.

For thus much dare I say wele,
 I had be dolven every dele,
 And dead, right through default of sleepe,
 If I ne had red, and take keepe
 Of this tale next before,
 And I will tell you wherefore,
 For I ne might for bote ne bale
 Sleepe, or I had redde this tale
 Of this dreint Seis the king,
 And of the gods of sleeping.

When I had red this tale wele,
 And overlooked it everydele,
 Me thought wonder if it were so,
 For I had never heard speake or tho
 Of no gods, that coude make
 Men to sleepe, ne for to wake,
 For I ne knew never God but one.
 And in my game I said anon,
 And yet the list right euill to pley,
 Rather than that I should dre
 Through default of sleeping thus,
 I would giue thilke Morpheus,
 Or that goddesse dame Juno,
 Or some wight els, I ne rought who,
 To make me slepe, and haue some rest,
 I will giue him the alther best
 Yeft, that ever he abode his liue,
 And here onward, right now as liue,
 If he wolle make me sleepe white,
 Of downe of pure douer white,
 I wolle yve him a featherbed,
 Raided with gold, and right well dref,
 In fine blacke sattin doustremere,
 And many a pillow, and euery bere,
 Of cloth of raines to slepe on soft,
 Him there not need to turne oft,
 And I wolle yve him all that fals
 To his chamber and to his hale,
 I wolle do paint with pure gold,
 And tapite hem full manyfold,
 Of one snte this shall he haue,
 If I wist where were his caue,
 If he can make me sleepe some,
 As did the goddesse, queene Alcione,
 And thus this ilke god Morpheus
 May win of me mo fees thus

Y

Than ever he was: and to Juno,
That is his goddesse, I shall so do,
I trowe that she shall hold her paid.

I had ranneth that word ysaid,
Right thus as I have told you,
That suddainly I mist how,
Such a lust anon me tooke
To sleepe, that right vpon my booke
I fell a sleepe, and therewith even
Me mette so inly such a sweven,
So wonderfull, that never yet
I trowe no man had the wit
To conne well my sweven rede.

No, not Joseph without drede,
Of Egypt, he that rad so,
The kinges meting Pharao,
No more than could the leasf of vs.

Ne nat scarcely Macrobeus,
He that wrote all the avision
That he met of king Scipion,
The noble man the Affrica,
Such meruailes fortunad than,
I trowe arede my dreames euen,
Lo thus it was, this was my sweven.

Me thought thus, that it was May,
And in the dawning there I lay,
Me met thus in my bed all naked,
And looked forth for I was waked,
With smale soules a great hope,
That had afraied me out of my slepe,
Through noise and sweetness of hir song.

And as me met, they sat among
Upon my chamber roofe without
Upon the tyles over all about.
And querische song in his wise
The most solemaie soruise

By note, that ever man I trow
Had heard, for some of hem song low,
Some high, and all of one accord,
To tell shortly at o word,
Was never heard so sweet stoven,
But it had be a thing of Heven,
So merry a soruise, so sweet entuses,
That certes for the towne of Tennes
I nolde, but I had heard hem sing,
For all say chamber gan to ring,
Through singing of hir armony,
For instrument nor melody
Was no where heard, yet halfe so swete,
Nor of accord halfe so mete,

For there was none of hem that failed
To sing, for ech of hem him painad
To find out many crafty notes,
They ne spared nat hir throtes,
And sooth to saine, my chamber was

Full well depainted, and with glas
Were all the windowes well yglased
Full clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to behold it was great joy,
For holly all the story of Troy

Was in the glaising ywrought thus,
Of Hector, and of king Priamus,
Of Achilles, and of king Laomedon,
And eke of Medea and Jason,
Of Paris, Heleine, and of Lavine,
And all the wals with coloure fise
Were paint, both turt and glose,
And all the Roumant of the Rose,
My windowes weren shrit echone,
And through the glasse the Sunne shone

Upon my bed with bright beames,
With many glad glidy stromes,
And eke the welkin was so faire,
Blew, bright, clere was the aire,
And full attempre, forsooth it was,
For neyther too cold ne hote it nas,
Ne in all the welkin was no cloud.

And as I lay thus wonder load
Me thought I heard a hunt blow
Tassay his great horne, and for to know
Whether it was clere, or horse of sorwe.

And I heard going both vp and downe
Men, horse, hounds, and other thing,
And all men speake of hunting,
How they would alec the hart with strength,
And how the hart had vpon length
So much embosed, I not sow what.

Anon right when I heard that,
How that they would on hunting gone,
I was right glad, and vp anon
Tooke my horse, and forth I went
Out of my chamber, I neuer stent
Till I come to the field without,

There oertooke I a great rout
Of hunters and eke forresters,
And many reliaes and liners,
And highed hem to the forrest fast,
And I with hem, so at the last
I asked one led, a lymere,

"Say, fellow, who shall hunt here?"

"(Quod I) and he answered ayen,

"Sir, the emperor Octonyen"

"(Quod he)" and is here fast by."

"A gods halfe, in good time" (quod I)

Go we fast, and gan to ride,
When we come to the forrest side,
Euery man did right anon,
As to hunting fell to done.

The maister hunt, anon fote hote
With his horse blew three mote
At the vncoupling of his boundis,
Within a while the hart found in
Ihalloved, and rechased fast
Long time, and so at the last
This hart rouned and stode away
Fro all the hounds a preuic way.

The hounds had oensemote him all,
And were vpon a default fill,
Therewith the hunt wonder fast
Blew a forloyn at the last,
I was go walked fro my tree,
And as I went, there came by me
A whelp, that fawnd me as I stode,
That had yfollowed, and could no good,
It came and crept to me as low,
Right as it had me yknow,
Held downe his head, and joynd his eeres,
And laid all smooth downe his heeres.

I would have caught it anon,
It fled, and was fro me gone,
As I him followed, and it forth went
Downe by a floury geene it went
Full thicke of grasse, full soft and sweet,
With floures fele faire vnder foot,
And little used, it seemed thus,
For both Flora, and Zepherus,
They two, that make floures grow,
Had made hir dwelling there I trow,
For it was on to behold,
As through the earth enuy wold

To be gayer than the hoven,
To have so flouris such seven,
As in the welkin sterres be,
It had forget the poerite
That winter, through his cold morrowes
Had made it suffer, and his sorrowes
All was foryeten, and that was scene,
For all the wood was woren greene,
Sweetnesse of dewe had made it waxe.

It is no need eke for to axe
Where there were many greene graues,
Or thicke of trees, so full of lewes,
And every tree stood by himselfe
Pro other, well tenne foot or twelue,
So great trees, so huge of strength,
Of fortie or fiftie fadome length,
Cleane without bowe or sticke,
With crops brode, and eke as thicke,
They were not an inch assunder,
That it was abalde over all vnder,
And many an hart and many an hind
Was both before me and behind,
Of fawnes, sowens, buckes, does,
Was full the wood, and many roes,
And many squirrels, that sete
Fall high vpon the trees and ete,
And in hir maner made feasts:
Shortly, it was so full of beasts,
That though Argus the noble countour
Sate to reken in his countour,
And reken with his figures ten,
For by the figures newe all ken,
If they be craftie, reken and number,
And tell of every thing the number,
Yet should he faile to reken even
The wonders me met in my awen:

Net forth I romed right wonder fast
Downe the wood, so at the last
I was ware of a man in blacke,
That sate, and had yturned his backe
To an oke, an huge tree:

"Lord," thought I, "who may that bee,
What eyleth him to sitten here,"
Anon right I went nere,
Than found I sitte, even vpright,
A wonder wel-faring knight,
By the manner me thought so,
Of good mohell, and right yong thereto,
Of the age of threes-and-twentie yere,
Upon his beard but little heere,
And he was clothed all in blacke.

I stalked even vnto his backe,
And there I stood as still as ought,
The sooth to say, he saw me nought,
For why he hing his head adowne,
And with a deadly sorrowfull sowne,
He made of rime ten verses or twelue,
Of a complaint to himselfe,
The most pitie, the most routhe
That ever I heard, for by my trouthe
It was great wonder that nature
Might suffer any creature

To have such sorrow, and be not ded:
Fall pitous pale, and nothing red,
He said a lay, a manner song,
Without note, without song,
And was this, for full well I can
Rehearse it, right thus it began.

"I have of sorow so great wone,
That joy get I never none,

Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with all my might,
Is fro me dead, and is agone,
And thus in sorrow left me alone,
Alas, Death, what eyleth thee,
That thou oldest have taken me,
When that thou took me my lady srette,
Of all goodnesse she had none mete,
That was so faire, so fresh, so free,
So good, that men may well see."

When he had made thus his complaint,
His sorrowfull herte gan fast faint,
And his spirits waxen dead,
The blood was fled for pure dread
Down to his herte, to maken him warme,
For well it feeled the herte had harme,
To wete eke why it was adrad
By kind and for to make it glad,
For it is member principall
Of the body, and that made all
His hew chaunge, and were greene
And pale, for there no blood is scene
In so manner limme of his.

Anon therewith, when I saw this,
He fardre thus euill there he sete,
I went and stood right at his fete,
And grette him, but he spake nought,
But argued with his owne thought,
And in his wit disputed fast,
Why, and how his life might last,
Him thought his sorrowes were so smart,
And lay so cold vpon his herte.

So through his sorrow and holy thought,
Made him that he heard us wought,
For he had weinigh lost his mind,
Though Pan, that men clepeth god of kind,
Were for his sorrowes never so wroth.

But at the last, to faise right sooth,
He was ware of me, bow I stood
Before him and did off my hood,
And had ygret him, as I best coude
Debonairly, and nothing load,
He said, "I pray thee be not wroth,
I heard thee not, to saine the sooth,
Ne I saw the not, sir, truly."

"Ah, good sir, no force" (quod I)
"I am right sorry, if I haue ought
Distroubled you out of your thought,
Foryeve me, if I haue misse take."

"Yes, thameuris is light to make"
(Quod he) "for these lithe none thereto,
There is nothing misseide, nor da."

Lo how goodly spake this knight,
As it had be another wight,
And made it neyther tough ne quaint,
And I saw that, and gan me acquaint
With him, and found him so treatable,
Right wonder skilfull and reasonable,
As me thought, for all his bale,
Anon right I gan find a tale
To him, to looke where I might ought
Haue more knowledging of his thought.

"Sit" (quod I) "this game is done,
I holde that this hart be gone,
These hunts can him no where see."

"I do no force thereof" (quod he)

"My thought is thercan neuer adale,"
"By our lord" (quod I) "I trow you wale,
Right so me thinketh by your chere,
But, sir, o thing woll ye here,

Me thinketh in great sorrow I you see,
 But certes, sir, if that ye
 Would aught discurse me your wo,
 I would, as wise God helpe me so,
 Amend it, if I can or may,
 Ye mowe prove it by assay,
 For by my trouthe, to make you hole,
 I wold do all my power whole,
 And telteih me of your sorrowes smart,
 Paraunter it may ease your herte,
 That semeth full sicke vnder your side."

With that he looked on me aside,
 As who seith nay, that nilt not be.
 "Graunt mercy good friend" (quod he)

"I thanke thee, that thou wouldest so,
 But it may neuer the rather be do,
 No man may my sorrow glade,
 That maketh my bew to fall and fade,
 And hath my vnderstanding lorne,
 That me is wo that I was borne,
 May nought make my sorrowes aside,
 Not all the remedies of Ovide,
 Ne Orpheus god of melodie,
 Ne Dedalus, with his playes alie,
 Ne heale me may no phisicien,
 Nought Iocras, ne Galien,
 Me is wo that I line houres twelce,
 But wo so wold assay hamseize,
 Whether his herte can haue pite
 Of any sorrow let him see me,
 I wretch that death hath made all naked
 Of all the blame that ever was makid,
 Iwroth, werste of all wights,
 That hate my dayes, and my nights,
 My life, my lustes, be me loth,
 For all fare and I be wroth,
 The pure death is so full my fo,
 That I would die, it will not so,
 For whan I follow it, it will fie,
 I would have him, it nilt not me,
 This is pain without read,
 Alway dying, and be not deed,
 That Tesphas that lieth in Hell,
 May not of more sorrow tell,
 And who so wist all, by my trouthe,
 My sorrow, but he had routh
 And pitie of my sorrowes smart,
 That man hath a stouffly herte:
 For whose seeth me first on morrow,
 May saine he hath met with sorrow,
 For I am sorrow, and sorrow is I,
 Alas, and I will tell thee why,
 My sorrow is touned to plaining,
 And all my laughter to weeping,
 My glad thoughts to heauinesse,
 In trauaile is mine idlenessse,
 And eke my rest, my wele is wo,
 My good is harme, and euermo
 In wrath is touned my playing,
 And my delite into sorrowing,
 Mine heale is touned into sicknesse,
 In drede is all my sikernesse,
 To derke is touned all my light,
 My witte is foly, my day is night,
 My lose is hate, my slepe wakyng,
 My mirth and meales is fastyng,
 My countenance is nicete,
 And all abawed, where so I be,
 My peace plying, and in werre
 Alas, how might I fare werre.

"My boldnesse is touned to shame,
 For false Fortune hath played a game
 At the cheese with me, and this while,
 The trayterous false and full of gyle,
 That al beboteth, and nothing halte,
 She gothe vp right, and yet she halte,
 That baggeth foule, and loketh fayre,
 The dispitous debonaire,
 That scorneth many a creature,
 An ydole of false purtralture
 Is she, for she wold none wryen,
 She is the monstres heed ywryen,
 As filth, ouer ystrowed with floures,
 Her most worship and her floores
 To lyen, for that is her nature,
 Without faith, lawe, or mesure
 She false is, and euer laughing
 With one eye, and that other weping,
 That is brought vp, she set al downe:
 I liken her to the scorpiowne,
 That is a false flattering beast,
 For with his head he maketh feest,
 But all amid his flatering,
 With his taile he will sting
 And enuenim, and so will she:
 She is the enuious Charite,
 That is aye false, and semeth wele,
 So turneth she her false while
 About, for it is nothing stable,
 Now by the fire, now at table,
 Full many one hath she thus yblent,
 She is play of enchauntment,
 That semeth one, and is not so
 The false thefe, what hath she do,
 Trowest thou, by our Lord, I will thee say,
 At the cheese with me she gan to play,
 With her false draughtes full diuers
 She stale on me, and toke my fers,
 And whan I sawe my fers away,
 Alas I couth no lenger play,
 But said, farewell sweet ywis,
 And farewell all that euer there is:
 Therewith Fortune said, checke here,
 And mate in the mid point of the checkere,
 With a panne errant, alas,
 Full craftier to play she was
 Than Athalus, that made the game
 First of the cheese, so was his name:
 But God wolde I had ones or twice,
 Icoude, and know the jeopardie,
 That coude the Greke Pythagores,
 I shulde haue plaide the bet at chee,
 And kept my fers the bet thereby,
 And though whereto, for trewly
 I holde that wishe not worthe a stre,
 It had be uener the bet for me,
 For Fortune can so many a wyle,
 There be but few can her begile,
 And eke she is the lasse to blame,
 My selfe I wolde haue do the same,
 Before God, had I been as she,
 She ought the more excused be,
 For this I say yet more thereto,
 Had I be God, and might haue do,
 My will, whan she my fers caught,
 I wold haue drawe the same draught:
 For also wise, God giv me reste,
 I dare well swere, she toke the best,
 But through that draught I haue lorne
 My blisse, alas that I was borne,

For evermore I trowe trewly,
 For all my will, my lust wholly
 Is turned, but ye, what to done,
 By our Lorde it is to die sone :

For nothing I leaue it nougth,
 But live and die, right in this thought.
 For there nys planet in firmament,
 Ne in syre ne in erth none element,
 That they ne yeuse me a yeft echone,
 Of weping when I am alone :

For when that I aduise me wele,
 And betinke me euerydele,
 How that there lieth in rekenyng,
 In my sorrow for nothing,
 And how there lieth no gladnesse
 May glad me of my distresse,
 And how I haue lost suffisaunce
 And thereto I haue no pleasaunce :

Thus may I say, I haue right nougth,
 And when al this falleth in my thought,
 Alas, than am I overcome,
 For that is done, is not come
 I haue more sorrow than Tantalé."

And Therésé him tell this tale
 Thus pitously, as I you tell
 Unseth might I lenger dwell :
 It did mine herte so much wo.

" A good sir" (quod I) " say nat so,
 Haue some pitie on your nature,
 That forned you to creature,
 Remembreth you of Socrates,
 For he counted not three streeves
 Of nougth that Fortune coude do.

" No" (quod he) " I can not so,"
 " Why good sir, yes parde" (quod I)
 " Ne say not so for truly,
 Though ye had lost the feeses twelue
 And ye for sorrow murdered your selue,
 Ye should be dampned in this case,
 By as good right as Medea was,
 That slough her children for Jason,
 And Phyllis also for Demophon
 Bing her selfe, so welaway
 For he had broke his tarmie day
 To come to her : another rage
 Had Dido, the quene eke of Cartage,
 That slough her selfe, for Encas
 Was false, which a foole she was :
 And Ecquo died, for Narcissus
 Nolde nat loue her, and right thus
 Hath many another folly done,
 And for Dalida died Sampson,
 That slough himselfe with a piliere,
 But there is no man alius here
 Would for her feeses make this wo."

" Why so" (quod he) " it is not so,
 Thou wotest full little what thou menest,
 I haue lost more than thou weneest :"
 " How may that be" (quod I)
 " Good sir, tell me all holly,
 In what wise, how, why and wherefore,
 That ye haue thus your blisec lore?"

" Blithely" (quod he) " come sit doan,
 I tell thee vpon a condition,
 That thou shalt holly with all thy wit
 Doe thine entent to hearken it."

" Yes sir :"—" Swere thy trouth thereto,
 Gladly do than hold here to,"
 " I shall right blithely, so God me saue,
 Holly with all the wit I haue,

Here you as well as I can :"
 " A goddes halfe" (quod he) and began.
 " Sir" (quod he) " sith first I couth
 Haue any manner wit fro youth,
 Or kindly understanding,
 To comprehend in any thing
 What Loue was, in mine owne wit,
 Dredelesse I haue euer yet
 Be tributarie, and yeuse rent
 To Loue holly, with good entent.
 And through pleasaunce become his thrall,
 With good will, body, herte, and all,
 All this I put in his seruage,
 As to my lord, and did homage,
 And full deuoutly I praide him tho,
 He should beset mine herte so,
 That it pleasaunce to him were,
 And worship to my lady dere.

" And this was long, and many a yere
 (Ere that mine herte was set o where)
 That I did thus, and niet why,
 I trowe it came me kindly,
 Paraunter I was thereto most able,
 As a white wall, or a table,
 For it is ready to catch and take
 All that men will therein make,
 Whether so men will portrey or paint,
 Be the werkes neuer so quaint.

" And thilke time I fared right so,
 I was able to haue learned tho,
 And to haue coude as well or better
 Paraunter either art or letter,
 But for loue came first in my thought,
 Therefore I forgate it naught,
 I choos loue to my first craft,
 Therefore it is with me laft,
 For why, I toke it of so yong age,
 That mallice had my courage
 Not that time turned to nothing,
 Through too mokell knowledging,
 For that time youth my maistrisse
 Gouerned me in idleness,

For it was in my first youth,
 And tho full little good I couth,
 For all my werkes were fitting
 That time, and all my thought varying,
 All were to me yliche good,
 That knew I tho, but thus it stood.

" It happed that I came on a dey
 Into a place, there that I sey.
 Truly the fairest companie
 Of ladies, that ever man with eie
 Had seene together in o place,
 Shall I clepe it hap, either grace,
 That brought me there, not but Fortune,
 That is to lien full commune,
 The false trateresse peruerse,
 God would I could clepe her werse,
 For now she worcheth me full wo,
 And I woul tell soone why so.

" Amongst these ladies thus echone,
 Sooth to saine, I saw ooe
 That was like none of the rout,
 For I dare swere, without dout,
 That as the summers Sonne bright
 Is fairer, clerer, and hath more light
 Than any other planet in Heuen,
 The Moore, or the sterres seuen,
 For all the world so had she
 Sarmounten hem all of beaute,

Of maner, and of comeliness,
Of stature, and of well set gladnesse,
Of goodly heed, and so wel besey,
Shortly what shall I more sey,
By God and by his holowes twelve,
It was my swete, right all her selue,
She had so stedfast countenance,
So noble porte, and maintenaunce:
And Lone, that well barde my bone,
Had espied me thus come,
That she full soone in my thought,
As helpe me God so was I cought
So sodainly, that I ne toke
No maner counsaile, but at her loke,
And at mine herte, for why her eyen
So gladly I trowe mine herte seyne,
That purely tho, mine owne thought,
Said, it were better serue her for nougt,
Than with another to be wele,
And it was soth, for enery dele,
I will anone right tell thee why.

“ I sawe her daunce so comely,
Carol and sing so sweetly,
Laugh, and play so womanly,
And looke so debonairely,
So goodly speke and so frendly:
That certes I trowe that euermore,
Nas sene so blisfull a tresore:
For every heer on her heed,
Sothe to say it was not need,
Ne neither yelowe ne browne it nas,
Me thought most like gold it was,
And which eyen my lady had,
Debonaire, good, glad, and sad,
Simple, of good mokel, not to wide,
Thereto her loke nas not aside,
Ne ouertwhart, but best so wele,
It drewe and tooke vp enerydele
All that on her gas behold,
Her eyen seemed anone she wold
Haue mercy, folly wenden so,
But it was neuer the rather do,
It nas no counterfeted thing,
It was her owne pure lokyng:
That the goddesse dame Nature,
Had made hem open by measure,
And close, for were she neuer so glad,
Her looking was not folish sprad,
Ne wikkely, though that she plaid,
But euer me thought her eyen said,
By God my wrath is al foryeue.
Therewith her list so well to liue,
That dounesse was of her adrad,
She nas to sobre ne to glad,
In all things more measure,
Had neuer I trowe creature,
But many oon with her loke she berte,
And that sate her full lital at berte:
For she knew nothing of hir thought,
But whether she knew, or knew it nougt,
Algate she ne rougt of hem a stree,
To get her loue no nere nas he
That woned at home, than he in lude,
The foremost was always behinde,
But good folke ouer all other,
She loved as man may his brother,
Of which loue she was wonder large,
In skillfull places that bere charge,
But which a visage had she thereto,
Alas my herte is wonder wo,

That I ne can discruen it,
Me lacketh both English and wit.
For to vndo it at the full,
And eke my spiritis bene so dull
So great a thing for to deuise,
I haue not wit that can suffice
To comprehend her beaute,
But thus much I dare sain, that she
Was white, rody, fresh, and lifely hewed,
And enery day her beaute newed,
And nigh her face was alderbest,
For certes Nature had soch lest,
To make that faire, that truly she
Was her chiefe patron of beaute,
And chiefe ensample of all her worke
And mooster: for be it never so derke,
Me thinketh I see her euer mo,
And yet more ouer, though all tho
That euer liued, were now a liue,
Ne would haue found to discruie
In all her face a wicked signe,
For it was sad, simple, and benign.

“ And soch a goodly swete spech,
Had that swete, my liues lech,
So frendely, and so well ygrounded
Upon all reason, so well founded,
And so treftable to all good,
That I dare swere well by the rood,
Of eloquence was neuer fonde
So swete a sownyng faconde,
Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse,
Ne bet coude heale, that by the manse,
I durst swere though the pope it souge,
That there was neuer yet through her touge,
Man ne woman greatly harmid,
As for her, was all harme hid:
Ne lasse flattering in her worde,
That purely her simple recorde,
Was found as trewe as any bond,
Or trowth of any mans hood.

“ Ne chide she could neuer a dek,
That knoweth all the world ful wele.
But soch a fairnesse of a necke,
Had that swete, that bone nor breche
Nas there none sene, that misse sette,
It was white, smoth, straight, and pure flatte,
Without hole or canel bone,
And by semyng, she had none.

“ Her throte, as I haue now memorie,
Semed as a round toure of yuoire,
Of good greatnesse, and not to grete,
And faire white she hote,
That was my ladies name right,
She was thereto faire and bright,
She had not her name wrong,
Right faire shoulders, and body long
She had, and armes euer lith
Fattish, fleshy, nat great therewith,
Right white hande, and nails rede,
Round brestes, and of good brede
Her Lippes were, a straight flatte backe,
I knew on her none other lacke,
That all her limmes were pure sewing,
In as ferre as I had knowing,
Thereto she could so well play
What that her list, that I dare say
That was like to torch bright,
That eury man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath neuer the lesse
Of maner and of comeliness.

" Right so farde my lady dere,
For every wight of her manere
Might catche ynough, if that he wold
If he had eyen her to behold,
For I dare swere well, if that she
Had among tenne thousand be,
She wolde haue be at the best,
A cheff myrrour of all the best,
Though they had stonde in a rowe,
To mens eyen, that could haue knowe,
For where so men had plaide or waked,
Me thought the fellowship as naked

Without her, that I saw owen,
As a crowne without stones,
Trewly she was to mine eye,
The solein fenix of Arabie,
For there lieth neuer but one,
Ne such as she, ne know I none:
To speke of goodnesse, trewly she
Had as moch debonaire,

As euer had Hester in the Bible,
And more, if more were possible,
And soth to sayne, therewithall
She had a wite so general,

Whiche inclined to all good,
That al her wite was sette by the rood,
Without malice, vpon gladnesse,
And thereto I sawe never yet a lesse
Harme fall, than she was in doyng,
I say not that she ne had knowyng
What harme was, or els she

Had could no good, so thinketh me,
And trewly, for to speake of trouth,
But she had had, it had be routhe
Therof she had so moch her dele,
And I dare sayne, and swere it wele,
That Trouth himselfe, ouer al and alle,
Had chose his resting place

In her, that was his resting place,
Thereto she had the most grace,
To haue stedfast perseurance,
And easy attempre gouernance,
That euer I knew, or wist yet,
So pure suffraunt was her wit,
And reason gladly she vnderstood,
It folowed wel, she could good,
She used gladly to do wele,
These were her manere every dele.

" Therewith she loked so wel right,
She wroeg do would to no wight,
No wight might do her no shame,
She loked so wel her own name.

" Her lust to hold no wight in bond,
Ne be thou siker, she wold not fond,
To holde no wight in balauce,
By halfe word ne by countenance,
But if men wold vpon her lye,
Ne sende men into Walskie,
To Prase, and to Tartarie,
To Alisandrie, ne into Turkie,
And bidde him fast, anon that he
Go hoodlesse into the drie see,
And come home by the Carrenare.

" And sir, be now right ware,
That I may of you here saine,
Worship, or that ye come againe.

" She ne used no such knyghtes ruse,
But therfore that I tell my tale,
Right on this same I haue said,
Was wholly all my lone laid,

For certes she was that swete wife,
My suffraunce, my lust, my life,
Mine hope, mine heale, and all blesse,
My worlds welfare, and my goddesse,
And I wholly hers, and every dele."

" By our Lorde" (quod I) " I trowe you wele,
Hardly, your loue was wel beset,
I not how it might haue do bet."

" Bet, ne not so wel" (quod he)

" I trowe sir" (quod I) " parde."

" Nay leue it wel:"—" Sir so do I,
I leue you wel, that trewly
You thought that she was the best,
And to behold, the alderfairest,
Who so had loked her with your eyen?"

" With mine, may all that her seyen,
Said and swere it was so,

And though they ne had, I would the
Haue loked best my lady free,
Though I had had al the beaute

That euer had Alcibiades,
And al the strength of Hercules,
And thereto had the worthinesse
Of Alisander, and all the richesse
That euer was in Babiloine,

In Cartage, or in Macedoine,
Or in Rome, or in Ninus,
And thereto also hardy be,

As was Hector, so haue I joy,
That Achilles slough at Troy,
And therfore was he slayne also

In a temple, for both two
Were slaine, he and Antilegus,
And so saith Dares Fregius,

For loue of Polixena,
Or ben as wise as Minerva,
I would ouer, without drede
Haue loked her, for I most ned.

" Nede? Nay trewly I gabbe now,
Nought nede, and I wold telle how,
For of good will mine herte it wold,
And eke to loue her, I was holde,

As for the fyrest and the best,
She was as good, so haue I rest,
As euer was Penelope of Greece,
Or as the noble wife Locece,

That was the best, he telleth thus
The Roman Titus Linius,
She was as good, and nothing like,

Though bir stories be autentike,
Algate she was as trewe as she.

" But wherfore that I tell thes,
Whan I first my lady sey,
I was right yong, soth to sey,
And full great need I had to lerne,

Whan mine herte wolde yerne,
To loue it was a great emprise,
But as my wit wolde best suffice,
After my yong childely wit,

Without drede I beset it,
To loue her in my best wise
To do her worship, and the seruise

That I coude tho, by my trouth
Without faising, eyther slouth,
For wonder faine I wolde her see,
So mokell it amended mee,

That whan I sawe her amorowe,
I was wariaun of all my sorowe,
Of all day after, till it were eue,
Me thought nothing might me groue,

Were my sorowes neuer so smart,
And yet she set so in mine herte,
That by my trouthe, I wold nought
For all this world, out of my thought
Leaue my lady, no trewly."

"Now by my trouthe sir" (quod I)
"Me thinketh ye haue such a chaunce,
As shrift, without repentance."

"Repentaunce, say he" (quod he)
"Shuld I now repent me
To loue, nay certes than were I well
Worse than was Achitofell,
Or Antenor, so haue I joy,
The traitour that betrayed Troy:
Or the false Ganelon,
He that purchased the traision
Of Rouland, and of Oliuere:
Nay, while I am a liue here,
I wil forget her never mo."

"Now good sir," (quod I tho)
Ye haue well told me here before,
It is no need to reherse it more,
How ye saw her first, and where,
But would ye tell me the manere,
To her which was your first speche,
Thereof I wold you beseeche,
And how she knew first your thought,
Whether ye loved her or nought,
And telleth me eke, what ye haue lore,
I herde you tell her here before,
Ye said, thou notest what thou meanest,
I haue lost more than thou weenest:
What losse is that?" (quod I tho)

"Nil she not love you, is it so?
Or heve ye ought done amys,
That she hath lefte you, is it this?
For Goddes love tell me all."

"Before God" (quod he) "and I shall,
I say right as I haue said,
On her was all my love laid,
And yet she mist it not never a dele,
Not longe time, leve it wel,
For by right sikes, I durst nought
For all this world tell her my thought,
Ne I wolde here wrothed her trowly,
For wost thou why, she was lady
Of the body that had the herte.
And whoso hath that may not enterie."

"But for to keepe me fro ydelname,
Trewly I did my busshenes
To make songes, as I best coude.
And oft time I sang hem loud,
And made songes, this a greet dele,
Although I coude nat make so wel
Songes, ne knew the arte all,
As coude Lamekes son, Tubal,
That found out first the arte of songes,
For as his brothers hamers roge,
Upon his anvell vp and downe,
Thereof he toke the first science,

"But Grekes saine of Pithagoras,
That he the first finder was
Of the art, Aurora telleth so,
But thereof no force of hem two,
Algates songes thus I made,
Of my feling, mine herte to glade:
And lo this was alther first,
I not where it were the worst."

"Lord it maketh mine herte light,
Whan I thinke on that swete wight,

That is so seemly one to see,
And wish to God it might so be
That she wold hold me for her knight,
My lady that is so fayre and bright.

"Now have I told thee, soth to my,
My first song: vpon a day,
I bethought me what wo
And sorowe that I suffred tho,
For her, and yet she wist it nought,
Ne tell her durst I not my thought:
Alas thought I, I can no rede,
And but I tell her, I am but dode,
And if I tel her, to say right soth
I am a dradde she wold be wroth,
Alas, what shall I than do.
In this debate I was so wo,
Me thought mine herte brast a twain,
So at the last, sothe for to saime,
I bethought me that Nature,
Ne formed never in creature,
So much beauty trewly
And bounty, without mercy.

"In hope of that, my tale I tolde,
With sorowe, as that I never sholde,
For nede, and maugre mine heed
I must have tolde her, or be dead:
I not well how that I began,
Full yvel reherce it I can,
And eke as helpe me God withall,
I trow it was in the dismall,
That was the ten woundes of Egypt,
For many a word I overskipt
In my tale for pure feie,
Lest my wordes misse set were,
With sorowfull herte, and woundes dede,
Soft and quaking for pure drede,
And shame, and stinting in my tale,
For ferde, and mine hew al pale,
Full oft I wexte both pale and reed,
Bowng to her I hing the heed,
I durst not ones loke her on,
For wit, manner and all was gone,
I said: Mercy, and no more,
It was no game, it sate me sore."

"So at the last soth to saime,
Whan that mine herte was rom againe,
To tell shortly all my speech,
With hole herte I gan her beseech
That she wolde be my lady swete,
And swore, and hertely gan her bette,
Ever to be steadfast and trewe,
And love her alway freshly newe,
And never other lady have,
And all her worship for to save,
As I best coude, I sware her this,
For yours is all that ever there is,
For evermore, mine herte swete,
And never to false you, but I mete
I say, as wise God helpe me so."

"And whan I had my tale ydo,
God wote she accompted not a stre
Of all my tale, so thought me,
To tell shortly right as it is
Trewly her answer it was this,
I can not now well countrefeste
Her wordes, but this was the grete
Of her answer, she said nay
All vterly: alas that day,
The sorow I suffered and the wo,
That trewly Cassandra that so

Berayled the destruction
Of Troy, and of Ilyon,
Had never such sorrow as I tho,
I durst no more say thereto,
For pore feare, but stalle away,
And thus I lived full many a day,
That trewly I had no need,
Fester than my beddes heed,
Never a day to seche sorrow,
I found it ready every morrow,
For why I loved in no gere.

" So it befell another yere,
I thought ones I would fonde,
To doe her know, and understonde
My wo, and she well vnderstood,
That I no wiled thing but good,
And worship, and to keepe her name,
Over all things, and drede her shame,
And was so busie her to serve,
And pitie wery that I should sterve,
Esh that I wiled no harme iwile.

" So when my lady knew all this,
My lady yave me all holly,
The noble yest of her mercy,
Saving her worship by all ways,
Dredelesse, I mene none other ways,
And therewith she yave me a ring,
I trowe it was the first thing,
But if mine herte was iwaxe
Glad that it is no need to axe.

" As helpe me God, I was as blive
Rained, as fro death to live,
Of all happes the alderbest,
The gladdest and the most at rest,
For truly that swete wight,
When I had wrong, and she the right,
She would alway so goodly
Foryere me so debonairely,
In all my youth, in all chance,
She tooke in her governaunce,
Therewith she was alway so true,
Our joy was ever iliche newe,
Our hertes were so even a paire,
That never nas that one contrarie
To that other, for no wo
For soth iliche they suffred tho.
O blisse, and eke o sorrow bothe,
Rich they were both glad and wrotche,
All was vs one, without were,
And thus we lived full many a yere,
So well, I can not tell how."

" Sir" (quod I) " where is she now?"

" Now" (quod he) " and stinte anon,
Therewith he woxe as dedde as ston,
And said, " Alas, that I was born,
That was the losse, that here before
I tolde thee that I had lorne,

" Bethinke thee how I said here before,

Thou woste full litle what thou mentest,
I have koste more than thou weneest."

" God wote alas, right that was she."

" Alas sir how, what may that be?"

" She is dedde:"—" Nay,"—" Yes by my trouthe,"

" Is that your losse, by God it is routhe."

And with that worde right anon,
They gan to strake forth, all was done

For that tyme, the hart husing.

With that me thought that this kyng,
Gas homeward for to ride,
Unto a place was there beside,

Which was from vs but a lile,
A long castell with walles white,
By saint Joha, on a rich hill,
As me mette, but thus it fill.

Right thus me mette, as I you tell,
That in the castell there was a bell,
As it had smitte boores twelve,
Therewith I awoke my selve,
And found me lying in my hedde,
And the booke that I had redde,
Of Alcione and Seis the kyng,
And of the goddes of sleping,
I found it in mine hood full even,
Thought I, this is so quaint a sweren,
That I would by processe of tyme,
Fond to put this sweren in ryme,
As I can best, and that anon,
This was my sweren, now it is done.

EXPLICIT.

My master, &c. when of Christ our king,
Was asked, what is troth or sothfastnesse,
He not a worde answerde to that asking,
As who saith, no man is all true:
And therefore, though I hight to expresse
The sorrow and wo that is in mariage,
I dare not wryten of it no wickednesse,
Lest I my selfe fall eft in soche dotage.

I woll not say how that it is the chaine
Of Sathana, on which he knoweth ever,
But I dare saine were he out of his paine,
As by his will he would be bounden never,
But thilke doted foole, that eft hath lever
Ichayned be, than out of prison erpe,
God let him never fro his wo diacever,
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe.

But yet lest thou doe worse, take a wife,
Bet is to werke, than brenne in worse wise.
But thou shalt have sorrow on thy flesh thy life,
And hen thy wives thrale, as ain these wise,
And if that holy writ may not suffice,
Experiencc shall thee teach, so may happe,
Take the way leser to be taken in frise,
Than eft to fall of wedding in the trappe.

This litle writte, proverbes or figures,
I sende you, take keepe of it I rede,
Unwise is he, that can no wele endure,
If thou be siker, put thee not in drede,
The Wife of Bath, I pray you that ye rede
Of this matter that we have on boode,
God grant you your lyfe freely to lede
In fredome, for foule is to be boode.

EXPLICIT.

THE

ASSEMBLY OF FOWLS.

All fowls are gathered before nature on S. Valentinus day, to chuse their maker. A formall eagle, being below'd of three tercols, requirith

a years respite to make her choice: upon this trial, *qui bien aime tard oublie*: he that loveth well, is slow to forget.

Thy lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Thasay so hard, so sharpe the conquering.
The dreadful joy, alway that sit so yeroe,
All this mean I by Love, that my feeling
Astonieth with his wonderful werkyng,
So sore I wis, that whan I on him think,
Naught wete I wel, whether I fiete or siuk.

For all be that I know not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folke hir hire,
Yet happeth me fall oft in bookes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruell ire,
There rede I well, he will be lorde and sire:
I dare not say his strokes be sore,
But God save such a korde, I can no more.

Of vsage, what for lust and what for lore,
On bookes rede I of, as I you told,
But wherfore speake I all this? naught yore
Agon, it happed me to behold
Upon a booke swi written with letters old,
And therepon a certain thing to lerne,
The long day, full fast I radde and yerne.

For out of the old flaides, as men saith,
Commeth al this new come fro yere to yere,
And out of old bookes, in good faith,
Commeth all this new science that men lere,
But now to purpose, as of this matere,
To rede forth it gan me so delite,
That all that day, me thought it but a lite.

This booke of which I make mencion,
Emited was right thus, as I shall tell,
Tullius, of the dreame of Scipion:
Chapters seven it had, of Heaven and Hell,
And Yerth, and soles that therein dwell,
Of which as shortly as I can it treate,
Of his sentence I wold you saine the grete.

First telleth it, whan Scipion was come
In Affricke, how he metoth Massinissa,
That him for joy, in armes hath inome,
Than telleth he her speach and all the blisse,
That was betwixt hem til the day gan misse,
And how his auncester Affrikan so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night til him appere.

Than telleth it, that from a sterrie place,
How Affrikan hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of all his grace,
And said him, what man lered eyther leude,
That loveth common profite well inuende,
He should into a blisfull place wend,
There as the joy is without any end.

Than asked he, if folke that here been dede
Have life, and dwelling in another place?
And Affrikan said Ye, without any drede,
And how our present lives space,
Ment but a maner death, what way we trace,
And rightfull folke, shall gon after they die
To Heaven, and shewed him the Galaxie.

Than shewed he him, the litte Yerth that here is
To regard of the Heavens quantite,
And after shewed he hym the nine speris,
And after that the melodie heard be,
That commeth of thilke speres thrise thre,
That welles of musicke been and melodie
In this world here, and cause of armonie.

Than said he him, sens Earth was so lite,
And full of tournament, and of hard grace,
That he ne should him in this world delite:
Than told he him, in certain yeres space,
That every sterre should come into his place,
There it was first, and all should out of mind,
That in this world is dooe of all mankind.

Than prayed him Scipion, to tell him all
The way to come into that Heaven blisse,
And he said: "First know thy selfe immortal,
And loke nie busely, that thou werche and wise,
To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
To come swiftly vnto that place dere,
That full of blisse is, and of soles clere.

"And breakers of the law, with to saine,
And likerous folke, after that they been dede,
Shall whirle about the world, alway in paine
Till many a world be passed out of drede,
And than foryevn all hir wicked dede,
Than shullen they come to that blisfull place,
To which to comen, God send thes grace."

The day gan failen, and the darke night,
That reveth beastes from hir busynesse,
Berast me my book for lacke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to drese,
Fulfilled of thought and busic heavynesse,
For both I had thyngh, which that I wold,
And eke I ne had that thing that I wold.

But finally my spirite at last,
For weary of my labour all that day,
Tooke rest, that made me to slepe fast,
And in my sleepe I met, as that I say,
How Affrikan, right in the selfe aray
That Scipion him saw, before that tide,
Was come, and stode right at my beds side.

The wearie hunter sleeping in his bedde,
The wood ayen his mind goeth anone,
The judge dremeth, how his peeces be spode,
The carter dremeth, how his cartes gone,
The rich of gold, the knight fight with his foe,
The sickte mette he drinketh of the tonne,
The lover mette he hath his lady wounne.

Can I not saine, if that the cause were,
For I had radde of Affrikan before,
That made me to mete that he stood there,
But thus said he: "Thou hast thee so wel borne
In looking of mine old booke all to torne,
Of which Macrobie raught not a lite,
That some dele of thy labour would I quita."

Citherea, thou blisful lady wete,
That with thy fiv brood, dauntest when the last
That madest me this sweren for to mete,
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best,
As wisely as I spigh the north northwest,
Whan I began my sweren for to write,
So yeve me might to rime it and editte.

This foresaid Affrikan me hent anon,
And forthwith him to a gate brought,
Right of a park, walled with grene stone,
And over the gate, with letters large i wrought,
There were verse ywritten as me thought
On either halfe, of full great difference,
Of which I shall you say the playne sentence:

"Through me men gon into the blisful place
Of bates heale and dedly wounds cure,
Through me men gon into the well of grace,
Ther grene and lusty May shall over cadure,
This is the way to all good aventure,
Be glad thou reader, and thy sorrow off cast.
All open am I, passe in and speede thee fast."

"Through me men gon" (than spake the other
* Unto the mortall strokes of the speare, (side)
Of which disdain and danger is the gide,
Ther never tree shall fruit ne leaves beare,
This streame you ledeth to the sorrowful weire,
There as the fish in pryson is all dry,
The unchewing is onely the remedy."

These verses of gold and aune ywritten were,
Of which I gan astonied to behold,
For with that one increased all my feare,
And with that other gan my herte to bold,
That one me het, that other did me cold,
No wit had I for error for to chese,
To enter or fle, or me to save or lese.

Right as betwene adamants two,
Of even weight, a peece of yron set
Ne hath no might to move to ne fro,
Ne what that one may hale that other let,
So fared I, that I mist where me was bet
To entre or leave, till Affrikan my gide,
Me hent and shove in at the gates wide.

And said, "It standeth written in thy face,
Thine error, though thou tell it not me,
But dread thee not to come into this place,
For this writing is nothing meant by thee,
Ne by none, but he Loves servaunt bee,
For thou of love hast lost thy tast I gesse,
As sickle man hath, of swete and bitterness.

"But natheles, although thou be dull,
That thou canst not doe, yet mayst thou see,
For many a man that may not stand a pull,
Yet liketh it him at the wrestlyng for to be,
And demeth yet, whether he doe bet, or be,
And if thou haddest cunning for tendite,
I shall thee shew matter of to write."

And with that my hand in his he toke anon,
Of which I comfort caught, and went in fast,
But Lord so I was glad, and well begon,
For our all, where I mine iyen cast,
Were trees clad with leaues, that aie shal last
Eke in his kind, with colour fresh and grene,
As emeraude, that joy it was to sene.

The bider oke, and eke the hardy asbe,
The pillar elme, the coffre vato caraine,
The bone pipe tree, holme to whips lasbe,
The sailing firre, the cipres death to plaine,
The shooter swe, the aspe for shaftes plaine,
The druse of peace, and eke the drunken vine,
The victor palme, the laner to diuine.

A garden saw I, full of bloomed bowis,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,
There as sweetnesse cuermore inough is,
With floures white, blew, yelowe, and red,
And cold welle streames, nothing dede,
That swommen full of smale fishes light,
With finnes rede, and scales silver bright.

On every bough the birdes heard I sing,
With voice of angell, in hir armonie,
That busied hem, hir birdes forth to bring,
The little pretty conies to hir play gan hie,
And further all about I gan espie,
The dreadful roe, the bock, the hart, and hind,
Squirrels, and beasts small, of gentle kind.

Of instruments of stringes in accord,
Heard I so play, a ravishing sweetnesse,
That God, that maker is of all and Lorde,
Ne heard never better, as I gesse,
Therewith a wind, unpeeth it might be leme,
Made in the leaues grene a noise soft,
Acordant to the foules song on loft.

The aire of the place so attempre was,
That never was ther greunance of hot ne cold
There was eke every holtsome spice and gras,
Ne no man may there waxe sicke ne old,
Yet was there more joy o thousand fold,
Than I can tell or ever could or might,
There is ever clere day, and never night.

Under a tree, beside a well I sey
Cupide our lorde, his arrowes forge and file,
And at his feete his bowe already lay,
And well his daughter tempered all the while
The heddes in the well, with her wile
She couched hem after, as they should serve
Some to slea, and some to wound and carve.

Tho was I ware of Pleasance anon right,
And of Array, Lust, Beauty, and Curtesse,
And of the Craft, that can hath the might
To done by force, a wight to done folie:
Disfigured was she, I will not lie,
And by himselfe, vnder an oke I gesse,
Sawe I Delite, that stood with Gentleness.

Than saw I Beauty, with a nice attire,
And Youth, full of game and joitee,
Foule Hardinesse, Flatterie, and Desire,
Messagerie, Mede, and other three,
Hir names shall not here be told for me,
And vpon pillars great of jasper long,
I sawe a temple of brasse ifounded strong.

And about the temple daunced alway
Women inow, of which some there were
Faire of herself, and some of hem were gay,
In kirtis all disbeaded went they there,
That was their office ever, fro yere to yere,
And on the temple, saw I white and faire,
Of doves sitting many a thousand paire.

And before the temple doore full soberly,
Dame Peace sat, a curtaine in her bonde,
And her beside wonder discretly,
Dame Pacience, sitting there I fonde,
With face pale, vpon an hill of sonde,
And alther next, within and without,
Behest and Arte, and of her folke a rout.

Within the temple, of sighes hote as fire,
I heard a sough, that gan about ren,
Which sighes were engendred with desire,
That made every herte for to bren
Of newe flambe, and well espied I then,
That all the cause of sorowes, that they drie,
Come of the bitter goddess Jalousie.

The god Priapus, saw I as I went
Within the temple, in sovrein place stound,
In such array, as whas the esse him shent
With cribe by night, and with sceptre in hond,
Full busilie men gan assay and foud,
Upon his hedde to set of sondrie bewe,
Garlandes full of freshe floures newe.

And in a pricie corner, in disport
Found I Venna, and her porter Richesse,
That was full noble, and hautes of her port,
Darke was that place, but after lightnesse
I sawe a lite, vnmethes, it might be lesse,
And on a bed of golde she lay to rest,
Till that the hote Sonne gan to west.

Her gilte beeres, with a gold threde
Bound were, vntressed as she lay,
And naked from the breast unto the hede,
Men might her see, and notly for to say,
The remnant, covered well to my pay,
Right with a litte kercheve of Valence,
There was no thicker clothe of defence.

The place gave a thousand savours soote,
And Bacchus god of wine sate her beside,
And Ceres next, that doeth of hunger boote,
And as I said, a myddes lay Cupide,
To whom on knees, the yong folkes ride,
To be their helpe, but thus I let her lie,
And farther in the temple I gan espie.

That in despite of Disce the chaste,
Full many a bowe broke hing on the wall,
Of maidens, such as gone hir times waste
In her service: and painted ouer all,
Of many a storie, of which I touch shall
A fewe, as of Calixte, and Athalant,
And many a maid, of which the name I want.

Scanyanus, Candace, and Hercules,
Biblis, Dido, Tisbe, and Piramus,
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Helaine, Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Sylla, and eke the mother of Romulus,
All these were paynted on that other side,
And all hir hous, and in what plite they dide.

Whan I was comen ayen into the place
That I of spake, that was so soote and grame,
Forth walked I tho, my solum to sobace,
Tho was I ware, where there was a quene,
That as of light, the somner Sonne above
Passeth the sterre, right so ouer measure,
She fairer was than any creature.

And in a laund, vpon an hill of floures,
Was set this noble goddess Nature,
Of branches were her halles and her boures
Iwrought, after her craft and her measure,
Ne there nas foul, that cometh of engendrure,
That there ne were prest, in her presence,
To take hir dome, and yeue hir audience.

For this was on saint Valentines day,
Whan every foul cometh to chese hir make,
Of every kind, that men think may,
And that so huge a noise gan they make,
That earth, sea, and tree, and every lake,
So full was, that vnmeth there was space
For me to stand, so full was all the place.

And right as Alzine, in the plaint of kind,
Deuiseoth Nature, of such arais and face,
In soche aray, men might her there find.
This noble empress full of all grace,
Bad every foule take hir owne place,
As they were wont alway, fro yere to yere,
On saint Valentines day, standes there.

That is to say, the foules of rauine
Were highest set, and than the foules smale,
That eaten, as that nature would encline,
As worme or thing, of which I tell so tale,
But water foule sat lowest in the dale,
And foules that liusth by seed sat on the grame,
And that so many, that wonder was to seme.

There might men the royall egles find,
That with his sharpe looke perseeth the son,
And other egles of a lower kind,
Of which that clerkes well dounein con,
There was the tyrant with his fethers dor,
And grene, I mean the gostautes that doth pine
To birdes, for his outrageous raune.

The gentle feroon, that with his fete distreith
The kings hand, the hardy sperheule eke,
The quales foe, the merlion that priueth
Himself full oft the larks fur to seke,
There was the doon, with her iyen mete,
The jelous swan, ayenat his deith that singeth,
The owl eke, that of deith the bode bringeth.

The crane, the geant, with his tromps roune,
The thief the chough, and the chattering pie,
The scarning jaye, the oles foe the herous,
The false lapwing, full of trecherie,
The sturc, that the comaille can bewite,
The tame ruddoock, and the coward kite,
The cooke, that horloge is of thropen hit.

The sparrow Vesce was, and the nightingale
That clepeth forth the fresh leues new,
The swalow, murderer of the bees made,
That makes bouis of floures fresh of bew,
The wedded turtell, with his herte true,
The peacock, with his angel fethers bright,
The fesant, scourer of the cokes by night.

The waker gane, the cuckowe ewer viciid,
The poppingie, full of delicacie,
The drake, stroter of his owne kind,
The sturc, waker of adoutrie,
The hote comerant, ful of glotomie,
The raim and the crowe, with her voyce of care,
The trustell old, and the fronic foldfare.

What should I say of foules of every kind,
That in this world haue fethers and stature,
Men might in that place assembled find,
Before that noble goddess of Nature,
And eche of them did his besse cure,
Benignly to chese, or for to take
By her accorde, his formell or his make.

But to the point, Nature held on her bond,
A fowell egle, of shepe the gentlest,
That ever she among her workes found,
The most benigne, and eke the goodliest,
In her was every vertue, at his roost
So forth, that Nature her selfe had blisse,
To looke on her, and oft her booke to kisse.

Nature, the vicere of the almightie Lord,
That hote, colde, heuie, light, moist, and drie,
Hath knit, by euen number of accord,
In easie voise, began to speake and say,
"Fowles take hede of my sentence I pray,
And for your own ease, in fording of your need,
As fast as I may speak, I will me speed.

"Ye know wel, how on S. Valentines day,
By my statute, and through my gouernance,
Ye doe chuse your mates, and after the away
With heuie, as I priete you with pleasaunce,
But methinks, as by rightfull ordinaunce,
May I not let, for all this world to win,
But be that most worthiest it, shall begin.

"The tercell egle, as ye know full wel,
The foole royall, aboue you all in degre,
The wis and worthie, the secret true as stele,
The which I haue formed, as ye may see,
In every parte, as it best liketh mee,
It kedeeth not his shape you to devise,
It shall first chuse, and speake in his gise.

"And after him, by order shall ye chuse,
After your kind, euerich as you liketh,
And as your hap is, shall ye win or lose,
But which of you, that loue most enriketh,
God sende him here, that sweetest for him siketh:"
And therewithall, the tercell gan she call,
And said, "My surne the choise is to thee fall.

"But methinks, in this condicion
Must be the choise, of euerich that is here,
That she agree to his election,
Who so he be, that should been her fere,
This is our vange alway, fro yere to yere,
And who so may at this time haue his grace,
In blisful time he came into this place."

With had exclamed, and with ful humble chere,
This roial tercell spake, and taried nought,
"Unto my soveraine lady, and not my fere,
I chuse and chuse, with will, herte, and thought,
The fowell on your hand, so wel wrought,
Whome I am all, and euer will her serue,
Doe what her luste, to doe me lise or sterue.

"Becheyng her of mercy, and of grace,
As she that is my ladie soverain,
Or let me die here present in this place,
For certes long may I not lise in pain,
For in my herte is curuen every vein,
Having regard onely to my trouthe,
My dere herte, base on my wo some routhe.

"And if I be found to her vtrne,
Disobediant, or wilfull negligent,
As anamour, or in piteous love a newe,
I pry to you this be my judgement,
That with these fowles I be all to rout,
That like day that she me euer find
To her vtrne, or in my gilte vnkind.

"And sith that none loueth her so well as I,
Although she seuer of loue me belovet,
Than ought she be mine through her mercy,
For other bonde can I none on her knet:
For well nor wo neuer shall I let
To serue her, how farre so that she wende,
Say what you list, my tale is at an ende."

Right as the fresh redde rose newe,
Against the summer Sunne coloured is,
Right so for shame all waxen gas the howe
Of this formell, whan she heard all this,
Neither she answerde well, ne said amis,
So sore abashed was she, till that Nature
Said, "Daughter drede you not, I you assure."

Another tercell egle spake anon,
Of lower kind, and said "That should not be,
I loue her better than ye doe, by minect John,
Or at the least I loue her as well as ye,
And lenger haue serued her in my degre,
And if she should haue loosed for long louing,
To me alone had be the gerdoning.

"I dare eke say, if she me finde false,
Unkind jangler, or rebell in any wise,
Or jelous, doe me hang by the balise,
And but I beare me in her seruise
As well as my wit can me suffice,
Fro point to point, her honour for to saue,
Take she my life, and all the good I haue."

The third tercell egle answerde tho,
"Now sirs, ye see the little leaser here,
For every foule crieth out to be ago
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere:
And eke Nature her selfe ne will not here
For taryng her, not half that I would say,
And but I speake, I must for sorrow dre.

"Of long seruise anunt I use nothing,
But as possible is me to die to day,
For wo, as be that hath be languishing
This twenty winter, and wel it happen may,
A man may serue better, and more to pay,
In half a year, although it were no more,
Than some man doth, that hath serued full yere.

"I use my not this by me, for I ne can
Do no service that may my lady please,
But I dare say, I am her trewest man,
As to my dome, and fairest wold her please:
At short wordes, till that death me cease,
I will be here, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in all that herte may be thinke."

Of al my life sith that day I was borne,
So gentle plee in love or other thing,
Ne herde never no man see beforme,
Who so that had loier and owning
For to rehearse their chere, and their speaking,
And from the morrow gan this spech last,
Till downward went the Sunne wonder fast.

The noyse of fowles for to be dellward,
So loude rang, "Have don and let vs wend,"
That well wend I, the wood had al to shiverd:
"Come off" they cryd, "alas, ye will us ahead,
Whan shal your curued pleding haue an end,
How should a judge either party lene,
For ye or may, without any pence?"

Ipolita his wife, and hardy queene
Of Cithia, that he conquered had,
With Emely her young suster shene,
Faire in a chaire of gold he with him led,
That all the ground about her chair she sprad
With brightnes of beauty in her face,
Fulfilled of largesse and of grace.

With his triumph and laurer crowned thus,
In all the flour of fortunes yeuing,
Let I this noble prince Theseus,
Toward Athens in his way riding,
And fonde I woll in shortly to bring,
The slye way of that I gan to write,
Of queene Annelida and false Arcite.

Mars that through his furious cours of ire,
The old wrath of Juno to fulfill,
Hath set the peoples hertes both on fire
Of Thebes and Grece, and euerich other to kill
With bloody speres, rested never still,
But throug now here now there among hem both,
That euerich other slue, so were they wroth.

For whan Amphioras and Tideus,
Ipomedon and Partinope also
Were dedde, and slain proud Campanens,
And whan the wretched Thebanas brethren two
Were slain, and king Adraatas home ago,
So desolate stood Thebes and so bare,
That no wight could remedy his care.

And whan the old Creon gan espy,
How that the blood royal was brought adown,
He held the citee by his tyranny,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To been his friends, and dwell in the town,
So what for loue of him, and what for awe,
The noble folke were to the towne ydrawe.

Among all these, Annelida the queene
Of Ermony was in that towne dwelling,
That fairer was than the founne shene,
Throughtout the world so gan her name spring,
That her to see had every wight liking,
For as of trowth is there none her liche,
Of all the women in this world riche.

Yong was this queene, of twenty yere old,
Of middle stature, and of such fairnesse,
That Nature had a joy her to behold,
And for to speaken of her stedfastnesse,
She passed hath Penelope and Lucesse,
And shortly if she may ben comprehended,
In her might nothing ben amended.

This Theban knight oke sothe to saie,
Was yong, and thereto withal a lusty knight,
But he was double in love, and nothing plain,
And subtil in that craft ower any wight,
And with his coming was this lady bright:
For so ferforth he gan her trowth assure,
That she him trusteth ower any creature.

What should I saie, she loueth Arcite so
That whan that he was absent any throw,
Anone her thought her herte brast awto,
For in her sight to her he bare him low,
So that she wende have all his herte yknow,
But he was false, it nas but fayned chere,
As nedeth not soche craftie men to lere.

But nevertelless full mikell businesse
Had he, or that he might his lady winne,
And swore he would dien for distresse,
Or from his witte he said he would twinne:
Alas the while, for it was rough and sime,
That she upon his sorrows would rue,
But nothing thinketh the false as doth the true.

Her fredome found Arcite in soch manere,
That all was his, that she bath, moch or lite,
Ne to no creature made she cheere,
Further than it liked to Arcite,
There was no lack, with which he might her win,
She was so ferforth yeuen him to please,
That all that liked him did her ease.

There nas to her no maner letter sent,
That touched loue, from any maner wight,
That she ne shewed him, or it was brent,
So plain she was, and did her full right,
That she nyl hide nothing from her knight,
Lest he of any vntrowth her vphreide,
Without bode his herte she obeyd.

And eke he made him ialous ower her,
That what that any man had to her sayd,
Anon he would praien her to awere
What was that word, or make him yuell spaid,
Than wende she out of her wit have braid,
But all was but sleight and flatterie,
Without love he fained jealousye.

And all this took she so debonairely,
That all his will, her thought it skiffil thing
And ever the longer she loved him tenderly,
And did him honour as he were a king,
Her herte was to him wedded with a ring,
For so ferforth vpon trowth is her entent,
That where he goth, her herte with him went.

Whan she shal out, on him is so her thought,
That well vsmeth of meate toke she keepe,
And whan she was to her rest brought,
On him she thought alway till that she slepe.
Whan he was absent, prinely doth she wepe,
Thus liueth faire Annelida the queene,
For false Arcite, that did her all this tene.

This false Arcite, of his newfauglenesse,
For she to him so lowly was and trowe,
Took leese delattee for her stedfastnesse,
And saw another lady proude and sowe,
And right anon he aiaid him in her howe,
Wote I not whether in white, reed, or grece,
And falsed faire Annelida the queene.

But nevertelless, great wonder was it noon
Though he were false, for it is the kind of man,
Sith Lamech was, that is so long agone,
To be in love as false as ouer he can,
He was the first father that began
To loven two, and was in bigamy.
And he found tents first, but if men lye.

This false Arcite, somewhat must he faise,
Whan he was false, to coueren his traitoury,
Right as an horse, that can both bite and plaine,
For he bare her in honde of treachery,
And swore he coude her doublenesse espye,
And all was falsenesse that she to him trowe,
Thus swore this thefe, and forth his way he rove.

Alas what herte might endure it,
For routhe or wo, her sorrow for to tell,
Or what man hath the coming or the wit,
Or what man might within the chambre dwell,
If I to him rehersen shall the Hell
That suffreth fayre Annelida the queene,
For false Arcite, that did all this tene.

She wepeth, waileth, and swooneth pitously,
To ground deed she falleth as a stoope
Crampisbeth her limmes crokedly,
She speketh as her wite were all agone,
Other colour than ashen hath she none,
Ne none other word speketh she moch or lite,
But "Mercy cruell herte mine Arcite."

And thus endureth, til that she was so mate
That she ne hath foot, on which she may sustene,
But forth languishing ever in this estate,
Of which Arcite hath neyther routh ne tene,
His herte was els where newe and grene,
That on her wo, ne deinet him not to think,
Him rocketh never whether she flete or sinke.

This newe lady holdeth him so narowe,
Up by the bridel, at the staves end,
That every word he dred it as an owe,
Her danger made him both bowe and beud,
And as her loue, made him turne or wend,
For she ne graunted him in her living,
No grace, why that he hath to sing.

But drove him forth, unseeth list her know
That he was seruaunt unto her ladyship,
But lest he were proude, she helde him lowe,
Thus serueth he, without meate or sip,
She send him now to land, and now to ship,
And for she yaus him daunger all his fill,
Therefore she had him at her owne will.

Example of this, ye thrifty women all,
Take bode of Annelida and false Arcite,
That for her list him her de re herte call,
And was so meke, therefore he loved her lite,
The kinde of mans herte is to delite
On thing that strange is, also God me save,
For what they may not get, that wold they have.

Now turve we to Annelida ayen,
That pyneth day by day in languishing,
But whan she saw that her ne gate no geyn,
Upon a day sorrowfully wepyng,
She cast her for to make a complainyng,
And with her owne hand she gan it write,
And sent it to her Theban knight Arcite.

THE

COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA TO FALSE ARCITE.

"So thirled with the point of remembrance,
The sward of sorowe, whette with false pleasaunce,
Mise herte bare of blisse, and black of heu,
That turned is to quaking all my daunce,
My severity is a waped countenaunce,
VOL. I.

Sens it awayleth nought to ben trew :
For who so trew is, it shall her rew,
That serueth love, and doth her obseruaunce
Alway to one, and chaungeth for no new.

"I wote my selfe as well as any wight,
For I loved one, with all mine herte and might
More than my self as hundred thousand sith,
And called him my hertes lyfe, my knight,
And was all his, as ferre as it was right,
And whan that he was glad, than was I blithe,
And his disease was my death as swithe,
And he ayen, his trouth hath me plight,
For evermore hya lady me to kith.

"Now is he false alas, and canseles,
And of my wo he is so routheles,
That with a worde him list not ones daine,
To bring ayen my sorrowfull herte in pece,
For he is caught vp in another lece,
Right as him list, he laugheth at my paine,
And I ne can mine herte not restraine
For to loue him yet alway neuertheles,
And of all this I not to whom to plaine.

"And shuld I playne, alas the hard stound,
Unto my foe, that yane myne herte a wound,
And yet desireth that myne harme be more,
Now certes ferther wold I neuer found,
None other helpe, my sores for to sound,
My destiny hath shaped so full yore,
I wold none other medecine ne lore,
I wold ben ayen there I was ones bound,
That I haue said, he said for evermore.

"Alas, where is become your gentlinesse,
Your words full of pleasaunce and humblesse,
Your obseruaunce in so lowe manere,
Your awaying, and your businessse,
On me that ye called your maistrasse,
Your soveraine lady in this world here?
Alas, is there neyther worde ne chere,
Ye vouchsafe vpon myne heuinesse?
Alas your loue, I bye it all to dere.

"Now certes swete, though that ye
Thus canselesse the cause be,
Of my deedly aduercite,
Your manly reason ought it to respite,
To sleepe your frende, and namely me,
That ouer yet in no degre
Offended you, as wisly he
That all wote, of wo my soule quite.

"But for I was so playne, Arcite,
In all my workes moch and lite,
And was so besie you to delite,
Myne honour saue, meke, kinde, and fre,
Therefore ye put in me this wite:
Alas, ye retobe not a mite,
Though that the sward of sorow bite
My wofull herte, through your cruelty.

"My sweet fo, why do ye so for shame,
And thinke ye that furthered he your name,
To loue a newe, and ben vntrew ayen,
And put you in slander now and blame,
And do to me aduersitie and grame,

That lone you most, God thou wost alway,
Yet turne ayen, and yet be playne some day,
And than shall this that now is mis, ben game,
And all forysoe, while I lyue may.

" Lo herte myne, al this is for to saine,
As whether shall I pray or els playne,
Which is the way to done you to be trow,
For eyther mote I haue you in my chayne,
Or with the deth ye mote depart vs twayne,
There bethe none other meane wayes new,
For God so wisely on my soule rewe,
As verely ye staine me with the payne,
That mowe ye see vnfaigned on mine hewe.

" For thus ferforth haue I my deth sought,
My selfe I murder with my priuie thought,
For sorow and rooth of your unkindnesse,
I wepe, I wayle, I fast, all helpeth naught,
I voide joy that is to speake of aught,
I voide company, I sie gladnesse,
Who may assaut her better of heuynesse,
Than I? and to this plite haue ye me brought,
Without gilte, me needeth no witness.

" And should I pray, and weiden womanhede,
Nay rather death, than do so foule a dede,
And aske mercy and gyltesse, what node,
And if I plaine what lyfe I lede,
You recketh not, that know I out of drede,
And if I vnto you miche othes bede,
For mine excuse, a scorne shall be my mede,
Your chere flourerth, but it wot not seide,
Full long agon I might haue taken bede.

" For though I had you to morow agayne,
I might as well hold Aprill from rayne,
As holde you to maken stedfast,
Almighty God, of trouth the soerayn,
Where is that trouth of man, who hath it slayne,
She that hem looth, shall hem find as fast,
As in a tempest is a rotten mast,
Is that a tame best, that is aye flyne
To renne away, when he is lest agast.

" Now mercy sweete, if I misay,
Hane I aught sayd out of the way,
I nat, my writte is all away,
I fare as deth the songe of chauntepleure,
For now I plaine, and now I play,
I am so mased that I dey,
Arcite hath borne away the key
Of all my world, and my good aventure.

" For in this world there is no creature,
Walking in more discomfure,
Than I, ne more sorowe endure,
For if I sleepe a furlonge way or twey,
Than thinketh me that your figure
Before me stante clad in asure,
Efte to proffe a newe assure,
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to prey.

" The long night, this wonder eight ydrie,
That on the day for such affray I die,
And of all this right naught ywis ye retche,
Ne neuermore mine eye to ben drye,
And to your rooth, and to your trouth I crye,
But well away, to ferre been they to fetch,
Thus holdeth me my destiny a wretch,
But me to rede out of this drede or gye,
Ne may my wit (so weake is it) not stretch.

" Than end I thus, with I may do no more,
I yeue it vp for now and euermore,
For I shall neuer este putten in balauce
My sikernesse, ne lerne of loue the lore,
But as the swan, I haue herde say full yore,
Ayenat his deth woll sing in his penaunce,
So sing I here the destinie and cbanuce,
How that Arcite, Annelida so sore
Hath thrilled with the point of remembraunce."

Whan that Annelida this wofull queene,
Hath of her hand written in this wise,
With face dead, betwixt pale and greene,
She fell a swoone, and sicke she gan to lise,
And vnto Mars avoweth sacrifice
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere,
That shapen was, as ye may plainly here

EXPLICIT.

THE
COMPLAINT OF THE BLACK KNIGHT.
— LYDGATE

The heavy complaint of a knight, for that he can
not win his ladies grace.

In May, whan Flora the fresh lusty queene,
The soyle hath cladde in greene, red, and whight,
And Phebus gan to shede his stremes sheene,
Amidde the Bulle, with all the beames bright,
And Lucifer, to chace away the night,
Ayen the morow our orizont hath take,
To bid all lovers out of hir slepe awake.

And hertes heavy for to recomfort,
From dretched of heavy night sorow,
Nature had hem rise, and hem disport,
Ayen the goodly glad grey morow,
And hope also, with sainte Johan to borow,
Bad in despite of daunger and dispaire,
For to take the holsome lusty ayre.

And with a sigh I gan for to abreide
Out of my slumber, and sodainly vp starte,
As he (alas) that night for sorow deide,
My sicknesse sente aye so nye my herte,
But for to finde soccour of my smart,
Or at the least some release of my peine,
That me so sore halte in every veine.

I rose anone, and thought I would gow
Into the wodde, to heare the birdes sing,
Whan that the misty vapour was agow,
And cleare and faire was the morning,
The dewe also like silver in shing
Upon the leaues, as any baume swete,
Till fiery Titan with his perant hete

Had dried vp the lusty licour new,
Upon the herbes in the grasse mede,
And that the floures of many divers bew,
Upon hir stalkes gon for to sprede,
And for to splay out hir leues in brede
Againe the Sunne, gold burned in his spere,
That doune to hem cast his beames clere.

And by a river forth I gan costey,
Of water clere, as birell or cristall,
Till at the last I found a little wey,
Toward a parke, enclosed with a wall,
In compase rounde, and by a gate small,
Who so that would, frely might gone
Into this parke, walled with grene stone.

And in I went to heare the birdes song,
Which on the branches, both in plaine and vale,
So kood sang, that all the wood rong,
Like as it should shiver in peeces smale,
And as me thought, that the nightingale
With so great might, her voice gan out wreat
Right as ber herte for love would brest.

The soile was plaine, smooth, and wonder soft,
All oversprad with tapettes that Nature
Had made ber selfe: covered eke aloft
With bowes greene, the floures fox to cure,
That in hir beauty they may long endure
From all assant of Phebus fervent fere,
Which in his sphere so hote shone and clere.

The ayre attemptre, and the smoothe wind
Of Zepherus, among the blossomes white,
So holome was, and so nourishing by kind,
That smale budde, and round blossomes lite,
In maner gan of hir brethe delite,
To yeve vs hope there fruite shall take
Ayent autumpne redy for to shake.

I saw the Daphne closed under rinde,
Greene laurer, and the holome pine,
The mirre also that wepeth ever of kinde,
The cedres bye, upright as a line,
The silbert eke, that lowe doth encline
Her bowes grene, to the yearth adoun,
Unto her knight called Demophoun.

There sawe I eke the fresh hawthorne
In white motley, that so swete doth uncll,
Ase, firre, and oke, with many a yong acorn,
And many a tree mo than I can tell,
And me be forne I sawe a little well,
That had his course, as I gan beholde,
Under an hill, with quicke streemes colde.

The gravel gold, the water pure as glasse,
The bankes round, the well enviroying,
And soft as velvet the yong grasse
That therepon lustely came springyng,
The sute of trees about compassyng,
Hir shadow cast, closing the well round,
And all the herbes growing on the ground.

The water was holome, and so vertuous,
Through might of herbes growyng beside,
Not like the welle where as Narcissus
Maine was, through vengeance of Cupide,
Where so covertly he did hide
The graine of death vpon echo brinke,
That death mote folow, who that ever drinke.

Ne like the pitte of the Pegase,
Under Perusao, where poetes slept,
Nor like the welle of pure chastite,
Which that Diane with her nymphes kept,
Whan she naked into the water lepte,
That slowe Acteon with ber houndes fell,
Oonly for he came so nigh the well.

But this welle that I here of rehearee,
So holome was, that it would aswage,
Bollen heries, and the venom pearce,
Of pensifed, with all the cruell rage,
And over more refresh the visage
Of hem that were in any weriness,
Of great labour, or fallen in distresse.

And I that had through daunger and disdein
So drye a thrust, thought I would assay
To taste a draught of this welle or twain,
My bitter langour if it might alay,
And on the banke anone doune I lay,
And with mine hed vnto the welle I raught,
And of the water dranke I a good draught.

Wherof me thought I was refreshed welle,
Of the breynnyng that ate so nigh my herte,
That verely anone I gan to fele
An huge parte released of my smart,
And therewithall anone vp I start,
And thought I would walke and see more,
Forth in the parke, and in the hoites here.

And through a haud as I yede a pace,
And gan about fast to behold,
I found anone a delectable place,
That was beset with trees young and old,
Whose names here for me shall not be told,
Amide of which stood an herber greene,
That benched was, with colours new and clene.

This herber was full of floures gende,
Into the which, as I beholde gan,
Betwixt an hulfeere and a woodbende,
As I was ware, I saw where lay a man
In blacke, and white colour pale and wan,
And wonder deadly also of his hewe,
Of hurtes grene, and fresh woundes new.

And overmore distrayned with sicknesse
Beside all this he was full greuously,
For vpon him he had an hote access,
That day by day him shooke full pitously,
So that for constraynyng of his malady,
And hertely wo, thus lying all alone,
It was a death for to hear him groue.

Wherof astonied, my fote I gan withdraw,
Greatly woodring what it might be,
That he so lay and had no felaw,
Ne that I could no wight with him see,
Wherof I had routhe, and eke pite,
And gan anone, so softly as I coude,
Among the bushes prively me to shroude.

If that I might in any wise spy,
What was the cause of his deedly wo,
Or why that he so pitously gan cry
On his fortune, and on ure also,
With all my might I layd an eare to,
Every word to marke what he said,
Out of his swough amonge as he abraid.

But first, if I should make mencion
Of his person, and plainly him descrive,
He was in sothe, without excepcion,
To speake of manhood, one the best on live,
There may no man ayen trouth strive,
For of his tyme, and of his age also,
He proved was, there men shuld have ado.

For one of the best therto of bread and length
So well ymade by good propocion,
If he had be in his deliver strength,
But thought and sickness were occasion
That he thus lay in lamentacion,
Gruffe on the ground, in place desolate,
Sole by himselfe, awshaped and amate.

And for me seemeth that it is fitting
His wordes all to put in remembraunce,
To me that heard all his complayning,
And all the ground of his wofull chaunce,
If there withall I may you do pleasance,
I woll to you so as I can anone,
Lyke as he sayd, rehearce everichone.

But who shall helpe me now to complain,
Or who shall now my stile gy or lode,
O Niobe, let now thy teeres rain
In to my peyne, and helpe eke in nede,
Thou wofull Myrre that felest my herte blede
Of pitous wo, and mine hand eke quake,
Whan that I write, for this mannes sake,

For vnto wo accordeth complayning,
And dolefull chere vnto heavynesse,
To sorow also, sighing and weping,
And pitous mourning vnto dremynesse,
And who that shall write of distresse,
In party needeth to know feelingly,
Cause and roote of all such malady.

But I alas, that am of witte but dull,
And have no knowing of such mestere,
For to discrive, and write at the full
The wofull complaint, which that ye shall here,
But even like as doth a skriucener,
That can no more what that he shall write,
But as his maister beaide doth endite.

Right so fare I, that of no sentemnt,
Say right naught in conclusion,
But as I herde whan I was present,
This man complaine, with a pitous soun,
For even like without addiccion,
Or discrease, eyther more or lesse,
For to rehearce anone I woll me dresse.

And if that any now be in this place,
That fele in love brenning of fervence,
Or hindred were to his ladies grace,
With false tonges, that with pestilence
Slea trewe men, that never did offence
In wordes nor deed, ne in hir entent,
If any such be here now present,

Let him of routh lay to audience,
With doleful chere, and sobre countenance,
To here this man, by full hys sentence,
His mortall wo, and his perturbance,
Complayning, now lying in a trauance,
With lookes vncast, and reful chere,
The effect of which was as ye shall here.

"The thought oppressed with inward sigts sore,
The painful life, the body languishing,
The wofull goot, the herte rent and tore,
The pitous chere pale in complayning,
The deadly face, like ashes in shining,
The salt teares that from mise eyen fall,
Percei declare ground of my paynes all.

" Whose herte is ground to blede in beinesse,
The thought recet of wo, and of complaint,
The breast is chest of dole and dremynesse,
The body eke so feeble and so faint,
With hote and colde mine axes is so maine,
That now I chieuer, for default of heat,
And hote as glede, now sodainly I sweat.

" Now hote as fire, now colde as ashes deed,
Now hote for cold, now cold for heat agayne,
Now cold as yse, now as coles reed,
For heate I brenne, and thus betwix twaine,
I possed am, and all forecast in paine,
So that my heate plainly as I fele,
Of greuous colde is cause every dele.

" This is the colde of inward hie dismayn,
Colde of dispite, and colde of croell hate,
This is the colde that ever doth his besie payn,
Ayenst trowth to fight and debate,
This is the colde that the fire abate
Of trewe meaning, alas the harde while,
This is the colde that wof me begile.

" For ever the better that in trowth I meet,
With all my might faithfully to serue,
With herte and all to be diligent,
The lesse thanke, alas I can deserue:
Thus for my trowth danger doth me sterue,
For one that should my death of mercy let,
Hath made dispite new his swerde to whet.

" Against me, and his awones to file,
To take vengeance of wifull cruelte,
And tonges false through hir sleightly wile,
Han gon a worre that will not stinte be,
And false cruile, wrath and enuite,
Hane conspired against all right and law,
Of hir malice, that trowth shall be slaw.

" And male bouch, gan first the tale tell,
To sleander trowth of indignacion,
And false reporte so longe range the bell,
That misbeleefe and false suspiccion
Hane trowth brought to his dempacion,
So that alas, wrongfully he dieth,
And falschene now his place occupieth.

" And entred is in to troubles longe,
And bath therof the full possession,
O rightfull God that first the trowth fonde,
How may thou suffre such oppression,
That falsheed should hane jurisdiction
In trouthes right to see him gytiles,
In his franchise he may not lyue in post.

" Falaly accused, and of his fone forjudged,
Without answer, while he was absent,
He damned was, and may not be excused,
For cruelte sate in judgement,
Of businesse without aduicement,
And badde diadme do execute anone,
His judgement in presence of his fone.

" Attourney may none admitted been
To excuse trowth, ne a worde to speke,
To faith or othe the judge list not seem,
There is no game, but he will be wreke:
O Lord of trowth to thee I call and clepe,
How may thou see thus in thy presence,
Without mercy murdered innocence.

" Now God that art of trowth sovaine,
And seest how I lie for trowth bound,
So soon knit in looses fyrie chaine,
Euen at the death through gyrtle with many a wound,
That likely are neuer for to sound,
And for my trowth am dampned to the death,
And not abyde, but draw along the breath:

" Consider and see in thine eternal right,
How that mine herte professed whilom was,
For to be trewe with all my full might,
Oonly to see the which now alas,
Of violence without any trespass,
My accusours hath taken vnto grace,
And chrisbeth henn my death to purchase.

" What meaneth this? what is this wonder ure?
Of perjuryance if I shall it call,
Of god of looe, that false heem so assure,
And trewe alas, downe of the whole ben fall,
And yet in sothe this is the worst of all,
That falsed wrongfully of troth bath the name,
And trowth ayeward of falsed beareth the blame.

" This blind chasme, this stormy aventure,
Is looe bath most his experience,
For who that doth with trowth most his cure,
Shall for his made finde most offence,
That serueth looe with all his diligence:
For who can faime vnder lowly hede,
Ne fleyeth not to finde grace and spede.

" For I looued one, full long sith agone,
With all mine herte, body and full might,
And to be deed my herte can not gone
From his herte, but hold that he bath hight,
Though I be banished out of her sight,
And by her mouth dampned that I shall dey,
Vnto my heet, yet I will euer obey.

" For euer sith that the world began,
Who so fate looke, and in story rede,
He shall aye find that the trewe man
Was put abecke, whereas the falsheode
Yfurthred was: for Looue taketh none hede
To slea the trew, and bath of hem no charge,
Where as the false goeth freely at hir large.

" I take record of Palamydes,
The trewe man, the noble worthy knight,
That euer looued, and of his paine no releas,
Notwithstanding his manhood and his might,
Looe vnto him did full great vnrigh,
For aye the bet he did in cheualrie,
The more he was hindred by enuis.

" And aye the better he did in enery place,
Through his knighthood and busie payee,
The ferder was he from his ladies grace,
For to her mercy might be nener attayne,
And to his death he couid it not refrayne,
For no daungere, but aye obey and serue,
As he best coude, plainly till he sterue.

" What was the fine also of Hercules,
For all his conquest and his worthinesse,
That was of strength alone peerles,
For like as bookes of him list expresse,
He set pillers through his hys prowess,
Awy at Gades, for to signifie,
That no man might him passe in cheualrie.

" The which pillers ferre beyond Inde,
Be set of gold, for a remembrance:
And for all that was he set behinde,
With hem that looe list feebly auance,
For him set last vpon a daunce,
Against whom helpe may no strife,
For all his trowth he lost his life.

" Phebus also for his pleasaunt light,
When that he went here in yearth looe,
Vnto the herte with Venus sight,
Ywounded was, through Cupides bowe,
And yet his lady list him not to knowe,
Though for her looe his herte did blede,
She let him go, and toke of him no hede.

" What shall I say of yonge Piramus?
Of trewe Tristram, for all his hys renowe,
Of Achilles, or of Antonius,
Of Arcite, or of him Palomoune,
What was the end of hir passionne,
But after sorow death, and than hir graue,
Lo here the guerdon that these louers haue,

" But false Jason with his doubleme,
That was vntrewe at Colkos to Medee,
And Theseus, route of vnkindnesse,
And with these two eke the false Ence,
Lo thus the false aye in one degree,
Had in looe hir lust and all hir will,
And saue falshood, there was none other skill.

" Of Thebes eke the false Arcite,
And Demophon eke for his slouth,
They had hir lost and all that might delite,
For all hir falshood and great vntrowth:
Thus euer Looue alas, and that is routh,
His false lieges fortherth what he may,
And sleeth the trewe vngodly day by day,

" For trewe Adon was slaine with the bore,
Amidde the forest in the grene shade,
For Venus looe he felt all the sore,
But Vulcanus with her no mercy made,
The foule chorle had many nights glade,
Where Mars her knight and her man,
To find mercy comfort none he can.

" Also the yonge fresh Ipomedes,
So lustly free as of his corage,
That for to serue with all his herte he ches
Athalar, so faire of her visage,
But Looue alas quite him so his wage
With cruell daunger plainly at the last,
That with the death guerdonlesse he past.

" Lo here the fine of Loues seruice,
Lo how that Looue can his seruants quite,
Lo how he can his faithfull men dispise,
To slea the trewe men, and false to respise,
Lo how he doth the swerde of sorow bite
In hertes, such as most his lust obey,
To saue the false and do the trewe dey.

" For faith nor othe, worde, ne assurauce,
Trewe meaning, awaite, or businesse,
Still porte, ne faithfull attendaunce,
Manhood ne might in armes worthinesse,
Parasute of worship nor his prowess,
In strange land riding ne traualle,
Full litell or nought in looe doth auaile.

" Perill of death, nor in see ne land,
Hunger ne thurst, sorow ne sicknesse,
Ne great emprises for to take in hand,
Sbeding of blood, ne manfull hardinesse,
Ne oft wounding at smotes by distreme,
Nor in parting of life nor death also,
All is for nought, Loue taketh no heed thereto

" But lesings with hir flatterie,
Through hir falshede, and with hir doublenesse,
With tales new, and many fained lie,
By false semblaunt, and counterfeit humblesse,
Under colour depaint with stedfastnesse,
With fraud covered vnder a pitous face,
Accept be now rathest vnto grace.

" And can himselfe now best magnifie
With fained port and presumption,
They haunce hir cause with false surquidrie,
Under meaning of double entencion,
To thinke one in hir opinion,
And say another, to set himselfe aloft,
And binder trouth, as it is seeme full oft.

" The which thing I buy now all too deare,
Thanked be Venus, and the god Cupide,
As it is seeme by mine oppressed cheere,
And by his arrowes that sticken in my side,
That saue death I nothing abide
For day to day, alas the hard while,
Whan euer his dart that him list to file,

" My wofull herte for to rise atwo,
For fault of mercy, and lacke of pite
Of her that causeth all my paine and wo,
And list not ones of grace for to see
Unto my trouth through her cruelte,
And most of all I me complaine,
That she bath joy to laugh at my paine.

" And wilfully bath my death sworne,
All guilelesse, and wote no cause why,
Sawe for the trouth that I had aforned
To her alone to serue faithfully,
O god of loue, vnto thee I cry,
And to thy blind double deite,
Of this great wrong I complaine me.

" And vnto thy stormy wilfull variaunce,
Inzont with change and great vnstablenesse,
Now vp, now down, so renning is thy chance,
That thee to trust may be no sikernesse,
I wite it nothing but thy doublenesse,
And who that is an archer, and is blend,
Marketh nothing, but shooteth by wend.

" And for that he hath no discrecion,
Without aduise he let his arrow go,
For lacke of sight, and also of reason,
In his shooting it happeth oft so,
To hurt his friend rather than his fo,
So doth this god with his sharpe stons,
The trow sleeth, and letteth the false gone.

" And of his wounding this is the worst of all,
Whan he hurt dooth to so cruell wretch,
And maketh the sicke for to cry and call
Unto his foe for to be his leche,
And hard it is for a man to seche
Upon the point of death in jeopardie,
Unto his foe to find a remedie.

" Thus fareth it now euen by me,
That to my foe that gaue my herte a wound,
Mote aske grace, mercy, and pite,
And namely there where some may be found,
For now my sore my leche will confound,
And god of kind so bath set wise ere,
My liues foe to haue my wound in cure.

" Alas the while now that I was borne,
Or that I euer saw the bright Some,
For now I see that full long aforne,
Or I was borne, my desteny was sponse
By Parcas sisterne, to dea me if they conce,
For they my death shopen or my short,
Only for trouth, I may it not asert.

" The mighty goddesse also of Nature,
That vnder God hath the gouernaunce,
Of worldly things committed to her care,
Disposed haue through her wise purcaiance,
To giue my lady so much suffraunce
Of all vertues, and therewithall purside,
To murder trouth, bath take danger to side.

" For bounte, beaute, shape, and seemedehede,
Prudence, wit, passingly fairenesse,
Benigwe port, glad cheere, with lowlibede,
Of womanhede right plenteous largewesse,
Nature did in her fully empressse,
Whan she her wrought, and alther last distain,
To binder trouth, she made her chamberlain.

" Whan mistrust also, and false suspexion,
With mischelen she made for to be
Cheefe of counaile to this concolusion,
For to exile trouth, and eke pite,
Out of her court to make mercy see,
So that despite now holdeth forth her reie,
Through hasty bileue of tales that men feie.

" And thus I am for my trouth also
Murdered and slain, with words sharp and kea,
Guilelesse God wote of all trespass,
And lie and blede vpon this cold graue,
Now mercy sweets, mercy my liues quene,
And to your grace of mercy yet I prey,
In your seruice that your man may dey.

" But if so be that I shall die alyght,
And that I shall none other mercy haue,
Yet of my death let this been the date,
That by your wil I was brought to my graue,
Or hastily, if that you list me cause,
My sharpe wounds that ake so and blede,
Of mercy charme, and also of womanhede.

" For other charme plainly is there more,
But only mercy, to helpe in this case,
For though my wounds bleed euer in ooe,
My life, my death, standeth in your grace,
And though my guilt be nothing, alas,
I aske mercy in all my best entent,
Ready to die, if that ye assent.

" For there against shall I neuer strice
In word ne werke, plainly I ne may,
For lesur I haue than to be alic
To die soothly, and it be to her pay,
Ye though it be this same day,
Or whan that euer her list to deuise,
Suffreth me to die in your seruise.

" And God, that knowest the thought of every wight
Right as it is, in every thing thou maist see,
Yet ere I die, with all my full might,
Lowly I pray to graunt vnto mee,
That ye goodly, faire, fresh, and free,
Which onely slea me for default of ruth,
Or that I die, ye may know my trouthe.

" For that in sooth suffroeth me,
And she it know in every circumstance,
And after I am well paid that she
If that her list of death to do vengeance
Vnto me, that am vnder her lygences,
It sit me not her doome to disobey,
But at her last wilfully to dey.

" Without grutching or rebellion
In will or word, holly I assent,
Or any manner contradiction,
Folly to be at her commaundement,
And if I die in my testament
My herte I send, and my spirit also,
What so ever she list with hem to do.

" And alderlast to her womanhede,
And to her mercy me I recommaund,
That lie now here betwixe hope and drede,
Abiding plainly what she list commaund,
For utterly this nis no demaund
Welcome to me while me lasteth breath,
Right at her choice, where it be life or death.

" In this matter more what might I saine,
Sith in her hand, and in her will is all,
Bot life and death, my joy, and all my paine,
And finally my best hold I shall,
Till my spirit by destiny fatall,
Whan that her list fro my body wend,
Haue here my trouthe, and thus I make an end."

And with that word he gan sigh as sore,
Like as his herte rine would atwaine,
And held his peace, and spake no word more,
But for to see his wo and mortal paine,
The teares goune fro mine eyen raine
Fall pitously, for very inward roth,
That I him saw, so long wishing for troth.

And all this while my selfe I kepte close
Among the bowes, and my selfe goune hide,
Till at the last the wofull man arose,
And to a lodge went there beside,
Where all the May his custome was tabide,
Sole to complaine of his paines kene,
From yere to yere, under the bowes grene.

And for bicause that it drew to the night,
And that the Sonne his arke diurnal
Ypassed was, so that his perstant light,
His bright beams and his streams all
Were in the waues of the water fall,
Under the bordure of our ocean,
His chaire of gold, his course so swifly ran :

And while the twilight and the rowes rade
Of Phebus light were deaurat alite,
A penne I took, and gan me fast spede
The wofull plaint of this man to write,
Word by word, as he did coudite,
Like as I heard, and good hem the report,
I haue here set, your hertes to disport.

If ought be misse, lay the wite on me,
For I am worthy for to beare the blame,
If any thing misse reported be,
To make this ditte for to seeme lame,
Through mine uncounting, but for to saine the same,
Like as this manne his complaint did expresse,
I aske mercy and forgiuenesse.

And as I wrote, me thought I saw afferre,
Ferre in the west lustely appere
Esperus the goodly bright sterre,
So glad, so faire, so permaunt eke of chere,
I mean Venus with her beames clore,
That heauy hertes only to releas,
Is wont of custome for to shew at ere.

And I as fast fell adown on my knee,
And euen thus to her gan I to pray:
" O lady Venus so faire vpon to see,
Let not this man for his trouthe dey,
For that joy thou haddest whan thou ley
With Mars thy knight, whan Vulcanus fond,
And with a chaine vnrivable you bond

" Togider both tway in the same while,
That all the court aboue celestiaall,
At your shame gan laugh and smile:
Ah, faire lady welly fond at all,
Comfort to carefull, O goddesse immortall,
Be helping now, and do thy diligence,
To let the streames of thine influence

" Descend downe, in forthering of the trouthe,
Namely of hem that lie in sorrow bound,
Shew now thou might, and on hir wo haue routh,
Ere false daunger slea hem and confound :
And specially let thy might be found,
For so to couer what so that thou may
The true man that in the herber lay.

" And all true further for his sake,
O glad sterre, O lady Venus mine,
And cause his lady him to grace take,
Her herte of stele to mercy so encline,
Ere that thy beames go vp to decline,
And ere that thou now go fro us adoun,
For that loue thou haddest to Adoun."

And whan she was gone to her rest,
I rose anone, and home to bedd went :
For weary, me thought it for the best,
Praying thus in all my best intent,
That all trow, that be with daunger shent,
With merry may in releas of hir paine,
Secured be, ere May come eftes againe.

And for that I ne may no lenger wake,
Farewell ye louers all that be trow,
Praying to God, and thus my leue I take,
That ere the Sonne to morrow be risen now,
And ere he haue ayen risen how
That each of you may haue such a greet,
His owne lady in armer to embrace,

I meane thus, in all honesty,
Without more ye may togider speake
What so ye list at good liberty,
That each may to other hir herte brake,
On jealousies onely to be wroke,
That hath so long of his mallice and enuy
Worred trouthe with his thrauy.

LIVCOVE.

Princesse, pleaseth it to your benigmité
This little ditie to bane in mind,
Of womanbede also for to see,
Your man may your mercy find,
And pity eke, that long hath be behind,
Let him againe be provoked to grace,
For by my trouth it is againt kind,
False daunger to occupy his place.

Go little quaire vnto my livers queene
And my very hertes soueraine,
And be right glad for she shall the seene,
Such is thy grace, and not I alas in paine,
Am left behind, and but to whom to plaine,
For mercy, ruth, grace, and eke pite
Exiled be, that I may not attaine,
Recure to find of mine adversite.

EXPLICIT.

A PRAISE OF WOMEN.

Altho thee list of women evill to speak,
And sein of hem worse than they deserve,
I pray to god that hir neckes to break,
Or on some evil death mote the janglers sterve
For every man were holden hem to serve,
And do hem worship, honour, and servise,
In every manner that they best could devise.

For we ought first to think on what manere
They bring vs forth, and what pain they endure
First in our birth, and sith fro yere to yere
How busely they done their busic cure,
To keepe vs fro every misaventure
In our youth whan we have no might
Our selfe to keepe, neither by day nor night.

Alas, how may we say on hem but wela,
Of whom we were fostred and ybore,
And ben all our succour, and ever true as stela,
And for our sake fall oft they suffer sore,
Without women were all our joy lore,
Wherefore we ought all women to obey
In all goodnesse, I can no more say.

This is well knowne, and hath ben or this,
That women ben cause of all lightnesse,
Of knighthood, nurture, excluding all mallis,
Encrease of worship, and of all worthinesse,
Thereto curteis and meke, and ground of all good-
Glad and merry, and true in every wise
That any gentil herte can thinke or devise.

And though any would trust to your vtruth,
And to your faire words would aught assent,
In good faith me thinketh it wer great ruth,
That other women shuld for hir gilt be shent,
That never knew, ne wist nought of hir entent,
Ne list not to heare tho faire words ye write,
Which ye yo paine fro day to day tendite.

But who may beware of your tales vntreue,
That ye so busily paint and endite,
For ye will swere that ye never knew,
Ne saw the woman, neither much ne lite,
Save only her, to whom ye had delite,
As for to serve of all that ever ye sey,
And for her love must ye needs dey.

Than will ye swere that ye knew never before
What Love was, ne his dreddfull observance,
But now ye fele that he can wound sore,
Wherefore ye put you into her governaunce,
Whom Love hath ordeind you to serve and do ple-
With al your might your little lives space, [sweat]
Which endeth soone, but if she do you grace.

And than to bed will he soone draw,
And soone stoke ye will you thanaine,
And swere fast your lady hath you slaw,
And brought you suddainly in so high a paine
That fro your death may no man you restraine,
With a daungerous looke of her eyes two,
That to your death must ye needs go.

Thus will ye morne, thus will ye sigh sore,
As though your herte anon in two wold brest,
And swere fast that ye may live no more,
Mine owne lady, that might if ye lest
Bring mine herte somdele into rest,
As if you list mercy on me to have,
Thus your vntrouth will ever mercy crave.

Thus wold ye plain, tho ye nothing smart,
These innocent creatures for to beguile,
And swere to hem, so wounded is your herte
For hir love, that ye may live no while.
Scarcely so long as one might go a mile,
So hieth death to bring you to an end,
But if your soverain lady list you to amend.

And if for routh she comfort you in any wise
For pity of your false othes seve,
So that innocent wench that it be as you devise,
And wench your herte be as she may here,
Thus for to comfort and somewhat do you chere:
Than wold these janglers deme of her full ill,
And saine that ye have her fully at your will.

Lo how ready hir tonges been, and prest
To speake harme of women causelesse,
Alas, why might ye not as well say the best,
As for to deme hem thus guiltlesse,
In your herte iwis there is no gentinesse,
That of your own gilt list thus women fame,
Now by my trouth, me think ye be too blame.

For of women cometh this worldly wela,
Wherefore we ought to worship hem evermore,
And though it mishap one, we ought for to beke,
For it is all through our false lore,
That day and night we paine vs evermore
With many an oth, these women to beguile
With false tales, and many a wicked wile.

And if falsebede should be reckened and told
In women, iwis full trouth were,
Not as in men, by a thousand fold,
Pro all vices iwis they stand cleare,
In any thing that I could of heare,
But if enticing of these men it make,
That hem to flatteren comen never stake.

I wold fain wese where ever ye could here,
Without mens tising, what women did amys,
Forther ye may get hem, ye lie fro yere to yere
And many a gabbing ye make to hem iwis,
For I could never heare, ne knowen are this,
Where ever ye could find in any place,
That ever women brought you of grace.

There ye you pain, with all your ful might,
With all your herte, and all your businesse,
To please hem both by day and night,
Praying hem of hir grace and gentillesse,
To have pite upon your great distresse,
And that they would on your paine have routh,
And see you not, see ye meane but trouth.

This may ye see that they ben faultlesse,
And innocent to all your werkes alle,
And all your crafts that touch falsnesse,
They know hem not, ne may hem not espie,
So swaere ye, that ye must needs die,
But if they would of hir womanhead
Upon you rew, ere that ye be dead.

And than your lady, and your hertes queene
Ye call hem, and therewith ye sighte sore,
And say, " My lady I trow that it be seeene
In what plite that I have liued full yore,
But now I hope that ye woll no more
In these paines suffer me for to dwell,
For all goodnesse iwis ye be the well."

Lo which a painted processe can ye make,
These harmlesse creatures for to beguile,
And when they slepe, ye paine you to wake,
And to bethinke you on many a wicked wile,
But ye shall see the day that ye shall curse the
That ye so busily did your entent [while
Hem to beguile, that falshed neuer ment.

For this ye know wel, though I would lie,
In women is all trouth and stedfastnesse,
For in good faith I deme of hem sie
But much worship, bountie, and gentillesse,
Right coming, faire, and full of meeknesse,
Good and glad, and lowly I you ensure,
Is this goodly angellike creature

And if it hap a man be in disease,
She doth her businesse, and her full paine
With al her might, him to comfort and please
If fro his disease she might him restraine,
In word ne deed ywis she woll not faile,
But with all her might she doth her businesse
To bring him out of his heavinesse,

Lo what gentillesse these women have,
If we could know it for our rudenesse,
How busie they be us to keepe and saue,
Both in heale, and also in sicknesses,
And alway right sorrie for our distresse,
In every manner, this shew they routh,
That in hem is all goodnesse and trouth.

And sith we find in hem gentillesse and trouth,
Worship, bountie, and kindnesse evermore,
Let never this gentillesse through your slooth
In hir kind trouth be anght foreke
That in women is, and hath ben full yore,
For in reverence of the Heavens queene,
We ought to worship all women that be.

For of all creatures that ever wer get and borne,
This wote ye well a woman was the best,
By her was recovered the blisse that we had lorne,
And through the woman shall we come to rest,
And ben ysaued, if that our selfe lest,
Wherefore me thinketh, if that we had grace,
We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I rede, that to our lives end,
Fro this time forth, while that we have space,
That we have trespassed, pursue to amend,
Praying our ladie well of all grace
To bring us unto that blisful place,
There as she and all good women shal be in fere
In Heavens aboue, among the angels clere.

EXPLICIT.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

In this book is shewed how the deeds of all men
and women, be they good or bad, are carried by
report to posterity.

God tourne us every dream to good,
For it is wonder thing by the rood
To my wit, what causeth speeches
On the morrow, or on others,
And why the effect followeth of some,
And of some it shal never come,
Why that it is an auision,
And why this is a revelation,
Why this a dreame, why that a sweene,
And not to every man like esen,
Why this a fantome, why that oracles,
I not: but who so of these miracles
The causes know bet than I,
Define he, for I certainly
Ne can hem not, ne nener thinke
To busie my wit for to swinke
To know of hir significacions.
The genres, ne distinctions
Of the times of hem, ne the causes,
Or why this is more than that is,
Or yene folkes complexions,
Make hem dreame of reflections,
Or else thus, as other saie,
For the great feablenesse of hir brain,
By abstinence, or by sicknesses,
Prison, strife or great distresse,
Or els by disordinaunce,
Or natural acoustomaunce,
That some men be too curious
In studie, or melancolius,
Or thus, so inly full of drede,
That no man may him bothe rede,
Or els that deuotion
Of some, and contemplation,
Causen such dreames oft,
Or that the cruel life vnsoft
Of hem that lones ledge,
Oft hopes much or dreden,
That purely hir impressions
Causen hem to have visions,
Or if spirits han the might
To make folke to dreame on night,
Or if the soule of proper kind,
Be so perfite as men find,
That it wote what is to come,
And that he warneth all and some
Of everiche of hir auctures,
By auisions, or by figures,

But that our flesh hath no might
To vnderstand it aright,
For it is warned too derkely,
But why the cause is, not wote I,
Well worth of this thing clerkes,
That tressen of that, and of other werkes,
For I of none opinion
Nill as now make menton,
But only that the holy rood
Tourne vs euery dreame to good,
For ueuer sith I was borne,
Ne no man els me before,
Mette I trow stedfastly
So wonderfull a dreame as I.

The tenth day now of December,
The which, as I can remember,
I woll you tellen euerydale,
But at my beginning trusteth wele,
I woll make inuocation,
With a deuout speciall deuotion
Unto the god of sleepe anone,
That dwelleth in a caue of stone,
Upon a streame that cometh fro Lete,
That is a flood of Hell vsuete,
Beside a fulke, that men clepe Cimerie,
There sleepeth aye this god vnerie,
With his slepeth thousand sonnis,
That alway to sleepe hir woune is
And to this god that I of rede,
Pray I, that he woll me spede,
My sweuen for to tell aright,
If euery dreame stand in his might,
And be that mouer is of all
That is and was, and euer shall,
So giue hem joy that it here,
Or all that they dreame to yere,
And for to stand all in grace
Of hir loues, or in what place
That hem were leuest for to stond,
And shield hem from pouertie and abound,
And from euery vnhappe and disease,
And send hem that may hem please,
That taketh well and scorneth nought,
Ne it misdeme in hir thought,
Through malicious entencion,
And who so through presumption,
Or hate, or scoorne, or through enuie,
Dispite, or yape, or felonie,
Misdeme it, pray I Jesus good,
Dreame be barefoot, or dreame be shood,
That euery harme that any man
Hath had sith the world began,
Befall him thereof, or he sterue,
And graunt that he may it deserue.

Lo, with right such a conclusion,
As had of his suision
Cresus, that was king of Lyde,
That high vpon a gibbet dide,
This praier shall he haue of me,
I am no bette in charite.

Now herken, as I haue you sayd,
What that I mette or I brayd,
Of December the tenth day,
When it was night, to slepe I lay,
Right as I was wont to dreame,
And fell asleepe wonder soone,
As he that was wary frigo,
On pilgrimage miles two

To the corpes of saint Leonard,
To maken like, that erst was hard.

But as I slept, the mette I was
Within a temple ymade of glas,
In which there were the images
Of gold, standing in sundry steges,
In mo rich tabernacles,
And with perre mo piunacles,
And mo curious portraitures,
And queint manner of figures
Of gold werke, than I saw euer.

But certainly I mist neuer
Where that it was, but well wist I,
It was of Venus redely
This temple, for in portreiture,
I saw anon right her figure
Naked flecting in a see,
And also on her head parde,
Her rose garland white and red,
And her combe to kemb her bed,
Her doue, and dan Cupido,
Her blind soone, and Uulcano,
That in his face was full browne.

But as I rooned vp and downe,
I found that on the wall there was
Thus written on a table of braas.

" I woll now sing if that I can,
The armes, and also the man,
That first came through his destinie
Fugitive fro Troy the countrie,
Into Itale, with full much pine,
Unto the stronds of Lauise :"
And tho began the story anone,
As I shall tellen you echone.

First saw I the destruction
Of Troy, through the Greeke Sinon,
With his false vtture forwearings,
And with his chere and his lesings
Made a horse, brought into Troy,
By which Troyans lost all hir joy.

And after this was graued, alas,
How Ilions castle assailed was
And won, and king Priamus slaine,
And Polites his soone certaine,
Dispitously of dan Pirrus.

And next that saw I how Uenus
When that she saw the castle brend,
Downe from Heuene she gan descend,
And had her soone Eneas to flee,
And how he fled, and how that he
Escaped was from all the proce,
And toke his father, old Anchises,
And bare him on his backe away,
Crying " Alas and welaway,"
The which Anchises in his hand
Bare the the gods of the land,
Thilke that outwrood were.

Then saw I next all in fore,
How Crusa, dan Eneas wife,
Whom that he loued all his life,
And her yong soone Ido,
And eke Ascanius also,
Fledden eke with dreie chere,
That it was pitte for to here,
And in a forest as they went,
At a toorning of a went,
How Crusa was ylost, alas,
That rede not I, how that it was;
How he her sought, and how hev ghost
Bad him fle the Greekes nest,

And said he must into Itaile,
As was his destinie, sauns faile,
That it was pittie for to heare,
When her spirit gan appeare
The words that she to him said,
And for to keepe her sonne him prayed.

There saw I grauen eke how he,
His father eke, and his moine,
With his ships gan to saile
Toward the countrey of Itaile,
As streight as they mighten go.

There saw I eke the cruell Juno,
That art dan Jupiters wife,
That hast yhated all thy life
All the Troyan blood,
Rea and cry as thou were wood
On Eolus, the god of winds,
To blowen out of all kinds
So loud, that he should drench
Lord, lady, groomes, and wench
Of all the Troyans nation,
Withouet any of hir saluation.

There saw I such tempest arise,
That euery herte might agrise,
To see it painted on the wall.

There saw I eke grauen withall
Uenus, how ye my lady dero,
Weeping with full wofull chere,
Praying Jupiter on his
To saue and keepe that onie
Of that Troyan Eneas,
Sith that he her sonne was.

There saw I Joues Uenus kisse,
And graunted was of the tempest lisse.

There saw I how the tempest stent,
And how with all pine he went,
And pryncely took a riuage
Into the countrey of Carthage,
And on the morow how that he,
And a knight that height Achate,
Metten with Uenus that day,
Going in a queint array,
As she had be an hunteresse,
With wind blowing vpon her tresse,
And how Eneas began to plaine,
When he knew her, of his paine,
And how his shipe dreint were,
Or els ylost, be mist where.

How she gan him comfort tho,
And bade him to Cartage go,
And there he should his folke find,
That in the sea were left behind,
And shortly of this thing to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, queene of that countre,
That shortly for to telles, she
Became his loue, and let him do
All that wedding length to,
What should I speake it more queint,
Or paine me any words to paint,
To speake of loue, it woll not be,
I cannot of that fauolite,
And eke to telles of the manere
How they first acquainted were,
It were a long processe to tell,
And ouer lung for you to dwell.

There saw I graue, how Eneas
Told to Dido euery case,
That him was tidde vpon the see.

And eft grauen was how that she

Made of him shortly at a word,
Her life, her loue, her lust, her lord,
And did to him all reuerence,
And laid on him all the dispance,
That any woman might do,
Wening it had all be so,
As he her swore, and hereby deued
That he was good, for he such seemed.

Alas, what harme doth apparence,
When it is false in existence,
For he to her a traitour was,
Wherefore she slow her selfe alas.

Lo, how a woman doth amine,
To loue him that vnknowne is,
For by Christ lo thus it fareth,
It is not all gold that glareth,
For also brooke I well misse head,
There may be vnder goodlibead
Covered many a shreud vice,
Therefore be no wight so wise,
To take a lone onely for chere,
Or speech, or for friendly manere,
For this shall euery woman find,
That some man of his pure kind
Woll shewen outward the fairest,
Till he haue caught that what him lest,
And than woll he causes find,
And swere how she is vnkind,
Or false, or priuie, or double was,
All this say I by Eneas
And Dido, and her nice lest,
That looned all to soome a greet,
Wherefore I woll say o proverbe,
That he that fully knoweth the herbe,
May safely lay it to his sle,
Withoueten drede this is no lie.

But let vs speake of Eneas,
How he betrayed her, alas,
And left her full vnkindly.

So when she saw all vtrawly,
That he would her of trouth faile,
And wenden from her into Itaile,
She gan to wring her handes two.

"Alas" (quod she) "that me is wo,
Alas, is euery man thus true,
That euery yere woll haue a new,
If it so long time endure,
Or els three parauenture,
And thus of one he woll haue fame
In magnifying of his owne name,
Another friendship sayeth he,
And yet there shall the third be,
That is taken for delite,
Lo, or els for singular profite:"

In such words gan complain
Dido of her great paine,
As me mette dreaming readly,
None other authour alleidge woll I.

"Alas" (quod she) "my sweet herte,
Haue pittie on my sorowes smart,
And sles me not, go not away.

"O wofull Dido, welayway"
(Quod she) vnto her selfe tho.

"O Eneas what woll ye do,
O that your loss be your bond,
That ye swore with your right hand,
Ne my cruell death" (quod she)
"May hold you still here with me.
"O, heue ye of my death so pite,
I wis mine owne deare herte ye

Know full well that never yet,
As farre as ever I had wit,
Agilt you in thought ne in dede.

"O, haue ye man such goodlibede
In spech, and never a dale of trowth,
Alas that ever had routh
Any woman on a false man.

"Now I see well, and tall can,
We wretched women can no art,
For certaine, for the more part,
Thus we been serued enesichone,
How sore that ye man can grove,
Anon as we have you receiued,
Certainly we been deuided,
For though your love last a season,
Wait vpon the conclusion,
And eke how ye determine,
And for the more part define,
O welay that I was borne,
For through you my name is lorne,
And mine acts redde and song
Ouer all this land in esery tong.

"O wicked fame, for there nis
Nothing so swift lo as she is,
O sooth is, esery thing is wit,
Though it be couerde with the mist,
Eke though I might duren ever,
That I haue done recouer I neuer,
That it ne shall be said, alas,
I shamed was through Eneas,
And that I shall thus judged be :

"Lo right as she bath done, now she
Woll done eftsoones hardely,
Thus say the people pruely :"
But that is done, nis not to done,
But all her complaint ne her moone
Certaine anaileth her not a stre,
And when she wist soothly he
Was forth into his ship agone,
She into chamber went anon,
And called on her suster Anne,
And gan her to complain than,
And said, that she cause was,
That she first loued him alas,
And first counsailed her thereto,
But what, when this was said and do,
She roft her seluen to the berte,
And deide through the wounds smart,
But all the manner how she deide,
And all the words how she seide,
Who so to know it hath purpose,
Rede Virgile in Eneidos,
Or the Feteis of Ouide,
What that she wrote or that she deide,
And nere it too long to endite,
By God I would it bere write,
But welay, the harme and routh
That hath betide for such vntrowth,
As men may oft in bookes rede,
And all day seeme it yet in dede,
That for to thinken it tene is.

Lo Demophon, duke of Athenis,
How he forswore him falsely,
And traied Phillis wickedly,
That kinge daughter was of Thrace,
And falsely gan his tearme pace,
And when she wist that he was false,
She hong her selfe right by the helde,
For he had done her such vntrowth,
Lo, was not this a wo and routh.

Eke looke how false and rebetes
Was to Briseida Achilles,
And Paris to Oenone,
And Jason to Hippiphile,
And eft Jason to Medea,
And Hercules to Diandra,
For he left her for Iolus,
That made him take his death perde.

How false was eke Theseus,
That as the storie telleth vs,
How he betraied Adriane,
The deuill be his soules hane,
For had he laughed or yloured,
He must haue been all deuoured,
If Adriane ne had he,
And for she had of him pite,
She made him fro the death escape,
And he made her a full false jape,
For after this within a while,
He left her sleeping in an isle,
Desart alone right in the see,
And stalle away, and let her bee,
And toke her suster Phadra tho
With him and gan to ship go,
And yet he had sworne to here,
On all that euer he could sweere,
That so she saued him his life,
He would taken her to his wife,
For she desired nothing els,
In certaine, as the booke vs tala.

But for to excuse this Eneas
Fulliche of all his great trespas,
The booke saith saens faile,
The gods had him go to Itaille,
And leauen Affricke regions,
And faire Dido and her toum,
Tho saw I graue how to Itaille
Dan Eneas gan for to saile,
And how the tempest all began,
And how he lost his steresman,
Which that the sterne, or he toke keepe,
Smote ouer the bord as he slepe.

And also saugh I how Sibile
And Eneas beside an isle,
To Hell went for to see
His father Anchises the free,
And how he there found Palimurus,
And also Dido, and Deiphebus,
And eueriche tourment eke in Hell
Saw he, which long is for to tell,
Which paines who so list to know,
He must rede many a row
In Virgile or in Claudian,
Or Daunt, that it telle can.

Tho saw I eke all the aruuaile
That Eneas had made in Itaille,
And with king Latin his treme,
And all the batailles that he
Was at himselfe, and his knights,
Or he had all rroune his rights,
And how he Turnus reft his life,
And wan Laune to his wife,
And all the maruellous signale
Of the gods celestiale,
How maugre Juno, Eneas
For all her sleight and her compas
Acheued all his enesture,
For Jupiter tooke on him cure,
At the prayer of Venus,
Which I pray alway saue vs,

And vs eye of our sorrowes light.

When I had scene all this sight
In this noble temple thus,
" Hey lord, thought I, that madest vs,
Yet saw I neuer such noblesse
Of images, nor such richesse,
As I see grauen in this church,
But nought wote I who did hem worch,
Ne where I am, ne in what countree,
But now will I out gone and see
Right at the wicket if I can
Scene ought where stering any man,
That may me tellen where I am."

When I out of the dore came,
I fast about me beheld,
Then saw I hat a large field,
As farre as euer I might see,
Without toone, house, or tree,
Or bush, or grasse, or eared land,
For all the field was but of sand,
As small as men may see at eye
In the desert of Lybye,
Ne no manner creature,
That is yformed by nature,
Ne saw I, me to rede or wise:
" O Christ," thought I, " that are in blisse,
From fanton and illusion
Me saue," and with deuotion
Mine eyes to the Heauen I cast,
Tho was I ware lo at the last,
That fast by the Summe on hie,
As keene might I with mine eyes,
Me thought I saw an egle sore,
But that it seemed much more
Than I had any egle yerne,
This is as sooth as death certaine,
It was of gold, and shone so bright,
That neuer saw men such a sight,
But if the Heauen had yowne
All new of God another sonne,
So shone the egles fethers bright,
And somewhat downward gan it light.

EXPLICIT LIBRA PRIMUS.

Now hearken every manner man,
That English vnderstand can,
And listeth of my dreame to here,
For nowe at erst shall ye here
So sely and so dredefull a vision,
That I say neither Scipion,
Ne king Nabugodonosore,
Pharao, Turnus, ne Alcanore,
Ne metten such a dreame as this,
Now faire blisfull, O Cipris,
So be my fauour at this time,
That ye me tendite and rime
Helpoth, that in Pernaso dwell,
Beside Elicon the clere well.

O thought, that wrote all that I met,
And in the tresorie it set
Of my braine, now shall men see
If any vertue in thee bec,
To tell all my dreame aright,
Now kithe thy engins and thy might.
This egle of which I haue you told,
That with feathers shone all of gold,
Which that so high gan to soare,
I gan behold more and more,

To scene her beauty and the wonder,
But neuer was that dent of thunder,
Ne that thing that men call soudre,
That smite sometimes a toure to poudre,
And in his swift comming brend,
That so swithe gan downward disoord,
As this foule whan it beheld,
That I a rounge was in the field,
And with his grim pawes strong,
Within his sharpe nailes long,
Me fleying at a swappe he hent,
And with his sours againe vp went,
Me caryng in his claws starke,
As lightly as I had ben a larken,
How high, I cannot tellen you,
For I came vp, I niet uecer how,
For so astonied and awesod
Was euery vertue in my hened,
What with his sours and coy dread,
That all my feeling gan to dead,
For why it was a great adray.

Thus I long in his claws lay,
Till at the last he to me spake
In mans voise, and said " Awake,
And be not agast so for shame,"
And called me tho by my name,
And for I should better abraid,
Me to awake, thus he said,
Right in the same voise and stein,
That useth one that I can penia,
And with that voise, sooth to saine,
My mind came to me again,
For it was goodly said to me,
So nas it neuer wont to be,
And herewithal I gan to stize,
As he me in his feet bere,
Till that he felt that I had heat,
And felt eke tho mine herte beat,
And tho gan he me to disport,
And with gentle wordes me comfort,
And said twice, " Saint Mary,
Thou art a noyous thing to cary,
And nothing needeth it parde,
For also wise God helpe me,
As thou no harme shalt bawe of this,
And this case that betiddeth thee is,
Is for thy lore and for thy prow,
Let see, darst thou looke yet now,
Be full ensured holdely,

" I am thy friend," and therewith I
Gan for to wonder in my mind.

" O God," quod I, " that madest all kind,
Shall I none otherwise die,
Whether Jove will me stellife,
Or what thing may this signifie,
I am neither Enocke, ne Helie,
Ne Romulus, ne Ganimede,
That were bore up as men rode,
To Heauen with das Jupiter,
And made the gods buteler?"
Lo, this was tho my fantasie,
But he that bare gan aspie,
That I so thought and said this,
" Thou deemest of thy selfe amis,
For Jove is not thercabot,
I dare thee put full out of doubt
To make of the yet a sterre,
But ere I beare thee much ferre,
I will the tell what I am,
And wbider thou shalt, and why I came,

To do this, so that thou take
 Good herte, and not for feare quake."
 " Gladly," quod I, " Now well," quod he :
 " First, I that in my feet haue the,
 Of whom thou hast feare and wonder,
 I am dwelling with the god of thonder,
 Which men callen Jupiter,
 That doth me fien full oft for
 To do all his commandement,
 And for this cause he hath me sent
 To thee : herke now by thy trowth,
 Certaine he hath of the rooth,
 That thou hast so truly
 Long serued ententifly
 His blind newe Cupido,
 And faire Venus also,
 Without guerdon euer yet,
 And nathelesse hast set thy wit,
 Although in thy head full little is,
 To make bookes, songs, and dities
 In rime, or else in cadence,
 As thou best canst in reuerence
 Of Loue, and of his seruants eke,
 That haue his seruice sought and seke,
 And painest thee to praise his art,
 Although thou haddest neuer part,
 Wherefore also God me blesse,
 Iouis halt it great humblesse,
 And vertue eke, that thou wilt make
 A night full oft thine head to ake,
 In thy study so thou writest,
 And evermore of Loue enditest,
 In honour of him and praisings,
 And in his folkes furtherings,
 And in hir matter all deuiseat,
 And not him ne his folke dispisat,
 Although thou maist go in the daunce
 Of hem, that him list not auance,
 Wherefore as I said ywis,
 Jupiter considreth well this,
 And also beaurie, of other things,
 That is, thou haste no tidings
 Of Loues folke, if they be glade,
 Ne of nothing else that God made,
 And not onely fro ferre cuntries,
 That no tidings comen to thee,
 Not of thy very neighbours,
 That dwellen almost at thy dore,
 Thou hearest neither that ne this,
 For when thy labour all done is,
 And hast made all thy rekenings
 In stead of rest and of new things,
 Thou goest home to thine house anon,
 And also dombe as a stone,
 Thou sittest at another booke,
 Till fully dased is thy looke,
 And liuest thus as an hermite,
 Although thine abstinence is lite,
 And therefore Iouis through his grace
 Will that I beare thee to a place,
 Which that hight the House of Fame,
 And to do the sport and game
 In some recompensation
 Of thy labour and deuotion
 That thou hast had, lo causelesse,
 To god Cupido the rechelesse,
 And thus this god through his merite
 Will with some manner thing thee quite,
 So that thou wilt be of good chere,
 For trust well that thou shalt bere,

When we ben comen there as I say,
 Mo wonder things dare I say,
 And of Loues folke mo tidings,
 Both soothsaues and lesings,
 And mo loues new begon,
 And long serued till loue is won,
 And mo louers casuelly,
 That ben betide, no man wote why,
 But as a blind man startech an hare,
 And more jolite and welfare,
 While they find loue of steele,
 As thinke men, and oser all wele,
 Mo discorde, and mo ienalousie,
 Mo murmures, and mo nosedries,
 And also mo dissimulations,
 And eke fained reparations,
 And mo berdes in two hours
 Without rasour or sinours
 Ymade, than graines be of mands,
 And eke mo holding in mo hands,
 And also mo roneousnesses
 Of old forleten aqueistances,
 Mo loue daies, and mo accords
 Than on instruments ben cords,
 And eke of loue mo exchangees,
 Than euer come were in graunges,
 Unseth maist thou trowen this,"
 Quod he, " No so helpe me God as wis"
 Quod I, " Now why," quod he, " For it
 Were impossible to my wit,
 Though Fame had all the prys
 In all a realme and all اسپes,
 How that yet he should beare all this,
 Or they espieen?"—" O yes, yes,"
 Quod he, to me, " that can I preue
 By reason, worthy for to leue,
 So that thou gite thine aduertence
 To understand my sentence.
 " First shalt thou here where she dwelleth,
 Right so as thine owne booke telleth,
 Her palais standeth as I shall say
 Right euen amidde of the way
 Betwene Heauen, Earth, and see,
 That whatsoever in all these three
 Is spoken in priue or apert,
 The way thereto is so ouert,
 And stant eke in so just a place,
 That eury sowne mote to it pace,
 Or what so cometh from any tong,
 Be rowned, red, or song,
 Or spoken in suertie or drede,
 Certaine it mote thider nede.
 " Now hearken well, for why I will
 Tellen thee a proper skill,
 And a worthy demonstration
 In mine imagination.
 " Geffray, thou wotest well this,
 That eury kindly thing that is,
 Hath a kindly stede there be
 May best in it conserued be,
 Unto which place eury thing,
 Through his kindly enclining,
 Meueth for to come to,
 When that it is away threfro,
 As thus, lo how thou maist al day see,
 Take any thing that beauee bee,
 As stone or lead, or thing of weight,
 And beare it nouer so his on height,
 Let go thine hand, it falleth downe,
 Right so say I by fire or sowne

Or smoke, or other things light,
 Alway they seeke upward on height,
 Light things up, and downward charge,
 While euerich of hem be at large,
 And for this cause thou maist well see,
 That euery rizer unto the see
 Enclined is to go by kind,
 And by these skilles, as I find,
 Hase fishes dwelling in flood and see,
 And trees eke on the earth be,
 Thus euery thing by his reason
 Hath his own proper mansion,
 To which he seeketh to repaire,
 There as it should nat appaire.

"Lo, this sentence is knowne couth
 Of euery philosophers mouth,
 As Aristotle and dan Platone,
 And other clerkes many one,
 And to confirme my reason,
 Thou wost well that speech is soue,
 Or else no man might it here,
 Now herke what I wold thee here.

"Soune is not but eyre ybroken,
 And euery spech that is spoken,
 Lood or priue, foule or faire,
 In his substance is but aire,
 For as flame is but lighted smoke,
 Right so is soune eyre ybroke,
 But this may be in many wise,
 Of which I will thee devise,
 As soune cometh of pipe or harpe,
 For when a pipe is blown sharpe,
 The eyre is twist with violence,
 And rest: lo, this is my sentence
 Eke, when men harperstrings smite,
 Wheder it be much or lite,
 Lo, with the stroke the eyre it breketh,
 And right so breketh it when men speketh,
 Thus wost thou well what this is spech,
 Now henceforth I will thee teach,
 How euerich spech, voice, or soue,
 Through his multiplication,
 Though it were piped of a moose,
 Note needs come to Fames House,
 I proue it thus, take heed now
 By experience, for if that thou
 Threw in a water now a stone,
 Well wost thou it will make a soue
 A little roundell as a cerele,
 Parauenture as broad as a conerle,
 And right a soue thou shalt see wele,
 That whele cerele wil cause another whele,
 And that the third, and so forth brother,
 Euery cerele causing other,
 Broader than himseife was,
 And thus from roundell to compas,
 Ech about other going,
 Causeth of others stering,
 And multiplying euermo,
 Till it be so farre go
 That it at both brinkes bee,
 Although thou may it not see
 Above, yet gothe it alway under,
 Though thou thinke it a great wonder,
 And who so saith of trouth I vary,
 Bid him proue the contrary,
 And right thus euery word is,
 That lood or priue yspoken is,
 Moueth first an eyre about,
 And of his mouing out of doot

Another eyre a soue is moued,
 As I haue of the water proued,
 That euery cerele causeth other,
 Right so of eyre my leue brother,
 Euerich eyre in other stereth
 More and more, and spech vp beareth,
 Or voice or noise, word or soue,
 Aye through multiplication,
 Till it be at the House of Fame,
 Take it in earnest or in game,
 Now haue I told, if thou haue mind,
 How spech or soue, of pure kind
 Enclined is upward to mece,
 This maist thou fele well by proue,
 And that same stede iwis,
 That euery thing enclined to is,
 Hath his kindliche stede,
 That sheweth it without drede,
 That kindly the mansion
 Of euerich speche of euery soue,
 Be it either foule or faire,
 Hath his kind place in aire,
 And sith that euery thing iwis
 Out of his kind place iwis,
 Moueth thider for to go,
 If it away be therefro,
 As I haue before proued thee,
 It sheweth euery soue parde,
 Moueth kindly to pace,
 As up into his kind place,
 And this place of which I tell,
 There as Fame list to dwell,
 Is sette amidde of these thre,
 Heauen, Earth, and eke the see,
 As most conseruatiue the soue,
 Than is this the conclusion,
 That euery spech of euery man,
 As I thee tell first began,
 Moueth vp on height to pace
 Kindly to Fames place.

"Tell me this now faithfully,
 Haue I not proued thus simply,
 Without any subteltie
 Of spech, or great prolixite,
 Of termes of philosophy,
 Of figures of poetry,
 Or colours of rhetorike,
 Perde it ought thee to like,
 For hard language, and hard matere
 Is incombrous for to here
 At ones, wost thou not well this?"
 And I answered and said "Yes."

"Ah ah," quod he, "lo so I can,
 Leudly unto a leud man
 Speke, and shew him such shilles,
 That he may shake hem by the billes,
 So palpable they shoulde be,
 But tel me this now pray I thee,
 How thinketh thee my conclusion?"

"A good persuasion,"
 Quod I, "it is, and lyke to be,
 Right so as thou hast proued me."
 "By God," quod he, "and as I leue,
 Thou shalt haue it or it be eue,
 Of euery word of this sentence,
 A proue by experience,
 And with thyne eares heeren well,
 Toppe and tayle, and eueridell,
 That euery word that spoken is,
 Commeth into Fames House ywis,

As I haue said, what wilt thou more,"
And with this word upper to more,
He began and said "By saint Jame,
Now will we speake all of game.

"How farest thou now," quod he, to me,
"Well," quod I, "Now see," quod he,
By thy trouth yond adowne,
Where that thou knowest any towne,
Or house, or any other thing,
And whan thou hast of ought knowing,
Looke that thou warne me,
And I anon shall tell thee,
How farve that thou art now therefro."

And I adowne gan to loken tho,
And beheld fields and plaines,
Now hils, and now mountaines,
Now valeis, and now forestes,
And now unbeth great beests,
Now riuers, now citees,
Now townes, now great trees,
Now shippes sayling in the see.

But thus soone in a while hee,
Was flogen fro the ground so hie,
That all the world as to mine eye,
No more seemed than a pricke,
Or else was the eyre so thicke
That I might it not discernue:
With that he spake to me so yerne,
And said: "Seest thou any token,
Or ought that in this world of spoken?"

I said "Nay,"—"No wonder is,"
Quod he, "for neuer halfe so hie as this,
Nas Alexander of Macedon
King, ne of Rome, dan Scipion,
That saw in dreame at point deuse,
Heaven and Earth, Hell and Paradise,
Ne eke the wretch Dedalus,
Ne his childe nice Icharus,
That fiewe so hie, that the hote
His wyngs molte, and he fell wete
In midde the sea, and there he dreint,
For whom was made a great complaint.

"Now tourne upward," quod he, "thy face,
And behold this large place,
This eyre, but loke that thou ne bee
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see,
For in this region certayne,
Dwellet many a citezeine,
Of which speaketh dan Plato,
Those ben the eyribe beests lo,"
And tho sawe I all the membe,
Both go and also fle.

"Lo," quod he, "cast up thyn eye,
See yonder lo, the galaxie,
The which men clepe the milky way,
For it is white: and some perfaray
Callen it Watling streete,
That ones was brent with the hets,
When the Sumes soone the rede,
That bight Pheton, would lede
Algate his fathers cart, and gie.

"The cart horse gan well aspie,
That he coude no gouernaunce,
And gan for to leupe and prauuce,
And beare him up, and now down,
Till he saw the Scorpioun,
Which that in Heauen a signe is yet,
And he for fere lost his wit
Of that, and let the reyues gone
Of his horse, and they snoue

Soone up to mount, and downe discende,
Till bothe eyre and Earth brende,
Till Jupiter lo, at the last
Him slew, and fro the carte cast.

"Lo, is it not a great mischaunce,
To let a foole haue gouernaunce
Of things that he can not demeine?"

And with this word sothe for to saine
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me than more and more,
So faithfully to me spake he.

Tho gan I to looke under me,
And beheld the eyriah beests,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempests,
Snowes, hayles, raynes, and windes,
And than gending in hir kidnes,
All the way through which I came;
"O God," quod I, "that made Adame,
Moch is thy might and nobles."

And tho thought I upon Boece,
That writeth a thought may fie so hie,
With fetters of philosophy
To passen euerich element,
And when he hath so far ywent,
Than may be seen behind his backe,
Cloude, and earth, and all that I of spake.

Tho gan I weze in a were,
And said, "I wote well I am here,
But whether in body or in goost,
I not ywis, but God thou woost,"
For more clere ententement,
Nas me neuer yet ywent,
And than thought I on Marcian,
And eke of Antichaudan,
That sothe was hir descripcion
Of all the Heuouens region,
As far as that I saw the preve,
And therefore I can hem leue.

With that the egle gan to cry,
"Let be," quod he, "thy fantaste,
Wilt thou learne of sterres ought?"

"Nay certainly," quod I, "right noght."
"And why," quod he? "For I am old:"
"Or els would I thee haue told,"
Quod he, "the sterres names lo,
And all the Heuouens signs to,
And which they be."—"No force," quod I.

"Yes parde," quod he, "woost thou why,
For whan thou redest poetry,
How the goddes can stellify
Birde, fishe, or him, or her,
As the rainn and other,
Or Arionis harpe sine,
Castor, Polixa, or Delphine,
Or Athalantes daughters seuen,
How all these are set in Heuen,
For though thou haue hem ofte in hand,
Yet not thou nat where they stand."

"No force," quod I, "it is no need,
As well I leue so God me speed,
Hem that writen of this matere,
As though I knew hir places here,
And eke they semen here so bright,
It about shenden all my sight,
To looke on hem:"—"That may well be,"
Quod he, and so forth bare he me
A while, and tho he gan to cry,
(That neuer herde I thing so hie)
"Hold up thine heed, for all is well,
Saint Julian lo, bonne hostell."

See here the House of Fame lo,
Myst thou not here that I do?"

"What?" quod I, "The great sowne"
Quod he, "that rombieth up and downe
In Fames House full of tidings,
Both of fayre spech and chidings,
And of false and sothe compounded,
Herken well it is not rownded.

"Herest thou not the great swough?"
"Yes perdo," quod I, "wel ynough,"
And what sowne is it like," quod he?

"Peter, lyke the beating of the see,"
Quod I, "against the roches halow,
Whan tempests doone her shippes swallow,
And that a man stand out of doute,
A mye thene, and here it route.

"Or els lyke the humbling
After the clappe of a thundring,
Whan louis hath the eyre ybete,
But it doth me for feare swete."

"Nay, drede thee not thereof," quod he,
It is nothing that will byten thee,
Thou shalt have no harme truely."

And with that worde both he and I
As nigh the place arrived were,
As men might cast with a spere,
I aste how, but in a strete
He set me faire on my feete,
And said, "Walke forth a pace
And tell thine adventare and case,
That thou shalt finde in Fames place."

"Now," quod I, "while we haue space
To speake, or that I go fro thee,
For the love of God tell me,
Is sothe, that I will of thee here,
If this noyse that I here

Be as I have herde thee tell,
Of folke that done in earth dwell,
And commeth here in the same wise,
As I thee herd or this deuisse,
And that here liues body nis
In all that house that yonder is,
That maketh all this loude fare."

"No," quod he, "by saint Clare,
And also wise God rede me,
But o thing I will wate thee,
Of the which thou wilt haue wonder.

"Lo, to the House of Fame yonder,
Thou wote how commeth every speach,
It needeth not the efte to teach,
But understand now right well this,
Whan any speach ycomen is,
Up to the palas anon right,
It wexeth like the same wight,
Which that the worde in earth spake,
Be he clothed in reed or blake,
And hath so very his likenesse,
And spake the worde that thou wilt gonne,
That it the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.

"And is not this a wonder thing,"
"Yes," quod I tho, "by Heuene king,"
And with this worde "farewell," quod he,
"And here will I abide thee,
And God of Heuene send thee grace,
Some good to learne in this place,"
And I of him tooke leane anon,
And gan forth to the palays gone.

God of science and of light,
Apolo through thy great myght,
This littell last booke now thou gie,
Now that I will for maistris,
Here art potencial be shewe,
But for the rime is light and lewde,
Yet make it somewhat agreable,
Though some verses fayis in a sillable,
And that I do no diligence,
To shewe craft, but sentence,
And if deuine vertue thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now,
That in my heed ymarked is,
Lo, that is for to meeneth this,
The House of Fame for to diacrine,
Thou shalt see me go as blisc
Unto the next laurer I see,
And kisse it, for it is thy tree;
Now eare in my brest arouse.

When I was from the Egle gode;
I gan bebojd vpon this place,
And certaine or I further passe,
I wold you all the shappe deuisse,
Of house and citee, and all the wise,
How I gan to this place approach,
That stood vpon so hie a roch,
Hyer standeth none in Spayne,
But vp I clambe with moch payney,
And though to climbe greued mee,
Yet I ententife was to see,
And for to poren wondre low,
If I coude any wise yknow
What maner stone this roche was,
For it was lyke a linned glas,
But that it shone full more clere,
But of what congeled matere
It was, I niste redely,
But at the last espied I,
And found that it was euerydele,
A roche of yae and not of steele,
Thought I "By saint Thomas of Kent,
This were a feeble foundement,
To builden on a place hie,
He ought him litte to glorifie,
That hereon bilte, God so me saue."

Tho sawe I all the hall ygrate
With famous folkes names fele,
That had been in moch wele,
And hir fames wide yblow,
But well vnsteth might I know
Any letters for to rede
Hir names by, for out of drede,
They weren almost of thawed so,
That of the letters one or two
Were molte away of every name,
So vfamous was weze her faune,
But men say, what may euer last.

Tho gan I in mine herte cast,
That they were molte away for beate,
And not away with stormes beate,
For on that other side I sey,
Of this hill, that northward ley,
How it was written full of names,
Of folke that had afore great fames,
Of old time, and yet they were
As fresh as men had written been there
The self-day, or that houre
That I on hem gan to poure,

A

But well I wiste what it made,
It was conserved with the shade,
All the writing that I sie,
Of a castell that so stode on hie,
And stode eke in so cold a place,
That heate might it not deface,

The gan I on this hill to gone,
And found on the coppe a wone,
That all the men that been on hie,
Ne han the coming to discrive
The beaute of that like place,
Ne coud caste no compoe,
Soch another for to make,
That might of beauty be his make,
Ne so wonderly wrought,
That it astonieth yet my thought,
And maketh all my witte to swinke
On this castell for to thinke,
So that the great beauteie,

The caste, crafte, and curiosite,
Ne can I not to you devise,
My witte ne may me not suffice,
But nathelesse all the substaunce
I haue yet in my remembraunce,
For why me thought by saint Gile,
All was of stone of herile,
Both the castell and the toure,
And eke the hall, and enery heure,
Without peeces or joyningis,
But many subtell compassingis,
As habouries and pinnacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw, and full eke of windowes,
As flakes fallen in great snowes,
And eke in each of the pinnacles
Weren sundry habitacles,
In which stoden all withouten,
Full the castle all abouten,
Of all manner of ministrals,
And jestours, that telle tales
Both of weeping and of game,
And of all that longeth vnto Fame,

There heard I play on an harpe,
That souned both well and sharpe,
Him Orpheus full craftely,
And on this side fast by
Set the harper Orion,
And Gacides Chirion,
And other harpers many one,
And the Briton Glaskirion,
And smale harpers with hir gloes,
Eate vnder hem in diuers sees,
And gone on hem upward to gape,
And counterfeited hem as an ape,
Or as craft counterfeit kind.

Thou saw I stonden hem behind,
A farre from hem, all by hemselue,
Many a thousand times twelce,
That made loud ministraloies
In cornuse and shalmies,
And many another pipe,
That craftely began to pipe,
Both in douced and in rede,
That ben at feasts with the brode,
And many a foite and litling borne,
And pipes made of greene corne,
As haue these litte heard gromes,
That kepen beasts in the brocais.

There saw I than dan Citherus,
And of Athens dan Procerus,

And Mercia that lost her skimne,
Both in face, body, and chinee,
For that she would emisen lo,
To pipen bette than Apollo.

There saw I eke famous old and yung,
Pipers of all the Dutch tong,
To learne loue daunces, springis,
Reyes, and the straunge thingis.

Thou saw I in another place,
Standing in a large space
Of hem that maken bloody soue,
In trumpe borne, and clarion,
For in fight and bloodsheddingis
Is used gladly clarioningis.

There heard I trumpe, Messenus,
Of whom that speaketh Uergilius.

There heard I Jobb trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo,
And all that used clarion,
In Casteloigne and Aragon,
That in hir times famous were,
To learken saw I trumpeis there.

There saw I sit in other sees,
Playing upon other sundry gless,
Which that I cannot neuen,
Mo than sterres ben in Heuen,
Of which I nil as now not rime,
For ease of you, and losse of time:
For time ylost, this know ye,
By no way may recovered be.

There saw I playing jogelours,
Magiciens, and tragetouris,
And phetonimes, charmeresses,
Old witches, sorceresses,
That ven exorsisatioun,
And eke subfumigatioun,
And clerkes eke, which coune well
All this magicke naturell,
That craftely doe hir entents,
To maken in certaine ascendentis,
Images lo, through which magiks,
To maken a man ben hole or sike.

There saw I the queene Medea,
And Circes eke, and Caliophia.

There saw I Hermes Balenus,
Limote, and eke Simon Magus.

There saw I, and knew by name,
That by such art done men haue fame.

There saw I Coll Tragetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Play an vncouth thing to tell,
I saw him carry a wind mell
Under a walnote shale.

What should I make lenger tale,
Of all the people that I sey,
I could not tell till domisey.

When I had all this folke behold,
And found me losse and not hold,
And I amused a long while
Upon this wall of herile,
That shone lighter than a glas,
And made well more than it was,
As kind thing of fame is,
And than anon after this,
I gan forth romen till I fond
The castell yate on my right hond,
Which so well coruen was,
That neuer such another nas,
And yet it was by auntere
Ywrought by great and subtil cure;

It needeth not you more to tellen,
To make you too long dwellen,
Of these yates florishings,
Ne of compases, ne of karuings,
Ne how the hacking in masonries,
As corbets, and imageries,

But Lord so faire it was to shewe,
For it was all with gold bewee,
But in I went, and that anon
There met I crying many one,
"A larges a larges, hold vp well
God saue the lady of this pell,
Our owne gentill lady Fame,
And hem that wilken to haue a name
Of vs," thus heard I crie all,
And fast comen out of the hall,
And stoke nobles and starlings,
And crowned were as kings,
With crownes wrought full of losinges,
And many ribans, and many fringes
Were on hir clothes trooly.

Tho at the last espied I
That porsenautes and heraudes,
That crie riche folkes laudes,
It weren, all and every man
Of hem, as I you tell can
Had on him throwe a vesture,
Which men clepe a coate armure,
Embrouded wonderly riche,
As though they were not yliche,
But nought will I, so mote I thriue,
Be about to discrine
All these armes that there weren,
That they thus on hir coates weren,
For to me were impossible,
Men might make of hem a bible,
Twenty foote thicke as I trowe,
For certain who so coude know,
Might there all the armes seon,
Of famous folke that had been
In Afrike, Europe, and Asia,
Sith first began cheualrie.

Lo, how should I now tell all this,
Ne of the hall eke what need is,
To telles you that every wall
Of it, and rose and flore with all,
Was plated halfe a foote thicke
Of golde, and that nas not wioke,
But for to proue in all wise,
As heo as docket in Uenise,
Of which to lite all in my pouche is,
And they were set as thicke of ouches
Faire, of the finest stones fayre,
That men reden in the lapidaire,
Or as grasses growen in a mede,
But it were all to long to rede
The names, and therefore I pace,
But in this lustie and riche place,
That Fames hall called was,
Full moche pices of folke there nas,
Re crooding, for to moche pices,
But all on hie aboute a dees,
Sette in a see imperiall,
That made was of rubie royall,
Which that a carbuncle is ycalled,
I saue perpetually stalled,
A feminine creature,
That neuer formed by nature
Was such another thing I saie:
For altherfirst, soth to saie,

Me thought that she was so lite,
That the length of a cubite,
Was longer than she seemed be,
But thus soone in a while she,
Her self the wonderly streight,
That with her feet she therthe reight,
And with her hedde she touched Heauen,
There as shyneth the sterres seuen,
And thereto yet, as to my wit,
I saw a great wonder yet,
Upon her iyen to behold,
But certainly I hem neuer told,
For as fele iyen had she,
As fathers vpon foules be,
Or weren on the beasts foure,
That Goddes trote can honour,
As writeth John in the Apocalips,
Her heer that was owndie and crips,
As burned gold it shone to ser.

And sothe to tellen also shee,
Had also fele vp standing eares,
And tonges, as on beest been heares,
And on her feete woxen saw I,
Partriche winges redily.

But Lord the perrie and the richeste,
I saw sitting on the goddesse,
And the heauely melodie,
Of songes full of armonie,
I heard about her trome yong,
That all the palais wall roog,
So song the mighty Muse she,
That cleped is Caliope,
And her senece wistome eke,
That in hir faces seemen meke,
And euermore eternally,
They song of Fame tho heard I,
"Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddes of renoun and of Fame."

Tho was I ware at the last,
As I mine iyen gan vp cast,
That this ilke noble queene,
On her shoulders gan sustene
Both the armes and the name
Of tho that had large fame,
Alisander, and Hercules,
That with a sherte his life did lese,
And thus found I sitting this goddesse,
In noble honour and richesse,
Of which I stinte a while now,
Other thing to tellen you.

Tho saw I stande on thother side,
Streight doune to the doores wide,
From the dees many a pillere
Of metall, that shone not full clere,
But though ther were of no richesse,
Yet were they made for great noblesse,
And in hem great sentence,
And folke of hie and digne reuerence,
Of which to tell will I fonde.

Upon a piller sawe I stonde,
Alderfirst there I sie,
Upon a piller stonde on hie,
That was of lede and of iron fine,
Him of the secte Saturnine,
The Ebraike Josephus the old,
That of Jewes gestes told,
And he bare on his shuldres hie,
The fame vp of the Jurie,
And by him stoden other seom,
Wise and worthy for to noosen,

To helpen him beare vp the charge,
It was so beavy and so large,
And for they writen of battayles,
As well as of other maruayles,
Therefore was lo, this pillere,
Of which I you tell here,
Of leade and iron both iwis,
For iron Martes metall is,
Which that god is of battayle,
And the leade withouten fayle,
Is lo, the metall of Saturne,
That hath full large whele to turne,
To stand forth on either rowe
Of hem, which I could knowe,
Though I by order hem not tell,
To make you to long to dwell.

These, of which I gan rede,
There saw I stand out of drede,
Upon an iron piller strong,
That painted was all endlong,
With tiges blood in euery place,
The Tholason that heigt Stace,
That bare of Thebes vp the name,
Upon his shoulders, and the fame
Also of cruell Achilles,
And by him stode withouten lees,
Full wonder he vpon a piller
Of iron, he the great Omer,
And with him stode Dares and Titus
Before, and eke he Lolluis,
And Guido eke the Colempnis,
And English Gaufride eke iwis,
And ech of these as I haue joy,
Was busie to beare vp Troy,
So hevy thereof was the fame,
That for to beare it was no game,
But yet I gan full well espie,
Betwene hem was a little enuie,
One said that Omer made lies,
Feynyn in his poetries,
And was to the Grækes favourable,
Therefore held he it but fahle.

The saw I stand on a pillere,
That was of tinned iron clere,
The Latine poete Virgile,
That hath bore vp a long while
The fame of pius Eneas.

And next him on a piller was,
Of copper, Venus clerke, Ouide,
That hath sown wondrous wide
The great god of looes fame,
And there he bare vp well his name,
Upon this piller also he,
As I might see it with mine eye:
For why this hall wherof I rede,
Was wone on heigt, length, and brede,
Well more by a thousand deale,
Than it was erst, that saw I weale.

Too saw I on a piller by,
Of iron wrought full sternely,
The great poet dan Louan,
That on his shoulders bare vp than,
As he is as that I might see,
The fame of Julius, and Pompee,
And by him stoden all these clerkes,
That write of Rome's mighty werkes,
That if I would hir names tell,
All to long must I dwell.

And next him on a piller stode,
Of sulphure, liche as he were wood,

Dan Claudian, sothe for to tell,
That bare vp all the fame of Hell,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpine,
That queene is of the derke pine,
What should I more tell of this,
The hall was all full iwis,
Of hem that writen old jastes,
As been on trees rokes nestes,
But it a full confouse mattere
Were all these jastes for to bere,
That they of write, and how they hight
But while that I beheld this sight,
I herde a noise approchen bliue,
That fareth as bees done in an hie,
Ayenset her time of out flyng,
Right soch a maner murmuring,
For all the world it seemed mee.

The gan I looke about and see,
That there come entring into the hall,
A right great company withall,
And that of sondry regions,
Of all kind of condicions,
That dwell in yearth vnder the Moone,
Poore and riche; and all so soone
As they were come into the hall,
They gan on knees doune to fall,
Before this ilke noble queene,
"And said, Graunt vs lady shooe,
Eche of vs of thy grace a bone,"
And some of hem she graunted soone,
And some she warned well and faire,
And some she graunted the contraire
Of hir asking vterly:

But this I say you truly,
What her grace was, I mist,
For of these fulke full well I wist,
They had good fame eche deserued,
Although they were diuersly serued,
Right as her sister dame Fortune
Is wont to serue in commune.

Now herken how she gan to pay
Hem that gan her of grace pray,
And yet lo, all this companie
Saiden soth, and not a lie.

"Madame," said they, "we ben
Folke that here beseechen thee,
That thou graunt vs now good fame,
And let our werkes haue good name,
In full recompensacioun
Of good worke, giue vs good renom."

"I warne it you" (quod she) "anon,
Ye get of me good fame none,
By God, and therefore go your way."

"Alas" (quod they) "and welaway,
Tell vs what your cause may be."

"For me list it not" (quod she)
"No wight shall speake of you iwis,
Good ne harme, ne that ne this.

And with that word she gan to call
Her messenger that was in hall,
And had that he should faste gose,
Upon paine to be blind anon,
For Eolus the god of winde,
In Trace there ye shall him finde,
And bid him bring his clarion,
That is full diuers of his soun,
And it is cleped cleare laude,
With which he wont is to herande
Hem that me list ypraised be:
And also bid him how that bee

Bring eke his other clarions,
That heigt schlauder in euery toon,
With which he woot is to diffame
Hem that me list, and doe hem shame.

This messenger gan fast to gone,
And found where in a caue of stone,
In a countree that heigt Trace,
This Eolus with hardie grace,
Helde the winde in distresse,
And gan hem vnder him to presse,
That they gooe as the bees rone,
He bound and prested hem so sore.

This messenger gan fast crie,
" Rise vp" (quod he) " and fast thee hie,
Till thou at my lady bee,
And take thy clarions eke with thee,
And speed thee fast:" and he anone,
Tooke to one that hight Tritone,
His clarions to bearen the,
And let a certaine winde go,
That blew so hidously and hie,
That it no left not a skie
In all the welken long and brode.

This Eolus no where abode,
Till he was come to Fames foete,
And eke the man that Triton heete,
And there he stode as still as stone,
And herewithal! there came anone
Another huge companie
Of good folke and gan to crie,

" Lady graunt vs now good fame
And let our workes haue that name,
Now in honour of gentillnesse,
And also God your soule blame,
For we han well deserved it,
Therefore is right that we be quit."

" As thirue I" (quod she) " ye shall fayte,

Good workes shall you not awaite,
To haue of me good fame as now,
But wote ye what, I graunt you,
That ye shall haue a shrowd name,
And wicket loos and worse fame,
Though ye good loos haue well deserued,
Now goeth your way for you been serued:
And thou dan Eolus" (quod she)
" Take forth thy trumpe anone let see,
That is ycleped schlauder light,
And blow hir loos, that euery wight
Speake of hem harme and shreadnesse,
In wode of good and worthinesse,
For thou shalt trumpe all the contrarie,
Of that they haue done well and faire."

Alas thought I, what auentures
Haue these sory creatures,
That they among all the pres,
Should thus be shamed gittles?
But what, it must needs be.
What did this Eolus, but he
Tooke out his blacke trumpe of brais,
That fouler than the Deuill was,
And gan this troupe for to blow,
As all the world should overthrow,
Throughout euery region,
West this foule trumpe soom,
As writte as a pillet out of a goone,
When fire is in the powder ronne,
And such a smoke gan out wende,
Out of the foule trumpe ende,
Blacke, blue, greunische, swartish, rede,
As doth where that men molte lode,

Lo, all on hie from the towell,
And thereto one thing saw I well,
That the further that it ranne,
The greater wexen it beganne,
As doth the riuier from a well,
And it stanke as the pitte of Hell,
Alas, thus was hir shame yroug,
And gittlesome on euery tong.

Tho came the third companie,
And gone vp to the dees to hie,
And doone on knees they fell anone,
And saiden, " We been euerichome
Folke that han full truly
Deserued fame rightfully,
And prayed you it might be know,
Right as it is and forth blow."

" I graunt" (quod she) " for now me list
That your good workes shall be wist,
And yet ye shall haue better loos,
Right in despite of all your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anone:
Let now" (quod she) " thy trumpe gooe,
Thou Eolus that is so blacke,
And out thine other trumpe take
That hight laude, and blow it so
That through the world hir fame go,
All easely and not too fast,
That it be knowen at the last."

" Full gladly lady mine" he saied,
And out his trumpe of gold he braied
Anone, and set it to his mouth,
And blew it east, west, and south,
And north, as loude as any thounder,
That euery wight hath of it wouder,
So brode it ran or that it stant,
And certis all the breath that went
Out of his trumpe's mouth smelde,
As men a potte full of baume helde
Among a basket full of roses,
This fauour did be to hir loos.

And right with this I gan espie,
There came the fourth companie,
But certaine they were wouder fewe,
And gonnes to standen on a rewte,
And saiden, " Certis lady bright,
We haue done well with all our might,
But we no keepe to haue fame,
Hide our workes and our name,
For Goddes loue, for certis wee
Haue surely done it for bountee,
And for no manner other thing."

" I graunt you all your asking,"
(Quod she) " let your workes be dedde,"

With that about I tourued my hedde,
And sawe anone the fifth rout
That to this lady gan lout,
And doone on knees anone to fall,
And to her tho besoughten all,
To hidden hir good workes eke,
And said, they yeeue not a loka,
For no fame, ne soch renoue,
For they for contemptuous,
And Goddes loue had it wrought,
Ne of fame woude they nougt.

" What" (quod she) " and be ye wode,
And wene ye for to do good,
And for to haue of that no fame,
Haue ye despite to haue my name,
May ye shall lien euerichome:
Blowe thy trumpe and that anone."

(Good she) "thou Eolus I hate,
And ring these folkes wortes by note,
That all the world may of it heare:
And he gan blowe hir loos so cleare,
In his golden clarion,
Through the world went the soun,
Also kindly and eke so soft,
That their fame was blowe swift.

Tho came the sixt companie,
And gan fast to Fame crie,
Right verely in this manere,
They saiden, "Merry lady dere,
To tell certain as it is,
We haue done neither that ne this,
But idell all our life hath be,
But nauelense yet pray we,
That we may haue as good a fame,
And great renome and knowne name,
As they that haue do noble jastes,
And acheued all hir questes,
As well of loue as other thing,
All was vs neuer broche ne ring,
Ne els what fro women sent,
Ne ones in hir herte yment,
To maken vs openly chere,
But mought temen vs on here,
Yet let us to the people seeme
Soch as the world may of vs deeme,
That women louen vs for wood,
It shall do us as moch good,
And to our herte as moch sauile,
The counterpeise, ease, and traunails,
As we had won with labour,
For that is dere bought honour,
At regard of our great ease:
And yet ye must us more please,
Let us be hold eke therto,
Worthy, wise, and good also,
And rich, and happy vnto loue.
For Goddes loue that sitteth aboue,
Though we may not the body haue
Of women, yet so God me saue,
Let men glewe on vs the name,
Suffiaeth that we haue the fame."

"I graunt" (quod she) "by my trouth,
Now Eolus withouten slouth,"
Take out thy trumpe of gold" (quod she)
"And blowe as they haue asked me,
That every man wene hem at ease,
Though they go in full badde lease,"
This Eolus gan it so blowe,
That through the world it was iknow.

Tho came the seuenth route anone,
And fill on knees euerichone,
And sayed, "Lady graunt vs soome,
The same thing, the same boone,
That this nexte folke haue done."

"Fie on you" (quod she) "euerichone,
Ye nastie swine, ye idle wretches,
Full of rotten slow tetches,
What false theceus where ye wold,
Been famed good, and nothing noid
Deserue why, ne neuer thought,
Mea rather you to haugen ought,
For ye be like the slepis cat,
That wold haue fish: but wost thou what?
He wold cothing weate his clawes,
Euil thritte come to your iawes,
And on myne, if I it graunt,
Or do fauour you to assent.

"Than Eolus, thou kyng of Thrace,
Go blowe this folke a sorie grace,"
Quod she, "anone, and wost thou how,
As I shall tell thee right now,
Say these ben they that wold honour
Haue, and do no kins labour,
Ne do no good, and yet haue laude,
And that men wende that belle I saude,
Ne coude hem not of loue werme,
And yet she that grinat at querne,
Is all too good to case hir herte."

This Eolus anone vp sterte,
And with his blacke clarion
He gan to blasen out a soun,
As loude as bellethe winde in Hell,
And eke therewith sothe to tell,
This sowne was so full of iapes,
As ever mowes were in apes,
And that went all the world about,
That every wight gan on hem shout,
And for to laugh as they were wood,
Soch game found they in hir hood.

Tho came another company,
That had ydone the trechery,
The harme and great wickednesse,
That any herte coulden gesse,
And prayed her to haue good fame,
And that she nolde do hem no shame,
But gine hem loos and good renoun,
And do it blowe in clarion.

"Nay wis," quod she, "it were a vice,
Al be there in me no iustice,
Me list not to do it now,
Ne this I will graunt it you."

Tho came there leaping in a rout,
And gan clappen all about,
Every man vpon the crowe
That all the hall gan to sowne,
And said, "Lady left and dere,
We ben soch folkes as ye may here,
To tell all the tale aright,
We ben shrewes every wight,
And haue delite in wickednesse,
As good folke haue in goodnesse,
And ioy to been knowen shrewes,
And full vice and wicked thewes,
Wherefore we pray you on a rowe,
That our fame be soch yknow,
In all things right as it is.

"I graunt it you," quod she, "ywis,
But what art thou that saiest this tale,
That wearest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tippet soch a bell?"

"Madame," quod he, "sothe to tell,
I am that ike shrew iwis
That brent the temple of Isidis
In Athens, to that citee."

"And wherefore diddest thou so," quod she?
"By my trouth," quod he, "madame,
I wolde faine haue had a name,
As other folke had in the towne,
Although they were of great renoune
For hir vertue and hir thewes,
Thought I, as great fame haue shrewes:
(Though it be nought) for shrewednesse,
As good folke haue for goodnesse,
And sithen I may not haue that one,
That other nyll I not forgoe,
As for to get a fame here,
The temple set I all on fire.

"Now done our loos be blowe swithe,
As wisely be thou ever blithe."
"Gladly," quod she, "thou Bolus,
Hereat thou not what they prayen vs,"
"Madame yes, full well," quod he,
"And I will trumpete it parde:"
And tooke his blacke trumpe fast,
And gan to puffen and to blast,
Till it was at the worldis end.

With that I gan about wend,
For one that stode right at my hacke,
Me thought full goodly to me spake,
And said, "Frende what is thy name?
Arte thou come hider to haue fame?"
"Nay forsothe frende," quod I,
"I come not hither, graunt mercy,
For no such cause by my heed,
Suffiseth me as I were deed,
That no wight haue my name in honde
I wot my selfe best how I stonde,
For what I drie or what I thinke,
I wull my wife all it drinke,
Certaine for the more part,
As ferforth as I can mine art."

"What dost thou here than" (quod he):
(Quod I) "that wull I tell thee,
The cause why I stand here,
Some new tidings for to here,
Some new thing, I not what,
Tidings eyther this or that,
Of loue, or such things glade,
For certainly be that me made
To come hyder, said to mee
I sholde bothe heare and see,
In this place wonder tidings;
But these be no such tidings
As I meant of:"—"No" (quod he)
And I answerde "No parde,
For well I wote euer yet,
Sith that first I had wit,
That some folke han desired fame,
Diuersly, and loos and name,
But certainly I nist how,
Ne where that fame dwelled or now,
Ne eke of her description,
Ne also her condicion,
Ne the order of her dome,
Knew I not till I hider come."

"Why than be lo these tidings,
That thou now hether bringis,
That thou hast herde" (quod he to mee)
"But now no force for well I see
What thou desirest for to here,
Come forth and stande no leuger here,
And I wull thee without drede,
Into such another place lede,
There thou shalt here many one."

The gan I forth with him gone,
Out of the castell sothe to sey.

The sawe I stand in a valey,
Under the castell fast by,
An house, that domes Dedali,
That Laborintus ycleped is,
Nas made so wonderly wys,
Ne halfe so queintly ywrought,
And evermo, as swift as thought,
This queint house about went,
That neuermo it still stont,
And there came out so great a noyse,
That bad it stonde upon Oyse,

Men might haue heard it easily
To Rome, I trowe sikerly,
And the noyse which that I herde,
For all the world right so it ferde,
As doth the routing of the stone,
That fro tregin is letyn gone,
And all this house of which I rede,
Was made of twiggis, sawow, rede,
And green eke, and some were white,
Such as men to the cages twithe,
Or maken of these panera.
Or eis hutches or doffers,
That for the swough and for the twiggis,
This house was also full of gigges,
And also full eke of chirkinges,
And of many other workings,
And eke this house hath of entrees
As many as luses ben on trees,
In summer when they been greene,
And on the rose yet men may see
A thousand holes, and wel mo,
To letten the sawne out go,
And by day in euery tide
Beene all the dores open wide,
And by night ceche one unshet,
Ne porter is there none to let
No maner tidings in to pace,
Ne neuer rest is in that place,
That it nis filled full of tidings,
Eyther loude or of whisperingis,
And euer all the houses angled,
Is ful of rownings and of iangles,
Of werres, of pease, of marriages,
Of restes, and of labour, of viages,
Of abode, of death, and of lyfe,
Of loue, of hate, accord, of strife,
Of loue, of lore, and of winnys,
Of heale, of sicknesse, or of leysingis,
Of faire weither, and eke of tempestis,
Of qualme, of folke, and of beesta,
Of diuers transmutacionis,
Of estates and eke of regions,
Of trust, of drede, of ialousie,
Of witte, of winning, of folie,
Of plenty, and of great famine,
Of chepe, derth, and of ruine,
Of good or misgouernment,
Of fire, and of diuers accident.

And lo, this house of which I write,
Syker be ye it nas not lite,
For it was sixtis myle of length,
Al was the timber of no strength,
Yet it is founded to endure,
While that it list to asenture,
That is the mother of tidings,
As the sea of welles and springis,
And it was shaped lyke a cage.

"Certis" (quod I) "in all mine age,
Ne saw I such an house as this,"
And as I wondred me wys,
Upon this house tho ware was I,
How mine egle fast by,
Was perched his upon a stone,
And I gan straight to him gone,
And said thus, "I pray thee
That thou a while abide mee
For goddes loue, and let me seees
What wonders in that place beas,
For yet paraunter I may lere
Some good therin, or somewhat here,

That lefe me were, or that I went."

"Peter that is now mine entent,"

(Quod he to me) "therefore I dwell,

But certaine ooe thing I thee tell,

That but I bryng thee therein,

Ne shall thou neuer coune the gin,

To come into it out of doubt,

So faste it whirleth lo about,

But sith that Ioues of his grace,

As I haue said will the solace,

Finally with these things

Uncouth sighes and tidings,

To passe with thine entente,

Soch routh hath he of thy distresse,

That thou suffrestest debonairely,

And woste they seluen utterly,

Desperate of all bisse.

Sith that fortune hath made a misse,

The swete of all thine hertes rest,

Languish and eke in poynt to brest,

But he through his mighty melite,

Wil do thee ease, al be it lite,

And gauis in expresse commaundment,

To which I am obedient,

To forther thee with all my might,

And wish and teach thee aright,

Where thou maist most tidings here,

Thou shalt here many ooe here."

With this word he right soone,

Hent me up bytwene his tone,

And at a window in me brought,

That in this house was at me thought,

And therewithall me thought it stent,

And nothing it about went,

And me set in the floore adoun

But such a great congregacioun

Of folke as I sawe rume about,

Some within and some without,

Nas neuer seene, ne shall be efte

That certes in this world nis left,

So many formed by nature,

Ne need so many a creature,

That wel vneth in that place

Had I a foote brede of space,

And euery wight that I sawe there,

Rowned euerich in others eere,

A new tiding priuely,

Or els he told it all openly

Right thus, and said: "Nost nat thou

That is betidde, lo right now."

"Not" (quod he) "tell me what,"

And than he told him this and that,

And swore thereto that it was soth,

Thus hath he said, and thus he doth,

And this shal be, and thus herde I say,

That shal be found that dare I lay:

That all the folke that is on liue,

Ne haue the couning to discriue,

The things that I herde there,

What a loude, and what in bere,

But all the wonder most was this,

Whan one had herd a thing ywis,

He came streight to another wight

Ase gan him tellen anon right,

The same that him was told

Or it a forloug way was old,

And gan somewhat for to eche

To this tiding in his speche,

More than euer it spoken was,

And nat so some departed nas

Tho fro him that he ne mette
With the third, and erbe lette
Any stound he told hym else,
Where the tidings sothe or false,
Yet wold he tell it natheles,
And euermore with mo ecrees,
Than it was erst: thus north and south,
Went euery tiding fro mouth to mouth,
And that encreasing euermore,
As fire is wout to quicken and go
From a sparcle sproongen amis,
Till a citee brent vp is.

And whan that was full vp sprong,

And waxen more on euery longe

Than euer it was, and went anon

Up to a window out to gose,

Or but it might out there passe,

It gan out crepe at some creuasse,

And flew forth fast for the noose.

And sometime I saw there at ones,

A leasing and a saddle sothe sawe,

That gonnen of aventure drawe,

Out at a window for to pace,

And whan they metten in that place,

They were achecked both two,

And neyther of them might out go,

For ech other they gonne so croude

Till ech of hem gan crie loude,

"Let me gose first,"—"nay but let me,

And here I wold ensuren thee.

With vowe that thou wold do an,

That I shall neuer fro thee go,

But be thine owne swome brother,

We wold meddie vs eche in other,

That no man be he neuer so wrothe,

Shall haue one two, but bothe

At ones, as beside his leue,

Come we a morrowe or on eue,

But we cryde or still yrownd:"

Thus saw I saise and soth compouned,

Togider fle for o tiding.

Thus out at holes gonne wring,

Euery tidying streight to Fame,

And she gan yeue eche his name,

After her disposicion,

And yeue hem eke duracioun.

Some to wene and wene soone,

As doth the faire white Moone,

And let hem gonse, there might I seen

Winged wonders fast flien,

Twenty thousand in a route,

As Bolus hem blewe aboute,

And lord this house in all times

Was full of shipmen and pilgrimes,

With scrippes brette full of leasings,

Entermelled with tidings,

And eke alone by hemselue.

O many thousand times twelue

Saw I ake of these pardoners,

Currouns, and eke messaugers,

With boxes crowned full of lies

As euer vessoll was with lies.

And as I alther fastest went

About, and did all mine entent,

Me for to playen and for to lere,

And eke a tidying for to here,

That I had herde of some countree

That shall not now be told for me,

For it no need is redely

Folke can sing it bet than I.

For al mote out into or rather,
All the sheues in the fath.

I herde a great noyse withall
In a corner of the hall,
There men of loue tidings told
And I gan thitherward behold,
For I saw renning euery wight,
As fast as that they haddn might,
And everich cride "What thing is that,"
And some said "I not nener what,"
And when they were all on a hepe,
Tho behind gone up lepe,
And clamben up on other faste
And up the noyse on highen caste,
And treden fast on others heles
And stampe as men dose after eles.

At the last I saw a man,
Which that I nought ne can,
But he seemed for to be
A man of great auctorite.
And therewithall I abraide
Out of my slepe halfe afraid,
Remembring well what I had sene
And how he and ferre I had bene
In my goost, and had great wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Had let me knowen, and began to write
Like as ye have herd me endite,
Wherefore to stady and rede alway,
I purpose to do day by day.

Thus in dreaming and in game,
Endeth this litell booke of Fame.

HERE ENDETH THE BOOKS OF FAMES.

THE

COMPLAINT OF MARS AND VENUS.

GLADTH ye louers in the morowe graie,
Lo VENUS risen among yow rows rede,
And scoures freshe honour ye this daie,
For when the Sun vprist than wold they sprede,
But ye louers that lie in any drede,
Flieth least wicked tongues you aspie,
Lo yonde the Sun, the candell of jelousie.

With tears blew, and with a wounded herte
Taketh your leue, and with salet John to borow
Aposeth somewhat of your paines smert,
Time cometh eft, that cessen shall your sorrow,
The glad night is worth an beaury morow,
Saint Valentin, a foule thus heard I sing,
Upon thy day, or Sun gan vp spring.

Yet sang this foule, "I rede you all swake,
And ye that haue not chosn in humble wise,
Without repeating cheseth your make,
Yet at the least, renoucleth your seruaice:
And ye that haue full chosn as I deuaice,
Confermeth it perpetually to dura,
And paciently taketh your aventure."

And for the worship of this high feast,
Yet wold I my brides wise sing,
The sentence of the complaint at the least,
That wofull Mars made at the departing
Fro fresh Venus in a morowning,
When Phebus with his fire torches rede,
Rasmaketh bath euery louner in his drede.

Whilome the three Heauens lorde above,
As well by heauenlich reuolucioe,
As by desert hath wonne Venus his loue,
And she hath take him in subiection,
And as a maistresse taught him his lesson,
Commanding him neuer in her seruaice,
He were so bold no louner to dispise.

For she forbade him icalousie at all,
And cruelty, and houte, and tyranny,
She made him at her lust so humble and tall,
That when she daimed to cast on him her eye,
He tooke in patience to liue or die,
And thus she bridleteth him in her maner,
With nothing, but with scouring of her chere.

Who reigneth now in blisse but Venus,
That hath this worthy knight in gouernance
Who singeth now but Mars that serueth thus,
The faire Venus, causeur of plessaunce,
He hint him to perpetuel obeyaunce,
And she binte her to loue him for euer,
But so be that his trespace it discouer.

Thus be they kind, and reiguen as in Heuen,
By loking most, as it fell on a tide,
That by her both assent was set a steuen,
That Mars shall enter as fast as he may glide,
In to her next painis to abide,
Walking his course till she had him ytake,
And he prayed her to hast her for his sake.

Than said he thus, "Mine hertes lady sweete,
Ye know well my mischief is that place,
For sikerly till that I with you meete,
My life stante there in auenture and grace,
But when I see the beaute of your face,
There is no drede of death may do me smart,
For all your luste is ease to mine herte."

She hath so great compassion of her knight,
That dwelleth in solitude till she come,
For it stode so, that ilke time no wight,
Counsailed him, ne said to him welcome,
That nigh her wit for sorow was ouercome
Wherefore she speeded as fast in her way,
Almost in one day as he did in tway.

The great ioy that was betwix hem two,
When they be mette, there may no tong tel,
There is no more but unto bedde they go,
And thus in ioy and blisse I let hem dwell,
This worthy Mars that is of knightdowd well,
The soure of fairnesse happeth in his arms,
And Venus kineth Mars the god of arms.

Soiourned hath this Mars of which I rede
In chambre amide the palais priuely,
A certaine time, till him fell a drede,
Through Phebus that was comen hastely,
Within the palais yates sturdely,
With toroh in bond, of which the stremes bright
On Venus chambre, knockeden ful light.

The chambre there as lay this fresh quene,
Depeinted was with white boles grete,
And by the light she knew that ebon so shene,
That Phebus cam to bren hem with his hete
This silly Venus ny dremit in teares wete,
Embraceth Mars, and said "Alas I die,
The torch is come, that al this world wol write."

Up sterre Mars, him list not to sleepe,
Whan he his lady herde so complaine,
But for his nature was not for to wepe,
Instede of teares from his eyen twayne,
The firy sparkles spongen out for paine,
And hente his hauberke that lay him beside,
Fie wold he sought, ne might himself hide.

He throweth on his helme of huge weight,
And girt him with his swerde, and in his hounde
His mighty speare, as he was wont to feight,
He shoketh so, that it almost to woude,
Full hevy was he to walken ower londe,
He may not hold with Venus company,
But bad her fle least Phebus her spy.

O woful Mars alas, what maist thou sein
That in the palais of thy disturbaunce,
Art left behind in peril to be slain,
And yet there to is double thy penaunce,
For she that hath thine herte in gouernance,
Is passed halfe the streames of thine eyen,
That thou nere swift, wel maist thou wepe and crien.

Now sieth Venus in to Ciclious toor,
With void corse, for fear of Phebus light,
Alas and there hath she no socour,
For she no found no sey no maner wight,
And eke as there she had but litel might,
Wherefore her selvon for to hide and saue,
Within the gate she fledde in to a caue.

Darke was this caue, and smoking as the bell
Nat but two pass within the yate it stood,
A naturel day in darke I let her dwell,
Now wol I speake of Mars furious and wood,
For sorow he wold hane seene his herte blood,
Sith that he might hane done her no company,
He ne rougt not a mite for to die.

So feble he went for hete and for his wo,
That nigh he swelt, he might vnieth endure
He pameth but a sterre in daies two,
But neuertholes, for al his hery armure,
He foloweth her that is his liues cure,
For whos departing he tooke greater yre,
Than for his breeming in the fire.

After he walketh softly a pass,
Complaynyng that it pitie was to here,
He saide, "O lady bright Venus alas,
That euer so wide a compass is my sphere,
Alas, whan shall I mete you herte dere,
This twelve dayes of April I endure,
Through ielous Phebus this misaventure."

Now God helpe sely Venus alone,
But as God wold it happed for to be,
That while the weping Venus made her moue
Ciclious riding in his chynanche,
Pro Venus Ulianus might this palais see,
And Venus he salueth, and maketh ohere,
And her receiueh as his frende full chere.

Mars dwelleth forth in his admerite,
Complaynyng euer in her departing,
And what his complaint was remembreth me,
And therefore in this lusty mornynge,
As I best can, I wol it mise and sing,
And after that I wold my leave take,
And God yene every wight loy of his make.

THE COMPLAINT OF MARS.

THE order of complaint requirith skillfully,
That if a wight shal plain pitously,
There mote be cause wherefore that men plain,
Or men may deme be plaineth folly,
And cancele, alas that am not I,
Wherefore the ground and cause of al my pain,
So as my troubled witte may it attain,
I wol reherse, not for to haue redresse,
But to declare my ground of heuinesse.

The first time also that I was wrought,
And for certain effects hidre brought,
By him that lurded each intelligence,
I yans my tref seruice and my thought,
For everus, how dere I haue it bought,
To her that is of so great excellence,
That what wight that sheweth first her offence,
Whan she is wroth and taketh of him no care,
He may not long in joy of love endure.

This is no faimed mater that I tell,
My lady is the very sours and well
Of beaute, luste, fredome, and gentilnesse,
Of rich array, how dere men it sell,
Of al disport in which men frendly dwell,
Of loue and play, and of benigne humblesse,
Of sowne of instruments of al sweetnesse,
And thereto so well fortuned and thewed,
That through the world her goodnes is shewed.

What wonder is than though that I be set
My seruice on such one that may me knit
To weld or wo, sith it lithe in her might,
Therefore myas herte for euer I to her botte,
Ne trefwly for my death shall I not lette,
To ben her trefwest seruaunt and her knight,
I flatter nat, that may wete every wight,
For this day in her seruice shall I dye,
But grace be, I see her nouer with eye.

To whom shall I plaine of my distresse,
Who may me help, who may my herte redresse?
Shall I complaine unto my lady free,
Nay certes, for she hath such heuinesse,
For feare and eke for wo, that as I gease,
In littel time it wold her bane bee,
But were she safe, it were no force of mee,
Alas that euer louers mote endure,
For lose so many perikous aventure.

For though so be that louers be as trewe,
As any metal that is forged now,
In many a case hem tideth of sorowe,
Somtime hir ladies wold nat on hem rowe.
Somtime if that ielousie it knowe,
They might lightly lay hir heed to borow,
Somtime enuious folke with tonge horow,
Depraunen hem alas, whom may they please,
But he befales, no louer hath his ease.

But what availleth such a long sermonun,
Of aventures of loue vp and down,
I wol retorne and speake of my paine,
The point is this of my distraction,
My right lady, my saluacion,
Is in affray, and not to whom to plaine,
O herte sweete, O lady soueraine,
For your disease I ought wel soun and weht,
Though I none other harme ne drede felt.

To what fine made the God that sit so he,
 Beneath him lone other companie,
 And straineth folke to lone manger hir heed,
 And than hir joy for aught I can espie,
 Ne lasteth not the twinkling of an eye,
 And some have neuer joy till they be deed,
 What meaneth this, what is this mistibeed,
 Wherto copstraineth he his folke so fast,
 Thing to desire but it should last.

And though he made a lover lone a thing,
 And maketh it seem steadfast and during,
 Yet putteth he in it such misaventure,
 That rest nis there in his yeuing,
 And that he wonder that so just a king,
 Doth such hardnesse to his creature,
 Thus whether love breake or els dure,
 Alghates he that bath with love to dure,
 Hath after wo, than changed is the Moore.

It seemeth he hath to lovers enmited,
 And like a fisher, as men may all day se,
 Baited his angle boke with some pleasure,
 Till many a fish is wood till that he be
 Ceased therwith, and then at erst hath he
 All his desire, and therwith all mischaunce,
 And though the line breke he hath penance,
 For with that boke he wounded is so sore,
 That he his wages hath for evermore.

The broche of Thebes was of such kinde,
 So full of rubies and of stones of Inde,
 That every wight that set on it an eye,
 He wende amone to worth out of his mind,
 So sore the beaute wold his herte bind,
 Till he it had, him thought he must die,
 And when that it was his than should he dry,
 Soch wo for drede, aye while that he it had,
 That woldigh for the feare he should mad.

And when it was fro his possession,
 Then had he double wo and passion,
 That he so faire a jewell hath forgo,
 But yet this broche, as in conclusion,
 Was not the cause of his confusion,
 But he that wrought it enfortuned it so,
 That every wight that had it shold have wo,
 And therefore in the worcher was the vice,
 And in the couetour that was so nice.

So fareth it by lovers, and by me,
 For though my lady have so great beaute,
 That I was mad till I had gette her grace,
 She was not cause of mine aduertite,
 But he that wrought her, as mote I thee,
 That put such a beaute in her face,
 That made me couetous and purchase
 Mine owne death, him wite I, that I die,
 And mine wauit that over I clambe so he,

But to you hardy knights of renowne,
 Sith that ye be of my deuitowne,
 Albe I not worthy to so great a name,
 Yet mine these clerkes I am your patrone,
 Therefore ye ought have some compassion
 Of my disease, and take it nat a game,
 The proudest of you may be made ful tame,
 Wherefore I pray you of your gentillesse,
 That ye complaine for mine heauinesse.

And ye my ladies that be true and stable,
 By way of kind ye ought to be able,
 To haue pite of folke that been in paine,
 Now haue ye cause to cloth you in sable,
 Sith that your empres the honorable,
 Is desolate, wei ought you to plaine,
 Now should your holy teares fall and raine,
 Alas your honour and your emprice,
 Nigh deed for drede, ne can her not cheuice.

Complaineth eke ye lovers all in fere,
 For her that with unfained humble chere,
 Was ever redy to do you occur,
 Complaineth her that ever hath be you dere,
 Complaineth beaute, freedome, and manere,
 Complaineth her that endeth your labour,
 Complaineth thilke ensample of al honour,
 That neuer did but gentillesse,
 Kytheth therefore in her some kindnesse.

THE COMPLAINT OF VENUS.

There nis so high comfort to my pleasure,
 When that I am in any heauinesse,
 As to haue layser of remembrance,
 Upon the manhood and the worthinesse,
 Upon the trouth, and on the steadfastnesse,
 Of him whose I am at while I may dure,
 There ought to blame me no creature,
 For every wight praiseth his gentillesse.

In him is bountie, wisdom, and governaunce,
 Wel more than any mans witte can geue,
 For grace bath wolde so ferforth him auance,
 That of knight hood he his parfitte richesse,
 Honour honoureth him for his noblesse,
 Thereto so well hath fourmed him nature,
 That I am his for ever I him ensure,
 For every wight praiseth his gentillesse.

And nat withstanding all his suffiaunce,
 His genti herte is of so great humblesse,
 To me in word, in werke, and in countenance,
 And me to serue is all his businesse,
 That I am sette in very sikernesse,
 Thus ought I blisse well mine auentour,
 Sith that him list me seruen and honour,
 For every wight praiseth his gentillesse.

Now certes, Lone, it is right countenable
 That men ful dere able thy noble thinge,
 As wake a bedde, and fasten at the table,
 Weeping to laugh and sing in complaininge,
 And downe to cast visage and lookinge,
 Often to change visage and countenance,
 Play in sleeping, and dremen at the daunce,
 All the reuers of any glad feelinge.

Jelousie he hanged by a cable,
 She wold al know through her spyng,
 There doth no wight nothing so reasonable,
 That al nis harme in her imaginig,
 Thus dere about is Lone in yeuing,
 Which oft he yeueth without ordinaunce,
 As sorow yough, and little of pleasure,
 All the reuers of any glad feelinge.

A little time his yefte is greable,
But full accombrous is the vsing,
For subtil ielousie the deceivable,
Full often time causeth disturbing.
Thus ben we euer in drede and suffring,
In no certaine, we languishen in penaunce,
And haue well oft many an hard miachance,
All the reuers of any glad feling.

But certes, Loue, I say not in soch wise,
That for to scape out of your laces I ment,
For I so long haue been in your seruaice,
That for to lete of will I neuer assent,
No force though ielousie me tourment,
Suffiseth me to see him when I may,
And therefore certes to my ending day,
To loue him best, shall me neuer repent.

And certes, Loue, when I me well aduise,
Of any estate that man may represent,
Than haue ye made me through your franchise
Thefe the best that euer in earth went,
Now loue well herte, and look thou neuer stent,
And lette the ielous put it in assay,
That for no paine wold I not say nay,
To loue him best, shall I neuer repent.

Herte to thee it ought yough suffice,
That Loue so high a grace to you sent,
To chose the worthies in all wise,
And must agreable vnto mine entent,
Seek no farther, neither way ne went,
Nith ye haue suffisaunce vnto my pay,
Thus wol I end this complaining or this hay,
To loue him best shall I neuer repent.

LEPROF.

Princes receiue this complaining in grece,
Unto your excellent benignite,
Direct after my fitel suffisaunce,
For elde, that in my spirite dulleth mee,
Hath of enditing all the subtelte
Welaign befaite out of my remembrance:
And eke to me it is a great penaunce,
Sith rime in English hath such soarcite,
To folow word by word the curiosite
Of Graunsofour, of hem that make in Franca.

EXPLICIT.

OF THE
CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

Chaucer dreameth that he heareth the cuckow
and the nightingale contend for excellency in
singing.

The god of love and benedicite,
How mighty and how great a lord is he,
For he can make of low hertes by,
And of high low, and like for to dy,
And hard hertes he can maken free.

He can make within a little stound
Of sicke folke hole, fresh, and sound,
And of hole he can make seek, eke
He can bind and vnbinden eke
That be well here bounden or vnbound.

To tell his might my wit may not suffice,
For he can make of wise folke full nice,
For he may do all that he wold devise,
And lithy folke to destroyen vice,
And proud hertes he can make agrise.

Shortly all that ever he wold he say,
Against him dare no wight say nay,
For he can glad and greve whom him liketh,
And who that he wold, he longbeth or siketh,
And most his might he shodeth ever in May.

For every true gentle herte free,
That with him is or thinketh for to be,
Against May now shall haue some stering,
Or to joy or eis to souse mourning,
In no season so much, as thinketh me.

For when they may here the birds sing,
And see the floures and the leaves spring,
That bringeth into hir remembrance
A manner case, medled with grevaunce,
And ielousie thoughts full of great longing.

And of that longing cometh heuynesse,
And thereof groweth of great sicknesse,
And for lacke of that that they desire,
And thus in May ben hertes set on fire,
So that they brennen furth in great distresse.

I speake this of feeling truly,
If I be old and volusty,
Yet I haue felt of the sicknesse through May
Both hote and cold, and aze every day,
How sore ywis there wote no wight but I.

I am so shaken with the fevers white,
Of all this May sleepe I but a lite,
And also it is not like to me,
That any herte should sleepe be,
In whom that Loue his fry dart wold smite.

But as I say this other night waking,
I thought how lovers had a tokening,
And among hem it was a custumous tale,
That it were good to here the nightingale,
Rather than the leud cuckow sing.

And than I thought anon as it was day,
I would go some where to assay
If that I might a sightingale here,
For yet had I none heard of all that yere,
And it was tho the third night of May.

And anon as I the day aspid,
No lenger would I in my bed abide,
But vnto a wood that was fast by,
I went forth alone boldly,
And held the way downe by a brooke side.

Till I came to a foun of white and green,
So faire one had I neuer in been,
The ground was green, ypoundred with daisie,
The floures and the greces like hy,
All greene and white, was nothing els seeme.

There sat I downe among the faire floure,
And saw the birds trip out of hir bours,
There as they rested hem all the night,
They were so joyfull of the dayes light,
They began of May for to done honour.

They coud that seruaice all by rote,
There was many a lonely note,
Some sang loud as they had plained,
And some in other manner voice yfained,
And some all out with the full throte.

They proued hem, and made hem right gay,
And daunceden and lepton on the spray,
And coermore two and two in fere,
Right so as they had chosen hem to yere
La Fenereere vpon saint Valentines day.

And the riner that I saue vpon,
It made such a noise as it row,
Accordant with the birds armony,
Me thought it was the best melody
That might ben yheard of any mon.

And for delite, I wote neuer how
I fell in such a slomber and a trow,
Nst all asloope, ne fully waking,
And in that swow me thought I heard sing
The sorry bird the leand cuckow.

And that was on a tree right fast by,
But who was than euill aspid but I:
"Now God" (quod I) "that died on the crois
Yeue sorrow on thee, and on thy leand vois,
Fall little joy haue I now of thy cry."

And as I with the cuckow thus gan chide,
I heard in the next bush beside
A nightingale so lustely sing,
That with her clere voice she made ring
Through all the greene wood wide.

"Ah, good nightingale" (quod I than)
"A little hast thou ben too long here,
For here hath ben the leand cuckow,
And songen songs rather than hast thou,
I pray to God euill fire her been."

But now I wot you tell a wonder thing,
As long as I lay in that srouning,
Me thought I wist what the birds ment,
And what they said, and what was hir entent,
And of hir speech I had good knowing.

There heard I the nightingale say,
"Now good cuckow go somewhere away,
And let vs that can singen dwellen here,
For every wight escheoeth thee to here,
Thy songe be so clenge in good fay."

"What" (quod she) "what may thee ayken now,
It thinketh me, I sing as well as thou,
For my song is both true and plaine,
And though I cannot crakell so in vaine,
As thou dost in thy throte, I wot neuer how.

"And every wight may vnderstand mee,
But nightingale so may they not done thee,
For thou hast many a nice queint cry,
I haue thee beerd saine, ocy, ocy,
How might I know what that should be?"

"Ah foole" (quod she) "wot thou not what it is,
When that I say, ocy, ocy, ywis,
Thas meane I that I would wonder faine,
That all they were shamefully ysaine,
That meaneu ought againe looe amia

"And also I would that all tho were dede,
That thinke not in looe hir life to lede,
For who so that wot not the god of looe serue,
I dare well say he is worthy to sterue,
And for that skill, ocy, ocy, I grede."

"Eye" (quod the cuckow) "this is a queint law,
That every wight shall looe or be to draw,
But I forsake all such companie,
For mine entent is not for to die,
Ne neuer while I liue on Loues yoke to draw.

"For louers ben the folke that ben on line,
That most disease haue, and most vnbriue,
And most endure sorrow, wo, and care,
And leest feelen of welfare,
What needeth it ayenst trowth to strue."

"What" (quod she) "thou art out of thy mind,
How might thou in thy churlenesse find
To speake of Loues seruants in this wise,
For in this world is none so good seruaice
To every wight that gentle is of kind.

"For thereof truly cometh all goodnesse,
All honour and all gentlenesse,
Worship, ease, and all hartes lust,
Parfitte joy, and full assured trust,
Solitie, pleasance, and freshnesse,

"Lowlyhead, largesse, and curtesie,
Semblyhead, and true companie,
Drede of shame for to done amia:
For he that truly Loues seruaunt is,
Were lother be shamed than to die.

"And that this is soth that I sey,
In that beleene I will liue and dey,
And cuckow so I rede that thou do ywis:"

"Than" (quod he) "let me neuer haue blame,
If euer I vnto that counsaile obey.

"Nightingale thou speakest wonder faire,
But for all that is the sooth contraire,
For looe is in yong folke bot rage,
And in old folke a great dotage,
Who most it vseth, most shall enpire.

"For thereof cometh disease and heimesse,
So sorrow and care, and many a great sicknesse,
Despite, debate, anger, and emie,
Depraung, shame, vntrust, and jelousie,
Pride, mischeefe, poverty, and woodnesse:

"Louing is an office of despaire,
And one thing is therein that is not faire,
For who that getteth of looe a little blame,
But if he be alway therewith ywis,
He may full soone of age haue his haire.

"And nightingale therefore hold thee ny,
For leue me well, for all thy queint cry,
If thou be ferre or long fro thy make,
Thou shalt be as other that been forsake,
And than thou shalt boten as dee I."

"Fie" (quod she) "on thy name and on thee,
The god of looe ne let thee neuer ythee,
For thou art worse a thousand fold than wood,
For many a one is full worthy and fall good,
That had be naught: ne had looe ybea.

" For evermore Loue his seruaunts amendeth,
And from all euill teaches hem defendeth,
And maketh hem to breunge right in a fere,
In trouthe and in worshipfull desyre,
And whan him liketh, joy inough hem sendeth."

" Thou nightingale" he said, " be still,
For Loue hath no reason, but it is will,
For oft time vntreue folke he asseth,
And true folke so bitery he displeaseth,
That for default of courage he let hem spill."

Than took I of the nightingale keepe,
How she cast a sigh out of her deepe,
And said, " Alas that euer I was bore,
I can for tene not say one word more,"
And right with that word she brast out to weepe.

" Alas" (quod she) " my herte wolt to breake,
To hearen thus this leand bird speake
Of Loue, and of his worshipfull seruise,
Now God of loue thou help me in some wise,
That I may on this cuckow been awreake."

Me thought than he stert vp anone,
And gind was I that he was agone,
And euermore the cuckow as he say,
Said " Farewell, farewell popingray,"
As though he had scorned me alone.

And than came the nightingale to mee,
And said, " Friend forsooth I thanke thee,
That thou hast liked me to rescow,
And one snow to loue make I now,
That all this May I wolt thy singer be."

I thanked her, and was right well apaid:
" Ye" (quod she) " and be thou not dismayed,
The thou haue herd the cuckow erst than me,
For if I live, it shall ampeded be
The next May, if I be not affraid.

" And one thing I wolt rede thee also,
Ne loue thou not the cuckow, ne his loues so,
For all that he hath said is strong leasur:"
" Nay" (quod I) " thereto shall nothing me bring,
For loue and it hath doe me much wo.

" Ye, vne" (quod she) " this medicine
Every day this May or thou dibe,
Go looke vpon the fresh daisie,
And though thou be for wo in point to die,
That shall fall greatly lessen thee of thy pine.

" And looke alway that thou be good and trew,
And I wolt sing one of the songs new
For loue of thee, as loud as I may cry:"
And than she began this song full ble,
" I threw all hem that been of loue vntreue."

And whan she had song it to the end,
" Now farewell" (quod she) " for I mote wend,
And god of loue, that can right well, and may,
As much joy send thee this day,
As any yet louer be euer send."

Thus taketh the nightingale her leaue of me,
I pray to God alway with her be,
And joy of loue he send her euermore,
And shilde us fro the cuckow and his bore,
For there is not so false a bird as he.

Forth she flew the gentle nightingale
To all the birds that were in that dale,
And gate hem all into a place in fere,
And beaughten hem that they would here
Her disease, and thus began her tale.

" The cuckow, well it is not for to hide,
How the cuckow and I fast haue chide,
Eer sithen it was day light,
I pray you all that ye do me right
On that false false vnkind bridle."

Than spake o bird for all, by one assent,
" This matter asketh good avisement,
For we ben birdes here in fere,
And sooth it is, the cuckow is not here,
And therefore we wolt haue a parliament.

" And therat shall the eagle be our lord,
And other peres that been of record,
And the cuckow shall be after sent,
There shall be yene the judgement,
Or els we shall finally make accord.

" And this shall be without nay
The morrow after saint Valentines day,
Under a maple that is faire and grene,
Before the chamber window of the queene,
At Woodstocke vpon the grene lay."

She thanked hem, and than her leaue toke,
And into an heurborne by that broke,
And there she sat and song vpon that tree,
" Terme of life keue hath withhold me,"
So loud that I with that song awoke.

EXPLICIT.

O loun booke with thy soule rudenesse,
Sith thou haste neither beauty ne eloquence,
Who hath thee caused or yene the hardnesse
For to appeare in my ladies presence,
I am full siker thou knowest her beneuolence,
Full agreeable to all her abyring,
For of all good she is the best living.

Alas that thou ne haddest worthinesse,
To shew to her some pleasaunt sentence,
Sith that she hath through her gentillesse
Accepted the seruant to her digne reverence,
O, me repenteth that I ne had science
And leiser she to make thee more flourishing,
For of all good she is the best living.

Besech her meekely with all lowlinesse,
Though I be ferre from her in absence,
To think on my trouthe to her and steadfastnesse,
And to abridge of my sorowes the violence,
Which caused is, wherof knoweth your sapience,
She like among to notifie me her liking
For of all good she is the best living.

LAMOUKE.

Arouns of gladnesse, and day of lustinesse,
Lucern a night with heavenly influence
Illumined, root of beauty and goodnesse,
Suspires which I effande in silences,
Of grace I besech alledge let your writing,
Now of all good, sith ye be best living.

EXPLICIT.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

This book is an imitation of the Roman of the Rose, shewing that all are subject to love, what impediments sever to the contrary: containing also those twenty statutes which are to be observed in the Court of Love.

W^{ITH} timorous herte, and trembling hand of drede,
Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence,
Unto the founte of poete in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metres hath, as founte of sentence:
Saufe that me list my writing to conuey,
In that I can to please her high nobley.

The blossomes fresh of Tullius gardein soot
Present they not, my matter for to born:
Poemes of Virgil taken here no root,
Ne craft of Galfride, may not here sojourn:
Why nam I cunning? O well may I mourn
For lacke of science, that I cannot write
Unto the princes of my life aright.

No tearmes digne unto her excellence,
So is she sprong of noble stirpe and high:
A world of honour and of reuerence
There is in her, this will I testifie,
Calliope thou suster wise and slie,
And thou Minerva, guide me with thy grace,
That language rude, my matter not deface.

Thy suger dropes sweet of Helicon
Distill in me, thou gentle Muse I pray,
And thee Melpomene I call anon,
Of ignorance the mist to chase away:
And giue me grace so for to write and say,
That she my lady of her worthinesse
Accept in gree this little short treatesse,

That is entituled thus, The Court of Loue:
And ye that bea metricians me excuse,
I you beseech for Venus sake aboue,
For what I mean in this, ye need not muse:
And if so be my lady it refuse
For lacke of ornate speech, I would he wo,
That I presume to her to written so.

But my entent and all my basic cure
Is for to write this treatesse, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Faithfull and kind, sith first that she began
Me to accept in seruise as her man:
To her be all the pleasure of this book,
That whan her like she may it rede and look.

W^{HAN} I was young, at eightene years of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of plesaunce,
Approching on full saddle and ripe courage,
Loue artd me to do my obeisance,
To his estate, and done him obeisance;
Commaunding me the Court of Loue to see,
Aite beside the mount of Citharee.

There Citherea goddesse was and queene:
Honoured highly for her majeste,
And eke her soone, the mighty god I wene;
Cupid the blind, that for his dignite
A M. louers worship on their knee,
There was I bid in paine of death to pere,
By Mercury the winged messengere.

So than I went by strange and fer countrees,
Enquiring aye what coast had to it drew
The Court of Loue: and thiderward as bees,
At last I see the poole gan purwe:
And me thought some wight was there that knew
Where that the court was holden ferre or nie,
And after them full fast I gan me hie.

Anone as I them oortooke, I said:
"Heile friends, whither purpose ye to wend?"
"Forsooth" (quod one) that answeredliche a mald,
"To Loues Court now ge gentle friend."
"Where is that place" (quod I) "my fellow hend?"
"At Citheron, sir," said he, "without dout,
The king of loue, and all his noble rout,

"Dwellet within a castle rially."
So than apace I journeyed furth among,
And as he said, so found I there truly:
For I beheld the toures high and strong,
And high pinacles, large of hight and long,
With plate of gold bespced on euery side,
And precious stones, the stone werke for to hide.

No saphire in Inde, no ruby rich of price,
There lacked than, nor emeraud so grene,
Bales Turkes, ne thing to my deuce,
That may the castle maken for to shene:
All was as bright as sterres in winter bene,
And Phebus shone to make his peace againe,
For trespass done to high estates twaine.

Venus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,
Whan he them found in armes cheined fast,
Venus was than full sad of herte and chere:
But Phebus beams streight as is the mast,
Upon the castle ginneth he to cast,
To please the lady, princes of that place,
In signe he looketh after Loues grace.

For there his god in Heauen or Hell ywis,
But he hath ben right soget unto Loue:
Joue, Pluto, or whatsoever he is,
Ne creature in yearth, or yet aboue,
Of these the reuer may no wight approue:
But furthermore, the castle to descrie,
Yet saw I neuer none so large and hie.

For unto Heauen it stretcheth, I suppose,
Within and out depeinted wonderly,
With many a thousand daisie rede as rose,
And white also this saw I verely:
But who the daisies might do signifie,
Can I not tell, save that the queenes flour,
Alceste it was that kept there her sojoure:

Which vnder Venus lady was and queene,
And Admete king and soueraine of that place,
To whom obeyed the ladies good ninetene,
With many a thousand other bright of face:
And yong men fele came forth with lusty pace,
And aged eke, their homage to dispose,
But what they were, I could not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dress
 Into an hall of noble apparail,
 With arras spred, and cloth of gold I gose,
 And other silke of cyyer anaile:
 Under the cloth of their estate sauns faille
 The king and queene there sat as I beheld:
 It passed joy of Helise the field.

There saints haue their comming and resort,
 To seece the king so rially beseyne
 In purple clad, and eke the queene in surt,
 And on their heads saw I crownes twaine,
 With stones fret, so that it was no paine,
 Withouten meat and drink to stand and see
 The kinges honour and the rialtee.

And for to treat of states with the king,
 That ben of counceel cheef, and with the queene:
 The king had Danger nere to him standing,
 The queene of loue, Disdain, and that was seene:
 For by the faith I shall to God, I wene
 Was neuer straunger come in her degree,
 Than was the queene in casting of her eye.

And as I stood perceiuing her apart,
 And eke the beames shining of her eyen,
 Me thought they weren shapen lich a dart,
 Sharpe and persing, and smal and streight of line:
 And all her haire it shoue as gold so fine,
 Dishuill criske, downe hanging at her backe
 A yard in length: and soothly than I spake.

"O bright regina, who made thee so faire?
 Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
 Wher woueth that god, how far above the aire?
 Great was his craft, and great was his delite.
 Now maruell I nothing that ye do bight
 The queene of loue, and occupie the place
 Of Cithare: now sweet lady thy grace."

In mewet spake I so, that nought amart:
 By no condition word, that might be hard:
 But in my inward thought I gan aduert,
 And oft I said "My wit is dull and hard."
 For with her beauty, thus God wot I ferde,
 As doth the man ymauiabed with sight,
 When I beheld her cristall eyen so bright:

No respect haning what was best to done,
 Till right anon beholding here and there,
 I spied a friend of mine, and that full some,
 A gentlewoman was the chamberere
 Unto the queene, that hote as ye shall here,
 Philobone, that loued all her life:
 When she me sey, she led me forth as blife;

And me demanded how and in what wise
 I thither come, and what my errand was?
 "To seece the court" (quod I) "and all the guise,
 And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
 And mercy aske for all my great trespass,
 That I none eret come to the Court of Loue:
 Foryeue me this, ye gods all aboue."

"That is well said" (quod Philobone) "indeed:
 But were ye not assomoned to appere
 By Mercurius, for that is all my drede:"
 "Yes gentill feire" (quod I) "now am I here,
 Ye yet what tho though that be true my drede:"
 "Of your free will ye should haue come vment,
 For ye did not, I deme ye will be shent."

"For ye that reigne in youth and lustinence,
 Pampired with ease, and jalous in your age,
 Your duty is, as ferre as I can geue,
 To Loues Court to dresen your viage,
 As soone as nature maketh you so sage,
 That ye may know a woman from a swan,
 Or when your foot is growen halfe a span."

"But sith that ye by wifull negligence
 This eighteome year hath kept your self at large,
 The greater is your trespass and offence,
 And in your neck you must here all the charge:
 For better were ye ben withouten barge
 Amidde the sea in tempest and in raine,
 Than biden here, receiuing we and paine."

"That ordained is for such as them about
 Fro Loues Court by yeres long and fele.
 I ley my life ye shall full soone repent,
 For Loue will reise your colour, lust, and bele:
 Eke ye must bait on many an heuuy mele:
 No force ywis: I stirred you long agone
 To draw to court" (quod little) Philobone.

"Ye shall well see how rough and angry face
 The king of loue will shew, when ye him see:
 By mine aduise kneel down and ask him grace,
 Bechewing perill and aduersite,
 For well I wote it will none other be,
 Comfort is none, ne counsaill to your ease,
 Why will ye than the king of loue displease?"

"O mercy God" (quod iche) "I me repent,
 Caslife and wretch in herte, in will and thought,
 And after this shall be mine hole outent
 To serue and please, how dere that loue be bought:
 Yet sith I haue mine own penance yought,
 With humble sprite shall I it receiue,
 Though that the king of loue my life bereiue."

"And though that foruent loues qualite
 In me did neuer wotch truly: yet I
 With all obeisaunce and humilite,
 And benigne herte shall serue him till I die:
 And he that lord of might is great and hie,
 Right as him list me chastice and correct,
 And punish me with trespass thus infect."

These wordes said, she caught me by the lap,
 And led me forth in till a temple round,
 Both large and wide: and as my blessed hap
 And good aventure was, right soone I found
 A tabernacle reised from the ground,
 Where Uenus sat, and Cupide by her side,
 Yet helpe for drede I can my visage hide.

And eft againe I looked and beheld,
 Seeing full sundry people in the place,
 And mister folke, and some that might not wold
 Their lims wele, me thought a wonder case,
 The temple shone with windows all of glasse,
 Bright as the day, with many a fair image,
 And there I see the fresh queene of Cartage

Dido, that brent her beauty for the loue
 Of false Eneas, and the weimenting
 Of her Annelida, true as turtle doue,
 To Arcite fals: and there was in peynting
 Of many a prince, and many a doughty king,
 Whose martiridom was shewed about the wab
 And how that fele for loue had suffred fals.

But sore I was abashed and astonied
Of all the folke that there were in that tide,
And than I asked where they had wooned :
" In diuers courts" (quod she) " here beside,
In sundry clothing mantill wise full wide
They were arraied, and did their sacrifice
Unto the god, and goddess in their guise.

" Lo yonder folke" (quod she) " that kneele in blew,
They weare the colour aye and euer shall,
In signe they were and euer will be trew
Withouten change: and soothly yonder all
That ben in black, and mourning cry and call
Unto the gods, for their lous bene,
Some sick, some dede, some all to sharp and kene."

" Yea than" (quod I) " what done these priests here,
Nonnes and hermites, freres, and all tho,
That sit in white, in russet, and in grece :"
" Forsooth" (quod she) " they waylen of their wo."
" O mercy lord, may they so come and go
Freely to court and haue such liberty!"
" Yea men of each condition and degre.

" And women eke: for truly there is none
Exception made, ne neuer was ne may :
This court is ope and free for euerychone,
The king of loue he will not say them nay :
He taketh all in poore or rich array,
That meekely se vnto his excellence
With all their herte and all their reuerence."

And walking thus about with Philobone
I see where come a messengere in hie
Saight from the king, which let command anone,
Throughout the court to make an ho and cry :
" All new come folke abide, and wote ye why,
The kings lust is for to seeue you some :
Come nere let see, his will mote ned be done."

Than gan I me present tofore the king,
Trembling for fere with visage pale of hew,
And many a louer with me was kneeling,
Abashed sore, till vnto the time they knew
The sentence yeue of his entent full trew :
And at the last the king hatb me behold
With sterne visage, and seid, " What doth this old

" Thus ferre yntope in yeres, come so late
Unto the court?" " Forsooth, my liege" (quod I)
" An hundred time I haue ben at the gate
Afore this time, yet could I neuer espie
Of mine acquaintance any in mine eie :
And shamesfastnesse away me gan to chace,
But now I me submit vnto your grace."

" Well, all is pardoned with condition
That thou be true from henceforth to thy night
And seruen Loue in thine entention,
Swear this, and than as ferre as it is right,
Thou shalt haue grace here in thy quence sight."
" Yes by the faith I owe to your crown, I swere,
Though Death therefore me thirith with his spere."

And when the king had seene vs euerychone,
He let command an officer in hie
To take our faith, and shew vs one by one
The statutes of the court full busily :
Among the booke was leid before their eie,
To rede and see what thing we must obserue
In Loues Court, till that we die and serue.

VOL. I.

And for that I was lettred, there I red
The statutes hole of Loues Court and hall :
The first statute that on the booke was spred,
Was to be true in thought and deede all
Unto the king of loue the lord ryall,
And to the quene as faithfull and as kind,
As I could thinke with herte, will and mind.

The second statute secretly to kepe
Councill of loue, not blowing euery where
All that I know, and let it sinke and fete,
It may not sowne in euery wights ere :
Exiling slaunder aye for drede and fere,
And to my lady which I loue and serue,
Be true and kind her grace for to deserue.

The third statute was clerely writ also,
Withouten change to liue and die the same,
None other loue to take for wele ne wo,
For blind delite, for earnest nor for game :
Without repent for laughing or for grame,
To hidden still in full perseuerance,
All this was hole the kings ordinaunce.

The fourth statute to purchase ever to herte,
And stirren folke to loue, and beten fire
On Venus auter, here about and here
And preach to them of loue and hote desire,
And tell how loue will quiten well their hire :
This must be kept, and loth me to displease :
If loue be wroth, passe : for there by is ease.

The fifth statute, not to be daungerous,
If that a thought would reue me of my slepe :
Nor of a sight to be ouer aquemous,
And so verely this statute was to kepe,
To turne and wallow in my bed and wepe;
When that my lady of her cruelty
Would from her herte exilen all pity.

The sixth statute, it was for me to vse,
Alooe to wandre, void of company,
And on my ladies beauty for to muse,
And to thinke it no force to liue or die,
And eft againe to thinke the remedie,
How to her grace I might anone attainue,
And tell my wo vnto my soueraine.

The seventh statute, was to be patient,
Whether my lady joyfull were or wroth,
For words glad or heauy, diligent,
Wheder that she me heiden lefe or loth :
And hereupon I put was to mine oth,
Her for to serue, and lowly to obey,
In shewing her my chere ye xx. sixth aday.

The eight statute to my remembrance,
Was to speken and pray my lady dese,
With hourly labour and great entendaunce,
Me for to loue with all her herte entere,
And me desire and make me joyfull chere,
Right as she is surmounting euery faire,
Of beauty well and gentle debonaire.

The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence bow that I and all,
Should euer dread to be to ouerbold
Her to displease, and truly so I shall,
But ben content for thing that may fail,
And meekely take her chastisement, and yerd,
And to offend her euer ben aferd.

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The tenth statute, was egally to discerne,
Betwene the lady and thine ability,
And thinke thy selfe art neuer like to yerne,
By right her mercy nor her equity,
But of her grace and womanly pity :
For though thy selfe be noble in thy streng,
A thousand fold more noble in thy quene.

Thy liues lady and thy soueraine,
That hath thine herte al hole in gouernance,
Thou mayst no wise it taken to disdainie,
To put thee hombly at her ordinaunce,
And give her free the reins of fier pleasure,
For liberty is thing that woman looke,
And truly els the matter is a crooke.

The xi. statute, thy signs for to know
With eye and finger, and with smiles soft,
And low to couch, and alway for to show,
For drede of spies, for to winken oft :
And secretly to bring up a sigh aloft,
But still beware of ouermach resort,
For that parauntere spilith all thy sport.

The xii. statute remember to obserue :
For all the paine thou hast for loue and wo,
All is too lite her mercy to deserue,
Thou musten thinke, wherouer thou ride or go :
And mortall wounds suffer thou also,
All for her sake, and thinke it well besette
Upon thy loue, for it may not be bette.

The xiii. statute, whylome is to thinke,
What thing may best thy lady like and please,
And in thine hertes bottome let it sinke :
Some thing desiae, and take for it thine ease,
And send it her, that may her herte appease :
Some herse, or ring, or letter, or deuice,
Or precious stone, but spare not for no price.

The xiiii. statute eke thou shalt assay,
Formely to keepe the most part of thy life:
Wish that thy lady in thine armes lay,
And nightly dreame, thou hast thy nights hertes wife,
Sweetly in armes, straying her as blife :
And whan thou seest it is but fantasie,
See that thou sing not ouer merely.

For too much joy hath oft a wofull end,
R longeth eke this statute for to bold,
To deme thy lady euer more thy friend,
And thinke thy selfe in no wise a cokold.
In every thing she doth but as she should :
Construe the best, beleuee no tales new,
For many a lye is told, that seemeth full trew.

But thinke that she, so boueous and feire,
Coud not be false : imagine this algate,
And thinke that tonges wicked would her appar,
Sclandering her name and worshipfull estate,
And louers true to setten at debate :
And though thou seest a fault right at thine eye,
Excuse it bliue, and glose it pretily.

The xv. statute, vse to swere and stave,
And counterfeit a leasng hardely,
To auue thy ladies honour euery where,
And put thy selfe for her to fight boldly :
Say she is good, vertuous, and ghostly,
Clere of entent, and herte, yea, thought and will,
And argue not for reason ne for skill.

Againe thy ladies pleasure ne entent ?
For loue will not be countrepleeted in dede :
Say as she seith, than shalt thou not be spent,
The crow is white, ye truly so I rede :
And aye what thing that she thee will forbede,
Eschew all that, and giue her soueraintes,
Her appetite followe in all degree.

The xvi. statute keepe it if thou may,
Seuen sith at night thy lady for to please,
And seuen at midnight, seuen at morrow day,
And drinke a caudle earely for thine ease.
Do this and keep thine head from all disease,
And win the garland here of louers all,
That euer came in court, or euer shall.

Full few, think I, this statute hold and keep :
But truly this my reason giueth me fele,
That some louers shoud rather fall asleepe,
Than lay on hand to please so oft and wele.
There lay none oth to this statute adele,
But keep who might, as gaue him his corage
Now get this garland lusty folke of age :

Now win who may ye lusty folke of youth,
This garland fresh, of floures red and white,
Purple and blew, and colours fell rincouth,
And I shall croune him king of all delite,
In all the court there was not to my sight,
A lover true, that he ne was adrede,
Whan he expresse hath heard the statute rede.

The xvii. statue, whan age approbeth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is queneit,
As freshly than thou shalt begin to foune
And date in loue, and all her image paint
In thy remembrance, till thou begin to faint,
As in the first season thine herte began :
And her desire, though thou ne may ne can

Performe thy liuing actuell, and lust,
Regester this in thine remembrance :
Eke whan thou maist not keep thy thing from rust,
Yet speake and talke of pleasaunt daliaunce,
For that shall make thine herte rejoice and dance,
And whan thou maist no more the game assay,
The statute bid thee pray for them that may.

The xviii. statute, holy to commend,
To please thy lady, is that thou eschew
With sluttishnesse thy selfe for to offend,
Be jollife, fresh, and fete, with things new,
Courtly with manner, this is all thy due,
Gentill of port, and louing cleanlinesse,
This is the thing, that liketh thy maistresse.

And not to wander liche a dilled ase,
Ragged and torne, disguised in array,
Ribaud in speech, or out of mesuro passe,
Thy bound exceeding, thinke on this alway :
For women been of tender hertes aye,
And lightly set their pleasure in a place,
Whan they misthinke, they lightly let it passe.

The xix. statute, meat and drinke forgette:
Ech other day, see that thou fast for loue,
For in the court, they liue withouten mete,
Sauc such as cometh from Venus all about,
They take none hede, in pain of great reprove
Of meat and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
Onely they liue by sight of their soueraine.

The ix: statute, last of euerychone,
 Enroll it in thyne hertes priuities;
 To wring and waile, to turne, and sigh and groone,
 When that thy lady absent is from thee,
 And eke renew the words all that she
 Between you twain hath said, and all the chere
 That thee hath made, thy lines lady dert.

And see thine herte in quiet, as in rest
 Sojourne, till time thou seene thy lady eft,
 But where she won, by south, or east, or west,
 With all thy force, now see it be not left:
 Be diligent, till time thy life be raft,
 In that thou mayest, thy lady for to see,
 This statute was of old antiquitee.

An officer of high authority,
 Claped Rigour, made vs to swere anone:
 He nas corrupt with partialty,
 Favour, prayer, ne gold that clerely shone;
 "Ye shall" (quod he) "now sweren here echone,
 Young and old, to kepe in that they may
 The statutes truly, all after this day."

O God thought I, hard is to make this off:
 But to my power shall I them obserue,
 In all this world nas matter halfe so loth
 To swere for all: for though my body sterue,
 I have no might them holt to obserue.
 But herken now the case how it befell,
 After my oth was made, the troth to tell.

I turned leues, looking on this booke,
 Where other statutes were of women shene,
 And right forthwith Rigour on me gan looke
 Full angerly, and sayed unto the quene
 I traitour was, and charged me let been,
 "There may no man" (quod he) "the statute know,
 That long to women, his degree ne low."

"In secret wise they kepten been full close,
 They soune echone to liberty, my friend,
 Pleasent they be, and to their owne purpose,
 There wote no wight of them, but God and fiend,
 Ne naught shall wit, vnto the worlds end,
 The quene hath yowre me charge in pain to die
 Neuer to rede ne seme them with myne eie."

"For men shall not so nere of counsaile bene
 With womanhood, ne knowen of her guise,
 Ne what they think, ne of their wit thengine,
 I me report to Salomon the wise,
 And mighty Sampson, which beguiled thrice
 With Dalida was, he wote that in a throw,
 There may no man statute of women know."

"For it perauenture may right so befell,
 That they be bound by nature to deceiue,
 And spynne, and weep, and sigre strow on gull,
 The herte of man to ruiush and to reuiue,
 And whet their tongue as sharpe as swerde or glene,
 It may betide, this is their ordinance,
 So must they lowly doen their obseruance."

"And kepe the statute yewer them of kind,
 Of such as loue hath yowre hem in their life,
 Men may not wete why turneth euery wind,
 Nor waxen wise, nor been inquistife
 To know secret of maid, wifow, or wife,
 For they their statutes haue to them reserved,
 And steeer man to know them hath deserued."

"Now dresse you forth, the god of loue you guide"
 (Quod Rigour than) "and seek the temple bright
 Of Cithere, goddesse here beside,
 Beseech her by innocence and might
 Of all her vertue, you to teach aright,
 How for to serue your ladies, and to please
 Ye that been sped, and set your herte in ease."

"And ye that ben vppuroyed, pray her eke
 Comfort you stowe with grace and destiny,
 That ye may set your herte there ye may like,
 In such a place, that it to loue may be
 Honour and worship, and felicity
 To you for aye, now gooth by oone assent."
 "Grant mercy sir" (quod we) "and forth we went"

Demoutly soft and easie pace to see
 Venus the goddesse image all of gold:
 And there we found a thousand on their knee,
 Some fresh and faire, some deadly to behold,
 In sundry mantils new and some were old,
 Some painted were with floures red as fire,
 Outward to show their inward hote desire.

With dolefull chere, ful fell in their complaint,
 Cried "Lady Venus, rew vpon our soere,
 Receiue our bills, with teares all bedreint,
 We may not weepe, there is no more in store
 But wo and pain, vs fretteth more and more:
 Thou blissefull planet, louers sterre so shene,
 Haue routh on vs, that agh and carefull bene."

"And punish lady greuouly we pray,
 The false vntrue, with counterfeit pleasaunce:
 That made their oth, be true to line or dey,
 With chere assured, and with countenaunce:
 And falsely now they footen loues daunce,
 Barraine of routh, vntrue of that they said,
 Now that their lust and pleasure is alaid."

Yet eft agayne a thousand million
 Rejoycing loou, leading their life in blisse,
 They sayd "Venus, redrease of all diuision,
 Goddesse eternell, thy name ihired is:
 By loues bond is knit all thing iwis,
 Beast vnto beast, the yearth to water wan,
 Bird vnto bird and woman vnto man."

"This is the life of joy that we ben in,
 Resembling life of heauenly paradise,
 Loue is exiler aye of vice and sinne,
 Loue maketh hertes lusty to deuise,
 Honour and grace, haue they in euery wise,
 That beem to loues law obedient,
 Loue maketh folke beuigne and diligent."

"Aye stering them to drede vice and shame:
 In their degree, it maketh them honourable,
 And sweet it is of loue to heare the name,
 So that his loue be faithfull, true and stable:
 Loue prometh him, to semeen amiable,
 Lone hath no feint, there it is exercised,
 But soke with them that haue all loue dispised."

"Honour to thee celestiall and clere
 Goddesse of loue, and to thy celestide,
 That yeneest vs light so fer down from thy spere,
 Piercing our hertes with thy pulcritude,
 Comparison none of similitude
 May to thy grace be made in no degree,
 That hast vs set with loue in vnie."

"Great cause haue we to praise thy name and thee,
For thorough thee we liue in joy and blisse.
Blessed be thou; most soueraine to see,
Thy holy court of gladnesse may not misse:
A thousand sith we may rejoyce in this,
That we ben thine with herte and all yfere,
Roflamed with thy grace, and heauenly here."

Musing of tho that spoken in this wise,
I me bethought in my remembraunce
Mine orizon right goodly to deuise,
And pleasantly with hertes obeisaunce,
Beseech the goddesse voiden my gretaunce,
For I loued eke, saufe that I wist not where,
Yet downe I set and sayd as ye shall here.

"Fairrest of all, that euer were or bee,
Licour and light, to pensife creature,
Mine hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
My goddesse bright, my fortune and my ure,
I yeue and yeeld my herte to thee full sure,
Humbly beseeching lady of thy grace
Me to bestow now in some blessed place.

"And here I row me, faithful, true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilitie,
Humbly to serue, while I haue wit and mind,
Mine hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
In thilke place, there ye me signe to be:
And sith this thing of new is yeue me aye
To loue and serue, needly must I obey.

"Be merciable with thy fire of grace,
And fix mine herte, there beauty is and routh:
For hote I loue, determine in no place,
Saufe onely this, by God and by my trouth
Troubled I was, with slumber, slepe, and slouth
This other night, and in a visoun
I see a woman romen vp and down,

"Of meene stature, and seemly to behold,
Lustie and fresh, demure of countenaunce,
Yong and well shape, with hair shone as gold,
With eyen as cristal, ferced with pleasaunce,
And she gan stirre mine herte a lite to daunce:
But suddainly she vanish gan right there,
Thus I may say, I loue and wote not where.

"For what she is, ne ber dwelling I not,
And yet I fele that loue distrainteth me:
Might icbe her know, her would I faine God wot
Serue and obey with all benignite,
And if that other be my destinie,
So that no wise I shall her neuer see,
Than graunt me her that best may liken me.

"With glad rejoyce to liue in parfitte here,
Deuoid of wrath, repent or variaunce:
And able me to doe that may be wile
Unto my lady, with hertes hie pleasaunce:
And mighty goddes through thy purueiaunce
My wit, my thought, my lust and loue so guide,
That to thine honor I may me prouide.

"To set mine herte in place there I may like,
And gladly serue with all affection,
Great is the paine, which at mine herte doth sticke,
Till I be sped by thine election:
Helpe lady goddesse, that possession
I might of her haue, that in all my life
I elepen shall my quene, and hertes wife.

"And in the Court of Loue to dwell for aye
My will it is, and done thee sacrifice:
Dailly with Diane eke to fight and fraye,
And holden werre, as might will me suffice:
That goddesse chaat, I keeopen in no wise
To serue, a figge for all her chastity,
Her law is for religiosity."

And thus gan finish prayer, laud, and price,
Which that I yeue to Venus on my knee,
And in mine herte to ponder and to peice,
I gan anone her image fresh beaute:
"Heile to that figure sweet, and heile to thee
Cupide" (quod I) and rose and yede my wey,
And in the temple as I yede, I sey

A shrine surmounting all in stones rich,
Of which the force was pleasaunce to mine ey,
With diamond or saphire, neuerliche
I haue none scene, ne wrought so wonderly:
So whan I met with Philobone in bie,
I gan demand, who is this sepulture,
"Forsooth" (quod she) "a tender creature

"Is shrined there, and Pity is her name,
She saw an egre wreke him on a fie,
And pluck his wing, and eke him in his game,
And tender herte of that bath made her die:
Eke she would weep and mourn right pitously
To seee a louer suffer great distresse,
In all the court nas none, as I do geese,

"That coude a louer halfe so well euaille,
Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
Asken, for he was sure withouten faile,
That of his greef she coude the best assaige
In steed of Pity, speedeth hote courage
The matters all of court, now she is dead,
I me report in this to womanhead.

"For well and weep, and cry, and speak, and pray,
Women would not haue pity on thy plaint,
Ne by that mean, to case thine herte conpany,
But thee receiuen for their owne talent:
And say that Pity causeth thee in comert
Of reuth to take thy seruice and thy paine,
In that thou maist, to please thy soueraine.

"But this is counsaile, keepe it secretly,"
(Quod she) "I nold for all the world about,
The queene of loue it wist, and wite ye why,
For if by me this matter springen out,
In court no lenger shoud I out of dout
Dwellen, but shame in all my life endry,
Now keepe it close" (quod she) "this hardely.

"Well all is well now shall ye seeen," she said
"The fairest lady vnder Sonne that is:
Come on with me, demean you lich a maid,
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speak ywis
With her that is the mirroure joy and blime:
But somewhat strange and sad of her demean
She is, beware your countenaunce be seen,

"Nor ouer light, ne rechelessa, ne too bold,
Ne maiapert, ne renning with your tong,
For she will you obeisen and behold,
And you demand why ye were hence so long
Out of this court, without resort among:
And Rosial her name is hote aright,
Whose herte as yet is yeuen to no wight.

" And ye also been, as I vnderstood,
With loue but light auanced, by your word,
Might ye by hap your freedom maken bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wele accord,
Well might ye thank the god of loue and lord,
For she that ye saw in your dreame appere,
To loue such one, what are they than the nere,

" Yet wote ye what, as my remembraunce
Me yeueth now, ye faise where that ye say,
That ye with loue had neuer acquaintaunce,
Same in your dream right late this other day:
Why yes parde, my life that durst I lay,
That ye were caught vpon an heath, whan I
Saw you complain, and sigh full pitously.

" Within an herber, and a gardein faire
Where flowers grow, and herbes vertuous,
Of which the sauour swete was and the aire,
There were your self full bote and amorous:
I wis ye been too nice and daungerous,
I would ye now repent, and loue some new,"
" Nay by my trouthe," I said " I neuer knew

" The goodly wight, whose I shall be for aye:
Guide me the lord, that loue hath made and me."
But forth we went into a chamber gay,
There was Rosiall, womanly to see,
Whose streames, sotell piercing of her eye,
Mine herte gan thrill for beauty in the stound,
" Alas" (quod I) " who hath me yere this wound."

And than I drede to speake, till at the last
I grete the lady reuerently and wele,
Whan that my sigh was gone and ouerpast,
Than down on knees fal humbly gan I knele,
Beseeching her my feruent wo to kele,
For there I toke full purpose in my mind
Unto her grace, my painfull herte to bind.

For if I shall all fully her discryue,
Her head was round, by compasse of nature,
Her haire as gold, she passed all on line,
And lilly forehed had this creature,
With liueliche browes, faw of colour pure,
Betwene the which was meane discryuance
From euery brow, to shew a due distaunce.

Her nose directed straight, and euen as line,
With forme and shape thereto conuenient,
In which the goddess milk white path doth shine,
And eke her eyen ben bright and orient,
As is the smaragde, vnto my judgement,
Or yet those sterres Heauenly small and bright,
Her visage is of lowly rede and white.

Her mouth is short, and slit in little space,
Flaming some deale, not ouer redde I mean,
With pregest lips, and thicke to kisse percase,
For lippes thins not fat, but euer lene,
They serue of naught, they be not worth a bean,
For if the basse been full, there is delite,
Maximian truly thus doth he write.

But to my purpose, I say white as snow
Been all her teeth, and in order they stood
Of one stature, and eke her breath I trow
Sumouneth all odours that euer I found
In sweetnesse, and her body, face, and hond
Been sharply slender, so that from the head
Unto the foot, all is but womanhead.

I hold my peace, of other things hidde,
Here shall my soule, and not my tong bewray,
But how she was arraid, if ye me bidde,
That shall I well discouer you and say,
A bend of gold and silke, full fresh and gay,
With her intresse, broodered full wele,
Right smoothly kept, and shining euerydele.

About her necke a flower of fresh deuise,
With rubies set, that lusty were to see,
And she in gown was light and summer wise,
Shapen full wele, the colour was of grene,
With aureat sent about her sides cleme,
With diuers stones, precious and rich,
Thus was she rayed, yet saw I neuer her lich.

For if that Ioue had but this lady soie,
The Colixto ne yet Alcmena,
They neuer hadden in his armes leine,
Ne he had loued the faire Europa,
Ye ne yet Dane ne Antiopa,
For all their beauty stood in Rosiall,
She seemed lich a thing celestiall.

In bounty, fauour, port, and seemelnesse,
Pleasant of figure, mirrour of delite,
Gracious to seene, and root of all gentilnesse,
With angell visage, lusty redde and white:
There was not lack, saufe daunger had alite
This goodly fresh in rule and gouernaunce,
And somdele strange she was for her pleasaunce.

And truly some I took my leaue and went,
Whan she had me enquired what I was,
For more and more impresen gan the deat
Of Loues dart, while I beheld her face,
And eft againe I come to seeken grace,
And vp I put my bill, with sentence clere,
That followeth after, rede and ye shall here.

" O ye fresh, of beauty the root,
That nature hath formed so wele and made
Princes and queene, and ye that may do boot
Of all my langour, with your words glad,
Ye wounded me, ye made me wo bestad,
Of grace redresse my mortall greefe, as ye
Of all my harme the very causer be.

" Now am I caught, and sware suddainly
With persuant streames of your eye so clere,
Subject to been, and seruen you mekely,
And all your man, iwis my lady dere,
Abiding grace, of which I you require,
That meruelles ye cause me not to sterue,
But guerdon me, liche as I may deserue.

" For by my troth, all the days of my breath
I am and will be your in will and herte,
Patient and meane, for you to suffer death
If it require, now rue vpon my smart,
And this I swere, I neuer shall out start
From Loues Court for none aduertitie,
So ye would rue on my distresse and ma.

" My desteny, my fate, and hours I blame,
That haue me set to been obedient
Onely to you, the flour of all iwis,
I trust to Venus neuer to repent,
For euer redy, glad and diligent,
Ye shall me find in seruaice to your grace,
Till death my life out of my body race.

" Humble unto your excellence so digne,
Enforcing aye my wits and delite
To serue and please with glad herte and besigae,
And been as Troyles Troyes knight,
Or Antonic for Cleopatre bright,
And neuer you me thynke to reney,
This shall I keepe unto mine ending day.

" Eoprint my spech in your memoriall
Badly my princes, ealue of all my soyn,
And thinke, that for I would becomen thrall,
And been your owne, as I haue sayd before,
Ye must of pity cherish more and more
Your man, and tender after his desert,
And giue him courage for to beyn expert.

" For where that one hath set his herte on fire,
And findeth neither refute ne pleasaunce,
Ne word of comfort, death will quite his hire,
Alas that there is none allegeaunce
Of all their wo, alas the great greuaunce
To lose vnloved, but ye my lady dere,
In other wise may gouerne this matere."

" Truly gramercy friend of your good will,
And of your profer is your humble wise,
But for your service, take and keep it still,
And where ye say, I ought you well to cherise,
And of your greefe the remedy denie,
I know not why: I am acquainted well
With you, ne wot not sothly where ye dwell."

" In art of loue I write, and songs make,
That may be song in honour of the king
And queene of loue, and than I vndertake,
He that is sadde, shall than full merry sing,
And dangerous not ben in every thing
Beseech I you, but seeue my will and rede,
And let your answers put me out of drede."

" What is your name, rehearse it here I pray,
Of whence and where, of what condition
That ye been of, let see come off and say,
Faine would I know your disposition
Ye haue put on your old entencion,
But what ye mean to serue me I ne wote,
Save that ye say ye loue me wonder hote."

" My name, alas, my herte why makes thou strange,
Philogenet I calld am fer and nere,
Of Cambridge clerk, that neuer thinke to chaunge
Fro you that with your beuynly stremes clere
Ranish mine herte and ghost, and all inferre,
Since at the first I write my bill for grace,
Me thinke I see some mercy in your face.

" And what I mene, by gods that all hath wrought,
My bill now maketh small mention,
That ye been lady in my inward thought
Of all mine herte withouten offencion,
That I best loue, and with I begon
To draw to court, lo than what might I say,
I yeld me here unto your nobley.

" And if that I offend, or wilfully
By pomp of herte your precept disobay,
Or done agayne your will unskilfully,
Or greuen you for earnest or for play,
Correct ye me right sharply than I pray,
As it is seeue unto your womanhede,
And few or me, or els I nam but dede."

" Nay God forbode to feffe you so with grace,
And for a word of sugred cloquence,
To haue compasson in so litte space,
Than were it time that some of vs were henn,
Ye shall not find in me such insolence:
Eyn what is this, may ye not suffre sight,
How may ye looke vpon the candle light?"

" That clerer is and botter than mine eis,
And yet ye sayd the beanes perse and frete,
How shall ye than the candle light endrie,
For well wote ye, that hath the sharper betz,
And there ye bid me, you correct and bete,
If ye offend, may that may not be done,
There come but few, that speken here so some.

" Withdraw your eis, withdraw from prestens che:
Hart not your selfe, through foly with a look,
I would be sorry so to make you sick,
A woman should beware che whom she took:
Ye beth a clerke, go serchen well my book,
If any women ben so light to wisse,
Nay bide a while, tho ye were all my kisse."

" So sope ye may not win mine herte in truth,
The guise of court will seen your steadfastnesse:
And as you done to haue vpon you reuth,
Your owne desert, and lowly gentillesse,
That will reward you joy for heauinesse,
And tho ye waxen pale, and grene and dede,
Ye must it vse a while withouten drede,

" And it accept and grutchen in no wise,
But where as ye me heartely desire
To loue to loue, me thynke ye be not wise,
Cease of your language, cease I you require,
For he that hath this twenty yere how here,
May not obtaine, than maruaille I that ye
Be now so bold of loue to treat with me."

" Ah mercy herte, my lady and my loue,
My rightwise princeesse and my liues guide,
Now may I plaine to Venus all aboue,
That ruthlesse ye me gane this wound so wide:
What haue I done, why may it not betide,
That for my trowth I may receiued be:
Alas than, your danger and your cruelte,

" In wofull houre, I got was weleway,
In wofull houre fostred and ffeide,
In wofull houre iborse, that I ne may
My supplicacion sweetly haue I speide,
The frosty graue and cold must be my bedde,
Without ye list your grace and mercy sheue,
Death with his axe so fast on me doth heue.

" So great disease and in so littell while,
So littel joy that feke I neuer yet,
And at my wo Fortune ginneth to smile,
That neuer eart I felt so hard a fit:
Confounden ben my spiritis and my wit,
Till that my lady take me to her cure,
Which I loue best of erthly creature.

" But that I like, that may I not come by,
Of that I plain, that haue I haboundance,
Sorrow and thought they sit me wonder aie,
Me is withhold that might be my pleasaunce:
Yet turne agayne my worldly sustenance,
O lady bright, and saufe your faithfull trap,
And or I die yet once vpon me rowt."

With that I fell in sound and dede as stone,
 With colour slaine and wanne as ashe pale,
 And by the hand she caught me vp anon,
 "Arise," (quod she) "what haue ye drunken dwale,
 Why slepen ye it is no niterale:"
 "Now mercy sweete," (quod I) "I wis affraied:"
 "What thing," (quod she) "hath made you so dis-
 maied.

"Now wote I well that ye a louer be,
 Your hew is witness in this thing," she said:
 "If ye were secret, ye might know," (quod she)
 "Certeise and kind, all this shuld be alaid:
 And now mine herte, al that I haue missaid,
 I shall amend and set your herte in ease."
 "That word it is," (quod I) "that doth me please."

"But this I charge, that ye the stenys keepe,
 And breke them not for slouth nor ignoraunce."
 With that she gan to smile and laughen depe,
 "I wis," (quod I) "I will do your pleasaunce:
 The xvi. statute doth me great greuaunce,
 But ye must that release or modife."
 "I graunt," (quod she) "and so I will truly."

And softly than her colour gan appere,
 As rose so red throughout her visage all,
 Wherefore me thinke it is accordyng here,
 That she of right be cleped Rosiall:
 Thus haue I won with words great and small
 Some goodly worde of her, that I loue best,
 And trust she shall yet sette mine herte in rest.

"Gowt on," she said to Philobone, "and take
 This man with you, and lede him all about
 Within the court, and shewe him for my sake
 What louers dwell within, and all the rout
 Of officers him shew, for he is out of dout
 Astraunger yet:"—"Come on," (quod Philobone)
 "Philogeet with me now must ye go."

And stalyng soft with easie pace, I saw,
 About the kyng stonden all esouren,
 Attendaunce, Diligence, and their felow
 Fortherer, Asperaunce, and many one,
 Dred to offend, there stood, and not alone,
 For there was eke the cruell aduersair,
 The Iouers foe that cleped is Dispair.

Which vnto me spake angrely and fell,
 And said, "My lady me disseiue ne shall:
 Trowest thou," (quod she) "that all that she did tel,
 Is true, nay nay, but vnder hony gall,
 Thy birth and hers they be nothyng egall:
 Cast of thine herte, for all her words white,
 For in good faith she loueth thee but slite.

"And eke remembre thine habilité,
 May not compare with her, this well thou wot:"
 Ye then came Hope and said, "My frend let be,
 Beleue him not: Dispaire he ginneth dote,"
 "Alas," (quod I) "here is both cold and hote:
 The one me biddeth loue, the tnder may,
 Thus wote I not what me is best to say.

"But well wote I, my lady granted me,
 Truly to be my woundes remedie,
 Her gentleness may not infected be
 With doublenesse, thus trust I till I die,"
 So cast I to voidie Dispaire company,
 And taken Hope to counceill and to friend,
 "Yas keep that well," (quod Philobone) "in mind."

And there beside within a bay window,
 Stod one in grene ful large of bread and length,
 His beard as black as fethers of the crow,
 His name was Lust of wooder might and strength,
 And with Delite to argue there he think' th,
 For this was all his opinion,
 That loue was sinne: and so he hath begon

To reason fast, and ledge auctoritie:
 "Nay," (quod Delite) "loue is a vertue clere,
 And from the soule his progresse holdeth he:
 Blind apeteite of lust doth often stere,
 And that is sinne: for reason lacketh there,
 For thou dost think thy neighbours wife to win:
 Yet thinke it well that loue may not be sinne.

"For God, and seint, they loue right verryly,
 Void of all sinne and vise this know I well,
 Affection of flesh is sinne truly;
 But verry loue is vertue as I fele,
 For loue may thy freill desire ackle:
 For verry loue is loue, withouten sinne:"
 "Now stint," (quod Lust) "thou spekest not worth
 a pinne."

And there I left them in their arguynge,
 Roomyng farther in the castell wide,
 And in a corner Lier stode talkyng,
 Of lesings fast, with Flattery there beside,
 He said that woman weare attire of pride,
 And men were found of nature variaunt,
 And could be false and shewen beaw semblaunt.

Then Flattery bespake and said, ywis
 See so she goth on patens faire and fete,
 It doth right well: what preyty man is this,
 That rometh here, now truly drink he mite
 Nede I not haue, mine herte for joy doth bete
 Him to behold, so is he goodly fresh:
 It semeth for loue his herte is tender and nesh.

This is the court of lusty folke and glad,
 And well becommeth their abite and array,
 O why be some so sory and so sad,
 Complaining thus in blacke and white and gray,
 Freres they ben, and monkes in good fay:
 Alas for rooth great dole it is to seeue,
 To see them thus bewaile and sory beue.

See how they cry and wring their hands white,
 For they so sote went to religion,
 And eke the nonnes with wayle and wimple plight,
 Their thought is, they ben in confusion:
 "Alas," they saie "we faim perfection,
 In clothes wide and lacke our libertie,
 But all the sinne mote on our frends be.

"For Venus wote, we wold as faine as ye,
 That bene attyred here and welbesene,
 Desiren man and loue in our degre,
 Ferm and faithful right as wold the quene:
 Our frends wick in tender youth and grene,
 Ayeant our will made vs religious,
 That is the cause we mourn and wailen thus."

Then said the monk and freres in the tide,
 "Wel may we curse our abbes and our place,
 Our statutes sharpe to sing in copes wide,
 Chastely to keepe vs out of loues grace,
 And neuer to fele comfort ne solace:
 Yet suffre we the hoste of loues fire,
 And after that some other haply we desire.

"O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore
Hast thou," they said, "berafte vs libertie,
Sith the nature yane vs instrument in store,
And appetite to loue and louers be?
Why mote we suffer such aduersite,
Diane to serue, and Venus to refuse,
Full often sith this matters doth vs muse?"

"We serue and honour sore ayenst our will,
With chastite the goddess and the queene,
Us leeter were with Venus biken still,
And haue reward for loue and soget bene
Unto these women courtly, fresh, and shene,
Fortune we curse thy wheele of variance,
There we were well thou reuist our plesance."

Thus leaue I them with voice of plaint and care,
In raging wo crying full piteously,
And as I yede full naked and full bare,
Some I behold looking dispitously,
On pouerty that dedly cast their eye,
And "Welaway," they cried, and were not faine,
For they no might their glad desire attaine.

For lacke of riches worldly and good,
They bame and curse, and weep, and sayn, "Alas,
That pouerty hath vs hent that whilom stood
At beres ease, and free and in good case,
But now we dare not shew our self in place,
Ne vs embold to dwell in company,
There as our herte wold loue right faithfully."

And yet againward shrieked euery nonne,
The pange of lone so straineth them to crie:
"Now wo the time," (quod they) "that we be bound
This hatefull ordre nise will done vs die,
We sigbe and sobbe, and bleden inwardly,
Fretting ourself with thought and hard complaint,
That nis for loue we waxen wood and faint."

And as I stood beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort full languishing,
Sauage and wild, of loking and of chere,
Their mantelles and their clothes ey teryng,
And off they were of nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind I vnderstand.

They lacked shap, and beauty to preferre
Themsell in loue: and said that God and kind,
Hath forged them to worshippen the sterre,
Venus the hright, and lesen all behind,
His other workes clene and out of mind:
"For other have their full shape and beauty,
And we," (quod they) "been in deformity."

And nie to them there was a company,
That haue the susters varied and mismaide,
I meane the three of fatal destiny,
That be our workes: sodely abraide
Out gan they cry as they had been affraide,
"We curse," (quod they) "that euer hath nature,
Iformed vs this wofull life to endare."

And there eke was Contrite and gan repent,
Confessing hole the wound that Cithere
Hath with the darts of hote desire him sent,
And how that he to loue must subject be,
Than held he all his skornes vanity,
And said that louers held a blisful life,
Yong men and old, and widow, maid and wif.

"Berene me goddess," (quod he) "of thy might
My skornes all and skoffes, that I haue
No power for to maken any wight,
That in thy seruice dwell: for I did raue:
This know I well right now so god me saue,
And I shal be the chief post of thy faith,
And loue uphold, the reuers who so smith."

Dissemble stole not ferre from him in troth,
With party mantil party bode and bose,
And said he had upon his lady routh,
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose
Of his entent ful double I suppose,
In all the world he said he loved her wele,
But ay me thought he loved her nere a dele."

Eke Shamefastnesse was there as I tooke heed,
That blesshed rede, and durst nat ben aknow
She loues was, for therof had she drede,
She stode and hing her visage downe slow,
But such a sight it was to seeze I trow,
As of these roses rody on their stalke,
There coude no wight her spy to speak or talk.

In loues art so gan she to abuse,
Ne durst not vter al her preuitie:
Many a stripe and many a greuous lasbe
She gaue to them that wolden louers be,
And hindered sore the simple comality,
That in no wise durst grace and mercy craue,
For were not she they need but ask and baue,

Where if they now aprochein for to speke,
Than Shamefastnesse retorneth them again:
They thinke, if we our secrets comest broke,
Our ladies wil haue scorn on vs certain,
And perauenture thinke great disdain:
Thus Shamefastnesse may briogus in Dispaire,
Whan she is dede the toder will be heire.

Come forth a Vaunter, now I ring thy bel,
I spied him sone, to God I make a vowe,
He loked blacke as fendes doth in Hell,
"The first," (quod he) "that euer I did wote,
Within a worde she come, I wotte not how,
So that in armes was my lady free,
And so hath ben a thousand mo than she.

"In England, Britain, Spain, and Peardy,
Artois, and Fraunce, and vp in his Holand,
In Burgoine, Naples, and Italy,
Nauerne, and Grece, and vp in hethen lound
Was neuer woman yet that wold withstand,
To ben at commaundement whan I wold,
I lacked neyther siluer, coigne, no gold.

"And there I met with this estate and that,
And here I broched her, and her I trow:
Lo there goeth one of mine, and wotte ye what!
You fresh attired haue I laid full lowe,
And soch one yooder eke right well I know:
I kept the statute whan we lay ifere,
And yet you same hath made me right good chere."

Thus hath a Vaunter blownen euery where,
Al that he knoweth, and more a thousand fold
His auocetry of kinne was to Lier,
For first he maketh promise for to hold
His ladies counsel, and it not vnfold,
Wherfore the secret whan he doth vnsittie,
Than lieth he, that all the world may wille.

For falsing so his promise and behest,
I wouder sore he hath such fantasie,
He lacketh wit I trow or is a beast,
That can no bet himself with reason gie,
By mine aduise, loue shall be contrary
To his soule, and him eke dishonour,
So that in court he shall no more sojour.

"Take heed," (quod she) this little Philobone,
"Where Enuy rocketh in the corner yound,
And sitteth dirke, and ye shall see anon
His leane body, fading both face and bond,
Himself he fretteth, as I vnderstonde,
Witness of Ouid methamorphosose,
The louers fo he is, I will not glose.

"For where a louer thinketh him promote,
Enuy will grutch, repining at his wele,
It sweeteth more about his hertes rote,
That in no wise he cannot liue in hele,
And if the faithful to his lady stele,
Enuy will noyse and ring it round about,
And sey much worse than done is out of dout."

And Priuy Thought rejoyning of himselfe,
Stood not ferre thence in ahyt marcellous,
"You is," (thought I) "some spirit or some elfe,
His subtyll image is so curious:
How is," (quod I) "that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I not of what colour?"
And nere I went and gan to lere and pore.

And framed him a question full hard,
"What is," (quod I) "the thing thou locest best,
Or what is bote vnto thy paines hard,
Me think thou liuest here in great vnrrest,
Thou wandrest aye from sooth to east and west,
And east to north as ferre as I can see,
There is no place in court may holden thee.

"Whom followest thou where is thy herte iset,
But my demaund asoite I thee require."
"Me thought," (quod he) "no creature may let
Me to bea here, and where as I desire:
For where as absence hath done out the fire,
My very thought it kindeleth yet againe,
That bodely me thinkt with my souersine

"I stand and speake, and laugh, and kisse, and
halse:

So that my thought comforteth me ful oft,
I think god wote, though al the world be false,
I will be true, I thinke also how soft
My lady is in spech, and this on loft
Bringeth min herte with joy and great gladnes,
This priuy thought alayeth mine heauines.

"And what I thinke or where to be, no man
In all this Earth can tell iwis but I:
And eke there nis no swalow swift, ne swan
So wight of wing, ne half so yerne can fle,
For I can bene and that right sodenly,
In Heuen, in Hell, in Paradise, and here,
And with my lady whan I will desire.

"I am of counsell, ferre and wide I wote,
With lordes and lady, and theyr prouites
I wotte it all, and he it colde or hote,
They shall not speake without licence of me,
I mine in such as reasonable be,
For first the thing is thought within the hart,
Er any word out from the mouth astart.

And with the word Thought had farewell and yede:
Eke forth went I to seeke the courts guise,
And at the doore came in so God me spede,
Twenty courtours of age and of amise
Liche high, and brude, and as I me aduise,
The Golden Loue, and Leden Loue they hight,
The tone was sad, the toder glad and light.

"Yes draw your herte with all your force and might,
To lustnesse and ben as ye haue seid,
And thinke that I no drope of fauour hight,
Ne neuer had vnto your desire obeid,
Till sodenly me thought me was affraied,
To seeke you waxe so dede of countenance,
And Pite bade me done you some plesaunce.

"Out of her shrine she rose from death to liue,
And in mine care full priuely she spake,
'Doth not your seruauent hens away to driue,
Rosial,' (quod she) 'and than mine herte it brake,
For tenderich: and where I found moch lacke,
In your person, than I my selfe bethought,
And saide, this is the man myne hearte hath sought."

"Gramercy Pity, might I but suffice,
To yee due laude vnto thy shrine of gold,
God wotte I would: for sith that thou did rise
From death to liue for me, I am behold,
To thanken you a thousand times told,
And eke my lady Rosial the shene,
Which hath in comfort set mine herte iweue.

"And here I make mine protestacion,
And depely swere as mine power to bene
Faithful, deuouid of variacion,
And her forbearde in anger or in tene,
And seruiceable to my wordes quene,
With al my reason and intelligence,
To done her honour high and reuerence."

I had not spoke so none the words, but she,
My soverain, did thanke me bertely,
And said, "Abide ye shall dwell still with me,
Till season come of May, for than truly,
The king of loue and all his company,
Shall hold his feste full rialy and well,"
And there I bode till that the season fell.

On May day whan the lark began to rise,
To matens went the lusty nightingale,
Within a temple shapen hawthorn wise,
He might not slepe in all the nightertale,
But "Domine labia," gan he cry and gale,
"My lippes open lord of lous I cry,
And let my mouth thy preising now bewry."

The eagle sang "Venite bodies all,
And let vs joy to loue that is our health,"
And to the deske anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he preeced in by stealth:
Then seyde the faucon our own hertes wealth,
"Domine Dominus noster I wote,
Ye be the God that done vs brenne thus hote."

"Coni enamant," said the popingay,
"Your might is told in Heaumen and firmanent,"
And than came in the gold finch freshe and gay,
And said this psalme with bertily glad intent
"Domini est terra," this lalen intent,
The God of loue hath yerth in gouernaunce:
And that the wren gan scippen and to daunce.

" Jobs Donkno O lord of lous, I pray
Commasnd me well this lesson for rede,
This legende is of all that wolden dey
Marters for lous, God yet the souls spede:
And to thee Uenus sing we out of drede,
By influence of all thy vertue great,
Beseechyng thee to keepe vs in our beat."

The second lesson robin redebreast sang,
" Haile to the god and goddes of our lay,"
And to the lectorn amorously he sprong,
" Haile now," (quod eke) " O fresh season of May,
Our month glad that singen on the spray,
Haile to the floures, rede, and white, and blew,
Which by their vertue maketh our lust new."

The third lesson the turtl doue toke up,
And thereat lough the maucis in a score,
He said, " O God, as mote I dime or suppe,
This folish doue will give us al an horsse,
There bea right here a M bakter borne,
To rede this lesson, which as well as he,
And eke as hote, can lose in all degree."

The turtl doue said, " Welcom, welcom May,
Ghaden and light to lovers that bea trew:
I thanke thee lord of lous that doth pursey,
For me to rede this lesson al of dew,
For in good soth of corage I pursue,
To serue my make till death vs must depart,"
And than " Tu autem" sang he all apart.

" Te deum amoris" sang the thurstal cocke,
Tuball himselfe the first musician,
With key of armony coude not on locke,
So swete tounne as that the thurstal can:
" The kerd of lous we prayen," (quod he) than,
And so done al the foules great and lita,
" Honour we May, in fals lovers dispite."

" Dominus regnauit," said the peoccke there,
The lord of lous that mighty prince wis,
He is recouyd here and euery where:
Now iubilate sing!"—" What meaneth this?"
Said than the linet; " welcome lord of blisse:"
Out sterte the owle with " Benedicite,"
" What meaneth all this mery fare" (quod he.)

" Laudate," sang the lark with voice ful shrill,
And eke the kight " O admirabile,
This quere wil throw mine ears pers and thrill,
But what, welcome this May season," (quod he)
" And honour to the lord of lous mote be,
That hath this feste so solempne and so hie,"
" Amen," said al, and so said eke the pie.

And forth the cockow gan procede anon,
With " Benedicite" thanking God in hast,
That in this May would visite them echon,
And gladden them all while the feast shal last:
And therewithal a laughter out be brast,
" I thanke it God that I shuld and the song,
And all the seruice which hath bea so long."

Thus sang they all the seruice of the fest,
And that was done right erly to my dome,
And forth goth all the court both most and lest,
To fetch the floures fresh, and braunch and blome,
And namely hauthorn brought both page and grouse
With fresh garlants party blew and white,
And than rejoycen in their great delite.

Eke ech at other threw the floures bright,
The primerose, the niolete, and the gold,
So than as I beheld the royall sight,
My lady gan me sodenly behold,
And with a frewe lous plited mussy a fold:
She smote me through the very heart as blisse,
And Uenus yet I thanke I am aliue.

EXPLICIT.

CHAUCER'S DREAM.

NEVER PRINTED BEFORE THE YEAR 1597.

THAT WHICH HERETOFORE HATH COME UNDER THE NAME
OF HIS DREAM, IS THE FOOT OF THE HITCHER: OR THE
DEATH OF BLANCH, DUTCHES OF LANCASTER.

This Dream, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a
covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt
the king's son, with Blanch the daughter of Henry
duke of Lancaster, who, after long love, (during
the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be
dead) were in the end by consent of friends hap-
pily married: figured by a bird bringing in her
bill an herb which restored them to life again.
Here also is shewed Chaucer's match with a cer-
tain gentlewoman, who, although she was a
stranger, was notwithstanding so well liked and
loved of the lady Blanch and her lord, as Chan-
cer himself also was, that gladly they concluded
a marriage between them. [All this says Tyr-
whitt is a mere fancy, but there is no ground for
doubting the authenticity of the poem.]

WHAN Flora the queene of pleasaunce,
Had whole achieved thobeyssaunce
Of the fresh and new season,
Thorow out euery region,
And with her mantle whole couert
That winter made had discourte,
Of auctere without light,
In May I lay vpon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the lord that her wrought,
Couth well entayle in imagery
And shewed had great maistry,
Whan he in so little space
Made such a body and a face,
So great beauty with swich features
More than in other creatures,
And in my thoughts as I lay
In a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forest,
Where after hunting I toke rest,
Nature and kind so in me wrought,
That halfe on sleepe they me brought,
And gan to dreame to my thinking,
With mind of knowliche like making,
For what I dreamed as me thought
I saw it, and I slept nougth,
Wherefore is yet my full beleewe,
That some good spirit that ene,
By meane of some curious port,
Bare me, where I saw payne and sport,

But whether it were I woke or slept,
 Well wot I of, I loogh and wept,
 Wherefore I wold in remembrance,
 Put whole the payne, and the plessaunce,
 Which was to me axen and hale,
 Would God ye wist it every dale,
 Or at the leest, ye might o night
 Of such another haue a sight,
 Although it were to you a payne,
 Yet on the morow ye wold be fayne,
 And wish it might long dure,
 Than might ye say ye had good cure,
 For he that dreames, and venes he see,
 Much the better yet may hee
 Wit what, and of whom, and where,
 And eke the hame it wold hindere,
 To thiinke I see this with mine conne,
 Wis this may not dreame here,
 But signe or signifiuaunce,
 Ofasty thing souning plessaunce,
 For on this wise vpon a night,
 As ye haue heard without light,
 Not all wakyng, ne full on sleepe
 About such houre as louers weepe.
 And cry after their ladies grace,
 Befell me this wonder caue,
 Which ye shall heare and all the wise,
 So wholly as I can deuise,
 In playne English ouill written,
 For sleepe writter well ye witten,
 Excused is, though he do mis,
 More than one that waking is,
 Wherefore here of your gentillesse,
 I you requyre my hoistounesse
 Ye let passe, as thing rade
 And heareth what I wold concluden,
 And of the endityng taketh no heed,
 Ne of the tearmes so God you speed,
 But let all passe as nothing were,
 For thus befell, as you shall here.
 Within an yle me thought I was,
 Where wall, and yate was all of glasse,
 And so was closed round about,
 That leauesse none come in ne out,
 Uncouth and straunge to behold,
 For every yate of fine gold,
 A thousand faues, aie turning,
 Estemed had, and briddes singyng,
 Disert, and on each face a paire,
 With open mouth againe theirre,
 And of a sorte were all the toures,
 Sobtilly corwen after soures,
 Of vncouth colours during aye,
 That neuer been none seme in May,
 With many a small tarret hie,
 But man on linc could I non see,
 Ne creatures, saue ladies play,
 Which were such of theyr array,
 That as me thought of goodliheed,
 They paseden all, and womanhood,
 For to behold them daunce and sing,
 It seemed like none earthly thing,
 Such was their vncouth countinaunce,
 In every play of right vanaunce,
 And of one age euerichone,
 They seemed all saue onely one,
 Which had of yeres suffisaunce,
 For she might neyther sing ne daunce,
 But yet her countenaunce was so glad,
 As she so fewe yeres had had,

As any lady that was there
 And as little it did her dere,
 Of lustines to laugh and tale
 As she had full stuffed a male
 Of disports and new playes:
 Fayre had she been in her daies,
 And maistresse seemed well to be,
 Of all that lusty companie,
 And so she might I you ensure
 For oon the comingest creature
 She was, and so said euerichone,
 That euer her know, there fayled none,
 For she was sober, and well auised,
 And from every fault disguised,
 And nothing used but faith and truth,
 That she was young it was great ruth,
 For every where and in ech place,
 She gouerned her, that in grace
 She stode alway with poure and riche,
 That at a word was none herliche,
 Ne halfe so able maistres to be,
 To such a lusty companie.
 Befell me so, when I auised
 Had, the yle that me suffided,
 And whole the state every where,
 That in that lusty yle was there,
 Which was more wonder to deuise,
 Than the ioieux paradise,
 I dare well say, for soure ne tree,
 Ne thing wheroin plessaunce might bee,
 There fayled none, for every wight,
 Had they desired, day and night,
 Riches, heale, beauty, and ease,
 With every thing that them might please,
 Thinke and haue, it cost so more,
 In such a country there before,
 Had I not bene ne heard tell,
 That liues creature might dwell.
 And when I had thus all about,
 The yle auised throughout,
 The state, and how they were arrayed,
 In my heart I wore well payed,
 And in my selfe I me assured,
 That in my body I was well used,
 Sith I might haue such a grace,
 To see the ladies and the place,
 Which were so faire I you ensure,
 That to my dome though that nature,
 Would euer strine and do her paine,
 She should not com ne mow attaine,
 The leest feature to amend,
 Though she would all her conning spend,
 That to beauty might auise,
 It were but paine and lost transaile,
 Such part in their matuirty,
 Was them alarged of beauty,
 And eke they had a thing notable,
 Usto their death, ay durable,
 And was, that their beauty should dure,
 Which was neuer seme in creature,
 Saue onely thoue (as I trow)
 It hath not he wist ne know,
 Wherefore I praise with their coming,
 That during beauty, rich thing,
 Had they been of their liues certaine,
 They had been quite of every paine,
 And when I woud thus all haue seme,
 The state, the riches, that might seme,
 That me thought impossible were,
 To see one thing more than was there,

That to beauty or glad coming,
 Serue or assaile might any thing.

All sodainly as I there stood,
 This lady that couth so moote good,
 Unto me came with smiling chere,
 And said "Benedicte, this yere
 Saw I neuer man here but you,
 Tell me how ye come hider now?
 And your name, and where ye dwell?
 And whom ye seeke the mote ye tell,
 And how ye come be to this place,
 The soth well told may cause you grace,
 And else ye mote prisoner be,
 Unto the ladies here, and me,
 That haue the gouernance of this yle:"

And with that word she gan to smile,
 And so did all the lusty rout.
 Of ladies that stood her about.
 "Madame," (quod I) "this night past,
 Lodged I was and slept fast,
 In a forest beside a well,
 And now am here, how should I tell,
 Wot I not, by whose ordinance,
 But ouely Fortunes purceinaunce,
 Which puts many as I gese,
 To traualle, paine, and business,
 And lettes nothing for their truth,
 But some sleeth eke, and that is ruth,
 Wherefore I doubt her brittilnes,
 Her variance and vntsteadfastnes,
 So that I am as yet afraid,
 And of my beyng here assaid,
 For wonder thing seemeth me,
 Thus many fresh ladies to see,
 So faire, so cunning, and so young,
 And no man dwelling them among:
 Not I not how I hider come,
 Madame," (quod I) "this all end some,
 What should I faine a long preece
 To you that seeme such a pryncesse,
 What please you commaund or say,
 Here I am you to obey,
 To my power, and all fulfill,
 And prisoner bide at your will,
 Till you duly enforced be,
 Of enery thing ye aske me."

This lady there right well apaid,
 Me by the hand took, and said,
 "Welcome prisoner aduenturus,
 Right glad am I ye haue said thus,
 And for ye doubt me to displese,
 I will assay to do you ease:"
 And with that word, ye amon,
 She, and the ladies ouerichon
 Assembled, and to counsaile went,
 And after that soone for use sent,
 And to me said on this manere,
 Word for word, as ye shall here.

"To see you here we thinke maruaile,
 And how without bote or smile,
 By any subtilty or wyle,
 Ye get hane entre in this yle,
 Bot not for that, yet shall ye see,
 That we gentill women be,
 Loth to displese any right,
 Notwithstanding our great right,
 And for ye shall well vnderstond
 The old custome of this lond,
 Which hath continued many yere,
 Ye shall well wete that with us here

Ye may not bide, for causes twaine,
 Which we be purposed you to raise.

"Thone is this, our ordinance,
 Which is of long continuance,
 Woll not, sothly we you tell,
 That no man here among vs dwell,
 Wherefore ye mote needs retourne,
 In so wise may you here sojourne.

"Thother is eke, that our queene
 Out of the realme, as ye may see,
 Is, and may be to vs a charge,
 If we let you goe here at large,
 For which cause the more we doubt,
 To doe a fault while she is out,
 Or suffer that may be noyssaunce,
 Againe our old accustomaunce."

And when I had these causes twaine
 Heard, O God what a paine
 All sodainly about mine berte,
 There came at ones and how smart,
 In creeping soft as who should steale,
 Or doe me robbe of all mine heale,
 And made me in my thought so fraid,
 That in courage I stode dismayd.
 And standing thus, as was my grace,
 A lady came more than apace,
 With huge preece her about,
 And told how the queene without
 Was arised and would come in,
 Well were they that thider might twin,
 They hid so they would not abide,
 The bridling their horse to ride,
 By fise, by sixe, by two, by thre,
 There was not one abode with me,
 The queene to meet ouerichone,
 They went, and bode with me not one,
 And I after a soft psee,
 Imagining how to purchace
 Grace of the queene, there to bide,
 Till good fortune some happy guide
 Me send might, that would me bring
 Where I was borne to my wounding,
 For way ne foot knew I none,
 Ne witherward I mist to gone,
 For all was sea about the yle,
 No wonder though me list not smile,
 Seeing the case vncooth and strange,
 And so in like a perilous change,
 Imagining thus walking alone,
 I saw the ladies ouerichone,
 So that I might somewhat offer,
 Some after that I drew me nere,
 And tho I was ware of the queene,
 And how the ladies on their knees,
 With joyous words, gladly aduised,
 Her welcomed so that it sufficed,
 Though she princes hole had be,
 Of all enuironed is with see:
 And thus arising, with chere sad,
 All sodainly I was glad,
 That greater joy as mote I thriue,
 I trow had neuer man on liue,
 Than I tho, ne heart more light,
 When of my lady I had sight,
 Which with the queene come was there,
 And in one clothing both they were,
 A knight also there well becene,
 I saw that come was with the queene,
 Of whome the ladies of that yle
 Had huge wonder long while,

Till at the last right soberly,
 The queene her selfe full cunningly,
 With soft words in good wise,
 Said to the ladies young and nice,
 " My sisters how it hath befall,
 I trow ye know it one and all,
 That of long time here have I bene,
 Within this yle biding as queene,
 Living at ease, that never wight
 More parfit joy have me might,
 And to you been of governance,
 Such as you found in whole pleasance,
 In every thing as ye know,
 After our custome and our law,
 Which how they first found were,
 I trow ye wote all the manere,
 And who queene is of this yle,
 As I have been long while,
 Ech seven yeeres not of vantage,
 Visit the hevenly armitage,
 Which on a rocke so high stonde,
 In strange sea out from all lande,
 That to make the pilgrimage
 Is called a long perilous viage,
 For if the wind be not good friend,
 The journey dures to the end
 Of him that it undertakes,
 Of twenty thousand one not escapes,
 Upon which rock growth a tree,
 That certaine yeeres beares apples three,
 Which three apples who may have,
 Been from all displeasance save,
 That in the seven yeeres may fall,
 This wote you well one and all,
 For the first apple and the best,
 Which growth vnto you next,
 Hath three vertues notable,
 And keepeth youth aie durable,
 Beauty and looke, ever in one,
 And is the best in emerichon,
 " The second apple red and grene,
 Owey with lookes of your yowte,
 You nourishes in pleasance,
 Better than partidge or fessauce,
 And feeds every liwes wight
 Pleasantly with the sight.
 " The third apple of the three,
 Which groweth lowest on the tree,
 Who it beares may not faile
 That to his pleasance may answe,
 So your pleasure and beauty rich,
 Your during youth ever liobe,
 Your truth, your cunning, and your weale,
 Hath aye floured, and your good beale,
 Without sicknes or displeasance,
 Or thing that to you was noysaunce,
 So that you have as goddesses,
 Lived alone all princesses:
 Now is befall as ye may see,
 To gather these said apples three,
 I have not failed againe the day,
 Thitherward to take the way,
 Weaing to speed as I had oft,
 But when I come, I find aloft
 My sister which that here stands,
 Having those apples in her hands,
 Amising them and nothing said,
 Bot looked as she were well paid:
 And as I stood her to behold,
 Thinking how my joyes were cold,

Sith I those apples have no might,
 Even with that so came this knight,
 And in his armes of me aware,
 Me took, and to his ship me bare,
 And said, though him I never had seen,
 Yet had I long his lady been,
 Wherefore I should with him wend,
 And he would to his liwes end
 My servaunt be, and gas to sing
 As one that had woune a rich thing,
 Tho were my spirits fro me gone,
 So sodainly everichone,
 That in the appeared but death,
 For I felt neither life ne breath,
 Ne good ne harme none I knew,
 The sodaine paine me was so new,
 That had not the hasty grace be
 Of this lady, that fro the tree
 Of her gentilnesse so hind
 Me to comfort, I had died,
 And of her three apples, one
 In mine hand there put anon,
 Which brought againe mind and breath,
 And me recovered from the death,
 Wherefore to her so am I hold,
 That for her all things do I wold,
 For she was lech of all my smart,
 And from great paine so quite mine hart,
 And as God wote, right as ye heare,
 Me to comfort with friendly cheare,
 She did her provesse and her wight,
 And truly eke so did this knight,
 In that he couth, and oft said,
 That of my wo he was ill paid,
 And cursed the ship that them there brought,
 The mast, the master that it wrought,
 And as ech thing mote have an end,
 My sister here your brother frend,
 Con with her words so womanly
 This knight extreat, and comingly,
 For mine honour and his also,
 And said that with her we should go
 Both in her ship, where she was brought,
 Which was so wonderfully wrought,
 So cleane, so rich, and so araid,
 That we were both content and paid,
 And me to comfort and to please,
 And mine herte to put at ease,
 She toke great paine in little while,
 And thus hath brought vs to this yle,
 As ye may see, wharfore echorne,
 I pray you thanke her one and one,
 As heartily as ye can devise,
 Or imagine in any wise,"
 At once there the men might seen
 A world of ladies fall on kneen
 Before my lady that there about
 Was left none standing in the rout,
 But altogether they went at ones
 To kneele, they spared not for the stones,
 Ne for estate, ne for their blood,
 Well shewed there they couth much good,
 For to my lady they made such feast,
 With such words, that the least,
 So friendly and so faithfully
 Said was, and so cunningly,
 That wonder was seing their youth,
 To here the language they couth,
 And wholly how they governed were,
 In thanking of my lady there,

And said by will and mandement,
 They were at her commaundement,
 Which was to me as greet a joy,
 As winning of the towne of Troy
 Was to the hardy Grekes strong,
 When they it wan with sieg long,
 To see my lady in such a place,
 So receined as she was,
 And when they talked had a while
 Of this and that, and of the yle,
 My lady, and the ladies there,
 Altogether as they were,
 The queene her selfe began to play,
 And to the aged lady say:
 " Now seemeth you not good it were,
 Sith we be altogether here,
 To ordaine and deuse the best,
 To set this knight and me at rest,
 For woman is a feble wight,
 To reere a warre against a knight,
 And sith he here is in this place,
 At my list, danger, or grace,
 It were to me great villany,
 To do him any tyranny,
 But faine I would, now will ye here,
 In his owne country that he were,
 And I in peesce, and he at ease,
 This were a way vs both to please,
 If it might be, I you beseech,
 With him hereof you fall in speech."
 This lady tho began to smile,
 Auising her a little while,
 And with glad chere she said anon,
 " Madam I will vnto him gone,
 And with him speake, and of him fele
 What he desires euerie dele:"
 And soberty this lady tho,
 Her selfe and other ladies two
 She tooke with her, and with sad chere,
 Said to the knight on this manere,
 " Sir, the princes of this yle,
 Whom for your plessaunce many mile,
 Ye sought haue, as I vnderstood,
 Till at the last ye haue her food,
 Me sent hath here, and ladies twaine,
 To heare all thing that ye saine,
 And for what cause ye haue her sought,
 Faine would she wote, and whol your thought,
 And why you do her all this wo,
 And for what cause you be bes fo.
 And why of euery wight vware,
 By force ye to your ship her bare,
 That she so nigh was agone,
 That mind ne speech had she none,
 But as a painfull creature,
 Dying, abode her aduenture,
 That her to see indure that paine,
 Here weell say vnto you plaine,
 Right on your selfe ye did amisse,
 Seing how she a princes is."
 This knight the which cowth his good,
 Right of his truth meued his blood,
 That pale he woxe as any lead,
 And lookt as he would be dead,
 Rood was there none in nother cheke,
 Worldlesse he was and seemed sick,
 And so it proued well he was,
 For without mouing any part,
 All sodainely as thing dying,
 He fell at once downe sowing,

That for his wo, this lady fraid,
 Unto the queene her hyed and said,
 " Cometh on anon as haue you blame,
 But ye be wise, thing is amisse,
 This knight is dead or will be soone,
 Lo where he lyeth in a swoone,
 Without word, or answering
 To that I haue said, any thing:
 Wherefore I doubt, that the blame,
 Might be biadering to your name,
 Which floured hath so many yere,
 So long, that for nothing here,
 I would in no wise be dyed,
 Wherefore good were that ye hyed,
 His life to saue at the least,
 And after that his wo be ceast,
 Command him void, or dwell,
 For in no wise dare I more mell
 Of thing whereis such perill is,
 As like is now to fall of this."
 This queene right tho full of great feare,
 With all the ladies present there,
 Unto the knight came where he lay,
 And made a lady to him say:
 " Lo here the queene, awake for shame,
 What will you doe, is this good game?
 Why lye you here, what is your mind?
 Now is well seene your wit is blind,
 To see so many ladies here,
 And ye to make none other chere,
 But as ye set them all at nought,
 Arise, for his lone that you bought:"
 But what she said, a word not ooe
 He spake, ne answer gaue her none:
 The queene of very pittie tho,
 Her worship, and his like also,
 To saue there she did her paine,
 And quoke for feare, and gan to saine
 For wo, " Alas what shall I doe,
 What shall I say this man vnto,
 If he die here, lost is my name,
 How shal I play this perillous game?
 If any thing be here amisse,
 It shall be said, it rigour is,
 Whereby my name impayre might,
 And like to die eke is this knight:"
 And with that word her hand she laid
 Upon his brest, and to him said,
 " Awake my knight, lo it am I
 That to you speake, unwe tell me why
 Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
 Seing ye be in country sure,
 Among such friends that would you beale;
 Your hertes ease eke and your weale,
 And if I wist what you might ease,
 Or know the thing that you might please,
 I you ensure it should not faile,
 That to your heale you might smile:
 Wherefore with all my herte I pray
 Ye rise, and let vs talke and play,
 And see how many ladies here,
 Be comen for to make good chere."
 All was for nought, for still as stone,
 He lay, and word spoke none,
 Long while was or he might braid,
 And of all that the queene had said,
 He wist no word but at the last,
 " Mercy," twice he cried fast,
 That pittie was his voice to heare,
 Or to behold his painefull cheere.

Which was not fained well was to sein,
 Both by his visage and his eyu,
 Which on the queene at once he cast,
 And sighed as he would to brast,
 And after that he shright so,
 That wonder was to see his wo,
 For sith that paine was first named,
 Was neuer more wofull paine attained,
 For with voice dead he gan to plaine,
 And to himselfe these words saine,
 " I wofull wight full of malure,
 Am worse than dead, and yet dure,
 Maugre any paine or death,
 Against my will I fell my breath :
 Why nam I dead sith I ne serus,
 And sith my lady will me sterne,
 Where art thou Death art thou agast,
 Well shall we meete yet at the last,
 Though thou thee hide it is for nought,
 For where thou dwelst thou shalt be sought,
 Maugre thy subill double face,
 Here will I die right in this place,
 To thy dishonour and mine ease,
 Thy manner is no wight to please,
 What needs thee sith I thee seche,
 So thee to hide my paine to este,
 And well wost thou I will not live,
 Who would me all this world here giue,
 For I haue with my cowardise,
 Lost joy, and heale, and my seruise,
 And made my soueraigne lady so,
 That while she liues I trow my so
 she will be enar to her end,
 Thus haue I neither joy ne frend,
 Wote I not whether hast or sloth,
 Hath caused this now by my troth,
 For at the hermitage full his,
 When I her saw first with mine iye,
 I hid till I was aloft,
 And made my pace small and soft,
 Till in mine armes I had her fast,
 And to my ship bare at the last,
 Whereof she was displeasid so,
 That coudesse there seemed her wo,
 And I thereof had so great fere,
 That me repent that I coorse there,
 Which heat I trow gan her displese,
 And is the cause of my disease :"
 And with that word he gan to cry,
 " Now Death, Death," twy or thry,
 And motred wot I not what of sloth,
 And euen with that the queene of routh,
 Him in her armes took and said,
 " Now mine owne knight be not euill apaid,
 That I a lady to you sent,
 To haue knowledge of your entent,
 For in good faith I meant but well,
 And would ye wist it euery dele,
 Nor will not do to you ywis,"
 And with that word she gan him kisse,
 And prayed him rise, and said she would
 His welfare by her truth, and told
 Him how she was for his disease
 Right sory, and faine would him please,
 His life to saue : these words tho,
 She said to him and many mo,
 In comforting, for from the paine,
 She would he were deliuered faine,
 The knight tho vp cast his ern,
 And when he saw it was the queen,

That to him had these words said,
 Right in his wo he gan to braid,
 And him vp dresses for to knele,
 The queene auising wonder welle :
 But as he rose he ouertrew,
 Wherefore the queene, yet eft anew
 Him in her armes anon looke,
 And pitiously gan on him looke,
 But for all that nothing she said,
 Ne spake not like she were well paid,
 Ne no chere made, nor sad, ne light,
 But all in one to euery wight,
 There was seene, councing, with estate,
 In her without noise or debate,
 For saue oonly a looke piteous,
 Of womanhead vndispiteous,
 That she showed in countenance,
 For seemed her herte from obeissance,
 And not for that she did her reime,
 Him to recure from the peene,
 And his herte to put at large,
 For her entent was to his barge
 Him to bring against the eue,
 With certaine ladies and take leue,
 And pray him of his gentillesse,
 To suffer her thenceforth in pece,
 As other princes had before,
 And from thenceforth for euermore,
 She would him worship in all wise,
 That gentillesse might deuise,
 And paine her wholly to fulfill,
 In honour, his pleasure and will.
 And during thus this knights wo,
 Present the queene and other mo,
 My lady and many another wight,
 Ten thousand ships at a sight,
 I saw come ouer the wavy flood,
 With saile and oar, that as I stood
 Them to behold, I gan maruaile,
 From whom might come so many a saile,
 For sith the time that I was bore,
 Such a many there before,
 Had I not seene, ne so arrayed,
 That for the sight my herte played
 To and fro within my brest,
 For joy, long was or it would rest,
 For there was sailes full of floores,
 After castels with huge toures,
 Seeming full of armes bright,
 That wonder lusty was the sight,
 With large toppes, and mastes long,
 Richly depeint and rear among,
 At certaine times gan repaire
 Small birds downe from thaire,
 And on the ships bounds about,
 Sate and song with voice full out,
 Ballades and layes right joyously,
 As they coeth in their harmony,
 That you to write that I there see,
 Mine excuse is it may not be,
 For why, the matter were to long
 To name the birds and write their song,
 Whereof soon the tidings there
 Unto the queene soon brought were,
 With many alas, and many a doubt,
 Shewing the ships there without,
 Tho gan the aged lady weepe,
 And said " Alas our joy on sleepe
 Soone shall be brought, ye long or night,
 For we discried been by this knight,

For certes it may none other be,
 But he is of yond companie,
 And they be come him here to seeche,
 And with that word her failed speche,
 "Without remedy we be destruid,"
 Full oft said all, and gan concluden,
 Holy at once at the last,
 That best was, shite their yates fast,
 And arme them all in good limgages,
 As they had done of old vngage,
 And of fayre wordes make their abot,
 This was their counsaile and the knot,
 And other purpose tookte they none,
 But armed thus forth they gone
 Toward the walles of the yle,
 But or they come there long while,
 They met the great lord of boue,
 That called is the god of loue,
 That them auised with such chere,
 Right as he with them angry were,
 Auailed them not thir walls of glasse,
 This mighty lord let not to passe,
 The shutting of their yates fast,
 All they had ordaind was but wast,
 For whan his ships had found land,
 This lord anon with bow in hand,
 Into this yle with huge presse,
 Hied fast and would not cease,
 Till he came there the knight lay,
 Of queene ne lady by the way,
 Tookte he no heed but forth past,
 And yett all followed at the last,
 And whan he came where lay the knight,
 Well abowed he, he had great might,
 And forth the queene called anon,
 And all the ladies eneriehoun,
 And to them said, "Is not thus routh,
 To see my seruaunt for his truth,
 Thus leane, thus sick, and in this paine,
 And wot not vnto whom to plaine,
 Sawe onely one without mo,
 Which might him heale and is his fo,
 And with that word, his heavy brow
 He shewed the queene and looked row,
 This mighty lord forth the anone,
 With o looke her faults echone
 He can her shew in little speech,
 Commanding her to be his leech,
 Withouten more shortly to say
 He thought the queene soone should obey,
 And in his hoad he shoke his bow.
 And said right soone he would be know,
 And for she had so long refused
 His service, and his lawes not vred,
 He let her wit that he was wroth,
 And bent his bow and forth he goth
 A pace or two, and euen there
 A large draught, vp to his eare
 He drew, and with an arrow ground
 Sharpe and new, the queene a wound
 He gaue, that pierced vnto the herte,
 Which afterward full sore gan smart,
 And was not whole of many yeare,
 And euen with that "Be of good cheare,
 My knight," quod he, "I will thee hele,
 And thee restore to parfitte wele,
 And for each paine thou hast endured,
 To haue two joys thou art cured,"
 And forth he past by the rout,
 With sober cheare walking about,

And what he said I thought to heire;
 Well wist he which his seruaunts were,
 And as he passed anon he fund
 My lady and her tookte by the bond,
 And made her chere as a golde,
 And of beaute called her princes,
 Of bouante eke gaue her the name,
 And said there was nothing blame
 In her, but she was vertuous,
 Smaing she would no pity vse,
 Which was the cause that he her sought,
 To put that far out of her thought,
 And sith she had whole richesse
 Of womanhead, and friendlinesse,
 He said it was nothing fitting,
 To void pity his owne legging,
 And gan her preach and with her play,
 And of her beauty told her aie,
 And said she was a creature,
 Of whom the name should endure,
 And in booke full of pleasaunce
 Be put for euer in remembrance,
 And as me thought more friendly
 Unto my lady, and goodlely
 He spake, than any that was there,
 And for the appuik, I trow it were,
 That she had in possession,
 Wherefore long in procession,
 Many a pace arme vnder other,
 He welke, and so did with none other,
 But what he would commaund or say,
 Forthwith needs all must obey,
 And what he desired at the last,
 Of my lady, was by request,
 And whan they long together had bene,
 He brought my lady to the queene,
 And to her said, "So God you speed,
 Shew grace, consent, that is need,"
 My lady tho full conningly,
 Right well auised, and womanly
 Downe gan to kneele vpon the floures,
 Which April nourished had with shoures,
 And to this mighty lord gan say,
 "That pleaseth you, I will obey,
 And me restraine from other thought,
 As ye woll all thyng shall be wrought,"
 And with that word kneeling she quoke,
 That mighty lord in armes her tooke,
 And said "You haue a seruaunt one,
 That truer living is there none,
 Wherefore good were, seeing his trouthe,
 That on his paines ye had routh,
 And purpose you to heare his speech,
 Fully auised him to leech,
 For of one thyng ye may be sure,
 He will be yours, while he may dure,"
 And with that word right on his game
 Me thought he lough, and told my name,
 Which was to me maruile, and fere,
 That what to do I nist there,
 Ne whether was me bet or none,
 There to abide, or thus to gone,
 For well wend I my lady wold
 Imagen, or deme, that I had told
 My counsaile whole, or made complaint
 Unto that lord, that mighty saint,
 So verily, each thyng vnsought,
 He said as he had knowne my thought,
 And told my trouthe and mine vngace,
 Bet than I couth haue for mine ease,

Though I had studied all a wote,
 Well wist that lord that I was seke,
 And would be leched wonder faine,
 No man me blame, mine was the paine;
 And when this lord had all said,
 And long with my lady plaid,
 She gan to smile with spirit glade,
 This was the answers that she made,
 Which put me there in double peine,
 That what to do, ne what to seine
 Wist I not, ne what was the best,
 Ferre was my herte than fro his rest,
 For as I thought, that smiling signe
 Was token, that the herte incline
 Would to requests reasonable,
 Because smiling is favourable
 To every thing that shall thrive,
 So thought I the anon blise,
 That wordlesse answer in no toun
 Was tane for obligatioun,
 Ne called surely in no wise,
 Amongst them that called been wise.
 Thus was I in a joyous doot,
 Sure and vnsurest of that foote,
 Right as mine herte thought it were,
 So more or lesse wexe my fere,
 That if one thought made it wele,
 Another shent it every dele,
 Till at the last I cooth no more,
 But purposed as I did before,
 To serue truly my liues space,
 Awaiting ener the yeare of grace,
 Which may fall yet or I sterue,
 If it please her that I serue,
 And serued haue, and woll do eter,
 For thyng is dooe, that me is leter,
 Than her service, whose presence
 Mine Heaven is whole, and her absence
 As Hell, full of diuers paines,
 Whych to the death full oft me straines,
 Thus in my thoughts, as I stood,
 That vneth felt I harme no good,
 I saw the queene a little pass
 Come where this mighty lord was,
 And kneeled downe in presence there
 Of all the ladies that there were,
 With sober countenance aised,
 In few words that well suffised,
 And to this lord anon present
 A bill, wherein whole her entent
 Was written, and how she besought,
 As he knew euery will and thought,
 That of his godhead and his grace
 He would forgyue all old trespass,
 And vndisplesed be of time past,
 For she would ever bestedfast,
 And in his seruite to the death
 Use euery thought while she had breath,
 And sight and wept, and said no more,
 Within was written all the sore:
 At whych bill the lord gan smile,
 And said he would within that yle
 Be lord and syre, both east and west,
 And cadd it there his new conquest,
 And in great counceill toke the queene,
 Long were the tales them betwene,
 And ower her hill he read thise,
 And wonder gladly gan devise
 Her features faire, and her visage,
 And bad good thrift on that image,
 VOL. I.

And said he trowed her compeint
 Should after cause her be corseint,
 And in his sleues he put the bill,
 Was there none that knew his will,
 And furth he walke apace about,
 Beholding all the lusty rout,
 Halfe in a thought with smiling chere,
 Till at the last, as ye shall here,
 He turned vnto the queene ageine,
 And said, " To morne, here in this pleine,
 I woll ye be, and all yours,
 That purposed ben to weare founr,
 Or of my lusty colour we,
 It may not be to you excuse,
 Ne none of yours in no wise,
 That able be to my seruise,
 For as I said haue here before,
 I will be lord for eny more
 Of you, and of this yle, and all,
 And of all yours, that haue shall
 Joy, peace, ease, or in pleasaunce
 Your liues we without noysaunce;
 Here will I in state be seeme."
 And turned his visage to the queene,
 " And you give knowledge of my will,
 And a full answers of your bill,"
 Was there no nay, ne words none,
 But very obeisunt seemed echone,
 Queene and other that were there,
 Well seemed it they had great fere,
 And there toke lodging every night,
 Was none departed of that night,
 And some to read old romances,
 Them occupied for their pleasaunce,
 Some to make vreciaies, and laies,
 And some to other diuerse plaies:
 And I to me a romance tooke,
 And as I reading was the booke,
 Me thought the sphere had no rim,
 That it was rising of the Sun,
 And such a prees into the pleine
 Assemble gone, that with great paine
 One might for other go ne stand,
 Ne none take other by the hand,
 Withouten they distourbed were,
 So huge and great the prees was there.
 And after that within two houres,
 This mighty lord all in founr
 Of diuers colours many a paire,
 In his estate vp in the aire,
 Well two fathom, as his hight,
 He set him there in all their sight,
 And for the queene and for the knight,
 And for my lady, and euery night,
 In hast he sent, so that neuer one
 Was there absent, but come echone:
 And when they thus assembled were,
 As ye haue heard me say you here,
 Without more tarrying on hight,
 There to be seene of euery wight,
 Up stood among the prees aboute
 A counsailer, scrusaunt of Loue,
 Which seemed well, of great estate,
 And shewed there, how no debate
 Owe ne goodly might be used
 In gentlinesse, and be excused,
 Wherefore he said, his lords will,
 Was euery wight there should be still,
 And in pees, and one accord,
 And thus commaunded at a word,
 C o

And can his tongue to swiche language
 Turne, that yet in all mine age
 I heard I never so conningly
 Man speake, ne halfe so faithfully,
 For euery thing he said there,
 Seemed as it insealed were,
 Or approued for very trow :
 Swiche was his conning language new,
 And well according to his chere,
 That where I be, me thinks I here
 Him yet alway, when I mine one
 In any place may be alone :
 First con he of the lusty yle
 All thastate in little while
 Rehearse, and wholly euery thing,
 That caused there his lordis conning,
 And euery wele and euery wo,
 And for what cause ech thing was so,
 Well shewed he there in easie speech,
 And how the sicked had need of leech :
 And that whole was, and in grace,
 He told plainly why ech thing was,
 And at the last he con conclude,
 Voided euery language rude,
 And said, " That prince, that mighty lord,
 Or his departing, would accord
 All the parties there present,
 And was the fine of his entent,
 Witnesse his presence in your sight,
 Which sits among you in his might : "
 And kneeled downe withouten more,
 And not o word spake he more.

The gan this mighty lord him dresse,
 With cheare suised, to do largesse,
 And said vnto this knight and me,
 " Ye shall to joy restored be,
 And for ye haue ben true ye twaine,
 I graunt you here for euery paine
 A thousand joys euery weeke,
 And looke ye be no lenger seekes
 And both your ladies, to hem here,
 Take ech his own, boeth of good chere,
 Your happy day is new begun,
 Sith it was rising of the Sun,
 And to all other in this place,
 I graunt wholly to stand in grace,
 That serueth truly, without slouth,
 And to aunced be by trowth. "
 Tho can this knight, and I downe kneele,
 Wening to doe wonder wele,
 " Seeing O Lord your great mercy,
 Us hath enriched, so openly,
 That we deserue may neuer more,
 The least part, but euermore
 With soules and body truly serue
 You and yours till we sterue. "
 And to their ladies there they stood,
 This knight that couth so unikel good,
 Went in hast, and I also,
 Ioyous, and glad were we tho,
 And also rich in euery thought,
 As he that all hath and ought nought,
 And them besought in humble wise,
 Us accept to their seruice,
 And shew vs of their friendly cheares,
 Which in their treasure many yeares,
 They kept had, vs to great paine,
 And told how their seruants twaine,
 Were and would be, and so had eter,
 And to the death chaunge would we neuer,

Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ill,
 But fill their ordinance and will :
 And made our othes fresh new,
 Our old seruice to renew,
 And wholly theirs for euermore,
 We there become, what might we more,
 And well awaiting, that in slouth,
 We made no fault, ne in our trowth,
 Ne thought not do, I you ensure,
 With our will, where we may dure.
 This season past, againe an eue,
 This lord of the queene tooke leue,
 And said he would hastily returne,
 And at good leisure there sojourn,
 Both for his honour, and for his ease,
 Commanding fast, the knight to please,
 And gaue his statutes in papers,
 And ordent diuers officers,
 And forth to ship the same night
 He went, and soone was out of sight.
 And on the morrow when the aue
 Attenued was, and wonder faire,
 Early at rising of the Sun,
 After the night a way was run,
 Playing vs on the riuage,
 My lady spake of her voyage,
 And said she made small journaies,
 And held her in straunge countries,
 And forthwith to the queene went,
 And shewed her wholly her entent,
 And tooke her leue with cheare weeping,
 That pity was to see that parting :
 For to the queene it was a paine,
 As to a martyr new ysaie,
 That for her wo, and she so tender,
 Yet I weepe oft when I remember,
 She offered there to resigne,
 To my lady eight times or nine,
 Thastate, the yle, shortly to tell,
 If it might please her there to dwell.
 And said, for euer her linage,
 Should to my lady doe honage,
 And hers be hole withouten more,
 Ye, and all theirs for euermore :
 " Nay God forbid, " my lady oft,
 With many conning word and soft,
 Seid, " that euer such thing should beene,
 That I consent should, that a queene
 Of your estate, and so well named,
 In any wise should be attained :
 But would be faine with all my herte,
 What so befall, or how me auert,
 To doe thing that you might please,
 In any wise, or be your ease, "
 And kissed there, and bad good night,
 For which leue wupt many a wight,
 There might men here my lady praised,
 And such a name of her araised,
 What of cunning and friendlinesse,
 What of beauty with gentilnesse,
 What of glad and friendly cheares,
 That she used in all her yeares,
 That wonder was here euery wight
 To say well, how they did their might,
 And with a pree vpon the morrow,
 To ship her brought, and what a sorrow
 They made, when she should vnder mile,
 That and ye wist, ye would meruaile,
 Forth goeth the ship, out goeth the rowd,
 And I as wood man vubond,

For doubt to be behind there,
 Into the sea withouten fere,
 Anon I ran, till with a waw,
 All sodenly I was ouerthrow,
 And with the water to and fro,
 Backward and forward traualled so,
 That mind and breath, nigh was gone,
 For good ne harme knew I none,
 Til at the last with hookes tweiue,
 Men of the ship with mikel peine,
 To saue my life, did such traualle,
 That and ye wist ye would mervaille,
 And in the ship me drew on his,
 And saiden all that I would die,
 And laid me long downe by the maast,
 And of their clothes on me cast,
 And there I made my testament,
 And wist my selfe not what I ment,
 But when I said had what I would,
 And to the maast my wo all told,
 And tane my leaue of euery wight,
 And closed mine eyes, and lost my sight,
 Anised to die, without more speech,
 Or any remedy to seech
 Of grace new, as was great need:
 My lady of my paine tooke heed,
 And her bethought how that for trouth
 To see me die it were great routh,
 And to me came in sober wise,
 And softly said, "I pray you rise,
 Come on with me, let be this fare,
 All shall be wel, haue ye no care,
 I will obey ye and fulfil
 Holy in all that lord's will,
 That you and me not long ago,
 After his list commaunded so,
 That there againe no resistance
 May be without great offence,
 And therefore now what I say,
 I am and will be friendly eye,
 Rise vp behold this auantage,
 I graunt you inheritaunce,
 Peaceably without strue,
 During the daies of your liue,"
 And of her apples in my sleue
 One she put, and took her leue
 In words few and said, "Good hele,
 He that all made you send and wele,"
 Wherewith my paines all at ones
 Tooke such leaue, that all my bones,
 For the new durense pleaseaunce,
 So as they couth, desired to daunce,
 And I as whole as any wight,
 Up rose with joyous herte and light,
 Hole and tsnicke, right wele at ease,
 And all forget had my disease,
 And to my lady where she plaid,
 I went anone, and to her said:
 "He that all joies persons to please
 First ordained with parfite ease,
 And euery pleasure can depart,
 Send you madame, as large a part,
 And of his goods such plenty,
 As he has done you of beauty,
 With hele and all that may be thought,
 He send you all as he all wrought:
 Madame" (quoth I) "your seruaunt trefw,
 Haue I ben long, and yet will new,
 Without change or repentaunce,
 In any wise or variuaunce,

And so will do as thriue I euer,
 For thing is none that me is leuar
 Than you to please, how euer I fare,
 Mine bertes lady and my welfare,
 My life, mine hele, my lech also,
 Of euery thing that doth me wo,
 My helpe at need, and my surety
 Of euery joy that longs to me,
 My succours whole in all wise,
 That may be thought or man deuise,
 Your grace madame such haue I found,
 Now in my need that I am bound
 To you for euer so Christ me saue,
 For heale and liue of you I haue,
 Wherefore is reason I you scoue,
 With due obeisaunce till I sterue,
 And dead and quicke be euer yours,
 Late, early, and at all hours,"
 The came my lady small alite,
 And in plaine English con consite
 In words few, whole her entent
 She shewed me there, and how she ment
 To neward in euery wise,
 Wholly she came at their deuise,
 Without processe or long trauell,
 Charging me to keepe counsell,
 As I would to her grace attaine,
 Of which commaundement I was faine.
 Wherefore I passe ouer at this time,
 For counsell cords not well in rime,
 And eke the oth that I haue sworn,
 To breake, me were better vnore,
 Why for untruse for euermore
 I should be hold, that neuermore
 Of me in place should be report
 Thing that auaille might, or comfort
 To newards in any wise,
 And ech wight would me dispise
 In that they couth, and me reprecue,
 Which were a thing sore for to gresue,
 Wherefore hereof more mencion
 Make I not now ne long sermon,
 But shortly thus I me excuse,
 To rime a counsell I refuse.
 Sailing thus two dayes or thre,
 My lady towards her countree,
 Ouer the waues high and grece,
 Which were large and deepe betweene,
 Upon a time me called and said,
 That of my hele she was well paid,
 And of the queene and of the yle,
 She talked with me long while,
 And of all that she there had seene,
 And of the state, and of the queene,
 And of the ladies name by name,
 Two houres or mo, this was her game,
 Till at the last the wind gan rise,
 And blew so fast, and in such wise,
 The ship that euery wight can say,
 "Madame er eue be of this day,
 And God ufore, ye shall be there,
 As ye would faiest that ye were,
 And doubt not within sixe hours,
 Ye shall be there, as all is yours,"
 At which words she gan to smite,
 And said that was no long while,
 That they her set, and vp she rose,
 And all about the ship she gese,
 And made good cheare to euery wight,
 Till of the land she had a sight,

Of which sight glad God it wot,
 She was abasabed and aboot,
 And forth goeth, shortly you to tell,
 Where she accustomed was to dwell,
 And received was as good right,
 With joyous cheere and herbes light,
 And as a glad new aventure,
 Pleasant to every creature,
 With which landing tho I woke,
 And found my chamber full of smoke,
 My cheekes eke unto the cares,
 And all my body weat with teares,
 And all so feeble and in such wise,
 I was, that vneth might I rise,
 So fare trauided and so faint,
 That neither knew I kirke ne saint,
 Ne what was what, ne who was who,
 Ne auised, what way I would go,
 But by a venturous grace,
 I rise and walkt, sought pace and pace,
 Till I a winding staire found,
 And held the vice eye in my hood,
 And vpward softly so gan creepe,
 Till I came where I thought to sleepe
 More at mine ease, and out of preace,
 At my good leisure, and in peace,
 Till somewhat I recomfort were
 Of the tranell and great feare
 That I endured had before,
 This was my thought without more,
 And as a wight witlesse and fatut,
 Without more, in a chamber paint
 Full of stories old and diuers,
 More than I can now rehearse,
 Unto a bed full soberly,
 So as I might full sothly,
 Pace after other, and nothing said,
 Till at the last downe I me laid,
 And as my mind would giue me leste,
 All that I dreamed had that cue,
 Before all I can rehearse,
 Right as a child at schoole his verse
 Doth after that he thinketh to thriue,
 Right so did I for all my liue,
 I thought to haue in remembrance,
 Both the paine and the pleasure,
 The dreame whole, as it me befell,
 Which was as ye here me tell,
 Thus in my thoughts as I lay,
 That happy or vnhappy day,
 Wot I not so haue I blame,
 Of the two, which is the name:
 Befell me so, that there a thought,
 By procees now on sleepe me brought,
 And me governed so in a while,
 That againe within the yle,
 Me thought I was, whereof the knight,
 And of the ladies I had a sight,
 And were assembled on a greene,
 Knight and lady, with the queene,
 At which assembly there was said,
 How they all content and paid,
 Were wholly as in that thing,
 That the knight there should be king,
 And they would all for sure witnessse
 Wedded be both more and lesse,
 In remembrance without more,
 Thus they consent for euermore,
 And was concluded that the knight
 Depart should the same night,

And forthwith there tooke his voiage,
 To journey for his marriage,
 And returne with such an host,
 That wedded might be least and most,
 This was concluded, written and sealed,
 That it might not be repealed
 In no wise but aie be firme,
 And all should be within a tearme,
 Without more excusation,
 Both feast and coronation,
 This knight which had thereof the charge,
 Anon into a litle barge,
 Brought was late against an eue,
 Where of all he tooke his leaue,
 Which barge was as a man thought,
 After his pleasure to him brought,
 The queene her selfe accustomed aye
 In the same barge to play,
 It needeth neither must ne rother,
 I haue not heard of such another,
 No maister for the gouernance,
 He sayled by thought and pleasure,
 Without labour east and west,
 All was one, calme, or tempest,
 And I went with at his request,
 And was the first prayed to the fest.
 When he came in his countree,
 And passed had the way sece,
 In an haunc deepe and large
 He left his rich and noble barge,
 And to the court shortly to tell,
 He went, where he went was to dwell,
 And was received as good right,
 As heire, and for a worthy knight,
 With all the states of the lond,
 Which came anon at his first sode,
 With glad spirits full of trowth,
 Loth to do fault or with a slouth,
 Attaint be in any wise,
 Their riches was their old seruise,
 Which euer trew had be fond,
 Sith first inhabit was the lond,
 And so received there hir king,
 That forgotten was no thing,
 That owe to be done ne might please,
 Ne their gouerne lord do ease,
 And with them so shortly to say,
 As they of custome had done aye,
 For seuen yere past was and more,
 The father, the old wise and hore
 King of the land tooke his leue
 Of all his barons on an eue,
 And told them how his dayes past
 Were all, and comen was the last,
 And bertylly prayed hem to remember
 His soune, which youg was and tender,
 That borne was their prince to be,
 If he returne to that countree
 Might, by aduerture or grace,
 Within any time or space,
 And to be true and friendly aye,
 As they to him had bene alway:
 Thus be them prayd, without more,
 And tooke his leaue for euermore.
 Known was, how tender in age,
 This young prince a great viage
 Vnecoth and straung, honours to seeke,
 Tooke in hand with litle speeche,
 Which was to seeke a princes,
 That he desired more than riches,

For her great name that flourished so,
 That in that time there was no mo
 Of her estate, ne so well named,
 For borne was none that euer her blamed:
 Of which princes somewhat before,
 Here haue I spoke, and some will more.
 So thus befell as ye shall heare,
 Unto their lord they made such aheare,
 That joy was there to be present
 To see their troth and how they went,
 So very glad they were ech one,
 That them among there was no one,
 That desired more riches,
 Than for their lord such a princes,
 That they might please, and that were faire,
 For fast desired they an heire,
 And said great surety were wis.
 And as they were speaking of this,
 The prince himselfe him auised,
 And in plaine English vndisguised,
 Them shewed hole his journey,
 And of their counsell gan them prey,
 And told how he ensured was,
 And how his day he might not passe,
 Without diffame and great blame,
 And to him for euer shame,
 And of their counsell and auise,
 There he prayth them once or twice,
 And that they would, within ten daies,
 Auise and ordaine him such waies,
 So that it were no displeasance,
 Ne to this realm ouer great griuance,
 And that he haue might to his feast,
 Sixty thousand at the least,
 For his intent within short while
 Was to returne vnto his yle
 That he came fro, and kepe his day,
 For nothing would he be away.
 To counsaile tho the lords anon,
 Into a chamber euerychone,
 Together went, them to deuise,
 How they might best and in what wise,
 Puruey for their lords pleasaunce,
 And the realmes continuance
 Of honor, which in it before
 Had continued euermore,
 So at the last they found the waies,
 How within the next ten daies,
 All might with paine and diligence
 Be done, and cast what the dispence
 Might draw, and in conclusion,
 Made for ech thing pouision.
 When this was done, wholly tofore
 The prince, the lords all before
 Come, and shewed what they had done,
 And how they couth by no reason
 Foul, that within the ten daies
 He might depart by no waies,
 Bot would be siftenne at the least,
 Or he returne might to his feast:
 And shewed him euery reason why
 It might not be so hastily,
 As he desired, ne his day
 He might not keepe by no way,
 For diuers causes wonder great:
 Which when he heard, in such an heat
 He fell, for sorow and was seke,
 Still in his bed whole that weke,
 And nigh the tother for the shame,
 And for the doubt, and for the bizare

That might on him be aret,
 And oft vpon his brest he bet,
 And said, "Alas, mine honour for aye,
 Haue I here lost cleue this day,
 Dead would I be, alas my name
 Shall aye be more heuceforth in shame,
 And I dishonoured and reueued,
 And neuer more shall be beleued:"
 And made swich sorow, that in trouth,
 Him to behold it was great routh:
 And so endured the dayes siftenne,
 Till that the lords on an euen
 Him come, and told they ready were,
 And shewed in few words there,
 How and what wise they had purueyd
 For his estate, and to him said,
 That twenty thousand knights of name,
 And forty thousand without blame,
 All come of noble lignne,
 Togider in a compaign,
 Were lodged on a riuers side,
 Him and his pleasure there abide,
 The prince tho for joy vp rose,
 And where they lodged were, he goes
 Without more that same night,
 And these his supper made to dight,
 And with them bode till it was dey,
 And forthwith to take his journey,
 Leuing the straight, holding the large,
 Till he came to his noble barge,
 And when this prince, this lusty knight
 With his people in armes bright,
 Was comen where he thought to pas,
 And knew well none abiding was
 Behind, but all were there present,
 Forthwith upon all his intent
 He told them there, and made his cries
 Through his ome that day twice,
 Commanding euery liues wight,
 There being present in his sight,
 To be the morow on the riunge,
 Where he begin would his vinge.
 The morow come, the cry was kept,
 Few was there that night that slept,
 But trussed and purueed for the morow,
 For fault of ships was all their sorow,
 For saue the barge, and other two,
 Of ships there saw I no mo:
 Thus in their doubts as they stood,
 Weaing the sea, comming the flood,
 Was cried, "To ship goe euery wight,"
 Than was but he, that he might,
 And to the barge he thought echone
 They went, without was left not one,
 Horse, male, trusse, ne bagage,
 Saled, speare, gard brace, ne page,
 But was lodged and roomed yough,
 At which shipping me thought I lough,
 And gan to maruaile in my thought,
 How euer such a ship was wrought,
 For what people that can encrease,
 Ne neuer so thicke might be the prease,
 But all had roomed at their will,
 There was not one was lodged ill,
 For as I trow, my selfe the last
 Was one, and lodged by the mast,
 And where I looked I saw such come,
 As all were lodged in a towne.
 Forth goth the ship, said was the creed,
 And on their knees for their good speed,

Downe kneled every wight a while,
 And prayed fast that to the yle
 They might come in safety,
 The prince and all the company,
 With worship and without blame,
 Or disclaunde of his name,
 Of the promise he should retourne,
 Within the time he did sojourne,
 In his lord biding his host,
 This was their prayer least and most,
 To keepe the day it might not been,
 That he appointed had with the queene,
 To retourne without slouth,
 And so assured had his trouth,
 For which fank this prince, this knight,
 During the time slept not a night,
 Such was his wo and his disease,
 For doubt he should the queene displease.
 Forth gooth the ship with such speed,
 Right as the prince for his great need
 Desire would after his thought,
 Till it vnto the yle him brought,
 Where in hast vpon the sand,
 He and his people tooke the land,
 With hertes glad, and chere light,
 Weening to be in Heauen that night:
 But or they passed a while,
 Enteing in toward that yle,
 All clad in blacke with chere piteous,
 A lady which neuer dispiteous
 Had be in all her life tofore,
 With sory chere, and herte to tore,
 Unto this prince where he gan ride,
 Come and said, " Abide, abide,
 And haue no hast, but fast retourne,
 No reason is ye here sojourne,
 For your vtruth hath vs discried,
 Wo worth the time ye vs allied
 With you, that are so soone vntrew,
 Alas the day that we you knew,
 Alas the time that ye were bore,
 For all this lond by you is lore,
 Accused be he you hider brought,
 For all your joy is turnd to nought,
 Your acquaintance we may complaine,
 Which is the cause of all our paine."
 " Alas madame," quoth tho this knight,
 And with that from his horse he light,
 With colour pale, and cheekes lene,
 " Alas what is this for to mene,
 What haue ye said, why be ye wroth,
 You to displease I would be loth,
 Know ye not well the promesse
 I made haue to your princesse,
 Which to performe is mine intent,
 So mote I speed as I haue ment,
 And as I am her very trew,
 Without change or thought new,
 And also fully her seruand,
 As creature or man liuand
 May be to lady or princesse,
 For she mine Heauen, and whole richesse
 Is, and the lady of mine heale,
 My worlds joy and all my weale,
 What may this be, whence coma this speech,
 Tell me madame I you beseech,
 For with the first of my liuing,
 Was I so fearfull of nothing,
 As I am now to heare you speake,
 For dout I feele mine herte breake:

Say on madame, tell me your wiff,
 The remanent is it good or ill,"
 " Alas" (quod she) " that ye were bore,
 For, for your loce this land is lore,
 The queene is dead and that is ruth,
 For sorrow of your great vtruth,
 Of two partes of the lusty rout,
 Of ladies that were there about,
 That wout were to talke and play,
 Now are dead and cleane away,
 And vnder earth tane lodging new,
 Alas that euer ye were vntrew,
 For whan the time ye set was past,
 The queene to comsaite soone in hast,
 What was to doe, and said great blame,
 Your acquaintance cause would and shame,
 And the ladies of their auise
 Prayed, for need was to be wise,
 In cawching tales and songs,
 That by them make would ill tonge,
 And sey they were lightly conquest,
 And prayed to a poore feast,
 And foule had their worship weued,
 Whan so vnwisely they conceied,
 Their rich treasure, and their heale,
 Their famous name, and their weale,
 To put in such an aventure,
 Of which the sclaunder euer dure
 Was like, without helpe of appete,
 Wherefore they need had of counsele,
 For enery wight of them would say,
 Their closed yle an open way
 Was become to euery wight,
 And well appreued by a knight,
 Which be alas without payssaunce,
 Had soone achewed thobesaunce:
 All this was moued at counsell thrise,
 And concluded daily twise,
 That bet was die without blame,
 Than lose the riches of their name,
 Wherefore the deaths acquaintance
 They chese, and left haue their pleasaunce,
 For doubt to liue as preued,
 In that they you so soone beleued,
 And made their othes with one accord,
 That eat, ne drinke, ne speake word,
 They should neuer, but euer weping
 Bide in a place without parting,
 And use their dayes in penaunce,
 Without desire of allegaunce,
 Of which the truth anon con preue,
 For why the queen forth with her leue
 Toke at them all that were present,
 Of her defaults fully repent,
 And died there withouten more,
 Thus are we lost for euermore,
 What should I more hereof reherse,
 Comen within come see her herse,
 Where ye shall see the piteous sight,
 That euer yet was shewen to knight,
 For ye shall see ladies stound,
 Ech with a great rod in hond,
 Clad in black with visage white,
 Ready each other for to smite,
 If any be that will not wepe,
 Or who that makes countenaunce to slepe,
 They be so bet, that all so blew
 They be as cloth that died is n-w,
 Such as their parfite repentance,
 And thus they kepe their ordinaunce,

And will do ever to the death,
 While them endures any breath."
 This knight tho in armes twaine,
 This lady toke and gan her saine,
 "Alas my birth, so worth my life,"
 And even with that he drew a knife,
 And through gonne, doublet, and shirt,
 He made the blood come from his herte,
 And set him downe vpon the greene,
 And fall repent closed his erne,
 And saue that ones he drew his breath,
 Without more thus he toke his death.
 For which cause the lusty howt,
 Which in a battaile on the cunst,
 At once for sorrow such a cry
 Gau reth thorow the company,
 That to the Heaven heard was the sowne,
 And vnder therth his fer adowne,
 That wild beasts for the feare,
 So sodainly afrayed were,
 That for the doubt, while they might dure,
 They ran as of their lives vnsure,
 From the woods vnto the plaine,
 And from the valleys the high mountaine
 They sought, and ran as beasts blind,
 That cleane forgotten had their kind.
 This wo not ceased, to counsaile went
 These lordes, and for that lady sent,
 And of auisse what was to done,
 They her besought she say would some,
 Weeping full sore all clad in blake,
 This lady softly to them spake,
 And said, "My lordes by my trouth,
 This mischiefe it is of your slouth,
 And if ye had that iudge would right,
 A prince that were a very knight,
 Ye that ben of estate echone,
 Die for his fault shoud one and one,
 And if he hold had the promence,
 And done that longs to gentillene,
 And fulfilled the princes behest,
 This hasty farme had bene a feast,
 And now is vnrecourable,
 And vs a slaunders eye durable,
 Wherefore I say as of counsaile,
 In me is none that may auaile,
 But if ye list for remembrance,
 Purvey and make such ordinaunce,
 That the queene that was so meke,
 With all her women dede or seke,
 Might in your land a chappell haue,
 With some remembraunce of her grane,
 Shewing her end with the pity,
 In some notable old city,
 Nigh unto an high way,
 Where every wight might for her pray,
 And for all hers that haue ben trew,"
 And even with that she changed hew,
 And wise wished, after the death,
 And sight, and thus passed her breath.
 Thus said the lordes of the host,
 And so conclude least and most,
 That they would ever in houses of thacke,
 Their liues lead, and wearo but blake,
 And forsake all their pleasaunces,
 And turn all joy to penaunces,
 And beare the dead prince to the burge,
 And named them shoud haue the charge,
 And to the hearse where lay the queene,
 The remnaunt went and down on queene,

Holding their hands on high gon crie,
 "Mercy, mercy," euenish thrie,
 And cursed the time that euer slouth
 Shoud haue such masterdome of trouth,
 And to the burge a long mile,
 They bare her forth, and in a while
 All the ladies one and one,
 By companies were brought echone,
 And past the sea and toke the land,
 And in new herces on a sand,
 Put and brought were all anon,
 Unto a city closed with stone,
 Where it had been vsed aye
 The kings of the land to lay,
 After they raigned in honours,
 And writ was which were conquerours,
 In an abbey of nunnes which were blake,
 Which accustomed were to wake,
 And of vsage rise ech a night,
 To pray for euery liues wight,
 And so befell as in the guise,
 Ordeint and said was the seruise,
 Of the priunce and of the queene,
 So devoutly as might beu,
 And after that about the herces,
 Many orisons and verses,
 Without note fall softly,
 Said were and that full heartily,
 That all the night till it was day
 The people in the church con pray,
 Unto the holy Trinity,
 Of those soules to haue pity,

And when the night past and roune
 Was, and the new day begoune,
 The yong tomorrow with rayes red,
 Which from the Soune ouer all con spred,
 Atempared clere was and faire,
 And made a time of wholesome aire,
 Befell a wonder case and strange,
 Among the people and gan change
 Soone the word and euery woo,
 Unto a joy and some to two:
 A bird all felred blew and greene,
 With bright rayes like gold betweene,
 As small thred ouer euery joynt,
 All full of colour strange and coint,
 Uncouth and wonderfull to sight,
 Upon the queens herse con light,
 And song full low and softly,
 Three songs in her harmony,
 Unlcted of every wight,
 Till at the last an aged knight,
 Which seemed a man in great thought,
 Like as he set all thing at nought,
 With visage and ein all forsept,
 And pale, as man long vnslapt,
 By the herces as he stood,
 With hasty handling of his hood,
 Unto a price that by him past,
 Made the bridde somewhat agast,
 Wherefore she rose and left her song,
 And depart from us among,
 And spread her wings for to passe
 By the place he entred was,
 And in his haue shortly to tell,
 Him hurt, that backward downe he fell,
 From a window richly paint,
 With liues of many divers coint,
 And bet his wings and bled fast,
 And of the hurt thus died and past,

And lay there well an houre and more,
 Till at the last of briddes a score,
 Come and sembled at the place
 Where the window broken was,
 And made swike wamentacion,
 That pity was to heare the soue,
 And the warbles of their throtes,
 And the complaint of their notes,
 Which from joy cleane was reversed,
 And of them one the glas some perced,
 And in his beke of colours nine,
 An herbe he brought flourlesse all grene,
 Full of small leaues and pleins,
 Swart and long with many a vaise,
 And where his fellow lay thus dede,
 This herbe down laid by his hede,
 And dressed it full softly,
 And hong his head and stood thereby,
 Which herbe in leste than halfe an houre,
 Gan ower all kruit, and after floure
 Full out and wore ripe the seed,
 And right as one another feed
 Would, in his beke he toke the graine,
 And in his fellowes beke certaine
 It put, and thus within the thrid
 Up stood, and prused him the bird,
 Which dead had be in all our sight,
 And both together forth their flight
 Tooke singing from vs, and their leue,
 Was none disturb hem would ne greue,
 And whan they parted were and gone
 Thabbesse the seeds some echone
 Gadred had, and in her hand
 The herb she toke, well aunsaid
 The leafe, the seed, the stalke, the floure,
 And said it had a good honour,
 And was no common herb to find,
 And well approued of uncouth kind,
 And than other more vertuouse,
 Who so haue it might for to use
 In his need, floure, leafe, or graine,
 Of their heale might be certaine :
 And laid it downe upon the herse
 Where lay the queene, and gan reherse,
 Echone to other that they had seene,
 And taling thus the seede wax greene,
 And on the dry herse gan spring,
 Which me thought a wondrous thing,
 And after that floure and new seed,
 Of which the people all toke heed,
 And said, it was some great miracle,
 Or medicine fine more than triacle,
 And were well done there to assay,
 If it might ease in any way,
 The corces, which with torch light,
 They waked had there all that night,
 Soone did the lords there consent,
 And all the people thereto content,
 With ease words and litle fare,
 And made the queenes visage bare,
 Which shewed was to all about,
 Wherefore in swome fell whole the rout,
 And were so sory most and leest,
 That long of weeping they not ceast,
 For of their lord the remembraunce,
 Unto them was such displeaunce,
 That for to lise they called a paine,
 So wore they very true and plainc,
 And after this the good abbesse,
 Of the graine gan chese and dresse,

Three, with her fingers cleane and small,
 And in the queenes mouth by tale,
 One after other fall easily,
 She put and full comingsly,
 Which shewed moone such varise,
 That prened was the medicine true,
 For with a staling courtesaunce
 The queene yprose, and of rauxnee,
 As she was wont to every night,
 She made good cheere, for which sight,
 The people kneeling on the stomm,
 Thought they in Heauen were soule and bone ;
 And to the prince where he lay,
 They went to make the same assay,
 And whan the queene it vnderstood,
 And how the medicine was good,
 She prayed she might haue the graines,
 To releue him from the paines
 Which she and he had both endured,
 And to him went and so him cured,
 That within a litle space,
 Lusty and fresh on lise he was,
 And in good bele, and hole of spech,
 And lough, and said, " Gramercy leech,
 For which the joy throughout the town,
 So great was that the bele sown
 Afraied the people, a journey,
 About the city every way,
 And come and asked cause and why
 They rongen were so stultly ?
 And after that the queene, thabbesse
 Made diligence or they would cease,
 Such, that of ladies stonc a rout,
 Shewing the queene was all about,
 And called by name echone and laid,
 Was none forgotten young ne old,
 There might men see joyes new,
 Whan the medicine flouc and trow,
 Thus restored had every night,
 So well the queene as the knight,
 Unto perfit joy and bele,
 That feting they were in such wele
 As folke that would in no wise,
 Desire more perfit paradice.
 And thus whan passed was the sorrow,
 With mikel joy soone on the morrow,
 The king, the queene, and every lord,
 With all the ladies by one accord,
 A generall assembly
 Great cry through the country,
 The which after as their intent
 Was turned to a parliament,
 Where was ordained and aised,
 Every thing and deuised,
 That please might to most and leest,
 And there concluded was the feast,
 Within the yle to be hold
 With full consent of young and old,
 In the same wise as before,
 As thing should be withouten more,
 And shipped and thither went
 And into strange resimes sent,
 To kings, queenes, and duchesses,
 To diuers princes and princesses,
 Of their linage and can pray,
 That it might like them at that day
 Of marriage, for their sport,
 Come see the yle, and them disport,
 Where should be jousts and turnaies,
 And armes done in other waies,

Signifying over all the day
 After April within May,
 And was aised that ladies tweine,
 Of good estate and well besaine,
 With certaine knights and squiers,
 And of the queenes officers,
 In manner of an embassade,
 With certain letters closed and made,
 Should take the barge and depart,
 And seeke my lady euery part,
 Till they her found for any thing,
 Both charged haue queene and king,
 And as their lady and maistres,
 Her to beseke of gentilnes,
 At the day there for to beco,
 And oft her recommaund the queene,
 And prayes for all loous to best,
 For but she come all will be wast,
 And the feast, a businesse
 Without joy or lustinesse:
 And tooke them tokens and good speed
 Praid God send, after their need.
 Forth went the ladies and the knights,
 And were out fourteene daies and nights,
 And brought my lady in their barge,
 And had well sped and done their charge:
 Whereof the queene so hartly glad
 Was that in soch such joy she had,
 Whan the ship approached land,
 That she my lady on the sand
 Met, and in armes so constraine,
 That wonder was behold them tweine,
 Which to my dome during tweine houres,
 Neither for heat ne watry shoures,
 Departed not no company,
 Saving themselves but none them by,
 But gaue them layour at their ease,
 To rehearse joy and disease,
 After the pleasure and courages,
 Of their young and tender ages:
 And after with many a knight,
 Brought were, where as for that ight,
 They parted not, for to pleasaunce,
 Content, was herte and countenaunce,
 Both of the queene, and my maistresse,
 This was that night their businesse:
 And on the morrow with huge rout,
 This prince of lords him about,
 Come and to my lady said,
 That of her coming glad and well apaid
 He was, and full conuynge
 Her thanked and full heartily,
 And lough and smiled, and said ywis,
 That was in doubt, in safety is:
 And commanded do diligence,
 And spare for neither gold ne spence,
 But make ready, for on the morow,
 Wedded with saint John to borow,
 He would be, withouten more,
 And let them wite this lese and more.
 The morow come, and the service
 Of marriage in such a wise
 Said was, that with more honour,
 Was neuer prince ne conquerour
 Wedde ne with such company,
 Of gentilnesse in chivalry,
 Ne of ladies so great routs
 Ne so besoen as all abouts
 They were there, I certifie
 You on my life withouten lie.

And the feast hold was in tentis,
 As to tell you mine entent is,
 In a roma a large plaine
 Under a wood in a champaine,
 Betwixt a riuer and a well,
 Where neuer had abbay, ne seil
 Ben, ne kirke, house, ne village,
 In time of any manns age:
 And dured three months the feast,
 In ons estate and neuer ceast,
 From early the rising of the Sonne,
 Till the day spent was and yronne,
 In justing, dauncing, and lustinesse,
 And all that sowned to gentilnesse.
 And as me thought the second morrow,
 Whan ended was all old sorrow,
 And in surty euery wight
 Had with his lady slept a night,
 The prince, the queene, and all the rest,
 Unto my lady made request,
 And her beought off and praid,
 To mewards to be well apaid,
 And consider mine old trowth,
 And on my paines haue routh,
 And me accept to her seruise,
 In such forme and in such wise,
 That we both might be as one,
 Thus prayed the queene, and enerichone:
 And for there should be no nay,
 They stint justing all a day,
 To pray my lady and requere,
 Be content and out of fere,
 And with good herte make friendly cheere,
 And said it was a happy yeare:
 At which she smiled and said ywis,
 "I trow well he my seruaunt is,
 And would my welfare as I trist,
 So would I his, and would he wist
 How and I knew that his trowth
 Continue would without slouth,
 And be such as ye here report,
 Restraining both courage and sport,
 I couth consent at your request,
 To be named of your fest,
 And do after your vsaunce,
 In obeying your pleasaunce,
 At your request this I consent,
 To please you in your entent,
 And eke the soueraine aboute,
 Commanded hath me for to loue,
 And before other him prefer,
 Against which prince may be no wer,
 For his power ouer all raigneth,
 That other would for nought him paineth,
 And sith his will and yours is one,
 Contrary in me shall be none."
 Tho (as me thought) the promise
 Of marriage before the mese,
 Desired was of euery wight,
 To be made the same night,
 To put away all maner doubts
 Of euery wight thereabouts,
 And so was do, and on the morrow,
 Whan euery thought and euery sorrow
 Dislodged was out of mine herte,
 With euery wo and euery smert,
 Unto a tent prince and princes,
 Me thought, brought me and my maistres,
 And said we were at full age
 There to conclude our marriage,

With ladies, knights, and squiers,
 And a great host of ministers,
 With instruments and sounes diuerse,
 That long were here to rehearse,
 Which tent was church perochiall,
 Ordaint was in especiall,
 For the feast and for the sacre,
 Where archbishop, and archidiacon
 Song full out the seruisse,
 After the custome and the guise,
 And the churches ordinaunce,
 And after that to dine and daunce
 Brought were we, and to diuers playes,
 And for our speed ech with prayes,
 And merry was most and leas,
 And said amended was the feast,
 And were right glad lady and lord,
 Of the marriage and thaccord,
 And wished us hertes pleasure,
 Joy, hele, and continuance,
 And to the ministrils made request,
 That in increasing of the fest,
 They would touch their cords,
 And with some new joyeux accords,
 Mouue the people to gladnesse,
 And prouiden of all gentilnesse,
 Ech to paine them for the day,
 To shew his cunning and his play,
 Tho began sounes meruelous,
 Estuned with accords joyous,
 Round about all the tents,
 With thousands of instruments,
 That euery wight to daunce them pained,
 To be merry was none that fained,
 Which sounes me troubled in my sleepe,
 That fro my bed forth I lepe,
 Wening to be at the feast,
 But when I woke all was seast,
 For there nas lady ne creature,
 Save on the wals old portraiture
 Of horsmen, haukes, and hounds,
 And hurt deere full of wounds,
 Some like bittan, some hurt with shot,
 And as my dreame seemed that was not,
 And when I wake, and knew the trouth,
 And ye had seen of very routh,
 I trow ye would haue wept a weke,
 For neuer man yet halfe so seke,
 I went escaped with the life,
 And was for fault that sword ne knife
 I find ne might my life tabridge,
 Ne thing that kered, ne had edge,
 Wherewith I might my woful paines
 Haue voided with bleeding of my vains,
 Lo-here my blisse, lo here my paine,
 Which to my lady I do compleine,
 And grace and mercy her require,
 To end my wo and busie feare,
 And me accept to her seruisse,
 After her seruisse in such auisse,
 That of my dreame the substance
 Might turne oace to cognisaunce,
 And cognisaunce to very preue,
 By full consent, and good leue,
 Or els without more I pray,
 That this night, or it be day,
 I mote vnto my dreame returne,
 And sleeping so forth aie sojourn
 About the yle of pleasure,
 Under my ladies obeisaunce,

In her seruisse, and in such wise,
 As it please her may to deuise,
 And grace ones to be accept,
 Like as I dreamed when I slept,
 And dure a thousand yeres and ten,
 In her good will, amen, amen.

Fairest of faire, and goodliest on hie,
 All my secret to you I plaine, and shrie,
 Requiring grace and of complaint,
 To be heale or martyred as a saint,
 For by my trouth I sweare, and by this booke,
 Ye may both heale, and slea me with a looke.

Go forth mine owne true herte innocent,
 And with humblesse, do thine obseruaunce,
 And to thy lady on thy knees present
 Thy seruisse new, and think how great pleasure
 It is to liue vnder thobeisaunce
 Of her that may with her looks soft
 Giue thee the blisse that thou desirest oft.

Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede,
 And not too wild of thy countenaunce,
 But moeke and glad, and thy nature feed,
 To do each thing that may her pleasure,
 When thou shalt sleep, haue aie in remembrance
 Thimage of her which may with lookes soft
 Giue thee the blisse that thou desirest oft.

And if so be that thou her name find
 Written in booke, or els vpon wail,
 Looke that thou as seruaut true and kind,
 Thine obeisaunce as she were therewithall,
 Faining in loue is breeding of a fall
 From the grace of her, whose lookes soft
 May giue the blisse that thou desirest oft.

Ye that this ballete read shall,
 I pray you keepe you from the fall.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove, seeth
 a great company of knights and ladies in a
 daunce upon the greene grass: the which being
 ended, they all kneel down, and do honour to
 the daisie, some to the flower, and some to the
 leaf. Afterward this gentlewoman learneth by
 one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is
 this: They which honour the flower, a thing
 fading with every blast, are such as look after
 beauty and worldly pleasure. But they that
 honour the leaf, which abideth with the root,
 notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are
 they which follow vertue and during qualities,
 without regard of worldly respects.

When that Phebus his chaire of gold so hie
 Had whirled vp the stery sky aloft,
 And in the Boole was entred certainly,
 When shoures sweet of raine descended oft,
 Causing the ground fele times and oft,
 Up for to giue many an wholesome aie,
 And euery plaine was clothed faire

With new green, and maketh small flowers
To spring here and there in field and in meade,
So very good and wholesome be the shoures,
That it reueth that was old and deade,
In winter time and out of euery seide
Springeth the herbe, so that euery wight
Of this season vecheth glad and light.

And I so glad of the season swete,
Was happed thus vpon a certaine night,
As I lay in my bed, sleepe full vnmete
Was vnto me, but why that I ne might
Rest, I ne wist, for there nas earthly wight
As I suppose had more herbes ease
Than I, for I had sicknesse nor disease.

Wherefore I meruail greatly of my selfe,
That I so long withouten sleepe lay,
And vp I rose thee houres after twelfe,
About the springing of the day,
And on I put my geare nad mine array,
And to a pleasant grove I gan passe,
Long of the bright Sonne vp risen was.

In which were oaks great, straight as a line,
Under the which the grasse so fresh of hew,
Was newly sprung, and an eight fute or nine
Euery tree well fro his fellow grew,
With branches brode, lade with leues new,
That sprongen out ayen the sunne sheue,
Some very red, and some a glad light greue.

Which as me thought was right a pleasant sight,
And eke the briddes song for to here,
Would haue rejoyced any earthly wight,
And I that couth not yet in no manere
Hearde the nightingale of all the yeare,
Ful busily herkened with herte and with care,
If I her voice perceiue couod any where.

And at the last a path of little bread
I found, that greatly had not used be,
For it forrowne was with grasse and weed,
That well vnmet a wight might it se:
Thought I this path some whider goth parde,
And so I followed, till it me brought
To right a pleasant herber well ywrought,

That benched was, and with turfes new
Freshly turned, whereof the grene gras,
So small, so thicke, so short, so fresh of hew,
That most like vnto green well wod I it was;
The hegge also that yede in compas,
And closed in all the greene herbere,
With sicamoar was set and eglatere.

Wrethen in fere so well and cunningly,
That euery branch and leafe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of an heignt by and by,
I see neuer thing I you enure,
So well done, for he that touke the cure
It to make ytrow, did all his peine
To make it passe all tho that men haue seine.

And shapen was this herber rooffe and all
As a prety parbour, and also
The hegge as thicke as a castle wall,
That who that list without to stound or go,
Though he would all day prien to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no, but one within well might

Perceiue all tho that yede there without
In the field that was on euery side
Covered with corn and grasse, that out of doubt,
Though one would seeke all the world wide,
So rich a field couod not be espide
On no coast, as of the quantity,
For of all good thing there was plenty.

And I that all this pleasant sight sie,
Thought sodainly I felt so sweet an aire
Of the eglatere, that certainly
There is no herte I deme in such dispaire,
Ne with thoughts froward and constraire,
So overlaid, but it should none haue bote,
If it had ones felt this sauour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was ware of the fairest meddle tree
That euer yet in all my life I sie,
As full of blowmes as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretille
Pro bougt to bougt, and as him list he cot
Here and there of buds and flowers sweet.

And to the herber side was joyning
This faire tree, of which I haue you told,
And at the last the brid began to sing,
When he had eaten what he eat wold,
So passing sweetly, thot by manifold
It was more pleasant than I couod denise,
And when his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so merry a note
Answered him, that all the wood rong
So sodainly, that as it were a sote,
I stood astouied, so was I with the song
Thorow rauished, that till late and long,
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where,
And ayen me thought she song euen by mine ere.

Wherefore I waited about busily
On euery side, if I her might see,
And at the last I gan full well asprie
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side euen right by me,
That gaue so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglatere full well.

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
That as me thought I surely rauished was
Into Paradise, where my desire
Was for to be, and no farther passe
As for that day, and on the sote grasse
I sat me downe, for as for mine entent,
The birds song was more conuenient,

And more pleasant to me by manifold,
Than meat or drinke, or any other thing,
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome sauours eke so comforting,
That as I demed, sith the beginning
Of the world was neuer scene or than
So pleasant a ground of some earthly man.

And as I sat the birds harkening thus,
Me thought that I heard voices sodainly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That euer any wight I trow truly
Heard in their life, for the armony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the uoice to angels most was like.

At the last out of a groue even by,
That was right goodly and pleasant to sight,
I see where there came singing lustily
A world of ladies, but to tell aright
Their great beauty it lieth not in my might,
Ne their array, neurchelence I shall
Tell you a part, though I speake not of all.

The surcotes white of velvet were sitting,
They were in clad, and the semes nobles,
As it were a manner garnishing,
Was set with emerauds one and one,
By and by, but many a rich stone
Was set on the purples out of doubt
Of colors, stenes, and traises round about.

As great pearles round and orient,
Diamonds fine and rubies red,
And many another stone, of which I went
The names now, and emenich on her head
A rich fret of gold, which without dread
Was full of stately rich stanes set,
And every lady had a chapelet

On her head of fresh and greene,
So were wrought and so microvellously,
That it was a noble sight to see,
Some of laurer, and some full pleasantly
Had chapelets of woodbind, and sadly
Some of agnes castus were also
Chapelets fresh, but there were many of the

That daunced and she sang full soberly,
Bot all they yede in manner of compaign,
Bot one there yede in mid the company,
Soyle by her selfe, but all followed the pace
That she kept, whose beaunsly figured face
So pleasant was, and low were shape pouce,
That of beauty she past hem everichone.

And more richly besene by manifold
She was also in every manner thing,
On her head full pleasant to behold,
A crowne of gold rich for any king,
A branch of agnes castus she bearing
In her hand, and to my sight truly,
She lady was of the company.

And she began a roundell lustely,
That "Suso le foyle, de vert moy," men call,
"Seen et mon ioly cuer en dormy,"
And than the company answered all,
With voice sweet entuned, and so small,
That me thought it the sweetest melody
That ever I heard in my life soothly.

And thus they came dauncing and singing
Into the midst of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sitting,
And God wot me thought I was wel bigone,
For than I might arise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coude best dance or sing,
Or who most womanly was in all thing.

They had not daunced but a little thow,
Whan that I heard not ferre off sodainly,
So great a noise of thondring trumps blow,
As though it should have departed the skie,
And after that within a while I sie,
From the same groue where the ladies come out,
Of men of armes coming such a reat,

As all the men on earth had ben assembled
In that place, were horsed for the noyes,
Stering so fast, that all the earth trembled:
But for to speake of riches and stanes,
And men and horses I trow the large wonce,
Of Pretir John no all his treasury,
Might not wroeth have bought the tenth party.

Of their array who so list heare more,
I shall rehearse so as I can alite:
Out of the groue that I speake of before,
I sie come first all in their clokes white,
A company that were for their delite,
Chapelets fresh of okes small,
Newly sprong, and trumpets they were all.

On every trumpe hanging a broad banere
Of fine tartarium were full richly bata,
Every trumpet his lord's armes bere
About their neckes with great pearles seta,
Collers brode for cost they would not lette,
As it would seem for their scochones echone,
Were set about with many a precious stone.

Their horses harness was all white also,
And after them next in one company,
Came kinges of armes and so mo
In clokes of white cloth of gold richly,
Chapelets of greene on their heads on his,
The crowes that they on their scochones bere,
Were set with pearles, ruby, and saphere.

And she great diamonds many one,
Bot all their horses harness and other gearre
Was in a sute according everichone,
As ye have heard that fornaid trumpets were,
And by seeming they were nothing to lere,
And their guiding, they did so manerly,
And after hem came a great company

Of herauds and pursochantes eke,
Arrayed in clothes of white velvet,
And hardly they were so thing to seke,
How they on hem should the harness set,
And every man had on a chapelet
Socchones and eke hors harness inside,
They had in sute of hem that before hem yede.

Next after hem came in armour bright
All sawe their heads, seemely knights aise,
And every claspe and naile as to my sight
Of their harness were of red gold fise,
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermiane
Were the trappers of their stedes strong,
Wide and large, that to the ground did hong.

And every horse of bridle and paitrell
That they had, was worth as I would weene,
A thousand pound, and on their heads well
Dressed were crownes of laurer greene,
The best made that ever I had seen,
And every knight had after him riding
Three hennamen on him awaiting.

Of which every on o short tronchoun
His lord's helme bare, so richly dight,
That the worst was worth the reason
Of a king, the second a shield bright
Bare at his necke, the third bare upright
A mighty spere, full sharpe ground and keene,
And every child were of leanes grune

If fresh chapelet vpon his haire bright,
 And cokes white of fine velvet they were,
 Their steeds trapped and raised right
 Without difference as their lords were,
 And after hem on many a fresh comere,
 There came of armed knights such a rout,
 That they bespied the large field about.

And all they wore after their degrees
 Chapelets new made of laurer grene,
 Some of oke, and some of other trees,
 Some in their honds bare boughs shene,
 Some of laurer, and some of okeis kene,
 Some of hawthorne, and some of woodbrad,
 And many moe which I had not in mind.

And so they came their horses freshly string
 With bloody sowies of hir trumpes loud,
 There sie I many an vcooth disguising
 In the array of these knights proud,
 And at the last as evenly as they coude,
 They took their places in middes of the mede,
 And every knight turned his horse hede

To his fellow, and lightly held a spere
 In the rest, and so justes began
 On every part about here and there,
 Some brake his spere, some drew down hors and man,
 About the field astray the steeds ran,
 And to behold their rule and gouernance,
 I you ensure it was a great pleasure.

And so the justs last an houre and more,
 But tho that crowned were in laurer grene,
 Wan the prise, their dints were so sore,
 That there was none ayenst hem might sustene,
 And the justing all was left off cleue,
 And fro their horse the ninth slight anone,
 And so did all the remnant euerychone.

And forth they yede togider twain and twain,
 That to behold it was a worthy sight
 Toward the ladies on the greene plaine,
 That song and daunced as I said now right:
 The ladies as soone as they goodly might,
 They brake of both the song and dance,
 And yede to meet hem with ful glad semblance.

And every lady tooke full womanly
 By the hound a knight, and forth they yede
 Unto a faire laurer that stood fast by,
 With leues lade the boughes of great brede,
 And to my dome there neuer was indede
 Man, that had scene halfe so faire a tree,
 For vnderneath there might it well haue be

An hundred persons at their owne pleasure
 Shadowed fro the heat of Phebus bright,
 So that they should haue felt no grenace
 Of raine ne haille that hem hurt might,
 The sauour eke reioice would any wight,
 That had be sicke or melancoliis,
 It was so very good and vertuous.

And with great reverence they enclining low
 To the tree so soot and faire of hew,
 And after that within a little thow
 They began to sing and danche of new,
 Some song of lone, some plaining of vntrew,
 Embrousing the tree that stood vpright,
 And euer yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last I east mine eye aside,
 And was ware of a lanky company
 That came routing out of the field wide,
 Hound in hound a knight and a lady,
 The ladies all in surcotes, that richely
 Purfled were with many a rich stone,
 And every knight of greene ware mantles on,

Embroded well so as the surcotes were,
 And euerych had a chapelet on her hed,
 Which did right well vpon the shining here,
 Made of goodly floures white and red,
 The knights eke that they in hound led
 In sorte of hem ware chapelets euerychone,
 And before hem went minstrels mawty one,

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and saetie
 All in greene, and on their heads bare
 Of diuers floures made full craftely
 All in a sute goodly chapelets they ware,
 And so dauncing into the mede they fare,
 In mid the which they found a tuft that was
 All ouersprad with floures in compae.

Whereto they enclined euerychone
 With great reverence, and that fell humbly,
 And at the last there began anone
 A lady for to sing right womanly
 A bargaret in praising the daisie,
 For as she thought among her notes swete,
 She said "Si douset et la Margarete."

Than they all answered her in fere,
 So passingly well, and so pleasantly,
 That it was a blisful noise to here,
 But I not it happed suddainly,
 As about noone the Sonne so furuently
 Waxe hote, that the prey tocher soores
 Had lost the beauty of his fresh coloure.

For shronke with heat, the ladies eke to brent,
 That they ne wist where they hem might bestow,
 The knights swelt for lack of shade ne about,
 And after that within a little thow,
 The wind began so sturdily to blow,
 That down goeth all the floures euerychone,
 So that in all the mede there laft not one,

Sawe such as succoured were among the leues,
 Fro every storme that might hem assalle,
 Growing vnder hedges and thicke greues,
 And after that there came a storme of baile,
 And raine in fere, so that withouten faile,
 The ladies ne the knights made o threed
 Drie on them, so dropping was hir weel.

And when the storm was cleant passed away,
 Tho in white that stood vnder the tree,
 They felt nothing of the great affray,
 That they in greene without had in ybe,
 To them they yede for routh and pite,
 Them to comfort after their great disease,
 So faine they were the helpless for to ease.

Than I was ware how one of hem in grene
 Had on a crowne rich and well sitting,
 Wherefore I demed well she was a queene,
 And tho in greene on her were awlting,
 The ladies than in white that were comyng
 Toward them, and the knights in fere
 Began to comfort hem, and make hem chere.

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Took by the hand the queen that was in grene,
And said, "Soster, I have right great pite
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So long aia, and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall do you the case,

"In all the pleasure that I can or may,"
Whereof the tother humbly as she might,
Thanked her, for in right ill array
She was with storm and heat I you beight,
And every lady than anone right
That were in white, one of them took in grene
By the hand, which whan the knights had sece,

In likewise ech of them toke a knight
Clad in greene, and forth with hem they fare,
To an hegge, where they anon right
To make their justs they would not spare
Boughes to hew down, and eke trees square,
Wherwith they made hem stately fires great,
To dry their clothes that were wering wet.

And after that of beards that there grow,
They made for blisters of the Sunne burning,
Very good and wholesome ointments new,
Where that they yede the sick fast anointing,
And after that they yede about gadering
Pleasant salades which they made hem eat,
For to refresh their greet unkindly heat.

The lady of the Leafe then began to pray
Her of the Flour (for so to my seeming
They shold be as by their array)
To sope with her, and eke for any thing,
That she shold with her all her people bring:
And she ayen in right goodly manere,
Thanketh her of her most friendly cheere,

Saying plainly that she would obey
With all her herte all her commaundement,
And than anon without lenger delay
The lady of the Leafe bath one ysent
For a palfray, after her intent,
Arrayed well and faire in harness of gold,
For nothing lacked, that to him long shold.

And after that to all her company
She made to purvey horse and every thing
That they needed, and than full lustily,
Euen by the herber where I was sitting
They passed all so pleasantly singing,
That it would haue comforted any wight,
But than I se a passing wonder sight.

For than the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurer sete, and did her might
The whole service to sing longing to May,
All sodainly gan to take her flight,
And to the lady of the Leafe forthright
She flew, and set her on her hood softly,
Which was a thing I marueled of greatly.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medle tree
Was fled for heat into the bushes cold,
Unto the lady of the Flower gan flee,
And on her hood he set him as he wold,
And pleasantly his wings gan to fold,
And for to sing they pained hem both as sore,
As they had do of all the day before.

And so these ladies rode furth a greet pace,
And all the rout of knights eke in fere,
And I that had seen all this wonder case,
Thought I would assay in some manere,
To know fully the trowth of this manere,
And what they were that rode so pleasantly,
And whan they were the herber passed by,

I drest me furth, and happed to mete anone
Right a faire lady I you ensore,
And she come riding by her selfe alone,
All in white, with semblance ful demure:
I saluted her, and had her good aventure
Might her befall, as I coude most humbly,
And she answered, "My daughter gramercy."

"Madame" (quod I) "if that I durst ensore
Of you I would faine do that company
Wit what they be that pass by this arbore,"
And she ayen answered right friendly:
"My faire daughter, all-tho that passed here by
In white clothing, be seruants eschicheone
Unto the Leafe, and I my selfe am one.

"See ye not her that crowned is" (quod she)
"All in white?"—"Madame" (quod I) "yes."
"That is Diane, goddesse of chastite,
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her hand the braunch she beareth this,
That agnus castus men call properly,
And all the ladies in her company

"Which ye se of that heard chaplets weare,
Be such as han kept alway hir maidenehed:
And all they that of laurer chaplets beare,
Be such as herdy were and manly indeed,
Victorious unse which neuer may be dede,
And all they were so worthy of their hood,
In hir time that none might hem withstand.

"And tho that weare chaplets on their hede
Of fresh woodhind, be such as neuer were
To loose vntre in word, thought, ne dede,
But eye stedfast, ne for pleasaunce ne fere,
Thogh that they shuld their hertes all to tere,
Would neuer fit but euer were stedfast,
Till that their liues there aunder braut."

"Now faire madame" (quod I) "yet I would pray,
Your ladieship if that it might be,
That I might know by some maner way,
Sith that it hath liked your beaute,
The trowth of these ladies for to tell me,
What that these knights be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and weare the flour?"

"And why that some did reverence to that tre,
And some vnto the plot of floures faire?"
"With right good will my fair doghter" (quod she)
"Sith your desire is good and debonaire,
The nine crowned be very exemplaire,
Of all honour longing to chivalry,
And those certaine be called the nine worthy,

"Which ye may see riding all before,
That in hir time did many a noble dede,
And for their worthinesse full oft haue bore
The crowne of laurer leaues on their hede,
As ye may in your old bookes rede,
And how that he that was a conquerour,
Had by laurur alway his most honour.

" And tho that beare bowes in their hood
Of the precious laurer so notable,
Be such as were I wolle ye vnderstond,
Noble knights of the round table,
And eke the douseperis honourable,
Which they beare in signe of victory,
It is witness of their deeds mightily.

" Eke there be knights old of the garter,
That in his time did right worthily,
And the honour they did to the laurer,
Is for by they haue their laud wholly,
Their triumph eke, and marshall glory,
Which vnto them is more parfit richesse,
Than any wight imagine can or geese.

" For one leafe giuen of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
And it be done so as it ought to be,
Is more honour than any thing earthly,
Witness of Rome that foodour was truly
Of all knight hood and deeds marvelous,
Record I take of Titus Linus.

" And as for her that crowned is in greene,
It is Flora, of these fourre goddesses,
And all that here on her awaiting beene,
It are such that loued idlenessse,
And not delite of no businesse,
But for to hunt and haule, and pley in medes,
And many other such idle dedes.

And for the great delite and pleasaunce
They haue to the flour, and so reuerently
They vnto it do such obeisaunce
As ye may see."—" Now faire Madame" (quod I)
" If I durst aske what is the cause and why,
That knights haue the signe of honour,
Rather by the leafe than the flour."

" Soothly daughter" (quod she) " this is the trouthe,
For knights euer should be perseuering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,
For wele to better in all maner thing,
In signe of which with leues aye lasting,
They be rewarded after their degree,
Whose lusty green May, may not appaired be,

" But aie keeping their beaultis fresh and greene,
For there nis storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, wind nor frosts keene,
Wherfore they haue this property and grace
And for the flour within a litle space
Woll be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they so greuaunce may endure.

" And every storme will blow them soone away,
Re they last not but for a season,
That is the cause, the very trouthe to say,
That they may not by no way of reason
Be put to no such occupation."

" Madame" (quod I) " with all mine whole seruise,
I thanke you now in my most humble wise.

" For now I am ascertained throughly,
Of every thing I desired to know."
I am right glad that I haue said soothly
Ought to your pleasure if ye will me trow :"
(Quod she aye) " but to whom do ye owe
Your seruise, and which will ye honour,
Tel me I pray, this yere, the Leafe or the Fleur."

" Madame" (quod I) " though I leaue worthy,
Unto the Leafe I owe mine obeisaunce :"
" That is" (quod she) " right well done certainly,
And I pray God to honour you auaunce,
And kepe you fro the wicked remembraunce
Of male bouch, and all his crueltie,
And all that good and well conditioned be.

" For here may I no lenger now abide,
I must follow the great company
That ye may see yonder before you ride,"
And forth as I couth most humbly,
I toke my leue of her as she gan hie,
After them as fast as euer she might,
And I drew homeward, for it was nigh night

And put all that I had seene in writing
Under support of them that lust it to rede.
O litle booke, thou art so vnconning,
How darst thou put thy self in prees for drede,
It is wonder that thou wexest not rede,
Sith that thou wost full lite who shall behold :
Thy rude language, full boistously vnfold.

REFLECT.

CHAUCER'S A. B. C.

CALLED

LA PRIERE DE NOTRE DAME.

Chaucer's A. B. C. called *La Priere de nostre Dame*: made, as some say, at the request of Blanch, duchess of Lancaster, as a prayer for her private use, being a woman in her religion very devout.

A.

ALMIGHTY and all merciable queene,
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,
To haue release of sinne, of sorrow, of tene,
Glorious Virgine of all flouris flour,
To thes I flee confounded in erroure,
Helpe and releuee almighty debonaire,
Haue mercy of mine perillous langour,
Uenquist me hath my cruell aduersaire.

B.

Bounty so fixe hath in my herte his tent,
That well I wote thou wilt my succour be,
Thou canst not wari that with good entent,
Amith thine helpe, thine herte is aye so free :
Thou art largesse of plaine felicite,
Hanon and refute of quiete and of rest,
Lo how that theuis seuen chasen me,
Helpe lady bright, or that mine ship to brest.

C.

Comfort is none, but in you lady dere,
For lo mine sinne and mine confusioun,
Which ought not in thine presence for to aperi,
Han taken on me a greuous actioun,
Of veray right and disperatioun,
And as by right they mighten well sustene,
That I were worthy mine dematioun,
Nere mercy of you blissfuli queene.

D.

Doat is there none, queen of misericord,
That thou art cause of grace and mercy here,
God vouchesafe through thee with vs to accord:
For certis, Christ is blisful modir dere,
Were now the bow bent in sriche manere,
As it was first of justice and of ire,
The rightfull God would of no mercy here:
But through thee haue we grace as we desire.

E.

Euer bath mine hope of refote in thee be:
For here before full oft in many a wise,
Unto mercy hast thou receiued me,
But mercy lady at the great amise,
Whan we shall come before the high justise,
So little frent shall than in me ben found,
That but thou or that day correct me,
Of very right mine werk will me confound.

F.

Flying, I flee for succour to thine tent,
Me for to hide fro tempest full of drede,
Beseking you, that ye you not absent,
Though I be wick: O help yet at this nede,
All haue I been a beast in wit and dede,
Yet lady thou mee close in with thine own grace,
Thine enemy and mine, lady take hede,
Unto mine death in point is me to chase.

G.

Gracious maid and modir, which that neuer
Were bitter nor in earth nor in see,
But full of sweetnese and of mercy euer,
Help that mine fader be not wroth with me:
Speake thou, for I ne dare him not see,
So haue I done in earth, alas the while,
That certes but if thou mine succour be,
To sinke eterne he will mine ghost exile.

H.

He vouchesafe, tell him, as was his will,
Become a man as for our alliance,
And with his blood he wrote that blisfull bill
Upon the crosse as generall sequentaunce,
To euery penitent in full crisaunce:
And therefore lady bright, thou for vs prey,
Than shalt thou stent all his grevaunce,
And maken our foe to faisen of his prey.

I.

I wote well thou wilt been our succour,
Thou art so full of bounty in certeine,
For whan a soule falleth in errour,
Thine pity goeth, and haleth him againe,
Than maketh thou his peace with his souerain,
And bringest him out of the crooked strete:
Who so thee loueth, shall not loue in vaine,
That shall he find, as he the life shall lete.

K.

Kalenderis entumbed been they,
That in this world been lighted with thine name,
And who so goith with thee the right way,
Him that not drede in soule to been lame,
Now queen of comfort, sith thou art the same,
To whom I sech for my medicine:
Let not mine fo no more mine wound entame,
Mine hele into thine hound all I resine.

L.

Lady, thine sorrow can I not portrey
Under that crosse, ne his greuous penaunce:
But for your bothis paine, I you prey,
Let not our alder fo make his bostaunce,
That he hath in his lestin with mischaunce,
Conuict that, ye both han bought so dere:
As I said erst, thou ground of substantaunce,
Continue on vs thine pitous eyen clere.

M.

Moyes that saw the bush of flambin rede
Brenning, of which than neuer a sticke breed,
Was sign of thine unwemmed maidenbede,
Thou art the bush, on which there can descende
The Holyghost, which that Moyes weened
Had been on fire: and this was in figure.
Now lady from the fire vs defend,
Which that in Hell eternally shall dure.

N.

Noble pryncesse, that neuer haddest pere,
Certes if any comfort in vs hee,
That cometh of thee, Christis modir dere,
We haue none other melody ne glee,
Us to rejoyce in our aduersite,
Ne aduocat none, that will and dare so prey
For vs, and that for as little hire as ye,
That helpe for an Ancyary or trey.

O.

O very light of eyen tho been blind,
O very lust of labour and distresce,
O treasore of bounty to mankind,
The whom God chose to modir for humblese,
From his ancelle he made thee maistresce
Of Heauen and Earth, our bill vp to bede,
This world awaiteth euer on thine goodnes;
For thou ne failedest neuer wight at nede.

P.

Purpose I haue sometime for to enquire,
Wherefore and why the Holyghost thee sought,
Whan Gabrielis voice come to thine ere,
He not to werre vs swich a wonder wrought,
But for to save vs, that withen bought:
Than needeth vs no weapon vs to sane,
But onely there we did not as vs ought,
Do penitence, and mercy aske and haue.

Q.

Queen of comfort, right whan I me bethink,
That I agilt haue both him and thee,
And that mine soule is worthy for to sinke:
Alas I caitefe, wheder shall I flee,
Who shall vnto thine sonne mine mean be:
Who but thine selfe, that art of pity well,
Thou hast more routh on our aduersite,
Than in this world might any tongue tell.

R.

Redresse me moder, and eke me chastise,
For certainly my faders chastising
Ne dare I not abiden in no wise,
So hideous is his full reckening,
Moder of whom our joy gan to spring,
Be ye mine judge, and eke my soules leech,
For euer in you is pity abounding,
To each that of pity will you beseech.

S.

Soth is, he no graunteth no pity
Without thee: for God of his goodnesse
Forgieth none, but it like unto thee:
He hath thee made vicaire and maistresse
Of all this world, and eke gouerneresse
Of Heauen: and represseth his justise
After thine will: and therefore in witness
He hath thee crowned in so royal wise.

T.

Temple deuout, ther God chese his wouning,
For which these misbeleued depriued been,
To you mine soule penitent I bring,
Receiue me, for I can no further floon.
With thornis venomous, Heauen queene,
For which the erth accused was ful sore,
I am so wounded, as ye may well seeme,
That I am lost almost, it smert so sore.

V.

Virgine that art so noble of appaile,
That ledest vs into the high toure
Of Paradise, thou me wish and counsaile,
How I may haue thy grace and thy succour:
All haue I been in filth and in errour,
Lady on that countrey thou me adjoorne,
That cleaped is thine bench of fresh flour,
There as that mercy euer shall sojourn.

X.

Xpen thine soule that in this world alight
Upon a crose to suffer his passion,
And suffred eke that Longeus his hart pight,
And made his herte blood rene adoun,
And all this was for my saluatioun:
And I to him am fals and eke unkind,
And yet he will not mine dampnatioun:
This thanke I you, succour of all mankind.

Y.

Ysaac was figure of his death certaine,
That so ferre forth his fader would obey,
That him ne rougt nothing for to be slaine:
Right so thy soule list a lambe to dey:
Now lady full of mercy I you prey,
Sith he his mercy sared me so large,
Be ye not scant, for all we sing or say,
That ye been fro vengeance eye our targe.

Z.

Zacharis you clepith the open well,
That wisht sinfull soule out of his guilt,
Therefore this lesson out f will to tell,
That nere thine tender heart, we were spilt.
Now lady bright, sith thou canst and wilt
Bece to the seed of Adam merciabie,
Bring vs to that paleis that is built
To penitentiis, that ben to mercie able.

EXPLICIT.

CERTAIN BALLADES.

Somtimes the world so steadfast was and stable,
That mans word was an obligatioun,
And now it is so false and deceivable,
That word and deed as in conclusioun
Is nothing like, for touned is vp so doon
All the world, through mede and fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

VOL. I.

What maketh the world to be so variable
But lust, that men haue in disencion,
For among vs a man is hold vnabie,
But if he can by some collusion
Doe his neighbour wrong and oppression:
What causeth this but wilfull wretchednesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

Trouth is put downe, reason is hold fable,
Uertue hath now no domination,
Pity is exiled, no man is merciabie,
Through couetise is blent discretion,
The world hath made a permutation,
Pro right to wrong, fro trouth to fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

LENYOTE.

Princes desire to be honourable,
Cherish thy folke, and hate extortion,
Suffer nothing that may be reprouable
To thine estate, done in thy region,
Shew forth the yerd of castigation,
Drede God, do law, lous trouth and worthiaesse,
And wed thy folke ayen to stedfastnesse.

EXPLICIT.

GOOD COUNSAIL OF CHAUCER.

Fly fro the prease, and dwell with soothfastnesse,
Suffice unto thy good though it be small,
For horde hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prease hath enuy, and wele is blent ouer all,
Sauour no more than thee behoue shall,
Rede well thy selfe that other folke canst rede,
And trouth thee shall deliuer, it is no drede.

Paine thee not ech crooked to redrease
In trust of her that tourneth as a ball,
Great rest standeth in little businesse,
Beware also to spurne againe a nail,
Strive not as doth a crocke with a wall,
Deme thy selfe that demest others dede,
And trouth thee shall deliuer it is no drede.

That thee is sent receiue in buxomeesse,
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall,
Here is no home, here is but wildernesse,
Forth pilgrime, forth beast out of thy stall,
Looke vp on high, and thanke God of all,
Weise thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lede,
And trouth thee shall deliuer, it is no drede.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLADE

OF THE VILLAGE WITHOUT PAINTING.

PLAINTE TO FORTUNE.

This wretched worldes transmutation,
As wele and wo, now poor, and now honour,
Without order or due discretion,
Gouerned is by Fortunes error,
But natheless the lacke of her fatour
Ne may not doe me sing, though that I die,
L'ey tout perdu, mon temps et labour,
For finally fortune I defe.

Yet is me left the sight of my reasons,
To know friend fro foe in thy mirour,
So much hath yet thy touring vp and doon
Ytaught me to knowen in an hour,

D d

But truly no force of thy reddour
To him that over himselfe hath maistre,
My suffaunce shall be my succour,
For finally fortune I dede.

O Socrates, thou stedfast champion,
She might neuer be thy turmentour,
Thou neuer dredest her offence,
Ne in her chere found thou no fauour,
Thou knew the deceit of her colour,
And that her most worship is for to lie,
I know her eke a false dissimulour,
For finally fortune I dede.

THE ANSWERE OF FORTUNE.

No man is wretched, but himselfe it weene,
Ne that hath in himselfe suffaunce,
Why saist thou than I am to thee so kene,
That hast thy selfe out of my gouernance?
Say thus, graunt mercy of thine habundance
That thou hast lent or this, thou shalt not strue,
What wost thou yet how I thee woll auance,
And eke thou hast thy best friend alieue.

I haue thee taught deuision betweens
Friend of effect, and friend of countenance,
Thou needest not the gall of an hinc,
That cureth eyen darke for her penaunce
Now seest thou clere that were in ignoraunce,
Yet holt thine anker, and yet thou maist arriue
There bounty beareth the key of my substance,
And eke thou hast thy best friend alieue.

How many haue I refused to sustene,
Sith I haue thee fostred in thy pleasaunce,
Wolt thou than make a statute on thy queene,
That I shall be aye at thine ordinaunce,
Thou born art in my reigne of variaunce,
About the whele with other must thou driue,
My lore is bet, than wicke is thy greuaunce,
And eke thou hast thy best friend alieue.

THE ANSWERE TO FORTUNE.

Thy lore I dampne, it is adnerity,
My frend maist thou not reue blind guddesse,
That I thy friends know, I thanke it thee,
Take hem againe, let hem go lie a preece,
The niggardes in keeping hir richesse,
Promostike is, thou wolt hir toure assaile,
Wicke appetite commeth aye before sicknesse,
In general this rule may not faile.

FORTUNE.

Thou pinchest at my mutabiffy,
For I thee lent a droppe of my richesse,
And now me liketh to withdraw me,
Why shouldest thou my royalty oppresse,
The sea may ebbe and flow more and lesse,
The welken hath might to shine, rain, and hail,
Right so must I kithe my brotilnesse,
In general this rule may not faile.

THE PLAINTIFFE.

Lo, the execution of the majesty,
That all purueigheth of his rightwisenesse,
That same thing fortune clepen ye,
Ye blind beasts full of leaudnesse,
The Heanen hath property of sicknesse,
This world bath euer restlesse trouaile,
The last day is end of mine entresae,
In general this rule may not faile.

THEMOUYE OF FORTUNE.

Princes I pray you of your gentilnesse
Let not this man and me thus cry and plain,
And I shall quite you this businesse,
And if ye liste releue him of his pain,
Pray ye his best frende of his noblesse,
That to some better state he may attain.

LENUOY.

To broken been the statutes hie in Heauen,
That create were eternally tendure,
Sith that I see the bright goddes senen,
Mowe wepe and waille, and passion endure,
As may in yearth a mortall creature:
Alas, fro whens may this thing procede,
Of which errour I die almost for drede.

By word eterne whilom was it shape,
That fro the fifth cercle in no manere,
Ne might of teares doune escape,
But now so weepeth Venus in her sphere,
That with her teares she wol drench vs here,
Alas Scogan this is for thine offence,
Thou causest this deluge of pestiencie.

Hast thou not said in blaspheme of the goddis,
Through pride, or through thy gret rekelnes,
Such things as in the law of loue forbode is,
That for thy lady saw not thy distresse,
Therefore thou yaued her vp at Mighelnesse?
Alas Scogan of olde folke be yong,
Was neuer erst Scogan blamed for his tong,

Thou drew in scorne Cupide eke to record,
Of thilke rebell word that thou hast spoken,
For which he wolt no longer be thy lord,
And Scogan, though his bow be not broken,
He wolt not with his arrowes be ywrokg
On thee ne me, ne none of our figure,
We shall of him haue neither hurte ne cure.

Now certes frend I drede of thine vnshape,
Lest for thy gylte the wreche of loue procede
On all hem that been bore and round of shape,
That be so likely folke to spede,
Than we shall of our labour haue our mede,
But well I wot thou wolt answere and say,
Lo old Grisell list to renne and play.

Nay Scogan say not so, for I me excuse,
God helpe me so, in no rime doutles,
Ne thinke I neuer of sleepe wake my muse,
That rusteth in my sheath still in pees,
While I was yong I put her forth in pees,
But all shall passe that men prose of rime,
Take every man his tourse as for his time.

Scogan thou knelest at the stremes hedde
Of graue, of all honour, and of worthinesse,
In thende of which I am dull as dedde,
Forgotten in solitary wildernesse,
Yet Scogan thinke on Tullius kindness,
Mind thy frende there it may fructiffe,
Farewel, and looke thou neuer eft loue dedde.

EXPLICIT.

Go forth king, rule thee by sapience,
 Bishop be able to minister doctrine,
 Lorde to true counsaile yeue audience,
 Womanhode to chastity euer encline,
 Knight let thy deedes worship determine,
 Be righteous judge in seeing thy name,
 Rich do almose, lest thou lese bliss with shame.

People obey your king and the law,
 Age be ruled by good religion,
 True seruaunt be drefful and kepe thee vnder aw,
 And thou poore, fie on presumption,
 Inobedience to youth is viter destruction,
 Remember you how God hath set you lo,
 And doe your part as ye be ordeined to.

TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

To you my purse and to none other wight
 Complaine I, for ye be my lady dere,
 I am sorry now that ye be light,
 For certes ye now make me heauy chere,
 Me were as lefe laid vpon a bere,
 For which vnto your mercy thus I crie,
 Be heauy againe or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night,
 That I of you the blissful sowne may here,
 Or see your colour like the Sunne bright,
 That of yelowness had neuer pere,
 Ye be my life, ye be my hertes sters,
 Queene of comfort and of good companie,
 Be heauy againe, or els mote I die.

Now purse that art to me my liues light,
 And sauour, as downe in this world here,
 Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
 Eke that you will not be my treasure,
 For I am shene as nere as any frere,
 But I pray vnto your curtesie,
 Be heauy againe, or els mote I die.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD

MADE BY CHAUCER, TEACHING WHAT IS CERTAINNES, OR
 WHOM IS WORTHY TO BE CALLED GENTILL.

The first stocke father of gentlines,
 What man desireth gentil for to bee,
 Must followe his trace, and all his wittes dreis,
 Vertue to love, and vices for to flee,
 For vnto vertue longeth dignitee,
 And not the reuers falsly dare I deme,
 All weare he miter, crowne or diademe,

This first stocke was full of rightwisnes,
 Trewe of his wordes, sober, pitous and free,
 Cleue of his goste and loved besinesse,
 Against the vice of slouth in honeste,
 And but his eyre love vertue as did he,
 He is not gentill though he rich seme,
 All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

Ificence may well be heir to old richesse,
 But there may no man, as men may wel see,
 By quezbe his eyre his vertues noblesse,
 That is appropriated vnto no degree,
 But to the first father in majestee,
 That maketh his eyres them that him quezse
 All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

EXPLICIT.

A PROVERB

AGAINST COVETISE AND NEGLIGENCE.

WHAT shall these clothes manifold
 Lo this hote somers day,
 After great heat commeth cold,
 No man cast his pilch away,
 Of all this world the large compasse
 It will not in mine armes twaine,
 Who so mokel woll embrace,
 Litel thereof he shall distraine.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD

WHICH CHAUCER MADE AGAINST WOMEN UNCONSTANT.

MADAME, for your new fangleness,
 Many a seruaunt have you put out of your grace,
 I take my leafe of your unstedfastnesse,
 For well I wote, while ye to live haue space,
 Ye cannot love full half yere in a place,
 To new things your lust is ever kene,
 In stede of blew, thus may ye wear all greene.

Right as a mirroure that nothing may expresse,
 But lightly as it cometh, so mote it passe,
 So fares your love, your works bear witness
 There is no faith may your herte embrace,
 But as a wedercocke, that turneth his face
 With enery wind, ye fare, and that is scene,
 In stede of blew, thus may ye weare all greene.

Ye might be shrined, for your brothilnes,
 Better than Dalyda, Cresside, or Candace,
 For ever in changing stoundeth your sikernes,
 That catche may no wight, from your hertes a race,
 If ye lose one, ye can well twain purchase
 All light for somer, ye wot well what I meene,
 In stede of blew, thus may ye weare all greene.

EXPLICIT.

CHAUCER'S WORDS

UNTO HIS OWN SCRIVENER.

ADAM Scriuener if ever it thee befall,
 Boece or Troiles for to write new,
 Under thy long locks thou maist haue the scall,
 But after my making thou write more trew,
 So oft a day I mote thy werke renew,
 It to correct and eke to rubbe and scrape,
 And all is thorow thy negligence and rape.