



THE COMPLETE  
WORKS OF

Geoffrey  
Chaucer

---

*Edited from  
Numerous Manuscripts by*  
WALTER W. SKEAT

---

VOLUME IV  
*The Canterbury Tales*  
(TEXT)

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON	Amen House, E.C. 4
GLASGOW	58 Buchanan Street
NEW YORK	417 Fifth Avenue, N.Y. 16
TORONTO	70 Wynford Drive, Don Mills
MELBOURNE	Bowen Crescent
WELLINGTON	Empire Building, Willis Street
BOMBAY	Apollo Bunder
CALCUTTA	Lal Bazar
MADRAS	Mount Road
KARACHI	McLeod Road
DACCA	Red Cross Building, 114 Motijheel
LAHORE	Bank Square
KUALA LUMPUR	Jalan Belanda
HONG KONG	The University
CAPE TOWN	Thibault House, Thibault Square
IBADAN	Iddo Gate
ACCRA	Kwame Nkrumah Avenue
NAIROBI	Church House, Government Road
SALISBURY	Baker Avenue
JOHANNESBURG	Joubert Street

821  
Chaucer

:CC1

NY PUBLIC LIBRARY THE BRANCH LIBRARIES



3 3333 05978 8899

245957

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



THE COMPLETE WORKS  
OF  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

*SKEAT*

\* \* \* \*

THE CANTERBURY TALES: TEXT

*Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4*

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON

BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI LAHORE DACCA

CAPE TOWN SALISBURY NAIROBI IBADAN ACCRA

KUALA LUMPUR HONG KONG

THE COMPLETE WORKS,  
OF  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

*EDITED, FROM NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS*

BY THE

REV. WALTER W. SKEAT, M.A.

LITT.D., LL.D., D.C.L., PH.D.

ELRINGTON AND BOSWORTH PROFESSOR OF ANGLO-SAXON  
AND FELLOW OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

\* \* \* \*

THE CANTERBURY TALES: TEXT

' Let every felawe telle his tale aboute,  
And lat see now who shal the soþer winne.'  
*The Knightes Tale; A89c*

SECOND EDITION

OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

FIRST EDITION 1894  
SECOND EDITION 1900  
REPRINTED 1924, 1940, 1958, 1963  
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.—§ 1. The Present Text. § 2. The MSS.—I. In the British Museum. II. In Oxford. III. In Cambridge. IV. In other Public Libraries. V. In private hands. § 3. The Printed Editions. § 4. Plan of the present Edition. § 5. Table of symbols denoting MSS. § 6. Table showing various ways of numbering the lines. § 7. The four types of MSS. . . . .	vii
THE CANTERBURY TALES . . . . .	1
GROUP A. THE PROLOGUE . . . . .	1
THE KNIGHTES TALE . . . . .	26
THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	89
THE MILLERES TALE . . . . .	93
THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	112
THE REVES TALE . . . . .	114
THE COOK'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	126
THE COKES TALE . . . . .	128
GROUP B. INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	130
MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	133
THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE . . . . .	134
THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	165
THE SHIPMANNES TALE . . . . .	167
THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	180
THE PRIORESSES TALE . . . . .	181
PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS . . . . .	189
SIR THOPAS . . . . .	190
PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS . . . . .	197
THE TALE OF MELIBEUS . . . . .	199
THE MONK'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	241
THE MONKES TALE :—Lucifer; Adam; Sampson; Hercules; Nabugodonosor; Balthasar; Cenobia; De Petro Rege Ispannie; De Petro Rege De Cipro; De Barnabo de Lumbardia; De Hugelino Comite de Pize; Nero; De Oloferno; De Rege Anthiocho; De Alexandro; De Iulio Cesare; Cresus . . . . .	244

	PAGE
THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE . . . . .	269
THE NONNE PRESTES TALE . . . . .	271
EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PRESTES TALE . . . . .	289
GROUP C. THE PHISICIENS TALE . . . . .	290
WORDS OF THE HOST . . . . .	299
PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE . . . . .	301
THE PARDONERS TALE . . . . .	305
GROUP D. THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	320
THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHIE . . . . .	345
THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	357
THE FRERES TALE . . . . .	359
THE SOMNOUR'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	370
THE SOMNOURS TALE . . . . .	372
GROUP E. THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	389
THE CLERKES TALE . . . . .	391
THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	426
THE MARCHANTES TALE . . . . .	427
EPILOGUE TO THE MARCHANTES TALE . . . . .	460
GROUP F. THE SQUIERES TALE . . . . .	461
WORDS OF THE FRANKLIN . . . . .	480
THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	482
THE FRANKELEYNS TALE . . . . .	483
GROUP G. THE SECONDE NONNES TALE . . . . .	509
THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	527
THE CHANOUNS YEMANNES TALE . . . . .	532
GROUP H. THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	555
THE MAUNCIPLES TALE . . . . .	559
GROUP I. THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE . . . . .	567
THE PERSONES TALE . . . . .	570
-----	
APPENDIX TO GROUP A. The Tale of Gamelyn . . . . .	645

# INTRODUCTION



## § 1. THE PRESENT TEXT.

THE text of the 'Canterbury Tales,' as printed in the present volume, is an entirely new one, owing nothing to the numerous printed editions which have preceded it. The only exceptions to this statement are to be found in the case of such portions as have been formerly edited, for the Clarendon Press, by Dr. Morris and myself. The reasons for the necessity of a formation of an absolutely new text will appear on a perusal of the text itself, as compared with any of its predecessors.

On the other hand, it owes everything to the labours of Dr. Furnivall for the Chaucer Society, but for which no satisfactory results could have been obtained, except at the cost of more time and toil than I could well devote to the subject. In other words, my work is entirely founded upon the splendid 'Six-text' Edition published by that Society, supplemented by the very valuable reprint of the celebrated 'Harleian' manuscript in the same series. These Seven Texts are all exact reproductions of seven important MSS., and are, in two respects, more important to the student than the MSS. themselves; that is to say, they can be studied simultaneously instead of separately, and they can be consulted and re-consulted at any moment, being always accessible. The importance of such opportunities is obvious.

## § 2. THE MANUSCRIPTS.

The following list contains all the MSS. of the existence of which I am aware. As to their types, see § 7.

## I. MSS. IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

1. Harl. 7334; denoted here by **HL**. By Tyrwhitt called 'C.' A MS. of the B-type (see below). Printed in full for the Chaucer Society, 1885. Collated throughout.

A MS. of great importance, but difficult to understand or describe. For the greater clearness, I shall roughly describe the MSS. as being of the A-type, the B-type, the C-type, and the D-type (really a second C-type). Of the A-type, the best example is the Ellesmere MS.; of the B-type, the best example is the Harleian MS. 7334; of the C-type, the Corpus and Lansdowne MSS.; the D-type is that exhibited by Caxton and Thynne in the early printed editions. They may be called the 'Ellesmere,' 'Harleian,' 'Corpus,' and 'Caxton' types respectively. These types differ as to the arrangement of the Tales, and even MSS. of a similar type differ slightly, in this respect, among themselves. They also frequently differ as to certain characteristic readings, although many of the variations of reading are peculiar to one or two MSS. only.

MS. HL contains the best copy of the Tale of Gamelyn, for which see p. 645; this Tale is not found in MSS. of the A-type. Moreover, Group G here precedes Group C and a large part of Group B, whereas in the Ellesmere MS. it follows them. In the Monk's Tale, the lines numbered B 3565-3652 (containing the Tales called the 'modern instances') immediately follow B 3564 (as in this edition), whereas in the Ellesmere MS. these lines come at the end of the Tale.

The 'various readings' of this MS. are often peculiar, and it is difficult to appraise them. I take them to be of two kinds: (1) readings which are better than those of the Six-text, and should certainly be preferred, such as *halfe* in A 8, *cloysterlees* in A 179, *a* (not *a ful*) in A 196, and the like; and (2) readings due to a terrible blundering on the part of the scribe, such as *fleyng* for *flikeringe* in A 1962, *greene* for *kene* in A 1966, and the like. It is, in fact, a most dangerous MS. to trust to, unless constantly corrected by others, and is not at all fitted to be taken as the *basis* of a text. For further remarks, see the description of Wright's printed edition at p. xvi.

As regards age, this MS. is one of the oldest; and it is beautifully written. Its chief defect is the loss of eight leaves, so that ll. 617-1223 in Group F are missing. It also misses several lines in various places; as A 2013-8, 2958, 3721-2, 4355, 4358, 4375-6, 4415-22; B 417, 1186-90, 1355, 1376-9, 1995, 3213-20, 4136-7, 4479-80; C 299, 300, 305-6, 478-9; D 575-584, 605-612, 619-626, 717-720; E 2356-7; F 1455-6, 1493-8; G 155, 210-216; besides some lines in Melibee and the Persones Tale. Moreover, it has nine spurious lines, D 2004 *b, c*, 2012 *b, c*, 2037 *b, c*, 2048 *b, c*, F 592. These imperfections furnish an additional reason for not founding a text upon this MS.

2. Harl. 7335; by Tyrwhitt called 'A.' Of the B-type. Very imperfect, especially at the end. A few lines are printed in the Six-text edition, to fill up gaps in various MSS., viz. E 1646-7, F 1-8, 1423-4, 1433-4, G 158, 213-4, 326-337, 432-3, 484. Collated so far.



3. Harl. 7333; by Tyrwhitt called 'E.' Of the D-type. One of Shirley's MSS. Some lines are printed in the Six-text edition, viz. B 4233-8, E 1213-44, F 1147-8, 1567-8, G 156-9, 213-4, 326-337, 432. It also contains some of the Minor Poems; see the description of MS. 'Harl.' in the Introduction to those poems in vol. i.<sup>1</sup>

4. Harl. 1758, denoted by **Harl.** at p. 645; by Tyrwhitt called 'F.' In Urry's list, i. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Many lines are printed in the Six-text, including the whole of 'Gamelyn.' It is freely used to fill up gaps, as B 1-9, 2096-2108, 3049-78, 4112, 4114, 4581-4636, &c.

5. Harl. 1239; in Tyrwhitt, 'I.' In Urry's list, ii. Imperfect both at beginning and end.

6. Royal 18 C II; denoted by **Rl.**; in Tyrwhitt, 'B.' In Urry, vii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text; e.g. in B 1163-1190 (Shipman's Prologue, called in this MS. the Squire's Prologue), 2109-73, 3961-80, E 65, 73, 81, 143, G 1337-40, I 472-511. The whole of 'Gamelyn' is also printed from this MS. in the Six-text.

7. Royal 17 D xv; in Tyrwhitt, 'D.' In Urry, viii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text; e.g. in B 2328-61, 3961-80, 4112, 4114, 4233-8, 4637-51, D 609-612, 619-626, 717-720, E 1213-44, F 1423-4, 1433-4, H 47-52; and in the Tale of Gamelyn.

8. Sloane 1685; denoted by **Sl.** In Tyrwhitt, 'G.' In Urry, iii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. In two handwritings, one later than the other. Imperfect; has no Sir Thopas, Melibee, Manciple, or Parson. Very frequently quoted in the Six-text, to fill up rather large gaps in the Cambridge MS.; e.g. A 754-964, 3829-90, 4365-4422, &c. Gamelyn is printed from this MS. in the Six-text, the gaps in it being filled up from MS. 7 (above).

9. Sloane 1686; in Tyrwhitt, 'H.' In Urry, iv. Of the C-type; containing Gamelyn. A late MS., on paper. Imperfect; no Canon's Yeoman or Parson.

10. Lansdowne 851; denoted by **Ln.** In Tyrwhitt, 'W.,' because at that time in the possession of P. C. Webb, Esq. Used by Mr. Wright to fill up the large gap in Hl., viz. F 617-1223, and frequently consulted by him and others. Printed in full as

<sup>1</sup> Not the same MS. as that called 'Harl.' in the foot-notes to Gamelyn.

the sixth MS. of the Six-text. Of the C-type ; containing Gamelyn. Not a good MS., being certainly the worst of the six ; but worth printing owing to the frequent use that has been made of it by editors.

11. Additional 5140 ; in Tyrwhitt, 'Ask. 2,' as being one of two MSS. lent to him by Dr. Askew. It has in it the arms of H. Deane, Archbp. of Canterbury, 1501-3. Of the A-type. Quoted in the Six-text to fill up gaps ; e. g. B 3961-80, 4233-8, 4637-52, D 2158-2294, E 1213-44, 1646-7, 2419-40, F 1-8, 673-708, G 103, I 887-944, 1044-92.

12. Additional 25718. A mere fragment. A short passage from it, C 409-427, is quoted in the Six-text, to fill up a gap in Ln.

13. Egerton 2726 ; called the 'Haistwell MS. ;' in Tyrwhitt denoted by 'HA,' and formerly belonging to E. Haistwell, Esq. Of the A-type, but imperfect. The Six-text quotes F 679, 680 ; also F 673-708 in the Preface.

## II. MSS. IN OXFORD.

14. Bodley 686 ; no. 2527 in Bernard's list ; in Tyrwhitt, 'B a.' A neat MS., with illuminations. Of the A-type ; imperfect. The latter part of the Cook's Tale is on an inserted leaf (leaf 55), and concludes the Tale in a manner that is not Chaucer's. After the Canterbury Tales occur several poems by Lydgate.

15. Bodley 414 ; not noticed by Tyrwhitt. Given to the library by B. Heath in 1766. A late MS. of the D-type, and imperfect. No Cook, Gamelyn, Squire, or Merchant.

16. Laud 739 : no. 1234 in Bernard's list ; in Tyrwhitt, 'B β.' A poor and late MS. of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn ; imperfect at the end ; ends with Sir Thopas, down to B 2056.

17. Laud 600 ; no. 1476 in Bernard's list ; in Tyrwhitt, 'B γ.' Imperfect ; several leaves 'restored.' Apparently, of the B-type ; but Group D and the Clerk's Tale follow Gamelyn. Some extracts from it are given in the Six-text, viz. B 2328-61, D 717-20 (no other Oxford MS. has these scarce lines), F 673-708.

18. Arch. Selden B 14 ; no. 3360 in Bernard's list ; in Tyrwhitt, 'B δ.' Perhaps the best and earliest of the Bodleian MSS., but not very good. Sometimes here quoted as *Seld.* Apparently of the A-type, having no copy of Gamelyn ; but it practically

represents a transition-state between the A and B types, and has one correction of prime importance, as it is the *only* MS. which links together all the Tales in Group B, making the Shipman follow the Man of Law. Frequent extracts from it occur in the Six-text; e.g. A 1-72, B 1163-1190, &c. In particular, a large portion of the Parson's Tale, I 290-1086, is printed from this MS. in the same.

19. Barlow 20; no. 6420 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B ζ.' A clearly written MS. of the D-type, including Gamelyn; imperfect after Sir Thopas, but contains a portion of the Manciple's Tale. It contains the somewhat rare lines F 679, 680, which are quoted from it in the Six-text.

20. Hatton, Donat. 1 (not the same MS. as Hatton 1); no. 4138 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B ε.' The Tales are in great disorder, the Man of Law being thrust in between the Reeve and the Cook, as in no other MS. It contains Gamelyn. Lines F 679, 680 are quoted from it in the Six-text; and a few lines are again quoted from it at the end of the Parson's Tale.

21. Rawlinson Poet. 149. Apparently of the D-type, but it is very imperfect, having lost several leaves in various places. A late MS.

22. Rawlinson Poet. 141. Not a bad MS., but several Tales are omitted, and the Shipman follows the Clerk. Groups C and G do not appear at all. The Latin side-notes are numerous.

23. Rawlinson Poet. 223; the same as that called Rawl. Misc. 1133 in the Six-text 'Trial-table.' No copy of Gamelyn. The Tales are strangely misplaced. Slightly imperfect here and there.

24. Corpus Christi College (Oxford), no. 198; denoted by **Cp**. The best of the Oxford MSS., printed in full as the fourth MS. in the Six-text edition. Of the C-type; collated throughout. It contains a copy of Gamelyn, which is duly printed. It is rather imperfect from the loss of leaves in various places; the gaps being usually supplied from the Selden MS. (no. 18 above).

25. Christ Church (Oxford), no. 152. Contains Gamelyn. The Tales are extraordinarily arranged, but the MS. is nearly perfect, except at the end. A large part of the Parson's Tale, after I 550, being lost from the Hengwrt MS., the gap is supplied, in the Six-text, from this MS. and Addit. 5140. The Second Nun follows the Shipman. Of the A-type.

26. New College (Oxford), no. 314; called 'NC' in Tyrwhitt. Of the D-type; imperfect at the beginning. No copy of Gamelyn.

27. Trinity College (Oxford), no. 49; containing 302 leaves; formerly in the possession of John Leche, temp. Edw. IV. It contains Gamelyn. The Tales are misplaced; the Pardoner and Man of Law being thrust into the middle of Group B, after the Prioress.

### III. MSS. AT CAMBRIDGE.

28. University Library, Gg. 4. 27, not noticed by Tyrwhitt; here denoted by **Cm**. Also denoted, in vol. iii., by **C**.; and in vol. i., by **Gg**. A highly valuable and important MS. of the A-type, printed as the third text in the Six-text edition. The best copy in any public library. See the description of 'Gg.' in vol. i.; and the full description in the Library Catalogue.

29. University Library, Dd. 4. 24; in Tyrwhitt, 'C 1.' Quoted as **Dd**. A good MS. of the A-type, much relied upon by Tyrwhitt, who made good use of it. Has lost several leaves. The whole of the Clerk's Tale was printed from this MS. by Mr. Aldis Wright. The passage in B 4637-52 occurs only in this MS. and a few others, viz. Royal 17 D xv, Addit. 5140, and the Chr. Ch. MS. It also contains the rare lines D 575-84, 609-12, 619-26, 717-20, all printed from this MS. in the Six-text. Lines E 1213-44 are also quoted, to fill a gap in **Cm**.

30. University Library, Ii. 3. 26; in Tyrwhitt, 'C 2.' Of the D-type, including Gamelyn; but the Franklin's Tale is inserted after the Merchant. Contains many corrupt readings.

31. University Library, Mm. 2. 5. The arrangement of the Tales is very unusual, but resembles that in the Petworth MS., than which it is a little more irregular. A complete MS. of the D-type, including Gamelyn.

32. Trinity College (Cambridge), R. 3. 15; in Tyrwhitt, 'Tt.' In quarto, on paper. Some leaves are missing, so that the Canon's Yeoman, Prioress, and Sir Thopas are lost. Of the D-type, without Gamelyn.

N.B. This MS. also contains the three poems printed as Chaucer's (though not his) in the edition of 1687, and numbered 66, 67, and 68, in my Account of 'Speght's edition' in vol. i. It also contains the best MS. of Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, edited by me from this MS. in 1867.

33. Trinity College (Cambridge), R. 3. 3; in Tyrwhitt, 'T.' A folio MS., on vellum; of the D-type, without Gamelyn; but several Tales are misplaced.

## IV. IN OTHER PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

34. Sion College, London. A mere fragment, containing only the Clerk's Tale and Group D.

35. Lichfield Cathedral Library; quoted as **Lich.** or **Li.** Of the D-type, omitting Gamelyn. The Tale of Melibee is missing. As the Hengwrt MS. has no Canon's Yeoman's Tale, lines G 554-1481 are printed from this MS. in the Six-text.

36. Lincoln Cathedral Library; begins with A 381. Resembles no. 42.

37. Glasgow; in the Hunterian Museum. Begins with A 353; dated 1476.

38. MS. at Paris, mentioned by Dr. Furnivall. Of the B-type.

39. MS. at Naples, mentioned by Dr. Furnivall<sup>1</sup>.

## V. MSS. IN PRIVATE HANDS.

These include some of the very best.

40. The 'Ellesmere' MS., in the possession of the Earl of Ellesmere; denoted by **E.** It formerly belonged to the Duke of Bridgewater, and afterwards to the Marquis of Stafford. The finest and best of all the MSS. now extant. Of the A-type; printed as the first of the MSS. in the Six-text, and taken as the basis of the present edition.

It contains the curious coloured drawings of 23 of the Canterbury Pilgrims which have been reproduced for the Chaucer Society. At the end of the MS. is a valuable copy of Chaucer's Balade of 'Truth'; see vol. i. At the beginning of the MS., in a later hand, are written two poems printed in Todd's Illustrations of Gower, &c., pp. 295-309, which Todd absurdly attributed to Chaucer! They are of slight value or interest. It may suffice to say that, at the beginning of the former poem, we find *revyved* rimed with *meved*, and many of the lines in it are too long; e. g.—'I supposed yt to have been some noxiall fantasy.' In the latter poem, a compliment to the family of Vere, *by* rimes with *auncestrye*, and *quarter* with *hercafter*; and the lines are of similar over-length, e. g.—'Of whom prophesyys of antiquite makyth mencion.'

41. The 'Hengwrt' MS., no. 154, belonging to Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne, of Peniarth; denoted by **Hn.** A valuable MS.;

<sup>1</sup> It only contains the Clerk's Tale; see Reliquiae Antiquae, ii. 68. The Longleat MS. no. 25, belonging to the Marquis of Bath, contains both the Knight's Tale and the Clerk's Tale.

it is really of the A-type, though the Tales are strangely misplaced, and the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is missing. The readings frequently agree so closely with those of E. (no. 40) that it is, to some extent, almost a duplicate of it. Printed as the second MS. in the Six-text. It also contains Chaucer's Boethius (imperfect).

**42.** The 'Petworth' MS., belonging to Lord Leconfield; denoted by **Pt.** A folio MS., on vellum, of high value. Formerly in the possession of the Earl of Egremont (Todd's Illustrations, p. 118). Of the D-type, including Gamelyn; but the Shipman and Prioress wrongly precede the Man of Law. Printed as the fifth MS. in the Six-text.

**43.** The 'Holkham' MS., noted by Todd (Illustrations, p. 127) as then belonging to Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, and now belonging to the Earl of Leicester. The Tales are out of order; perhaps the leaves are misarranged. Imperfect in various places; has no Parson's Tale.

**44.** The 'Helmingham' MS., at Helmingham Hall, Suffolk, belonging to Lord Tollemache. On paper and vellum; about 1460 A.D. For a specimen, see the Shipman's Prologue, printed in the Six-text, in the Preface, p. ix\*. Either of the C-type or the D-type.

**45-48.** Four MSS. in the collection of the late Sir Thos. Phillipps, at Cheltenham, viz. nos. 6570, 8136, 8137, 8299.

Two of these are mentioned in Todd's Illustrations, p. 127, as being 'now [in 1810] in the collection of John P. Kemble, Esq., and in that belonging to the late Duke of Roxburghe; the latter is remarkably beautiful, and is believed to have been once the property of Sir Henry Spelman.' No. 8299 contains the Clerk's Tale only.

**49-52.** Four MSS. belonging to the Earl of Ashburnham; numbered 124-127 in the Appendix. Of these, no. 124 wants the end of the Man of Law's Tale and the beginning of the Squire's, and therefore belongs to either the C-type or D-type. Nos. 125 and 126 are imperfect. No. 127 seems to be complete.

**53.** A MS. belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, at Chatsworth; and formerly to Sir N. L'Estrange. (Of the A-type.)

**54.** A MS. belonging to Sir Henry Ingilby, of Ripley Castle, Yorkshire. (Of the A-type.)

**55.** A MS. belonging to the Duke of Northumberland, at Alnwick; and formerly to Mrs. Thynne. (Of the A-type.)

56. A MS. now (in 1891) in the possession of Lady Cardigan.

57-59. Tyrwhitt uses the symbol 'Ask. 1' to denote a MS. lent to him by the late Dr. Askew. He also uses the symbols 'Ch.' and 'N.' to denote 'two MSS. described in the Preface to Urry's edition, the one as belonging to Chas. Cholmondeley, Esq. of Vale Royal, in Cheshire, and the other to Mr. Norton, of Southwick, in Hampshire.' Of these, 'Ch.' is now Lord Delamere's MS., described by Dr. Furnivall in *Notes and Queries*, 4 Ser. ix. 353. The others I cannot trace.

### § 3. THE PRINTED EDITIONS.

In the first five editions, the *Canterbury Tales* were published separately.

1. Caxton; about 1477-8, from a poor MS. Copies are in the British Museum, Merton College, and in the Pepysian Library (no. 2053).

2. Caxton; about 1483, from a better MS. A perfect copy exists in St. John's College Library, Oxford. Caxton bravely issued this new edition because he had found that his former one was faulty.

3. Pynson; about 1493. Copied from Caxton's 2nd edition.

4. Wynkyn de Worde; in 1498. In the British Museum.

5. Pynson; in 1526. Copied from Caxton's 2nd edition.

After this the *Canterbury Tales* were invariably issued with the rest of Chaucer's Works, until after 1721. Some account of these editions is given in the Preface to the *Minor Poems*, in vol. i.; which see. They are: Thynne's three editions, in 1532, 1542, and 1550 (the last is undated); Stowe's edition, 1561; Speght's editions, in 1598, 1602, and 1687; Urry's edition, in 1721.

Two modernised editions of the *Canterbury Tales* were published in London in 1737 or 1740, and in 1741.

Next came: '*Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, to which is added, an Essay on his Language and Versification; an introductory discourse; notes, and a glossary. By Thomas Tyrwhitt, London, 1775-8, 8vo, 5 vols.*' A work of high literary value, to which I am greatly indebted for many necessary notes. Reprinted in 1798 in 4to, 2 vols., by the University of Oxford; and again, at London, in 1822, in post 8vo, 5 vols.; (by Pickering) in 1830, 8vo, 5 vols.;

and (by Moxon) in 1845, in 1 vol. imp. 8vo. The last of these adds poor texts of the rest of Chaucer's Works, from old black-letter editions, with which Tyrwhitt had nothing to do. In Tyrwhitt's text, the number of grammatical errors is very large, and he frequently introduces words into the text without authority. For some account of the later editions of Chaucer's Works, see the Introduction to the Legend of Good Women, in vol. iii. I may note, by the way, that the editions by Wright, Bell, and Morris are all founded on MS. Harl. 7334, a very unsafe MS. in some respects; see p. viii (above).

It is necessary to add here a few words of warning. Wright's edition, though it has many merits, turns out, in practice, to be dangerously untrustworthy. He frequently inserts words, borrowed from Tyrwhitt's edition (which he heartily condemns as being full of errors in grammar), without the least indication that they are *not in the MS.* This becomes the more serious when we find, upon examination, that Tyrwhitt had likewise no authority for some of such insertions, but simply introduced them, by guess, to fill up a line in a way that pleased him. For example, A 628 runs thus, in all the seven MSS :—

'Of his visage children were aferd.' It is quite correct; for 'viság-e' is trisyllabic. Tyrwhitt did not know this, and counted the syllables as *two* only, neglecting the final *e*. The line seemed then too short; so he inserted *sore* before *aferd*, thus ruining the scansion. Wright follows suit, and inserts *sore*, though it is not in his MS.; giving no notice at all of what he has done. Bell follows suit, and the word is even preserved in Morris; but the latter prints the word in italics, to shew that it is not in the MS. Nor is it in the Six-text.

I shall not adduce more instances, but shall content myself with saying that, until the publications of the Chaucer Society appeared, no reader had the means of knowing what the best MS. texts were really like. All who have been accustomed to former (complete) editions have necessarily imbibed hundreds of false impressions, and have necessarily accepted numberless theories as to the scansion of lines which they will, in course of due time, be prepared to abandon. In the course of my work, it has been made clear to me that Chaucer's text has been manipulated and sophisticated, frequently in most cunning and plausible ways, to a far greater extent than I could have believed to be possible. This is not a pleasant subject, and I only mention it for the use of scholars. Such variations fortunately seldom affect the sense; but they vitiate the scansion, the grammar, and the etymology in many cases. Of course it will be understood that I am saying no more than I can fully substantiate.

It is absolutely appalling to read such a statement as the following in Bell's edition, vol. i. p. 60. 'All deviations, either from Mr. Wright's edition, or from the original MS., are pointed out in the footnotes for the ultimate satisfaction of the reader.' For the instances in which this is really done are very rare indeed, in spite of the large number of such deviations.

Of Tyrwhitt's text, it is sufficient to remark that it was hardly possible, at



that date, for a better text to have been produced. The rules of Middle English grammar had not been formulated, so that we are not surprised to find that he constantly makes the past tense of a weak verb monosyllabic, when it should be dissyllabic, and treats the past participle as dissyllabic, when it should be monosyllabic: which makes wild work with the scansion. It is also to be regretted that he based his text upon the faulty black-letter editions, though he took a great deal of pains in collating them with various MSS.

On the other hand, his literary notes are full of learning and research; and the number of admirable illustrations by which he has efficiently elucidated the text is very great. His reputation as one of the foremost of our literary critics is thoroughly established, and needs no comment.

Mr. Wright's notes are likewise excellent, and resulted from a wide reading. I have also found some most useful hints in the notes to Bell's edition. Of all such sources of information I have been only too glad to avail myself, as is more fully shewn in the succeeding volume.

#### § 4. PLAN OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

The text of the present edition of the *Canterbury Tales* is founded upon that of the Ellesmere MS. (E.) It has been collated throughout with that of the other six MSS. published by the Chaucer Society. Of these seven MSS., the Harleian MS. 7334 (Hl.) was printed separately. The other six were printed in the valuable 'Six-text' edition, to which I constantly have occasion to refer, in parallel columns. The six MSS. are: E. (Ellesmere), Hn. (Hengwrt), Cm. (Cambridge, Gg, 4. 27), Cp. (Corpus Coll., Oxford), Pt. (Petworth), and Ln. (Lansdowne). MSS. E. Hn. Cm. represent the earliest type (A) of the text; Hl., a transitional type (B); Cp. and Ln., a still later type (C); and Pt., the latest of all (D), but hardly differing from C.

In using these terms, 'earliest,' &c., I do not refer to the age of the MSS., but to the type of text which they exhibit.

In the list of MSS. given above, Hl. is no. 1; E., Hn., Cm., are nos. 40, 41, and 28; and Cp., Pt., Ln., are nos. 24, 42, and 10 respectively.

Of all the MSS., E. is the best in nearly every respect. It not only gives good lines and good sense, but is also (usually) grammatically accurate and thoroughly well spelt. The publication of it has been a very great boon to all Chaucer students, for which Dr. Furnivall will be ever gratefully remembered. We must not omit, at the same time, to recognise the liberality and generosity of the owner of the MS., who so freely permitted such full use of it to be made; the same remark applies, equally, to the

owners of the Hengwrt and the Petworth MSS. The names of the Earl of Ellesmere, Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne of Peniarth, and Lord Leconfield have deservedly become as 'familiar as household words' to many a student of Chaucer.

This splendid MS. has also the great merit of being complete, requiring no supplement from any other source, except in the few cases where a line or two has been missed. For example, it does not contain A 252 *b-c* (found in Hn. only); nor A 2681-2 (also not in Hn. or Cm.); nor B 1163-1190 (also not in Hn. or Cm.); nor B 1995 (very rare indeed).

It is slightly imperfect in B 2510, 2514, 2525, 2526, 2623-4, 2746, 2967. It drops B 3147-8, C 103-4, C 297-8 (not in Hn. Cm. Pt.), E 1358-61, G 564-5; and has a few defects in the Parson's Tale in I 190, 273, &c. In the Tale of Melibeus, the French original shews that *all* the MSS. have lost B 2252-3, 2623-4, which have to be supplied by translation.

None of the seven MSS. have B 4637-4652; these lines are genuine, but were probably meant to be cancelled. They only occur, to my knowledge, in four MSS., nos. 7, 11, 25, and 29; though found also in the old black-letter editions.

On the other hand, E. preserves lines rarely found elsewhere. Such are A 3155-6, 3721-2, F 1455-6, 1493-9; twelve genuine lines, none of which are in Tyrwhitt, and only the first two are in Wright. Observe also the stanza in the footnote to p. 424; with which compare B 3083, on p. 241.

The text of the Ellesmere MS. has only been corrected in cases where careful collation suggests a desirable improvement. Every instance of this character is invariably recorded in the footnotes. Thus, in A 8, the grammar and scansion require *half-e*, not *half*; though, curiously enough, this correct form appears in Hl. only, among all the seven MSS. In very difficult cases, other MSS. (besides the seven) have been collated, but I have seldom gained much by it. The chief additional MSS. thus used are Dd.=Cambridge, Dd. 4. 24 (no. 29 above); Slo. or Sl.=Sloane 1685 (no. 8); Roy. or Rl.=Royal 18 C 2 (no. 6); Harl.=Harleian 1758 (see p. 645); Li. or Lich.=Lichfield MS. (no. 35), for the Canon's Yeoman's Tale; and others that are sufficiently indicated.

I have paid especial attention to the suffixes required by Middle-English grammar, to the scansion, and to the pronunciation; and I suppose that this is the first complete edition in which the

spelling has been tested by phonetic considerations. With a view to making the spelling a little clearer and more consistent, I have ventured to adopt certain methods which I here explain.

In certain words of variable spelling in E., such as *whan* or *whanne*, *than* or *thanne*, I have adopted that form which the scansion requires ; but the MS. is usually right.

E. usually has *hise* for *his* with a plural sb., as in l. 1 ; I use *his* always, except in prose. E. has *hir*, *here*, for her, their ; I use *hir* only, except at the end of a line.

E. uses the endings *-ight* or *-yght*, *-inde* or *-ynde* ; I use *-ight*, *-inde* only ; and, in general, I use *i* to represent short *i*, and *y* to represent long *i*, as in *king*, *wyf*. Such is the usual habit of the scribe, but he often changes *i* into *y* before *m* and *n*, to make his writing clearer ; such a precaution is needless in modern printing. Thus, in l. 42, I replace the scribe's *bigynne* by *beginne* ; and in l. 78, I replace his *pilgrymage* by *pilgrimage*. This makes the text easier to read.

For a like reason, where equivalent spellings occur, I select the simpler ; writing *couth* (as in Pt.) for *kowthe*, *sote* for *soote*, *sege* for *seege*, and so on. In words such as *our* or *oure*, *your* or *youre*, *hir* or *hire*, *neuer* or *neuere*, I usually give the simpler forms, without the final *-e*, when the *-e* is obviously silent.

For consonantal *u*, as in *neuer*, I write *v*, as in *never*. This is usual in all editions. But I could not bring myself to use *j* for *i* consonant ; the anachronism is too great. *Never* for *neuer* is common in the fifteenth century, but *j* does not occur even in the first folio of Shakespeare. I therefore usually keep the capital *i* of the MSS. and of the Elizabethan printers, as in *Ioye* (= *joye*) where initial, and the small *i*, as in *enioinen* (= *enjoinen*) elsewhere. Those who dislike such conservatism may be comforted by the reflection that the sound rarely occurs.

The word *eye* has to be altered to *yē* at the end of a line, to preserve the rimes. The scribes usually write *eye* in the middle of a line, but when they come to it at the end of one, they are fairly puzzled. In l. 10, the scribe of Hn. writes *Iye*, and that of Ln. writes *yhe* ; and the variations on this theme are most curious. The spelling *ye* (= *yē*) is, however, common ; as in A 1096 (Cm., Pt.). I print it 'yē' to distinguish it from *ye*, the pl. pronoun.

These minute variations are, I trust, legitimate, and I have not recorded them. They cause trouble to the editor, but afford ease

to the reader, which seems a sufficient justification for adopting them. But the scrupulous critic need not fear that the MS. has been departed from in any case, where it could make any phonetic difference, without due notice. Thus, in l. 9, where I have changed *foveles* into *fovels* as being a more usual form, the fact that *foveles* is the Ellesmere spelling is duly recorded in the footnotes. And so in other cases.

The footnotes do not record various readings where E. is correct as it stands; they have purposely been made as concise as possible. It would have been easy to multiply them fourfold without giving much information of value; this is not unfrequently done, but the gain is slight. With so good a MS. as the basis of the text, it did not seem desirable.

The following methods for shortening the footnotes have been adopted.

1. Sometimes only the readings of *some* of the MSS. are given. Thus at l. 9 (p. 1), I omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm. As a fact, neither of these MSS. contain the line; but it was not worth while to take up space by saying so. At l. 10 (p. 1), I again omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm., for the same reason; also of Ln., which is a poor MS., though here it agrees with Hl. (having *yhe*); also of Pt., which has *eyghe*, a spelling not here to be thought of. At l. 12, I just note that E. has *pilgrimage* (by mistake); of course this means that it should have had *pilgrimages* in the plural, as in other MSS., and as required by the rime.

2. At l. 23 (p. 2), the remark '*rest* was' implies that all the rest of the seven MSS. specially collated have '*was*.' The word '*rest*' is a convenient abbreviation.

3. When, as at l. 53, I give *naciouns* as a rejected reading of E. in the footnote, it will be understood that *naciouns* is a better spelling, justified by other MSS., and by other lines in E. itself. E. g., *naciouns* occurs in Hl. and Pt., and Cm. has *naciounnys*.

4. I often use '*om.*' for '*omit*,' or '*omits*,' as in the footnote to l. 188 (p. 6).

5. At l. 335 (p. 11), I give the footnote:—'*ever*] Hl. al.' This means that MS. Hl. has *al* instead of the word *ever* of the other MSS. It seemed worth noting; but *ever* is probably right.

6. At l. 520 (p. 16), the note is:—'*All but* Hl. this was.' That is, Hl. has *was*, as in the text; the rest have *this was*, where the addition of *this* sadly clogs the line.

With these hints, the footnotes present no difficulty.

As a rule, I have refrained from all emendation; but, in B 1189, I have ventured to suggest *physices*<sup>1</sup>, for reasons explained in the Notes. Those who prefer the reading *Phislyas* can adopt it.

For further details regarding particular passages, I beg leave to refer the reader to the Notes in vol. v.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the gen. case of *physice*; 'Magister Artium et Physices' occurs in Longfellow's Golden Legend, § vi.

## § 5. TABLE OF SYMBOLS DENOTING MSS.

Cm.—Cambridge Univ. Lib. Gg. 4. 27 (Ellesmere type). No. 28 in list.

Cp.—Corpus Chr. Coll., Oxford, no. 198. No. 24.

Dd.—Cambridge Univ. Lib. Dd. 4. 24 (Ellesmere type). No. 29.

E.—Ellesmere MS. (basis of the text). No. 40.

Harl.—Harl. 1758; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 4.

Hl.—Harl. 7334; British Museum. No. 1.

Hn.—Hengwrt MS. no. 154. No. 41.

Li. *or* Lich.—Lichfield MS.; see pp. 533-553. No. 35.

Ln.—Lansdowne 851; Brit. Mus. (Corpus type). No. 10.

Pt.—Petworth MS. No. 42.

Rl. *or* Roy.—Royal 18 C. II; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 6.

Seld.—Arch. Selden, B. 14; Bodleian Library. No. 18.

Sl. *or* Slo.—Sloane 1685; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 8.

## § 6. TABLE SHEWING THE VARIOUS WAYS OF NUMBERING THE LINES.

SIX-TEXT (as here)	TYRWITT.	WRIGHT.
A—1-4422	1-4420 <sup>1</sup>	1-4420 <sup>1</sup>
B—1-1162	4421-5582	4421-5582
B—1163-2156	12903-13894 <sup>2</sup>	14384-15374 <sup>5</sup>
B—2157-3078 <sup>4</sup>	<i>Prose; not counted</i> <sup>5</sup> .	<i>Prose; not counted.</i>
B—3079-3564	13895-14380	15375-15860
B—3565-3652	14685-14772	15861-15948

<sup>1</sup> Tyrwhitt counts 252 *b* and 252 *c* as 253 and 254; but omits 3155, 3156; hence, in 3157-3720, the numbering is alike in the Six-text and T. He then omits 3721, 3722, making a difference of *two* lines. Wright follows Tyrwhitt's numbering in Group A, and in B 1-1162.

<sup>2</sup> T. counts B 1982, 1983 as *one* line; so also B 2002, 2003, and B 2012, 2013, and B 2076, 2077, making a difference of *four* lines; but, on the other hand, he expands B 1993 into *three* lines; hence, on the whole, a difference of *two* lines in this portion. See pp. 192, 193, and note to B 1993 in vol. v.

<sup>3</sup> Wright counts the lines as I do, but his numbering is in one place incorrect; after the line which he calls 15260, he counts the next thirteen lines as ten.

<sup>4</sup> As in the Six-text, I call each clause of Melibeus between the sloping marks *a line*, and so number it. So also in the Parson's Tale.

<sup>5</sup> T. cuts up the Tale into paragraphs. So also in the Parson's Tale (Group I). I have *numbered* these, for convenience; see head-lines, pp. 199-240.

SIX-TEXT (as here)	TYRWHITT.	WRIGHT.
B—3653-3956	14381-14684	15949-16252
B—3957-4652	14773-15468	16253-16932 <sup>1</sup>
<i>Spurious</i> ; see p. 289, note.	11929-11934	13410-13415
C—1-968	11935-12902	13416-14383
D (2294 lines); E (2440); F (1624)	5583-11928 <sup>2</sup>	5583-11928
G—1-1481	15469-16949	11929-13409
H—(362); I 1-74	16950-17385	16933-17368

Hence, to obtain the order of the lines in Tyrwhitt, see A-B 1162; D, E, F; p. 289, footnote; C; B 1163-2156, 3079-3564, 3653-3956, 3565-3652, 3957-4652; G, H, I.

Or (by pages), see pp. 1-164, 320-508, 289 (footnote), 290-319, 165-256 (which includes Melibeus), 259-268, 256-258, 269-289, 509-end.

To facilitate reference, the numbering of the lines in Tyrwhitt's text is marked at the top of every page, preceded by the letter 'T.'; lines which Tyrwhitt omits are marked '[T. om.], as on p. 90; and his paragraphs (all numbered in this edition) are carefully preserved in Melibeus and the Parson's Tale, which are in prose. In the Prologue, after l. 250, his numbering is given within marks of parenthesis.

The lines in every piece are also numbered *separately*, within marks of parenthesis, as (10), (20), on p. 26. This numbering (borrowed from Dr. Murray) agrees with the references given in the New English Dictionary. It also gives, in most cases, either exactly or approximately, the references to Dr. Morris's edition, who adopts a similar method, with a few variations of detail. The lines in Bell's edition are not numbered at all.

To obtain the order in Wright's edition, see pp. 1-164, 320-554, 289 (footnote), 290-319, 165-289, 555-end. The variations are fewer.

Some may find it more convenient to observe the names of the Tales.

<sup>1</sup> Sixteen lines short in Wright, because the Epilogue to the Nonne Prestes Tale (see p. 289) is relegated to a footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Twelve lines short; T. omits E 1305-6, F 671-2, 1455-6, 1493-8. Wright keeps E 1305-6, but does not count them, and omits the other ten.

Tyrwhitt's order of the Tales is as follows<sup>1</sup> :—Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook—Man of Lawe—Wife, Friar, Somnour—Clerk, Merchant—Squire, Franklin—Doctor (Physician), Pardoner—Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk<sup>2</sup>, Nun's Priest—Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman—Manciple—Parson.

§ 7. THE FOUR LEADING TYPES OF THE MSS.

The four leading types of MSS. usually exhibit a variation in the order of the Tales, as well as many minor differences. I only note here the former (omitting Gamelyn, which is absent from MSS. of the A-type, and from some of the D-type).

A.—1. Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook.

2. Man of Lawe.

3. Wife of Bath, Friar, Sompnour.

4. Clerk, Merchant.

5. Squire, Franklin.

6. Doctor, Pardoner.

7. Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk, Nun's Priest.

8. Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman.

9. Manciple, (*slightly linked to*) Parson.

B.—Places 8 before 6. Order : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9.

C.—Not only places 8 before 6 (as B), but splits 5 into 5 *a* (Squire) and 5 *b* (Franklin), and places 5 *a* before 3. Order : 1, 2, 5 *a*, 3, 4, 5 *b*, 8, 6, 7, 9.

D.—As C, but further splits 4 into 4 *a* (Clerk), and 4 *b* (Merchant), and places 4 *b* after 5 *a*. Order : 1, 2, 5 *a*, 4 *b*, 3, 4 *a*, 5 *b*, 8, 6, 7, 9. (D. is really a mere variety of C., with an external difference.)

Observe the position of the Franklin. Thus : A. Squire, Franklin, Doctor. B. Squire, Franklin, Second Nun. C. Merchant, Franklin, Second Nun. D. Clerk, Franklin, Second Nun.

For further remarks on this subject, see vol. v.

<sup>1</sup> The dash (—) shews where the Groups end or are interrupted.

<sup>2</sup> The order of the divisions of this tale is different. The 'modern instances,' viz. Peter of Spain, Peter of Cyrus, Barnabo of Lombardy, and Ugolino of Pisa are placed at the end instead of coming in the middle.

## ERRATA.

- P. 14. A 467. Perhaps the full stop at the end of the line should be a colon.
- P. 15. Footnote to A 503. For 'Hl. alone' read 'Tyrwhitt.'
- P. 85. A 3016. For eye read yē
- P. 133. B 115. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning and end of the line.
- P. 133. B 120, 121. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning of l. 120 and at the end of l. 121.
- P. 134. In the headline; for T. 4454 read T. 4554.
- P. 146. B 540, 541, 547. For cristen read Cristen
- P. 146. B 544. For cristianitee read Cristianitee. So also at p. 525; G 535.
- P. 194. B 2043. *Dele*; after spicerye
- P. 202. B 2222. For yevynge read yevinge
- P. 205. B 2253. For owe read ow
- P. 207. B 2303. For se read see
- P. 219, footnotes. For 2251 and 2252 read 2551 and 2552
- P. 232, ll. 9, 10. *Dele the quotation-mark after certeyne, and insert it after another.*
- P. 271. B 4011. For stope a better reading is stape
- P. 285. B 4510. For charitee perhaps read Charitee
- P. 285. B 4541. For chide read chyde
- P. 299. C 291. *Either read advocas, or note that the t in advocats is silent.*
- P. 318. C 955. For Thay read They
- P. 338. In the headline; for 6225 read 6235.
- P. 339. In the headline; for 6226 read 6236.
- P. 344. D 846. For But if read But-if
- P. 345. D 859. For All read Al
- P. 354. Footnotes; last line. For 1205 read 1204
- P. 355. D 1219, 1227. For Chese and chese read Chees and chees.
- P. 363. D 1436. For But if read But-if
- P. 387. D 2242. *Perhaps insert a comma after himself*
- P. 419. E 994. For gouernance read governance
- P. 428. E 1304, 1306. Insert quotation-mark at the end of l. 1304, instead of the end of l. 1306.
- P. 438. E 1635. For Saue read Save
- P. 444. E 1866. *Insert Auctor opposite this line.*
- P. 449. E 2058. For scorpion read scorioun; as the last syllable is accented.
- P. 459. E 2418. For bless read blesse
- P. 461. F 20. After all, the right reading probably is that given by E. Cp. Pt. Ln. **Fl**, but with the form *pietous* for *pitous*, as in Troilus, iii. 1444, and v. 451. Read—And piētous and Iust, alwey y-liche.
- P. 468. F 266. For Cambynskan read Cambinskan. So also at p. 480, first line.
- P. 474. F 462. For sle read slee
- P. 505, footnotes. For 1527 read 1526
- P. 527. G 558, footnote. *The real reading of E is—  
And vnderne the he wered a surplys*
- P. 543. G 1107. For shall read shal
- P. 626. Footnotes; last line. For E. Seld. Ln. beauteis; read E. Seld. Ln. beautees;
- P. 634. I 955. For Daniel, read David. [N. B. MSS. E. Cm. Danyel; *the rest*, David. Probably Chaucer wrote 'Daniel' at first, and afterwards corrected it (by the original) to 'David.' Nevertheless, 'Daniel' is a good reading.]



## ADDITIONS

TO

### 'THE MINOR POEMS' IN VOL. I.

---

[Further researches have brought to light some more of Chaucer's Minor Poems. I first met with the excellent Balade on 'Womanly Noblesse' in MS. Phillipps 9030 (now MS. Addit. 34360) on June 1, 1894; and on the following day I noticed in MS. Harl. 7578 (partly described in vol. i. p. 58) two Complaints that may perhaps be attributed to our author. As, from the nature of the case, they could not be included in Vol. i, they are inserted here.]

---

#### XXIV. WOMANLY NOBLESSE.

---

##### **Balade that Chaucier made.**

So hath my herte caught in rémembraunce  
Your beautè hool, and stedfast governaunce,  
Your vertues allè, and your hy noblesse,  
That you to serve is set al my plesaunce;  
So wel me lykth your womanly contenaunce, 5

---

From MS. Addit. 34360, fol. 21, back (with ascription by Shirley); hitherto unprinted. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.

1. hert.            2. Yowre (*throughout*); hoole; stidefast.            3. al; hie.  
4. yow; sette.    5. likith; *for* womanly *perhaps read* wyfly.

Your fresshe fetures and your comlinessse,  
 That, whyl I live, my herte to his maistresse,  
 You hath ful chose, in trew perséveraunce,  
 Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse.

And sith I [you] shal do this observaunce 10  
 Al my lyf, withouten displeaunce,  
 You for to serve with al my besinesse,  
 [Taketh me, lady, in your obeisaunce,]  
 And have me somewhat in your souvenaunce.  
 My woful herte suffreth greet duresse ; 15  
 And [loke] how humbl[el]y, with al simplesse,  
 My wil I cónforme to your ordenaunce,  
 As you best list, my peynes to redresse.

Considring eek how I hange in balaunce  
 In your servysè ; swich, lo ! is my chaunce, 20  
 Abyding grace, whan that your gentilnesse  
 Of my gret wo list doon allegeaunce,  
 And with your pitè me som wyse avaunce,  
 In ful rebating of my hevinesse ;  
 And thinkth, by reson, wommanly noblesse 25  
 Shuld nat desyre for to doon outrance  
 Ther-as she findeth noon unbuxumnesse.

## Lenvoye.

Auctour of norture, lady of plesaunce,  
 Sovereaine of beauté, flour of wommanhede,  
 Take ye non hede unto myn ignoraunce, 30  
 But this receyveth of your goodlihede,  
 Thinking that I have caught in rémembraunce  
 Your beauté hool, your stedfast governaunce.

---

6. comlynesse. 7. whiles ; myn hert ; maystresse. 8. triev.  
 10. *I insert you.* 11. (*Accent on Al*) ; live. 12. besynesse. 13. *Dr.*  
*Furnivall supplies this lost line ; cf. Complaint to Pity, l. 84.* 15. hert  
 suffrih grete. 16. *I supply* loke ; humbly. 17. ordynaunce.  
 18. for to (*I omit for*). 19. eke. 20. service suche loo. 21. (*Perhaps*  
*omit that*). 22. grete woo ; do. 23. wise. 24. rebatyng ; myn  
 hevynesse. 25. And thynkith be raison that (*too long*). 26. desire ;  
 for til do the (*I omit the*). 27. fyndith non vn-. 29. Soucraigne ;  
 floure. 31. receyvith ; goodelyhede. 32. Thynkyng. 33. hole ;  
 stidefast.

XXV. COMPLAINT TO MY  
MORTAL FOE.



AL hoolly youres, withouten others part!  
Wherefore? y-wis, that I ne can ne may  
My service chaungen; thus of al suche art  
The lerninge I desyre for ever and ay.  
And evermore, whyl that I live may, 5  
In trouthe I wol your servant stille abyde,  
Although my wo encresè day by day,  
Til that to me be come the dethes tyde.

Seint Valentyne! to you I rénovèle  
My woful lyf, as I can, compleyninge; 10  
But, as me thinketh, to you a quarele  
Right greet I have, whan I, rememberinge  
Bitwene, how kinde, ayeins the yeres springe,  
Upon your day, doth ech foul chese his make;  
And you list not in swich comfórt me bringe, 15  
That to her grace my lady shulde me take.

---

From MS. Harl. 7578, fol. 15. At the bottom of fol. 14, back, is the last line of Chaucer's Complaint to Pity, beneath which is written 'Balade.' But the present poem is really a Complaint, like the preceding one. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given. There is no title in the MS. except 'Balade.'

1. holly; others parte. 2. I wisse. 3. By (*surely an error for My*); arte. 4. lernynge; desire; euer (*and u for v often*). 5. while; leue. 6. trought (*sic*); youre; abide. 7. be (*for by*). 8. valentine; Renouele. 9. compleynynge. 10. grete; whanne; rememberinge. 11. Bytwene howe kende. 12. Vppon youre; doith eche foule. 13. lyst; suche comforte.

Wherfor unto you, Cupide, I beseche,  
 Furth with Venús, noble lusty goddesse,  
 Sith ye may best my sorowe lesse and eche ;  
 And I, your man, oppressed with distresse, 20  
 Can not crye 'help !' but to your gentilnesse :  
 So voucheth sauf, sith I, your man, wol dye,  
 My ladies herte in pitè folde and presse,  
 That of my peyne I finde remedye.

To your conning, my hertes right princesse, 25  
 My mortal fo, whiche I best love and serve,  
 I recommaunde my boistous lewednesse.  
 And, for I can not altherbest deserve  
 Your grace, I preye, as he that wol nat swerve,  
 That I may fare the better for my trouthe ; 30  
 Sith I am youres, til deth my herte kerve,  
 On me, your man, now mercy have and routhe.

---

21. cry helpe; vnto (*for* to); gentelnesse. 22. safe. 24. peine ;  
 fynde I may (*for* I finde); remydie. 25. konnyngge; princes.  
 26. foo. 27. leudenesse. 29. prey; swerue. 30. trouthe. 31. herte  
 wol kerue (*I omit* wol). 32. haue; routh.

XXVI. COMPLAINT TO MY  
LODE-STERRE.

OF gretter cause may no wight him compleyne  
 Than I; for love hath set me in swich caas  
 That lasse Ioye and more encrees of peyne  
 Ne hath no man; wherfore I crye 'allas!'  
 A thousand tyme, whan I have tyme and space. 5  
 For she, that is my verray sorowes grounde,  
 Wol with her grace no wyse my sorowes sounde.

And that, shulde be my sorowes hertes leche,  
 Is me ageins, and maketh me swich werre,  
 That shortly, [in] al maner thought and speche, 10  
 Whether it be that I be nigh or ferre,  
 I misse the grace of you, my lode-sterre,  
 Which causeth me on you thus for to crye;  
 And al is it for lakke of remedye.

My soverain Ioye thus is my mortal fo; 15  
 She that shulde causen al my lustynesse  
 List in no wyse of my sorowes saye 'ho!'

---

From MS. Harl. 7578, fol. 15, back. No title but 'Balade'; but it is really a Complaint. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.

2. y (*for* I); hath me sette in swiche. 3. encrease. 5. whenne; haue.  
 6. sheo; werry (*for* verray). 7. Wolle; wise; (sounde *means* heal).  
 9. Ys; swide (*miswritten for* swiche). 10. I *supply* in; alle manere.  
 11. Whethre. 12. mys; loode-. 13. Whiche. 14. alle; remedye.  
 15. souzeraine; foo. 16. alle; lustynesse. 17. Liste; wise; say hoo.

But let me thus darraine, in hevinesse,  
 With woful thoughtes and my grete distresse,  
 The which she might right wele, [at] every tyde, 20  
 If that her liste, out of my herte gyde.

But it is so, that her list, in no wyse,  
 Have pitè on my woful besinesse ;  
 And I ne can do no maner servyse  
 That may me torne out of my hevinesse ; 25  
 So woldè god, that she now wolde impresse  
 Right in her herte my trouthe and eek good wille ;  
 And let me not, for lakke of mercy, spille.

Now wele I woot why thus I smerte sore ;  
 For couthe I wele, as othere folkes, feyne, 30  
 Than neded me to live in peyne no more,  
 But, whan I were from you, unteye my reyne,  
 And, for the tyme, drawe in another cheyne.  
 But woldè god that alle swich were y-knowe,  
 And duely punisshed of hye and lowe. 35

Swich lyf defye I, bothe in thoughte and worde,  
 For yet me were wel lever for to sterve  
 Than in my herte for to make an horde  
 Of any falshood ; for, til deth to-kerve  
 My herte and body, shal I never swerve 40  
 From you, that best may be my fynal cure,  
 But, at your liste, abyde myn aventure ;

And preye to you, noble seint Valentyne,  
 My ladies herte that ye wolde embrace,

---

18. lete ; hevinesse. 19. wooful ; grette. 20. sheo ; *I supply* at ; euery.  
 21. oute ; gujde. 22. liste ; wise. 23. Haue pitee. 24. kanne ;  
 manere seruice. 25. be (*for* me) ; oute ; hevynessee. 26. sheo nowe.  
 27. herre (*for* her) ; trouh (*sic*) ; eke. 28. lette ; lake. 29. woote ;  
 why that I thus smerte so sore (*two syllables too much*). 30. couth ; sayne  
 (*for* feyne). 31. Thanne nedes ; lyue. 32. whenne ; vnteye. 33. into  
 (*for* in) ; a-nothre. 35. punisshede both of high (*I omit* both). 36. Swiche ;  
 defie. 37. yette ; sterue. 38. Thanne ; hoorde. 39. falshode ; til deth  
 the kerue (*but see note on p. xxxii*). 40. neuere swerue. 41. youre  
 (*for* my). 42. atte youre ; abide. 43. prey ; sainte valentine.

And make her pitè to me more encline 45  
 That I may stonden in her noble grace  
 In hasty tyme, whyl I have lyves space:  
 For yit wiste I never noon, of my lyve,  
 So litel hony in so fayre hyve.

---

 NOTES TO THE PRECEDING POEMS.
 

---

XXIV.—I take the title from l. 25; cf. Troil. i. 287.

The metre exhibits the nine-line stanza, as in Anelida, 211-9; but the same rimes recur in all three stanzas. The six-line Envoy, with the rime-formula *a b a b a a*, is unique in Chaucer. There are nineteen lines ending in *-aunce*, twelve in *-esse*, and two in *-ede*.

1. Note how ll. 1 and 2 are re-echoed in ll. 32, 33. For a similar effect, see Anelida, 211, 350.

8. *ful chose*, fully chosen; parallel to *ful drive* in C. T., F 1230.

14. *souvenance*, remembrance; not found elsewhere in Chaucer.

16. *humblely* is trisyllabic; see Leg. 156, Troil. ii. 1719, v. 1354.

20. *lo* emphasises *swich*; cf. *lo, this*, T. v. 54; *lo, which*, T. iv. 1231.

22. *allegeaunce*, alleviation; the verb *allegge* is in the Glossary.

26. *outrance*, extreme violence, great hurt; see Godefroy.

27. *unbuxumnesse*, unsubmitiveness; cf. *buxumnesse*, Truth, 15.

XXV.—I take the title from l. 26; cf. Compl. to his Lady, 41, 64.

1. Cf. Amorous Complaint, 87; Troil. v. 1318, i. 960.

3. 'Love hath me taught no more of his art,' &c.; Compl. to his Lady, 42-3.

9. Cf. Compl. of Mars, 13, 14; p. xxx above, l. 43; Parl. Foules, 386-9; Amorous Complaint, 85-6.

19. *eche*, augment; 'hir sorwes *eche*,' T. i. 705.

27. 'And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde;' T. v. 1414. 'I am a *boistous* man;' C. T., H 211.

XXVI.—I take the title from l. 12; see T. v. 232, 638, 1392.

7. *sounde*, heal, cure; as in Anelida, 242.

8. Perhaps read *hertes sorwes leche*; see T. ii. 1066.

10. Cf. 'as *in* his speche;' T. ii. 1069.

26. *impresse*; cf. T. ii. 1371.

---

45. pitee.	46. here.	47. whiles; haue lyues.	48. yitte; neuere
none; lyfe.	49. hiue.		

28. *s/ille*; cf. Compl. to his Lady, 121.

32. *reyne*, bridle. For this image, cf. Anelida, 184.

39. MS. *deth the kerue*. As *e* and *o* are constantly confused, the prefix *to* (written apart) may have looked like *te*, and would easily be altered to *the*. Cf. *forkerveth* in the Manc. Tale, H 340.

47. Here *spac-e* rimes with *embrac-e*, but in l. 5 it rimes with *allas*. This variation is no worse than the riming of *embrace* with *compas* in Proverbs, 8 (vol. i. p. 407). Cf. *plac-e* in C. T., B 1910, with its variant *plas*, B 1971.

N. B. The Complaints numbered XXV and XXVI are obviously by the same author; compare XXV. 26 with XXVI. 15; XXV. 9 with XXVI. 43; and XXV. 29-31 with XXVI. 39, 40. They were probably written nearly at the same time.



# THE CANTERBURY TALES.

## GROUP A. THE PROLOGUE.

Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote  
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour ;  
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth 5  
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth  
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,  
And smale fowles maken melodye,  
That slepen al the night with open yë, 10  
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages) :  
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages  
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)  
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes ;  
And specially, from every shires ende 15  
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,  
The holy blisful martir for to seke,  
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.  
Bifel that, in that seson on a day,  
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20  
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage  
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,

---

HEADING. *From E.* 1. E. hise ; *rest* his. 8. Hl. halfe ; *rest* half. 9. Hl. fowles ; Pt. Ln. foules ; E. Hn. foweles. 10. Hl. yhe ; Hn. Iye ; E. eye. 12. Pt. Ln. Than ; E. Thanne. E. *pilgrimage (by mistake)*. 13. Pt. Hl. palmers ; E. Palmeres. 16. Hn. Caunter- ; E. Cauntur-. 18. E. seeke. 19. Hn. Bifel ; E. Bifil.

\*\*\*\*

B

At night was come in-to that hostelrye  
 Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,  
 Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25  
 In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,  
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde ;  
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,  
 And wel we weren esed atte beste.  
 And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, 30  
 So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,  
 That I was of hir felawshipe anon,  
 And made forward erly for to ryse,  
 To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space, 35  
 Er that I ferther in this tale pace,  
 Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,  
 To telle yow al the condicioun  
 Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,  
 And whiche they weren, and of what degree ; 40  
 And eek in what array that they were inne :  
 And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man, **Knight**  
 That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
 To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45  
 T'routhe and honour, fredom and curteisye.  
 Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
 And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)  
 As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,  
 And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne ;  
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
 Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.  
 In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,  
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55  
 In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be  
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.  
 At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,

23. E. were ; *rest* was. 24. E. Hn. compaignye. 26, 32. E. felawshipe.  
 Hl. pilgryms ; E. pilgrimes. 34. E. oure. 35. E. Hn. nathelees. 40. Hl.  
 weren ; *rest* were, weere. 49. Hn. Hl. as ; *rest* as in. 53. E. naciouns.  
 56. E. seege.

Whan they were wonne ; and in the Grete See  
 At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60  
 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
 And foughten for our feith at Tramissene  
 In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.  
 This ilke worthy knight had been also  
 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye, 65  
 Ageyn another hethen in Turkye :  
 And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.  
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
 And of his port as meke as is a mayde.  
 He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70  
 In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.  
 He was a verray parfit gentil knight.  
 But for to tellen yow of his array,  
 His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.  
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75  
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun ;  
 For he was late y-come from his viage,  
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.  
 With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER, **Squyer.**  
 A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler, 80  
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.  
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
 And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.  
 And he had been somtyme in chivachye, 85  
 In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,  
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,  
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
 Embrouded was he, as it were a mede  
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede. 90  
 Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day ;  
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.

60. Hl. ariue ; Cm. aryue ; E. Hn. arnee ; Cp. Ln. arme. 62. E. oure.  
 64. Pt. had ; *rest* hadde. 67. E. -moore. 68. E. Hn. Cm. were ; *rest* was.  
 74. E. Pt. weren ; Hl. Ln. was ; *rest* were. Hl. Hn. he ne was. 83. Ln.  
 euen ; *rest* euene. 84. Hl. Ln. delyuer ; *rest* delyuere. E. Hn. of greet ;  
 Cm. of gret ; *rest* gret of. 85. Ln. had. 87. E. weel. 89, 90. E. meede,  
 reede. 92. E. fressh. E. in ; *rest* is. E. Hn. Monthe ; Cp. month ; Hl. Pt.  
 Ln. moneth ; Cm. monyth.

Short was his gounce, with sleeves longe and wyde.  
 Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.  
 He coude songes make and wel endyte, 95  
 Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.  
 So hote he lovede, that by nightertale  
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.  
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,  
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo Yeman.  
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so ;  
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene ;  
 A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene  
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily ; 105  
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly :  
 His arwes drouped noght with fettheres lowe),  
 And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.  
 A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.  
 Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage. 110

Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,  
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,  
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,  
 Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere ;  
 A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene. 115  
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene ;  
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE, Prioeresse.  
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy ;  
 Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt Loy ; 120  
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.  
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,  
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely ;  
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe, 125  
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.  
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle ;

96. E. weel. 98. Hl. Cp. sleep; *rest* slepte. E. -moore. 99. Hl. Cp. Ln.  
 lowly; E. Hn. Pt. lowely. 101. E. seruantz. 102. E. soo. 104. Hl. Cp. Pt.  
 Ln. pocok. Cm. bryghte; *rest* bright. 107. E. Hise. 108, 111. E.  
 baar. 113. E. oother. 115. Hn. Cristofre; E. Cristophere. E. sheene.  
 122. E. soong. 123. E. semeely.

She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.  
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe, 130  
 That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.  
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.  
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,  
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene  
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte. 135  
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,  
 And sikerly she was of greet disport,  
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,  
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere  
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere, 140  
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,  
 She was so charitable and so pitous,  
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous  
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. 145  
 Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde  
 With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.  
 But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,  
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte :  
 And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150  
 Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was ;  
 Hir nose tretys ; hir eyen greye as glas ;  
 Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed ;  
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed ;  
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe ; 155  
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.  
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.  
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar  
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene ;  
 And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160  
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,

131. Cm. brest ; E. Hn. brist. 132. Cp. moche ; Cm meche ; E. Hn. muchel.  
 Hl. lest ; E. Hn. Cm. list. 134. Hl. was ; *rest* ther was. 137. E. Hn.  
 desport ; *rest* disport. 140. E. to been ; Hl. Hn. *omit* to. 144. Hl. Hn. Cp.  
 Ln. sawe ; E. saugh ; Cm. seye. 146. Pt. Ln. had ; *rest* hadde. 148. Ln.  
 wepped ; *rest* wepte ; *read* weep ; *cf.* l. 2878. E. any ; *rest* oon, on, one.  
 151. E. semyly, E. wympul ; Hn. wympel. 160. E. Hn. brooch ; *rest* broche.

And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,	Nonne.
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three.	3 Preestes.
A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye,	Monk.
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye ;	166
A manly man, to been an abbot able.	
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable :	
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here	
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,	170
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,	
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.	
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,	
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,	
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,	175
And held after the newe world the space.	
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,	
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men ;	
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,	
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees ;	180
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.	
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre ;	
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.	
What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,	
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,	185
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,	
As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?	
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.	
Therefore he was a pricasour aright ;	
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight ;	190
Of priking and of hunting for the hare	
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.	
I seigh his slevs purfild at the hond	
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond ;	
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,	195

---

170. Hl. Cp. whistlyng ; E. whistlynge. E. Cm. als ; Ln. al-so ; Hl. so ; *rest* as.  
 176. E. Hn. heeld ; Cm. held. 178. Hn. Hl. been ; E. beth. 179. Hl. cloy-  
 sterles ; E. Hn. recchelees ; Cp. Pt. Ln. recheles ; Cm. rekeles (Ten Brink  
*proposes recetlees*). 182. E. Hn. heeld ; Cm. held. 188. E. his owene ;  
*rest om. owene.* 190. Hl. swifte ; *rest* swift. 193. Hl. Hn. purfild ;  
 Cm. purfilid ; E. ypurfild.

He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin :  
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.  
 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,  
 And eek his face, as he had been anoint.  
 He was a lord ful fat and in good point ;      200  
 His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,  
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed ;  
 His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.  
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat ;  
 He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.      205  
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.  
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.  
 A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,      Frere.  
 A limitour, a ful solempne man.  
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that can      210  
 So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.  
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
 Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.  
 Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.  
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he      215  
 With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,  
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun :  
 For he had power of confessioun,  
 As seyde him-self, more than a curat,  
 For of his ordre he was licentiat.      220  
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,  
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun ;  
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce  
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce ;  
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive      225  
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.  
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
 He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.      230  
 Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeres,

196. Hl. a ; *rest* a ful. 196, 218. Ln. had ; *rest* hadde. 199. E. it ; *rest* he.  
 203, 4. E. staat, prelaat. 208. E. wantowne. 211. Hn. muche ; E. muchel.  
 213. Hl. owne ; E. owene. 215. E. And ; *rest* Ful. 217. Hl. Hn. eek ;  
*rest omit.* 224. Hl. Cm. han ; E. haue. 229. E. harde. 231. E. wepynge.

Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.  
 His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.  
 And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235  
 Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.  
 Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.  
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;  
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.  
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240  
 And everich hostiler and tappestere  
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;  
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he  
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,  
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce. 245  
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce  
 For to delen with no swich poraille,  
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.  
 And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,  
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250  
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.  
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;  
 [And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt; 252 *b*  
 Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;] 252 *c*  
 For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,  
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"  
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente. 255  
 His purchas was wel better than his rente.  
 And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.  
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe. (260)  
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,  
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler, 260  
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.  
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,  
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.

232. E. Hn. moote; *see note*. 234. E. yonge; *rest faire*. 235.  
 Hl. mery; E. murye. 237. E. baar. Pt. vttilry; Hl. vttilry; E. Hn.  
 outrely. 240. E. al the; *rest euery*. 245. E. Hn. Cm. sike; Pt. Ln.  
 seke; *see l. 18*. 246. Cm. honest; E. honeste. 248. E. selleres. 250.  
 E. lowely. *After l. 252, Hn. alone inserts ll. 252 b and 252 c.* 259. Hl.  
 Cm. cloysterer; E. Hn. Cloystre. 260. *So all the MSS. (but with -bare);*  
*cf. l. 290.* 252. *All worstede (badly).*



Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,  
 To make his English swete up-on his tonge ; 265  
 And in his harping, whan that he had songe,  
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,  
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night. (270)  
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd, **Marchant.**  
 In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat, 271  
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat ;  
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.  
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,  
 Souninge alway thencrees of his winning. 275  
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing  
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.  
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle. (280)  
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette ;  
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette, 280  
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,  
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.  
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,  
 But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also, **Clerk.**  
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go. 286  
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,  
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake ; (290)  
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.  
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy ; 290  
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,  
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.  
 For him was lever have at his beddes heed  
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye, 295  
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.  
 But al be that he was a philosophre,  
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre ; (300)

266. Pt. Ln. had ; *rest* hadde. 271. Ln. motteley ; Hl. motteleye ; E. Hn. motlee. 272. E. beuere. 273. Cp. Pt. clapsed ; Hl. clapsud.  
 274. E. Hise. 281. Cp. statly. 287. E. And ; Hl. Al so ; *rest* As.  
 289. E. Hn. sobrelly ; *rest* soburly. 290. *All*-bare. Hl. oucrest ; E. Hn. Cm. ouereste. 291. Cp. Ln. had ; *rest* hadde. 293. Cp. Ln. Hl. leuer ; *rest* leuere.

But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,  
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente, 300  
 And bisily gan for the soules preye  
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.  
 Of studie took he most cure and most hede.  
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,  
 And that was seyde in forme and reverence, 305  
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.  
 Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,  
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche. (310)

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys, **Man of Lawe.**  
 That often hadde been at the parvys, 310  
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.  
 Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:  
 He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.  
 Iustyce he was ful often in assyse,  
 By patente, and by pleyn commissioun; 315  
 For his science, and for his heigh renoun  
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.  
 So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon. (320)

Al was fee simple to him in effect,  
 His purchasing mighte nat been infect. 320  
 No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,  
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.  
 In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,  
 That from the tyme of king William were falle.  
 Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing, 325  
 Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;  
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.  
 He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote (330)

Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;  
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330

A FRANKELEYN was in his companye; **Frankelwyn.**  
 Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesyte.  
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.  
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.

300. E. Hl. his; *rest* on.  
 pynchen; *rest* pynche, pinche.  
*rest* the.

324. E. yfalle; *rest* falle.  
 332. E. heed; *rest* berd, berde.

326. E. Hn.  
 E. a;

To liven in delyt was ever his wone, 335  
 For he was Epicurus owne sone,  
 That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt  
 Was verrailly felicitee parfyt. (340)  
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he ;  
 Seint Iulian he was in his contree. 340  
 His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon ;  
 A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.  
 With-oute bake mete was never his hous,  
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,  
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke, 345  
 Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.  
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,  
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper. (350)  
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,  
 And many a breem and many a luce in stewe. 350  
 Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were  
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.  
 His table dormant in his halle alway  
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.  
 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire ; 355  
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.  
 An anlas and a gipser al of silk  
 Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk. (360)  
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour ;  
 Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour. 360  
 An **HABERDASSHER** and a **CARPENTER**,      **Haberdassher.**  
 A **WEBBE**, a **DYERE**, and a **TAPICER**,      **Carpenter.**  
 Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,      **Webbe.**  
 Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.      **Dyere.**  
 Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was ; 365  
 Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,  
 But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,  
 Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel. (370)

335. ever] Hl. al. 336. E. Hn. Cm. owene; *rest* owne. 338. Hl. verrailly; *rest* verray, verrey, uery. 340. E. was he; *rest* he was. 341. Cm. Ln. alwey; Hl. alway; E. Hn. Cp. always. 342. Hl. Pt. nowher; Cm. nowher; *rest* neuere; *cf.* l. 360. 349, 350. E. Hn. muwe, stuwe. 357. E. Hn. anlaas; Hl. Cm. anlas. 358. E. Hn. heeng. 359. E. Hn. Cm. om. a. 363. *So* Hl.; *rest* And they were clothed alle. 364. *All but* Hl. and a. 366. Hl. I-chapud; Cm. chapid; *rest* chaped.

Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,  
 To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys. 370  
 Everich, for the wisdom that he can,  
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.  
 For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,  
 And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente ;  
 And elles certein were they to blame. 375  
 It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"  
 And goon to vigilyës al bifore,  
 And have a mantel royalliche y-bore. (380)

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones, **Cook.**  
 To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones, 380  
 And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.  
 Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.  
 He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,  
 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me, 385  
 That on his shine a mormal hadde he ;  
 For blankmanger, that made he with the beste. (389)

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste : **Shipman.**  
 For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.  
 He rocd up-on a rouncy, as he couthe, 390  
 In a gowne of falding to the knee.  
 A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he  
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.  
 The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun ;  
 And, certainly, he was a good felawe. 395  
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe  
 From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.  
 Of nyce conscience took he no keep. (400)

If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,  
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond. 400  
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,  
 His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,  
 His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,  
 Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.

370. E. yeldehalle. 376. E. Hn. ycleped; Hl. clept; *rest* cleped, clepid.  
 380. Hl. *om.* 1st the. 383. E. Hl. boille; Cm. boyle; *rest* broille, broile.  
 388. E. wonyng; Hn. wonyng. 396. Cm. I-drawe; *rest* drawe.

Hardy he was, and wys to undertake ;      405  
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.  
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,  
 From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,      (410)  
 And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne ;  
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.      410

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISYK,      **Doctour.**  
 In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk  
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye ;  
 For he was grounded in astronomye.  
 He kepte his pacient a ful greet del      415  
 In houres, by his magik naturel.  
 Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent  
 Of his images for his pacient.      (420)  
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,      420  
 And where engendred, and of what humour ;  
 He was a verrey parfit practisour.  
 The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,  
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.  
 Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,      425  
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,  
 For ech of hem made other for to winne ;  
 Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.      (430)  
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,  
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,      430  
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien ;  
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen ;  
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn ;  
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.  
 Of his diete mesurable was he,      435  
 For it was of no superfluitee,  
 But of greet norissing and digestible.  
 His studie was but litel on the Bible.      (440)  
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,

407. Hl. *ins.* wel ; *rest om.* 415. Hl. wondurly wel ; *rest* a ful greet deel (del).  
 416. E. Hn. natureel. 418. E. Hn. hise ; Cm. hese. 421. E. Cm. Hl.  
 where they ; Hn. where it. 424. Cm. Ln. seke ; *rest* sike. 425. E. hise.  
 426. E. Hn. Cm. drogges ; Cp. Pt. Ln. drugges ; Hl. dragges. 430. Pt.  
 Rufus ; Cm. Rufijs ; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. Rusus ; E. Risus. 431. Hl. Pt. Old ;  
*rest* Olde.

Lyned with taffata and with sendal ; 440  
 And yet he was but esy of dispence ;  
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.  
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,  
 Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE, **Wyf of Bathe.**  
 But she was som-del deaf, and that was scathe. 446  
 Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,  
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. (450)  
 In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon  
 That to the offring bifore hir sholde goon ; 450  
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,  
 That she was out of alle charitee.  
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground ;  
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound  
 That on a Sunday were upon hir heed. 455  
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,  
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.  
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe. (460)  
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,  
 Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve, 460  
 Withouten other companye in youthe ;  
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.  
 And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem ;  
 She hadde passed many a straunge strem ;  
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, 465  
 In Galice at seint Iame, and at Coloigne.  
 She coude muche of wandring by the weye.  
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye. (470)  
 Up-on an amblere esily she sat,  
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat 470  
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe ;  
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,  
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.  
 In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe.  
 Of remedies of love she knew per-chaunce, 475  
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

452. Hl. was thanne out. 453, 455. E. weren. 457. Cp. Hl. schoos ;  
 E. Pt. Ln. shoes. 458. E. Hn. Boold. 463. Ln. had. 467. Ln. muche ;  
 Hl. Pt. Cp. moche ; E. Hn. muchel. 474. E. Hn. felaweschip. 476. Hl.  
 For of that art sche knew.

A good man was ther of religioun,  
 And was a povre **PERSOUN** of a toun ;  
 But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.  
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,  
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche ;  
 His parisspens devoutly wolde he teche.  
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
 And in adversitee ful pacient ;  
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes. 485  
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,  
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
 Un-to his povre parisspens aboute 490  
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.  
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce. 495  
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,  
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte  
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,  
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495  
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte ;  
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte ; 500  
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,  
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do ? 500  
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,  
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste ;  
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,  
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.  
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive, 505  
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold live.  
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,  
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre, 510  
 And ran to London, un-to sēynt Poules,  
 To seken him a chaunterie for soules, 510  
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde ;

485. Hl. I-proued ; E. Cp. Pt. preued. 486. E. hise. 490. Hl. Cm. Pt.  
 han ; E. Hn. Cp. Ln. haue. 493. E. siknesse. 497. E. firste. E. *ins.*  
 that (*by mistake*) before he. 503. Hl. *alone ins.* that after if. 505. Hl.  
 3iue ; E. yeue. 509. Hl. Cp. seynte. 510. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. chaunterie ;  
 E. Hn. chauntrie.

But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
 So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;  
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.  
 And though he holy were, and vertuous, 515  
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,  
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,  
 But in his teching discreet and benigne. (520)  
 To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse  
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse: 520  
 But it were any persone obstinat,  
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,  
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.  
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.  
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence, 525  
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,  
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,  
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve. (530)

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother, **Plowman**.  
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother, 530  
 A trewe swinker and a good was he,  
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.  
 God loved he best with al his hole herte  
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,  
 And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve. 535  
 He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,  
 For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,  
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might. (540)  
 His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,  
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel. 540  
 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,  
 A Somnour and a Pardoner also,  
 A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namo.

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones, **Miller**.

512. E. dwelleth; *rest* dwelte. E. keepeth; Ln. keped; *rest* kepte. 514.  
 Hl. no; *rest* not a. 516. Hl. to senful man nought; *rest* nat to sinful man.  
 520. *All but* Hl. this was. 522. Hn. lowe; E. lough. 523. E. nonys.  
 525. E. waiteth; *rest* waited. 527. E. hise. 528. Hl. and; *rest* but.  
 534. E. Pt. Ln. he; *rest* him. 537. for] Hn. Hl. with. 539. Cp. Pt.  
 payed; Cm. Hl. payede; E. Hn. payde. 540. propre] Hl. owne.



Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones ;      546  
 That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,  
 At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.      (550)  
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,  
 Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,      550  
 Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.  
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,  
 And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.  
 Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade  
 A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,      555  
 Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres ;  
 His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.  
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde ;      (560)  
 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.  
 He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys,      560  
 And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.  
 Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes ;  
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.  
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.  
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,      565  
 And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.  
 A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,      **Maunciple.**  
 Of which achatours mighte take exemple      (570)  
 For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.  
 For whether that he payde, or took by taille,      570  
 Algate he wayted so in his achat,  
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.  
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,  
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace  
 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men ?      575  
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,  
 That were of lawe expert and curious ;  
 Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,      (580)  
 Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond  
 Of any lord that is in Engelond,      580

550. Cp. Hl. nolde ; Hn. noolde ; E. ne wolde.      555. E. toft ; Ln. tofte ;  
*rest* tuft. E. herys.      556. Hn. bristles ; E. brustles ; Pt. brysteles ; Hl. Cp.  
 berstles. E. erys.      558. *All but* Cp. and a.      559. Hl. wyde ; *rest* greet, gret.  
 565. Hl. *om.* wel.      570. E. Hn. wheither.      571. E. Achaat.      572. E.  
 staat.      577. E. weren.      578. E. whiche.      Cm. doseyn ; E. duszeyne.

To make him live by his propre good,  
 In honour dettelees, but he were wood,  
 Or live as scarsly as him list desire ;  
 And able for to helpen al a shire  
 In any cas that mighte falle or happe ; 585  
 And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

The REVE was a scendre colerik man, **Reve.**  
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he can. (590)  
 His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.  
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn. 590  
 Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,  
 Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.  
 Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne ;  
 Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.  
 Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn, 595  
 The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.  
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,  
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye, (600)  
 Was hoolly in this reves governing,  
 And by his covenaut yaf the rekening, 600  
 Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age ;  
 Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.  
 Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,  
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne ;  
 They were adrad of him, as of the deeth. 605  
 His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,  
 With grene treës shadwed was his place.  
 He coude better than his lord purchase. (610)  
 Ful riche he was astored prively,  
 His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly, 610  
 To yeve and lene him of his owne good,  
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.  
 In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister ;

581. E. maken. 582. Cm. but ; Cp. Pt. but if that ; *rest* but if. 585.  
 E. Hn. caas. 589. *All but* Hl. Ln. *ins.* ful *after* eres. 590. E. doked.  
 594. E. of ; *rest* on. 603. ne (2)] E. Hn. Cp. Pt. nor. 604. Hl. they  
 (*for* he). E. Cm. *om.* ne. 606. Hl. fair ; E. faire. 607. E. Hn. shadwed ; Hl.  
 I-schadewed ; Cm. I-schadewid ; Cp. Pt. shadewed ; Ln. schadowed. 611.  
 Hl. owne ; E. owene. 612. E. *om.* and. E. gowne ; *rest* cote. 613. *So*  
 Hn. Hl. ; E. *and rest* hadde lerned. Cp. Hl. mester.

He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
 This reve sat up-on a ful good stot, 615  
 That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.  
 A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,  
 And by his syde he bar a rusty blade. (620)  
 Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,  
 Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle. 620  
 Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,  
 And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.  
 A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place, **Somnour.**  
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubennes face,  
 For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe. 625  
 As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe ;  
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd ;  
 Of his visage children were aferd. (630)  
 Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,  
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon, 630  
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,  
 That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,  
 Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.  
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,  
 And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood. 635  
 Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.  
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn. (640)  
 A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,  
 That he had lerned out of som decree ; 640  
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day ;  
 And eek ye knowen wel, how that a Iay  
 Can elepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.  
 But who-so coude in other thing him grope,  
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye ; 645  
 Ay '*Questio quid iuris*' wolde he crye.  
 He was a gentil harlot and a kinde ;  
 A better felawe sholde men noght finde. (650)  
 He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,  
 A good felawe to have his concubyn 650

618. E. baar. 623. Cm. Pt. Somnour ; Hl. sompnour ; E. Hn. Somonour.  
 627. E. Hn. Cm. scaled. 629. Cp. Pt. Hl. bremston. 632. E. the ; rest his.

A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:  
 Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.  
 And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,  
 He wolde techen him to have non awe,  
 In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655  
 But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
 For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.  
 'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he. (660)  
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;  
 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede— 660  
 For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth—  
 And also war him of a *significavit*.  
 In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse  
 The yonge girles of the diocyse,  
 And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed. 665  
 A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,  
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;  
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake. (670)

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER **Pardoner.**  
 Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670  
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.  
 Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'  
 This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,  
 Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.  
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex, 675  
 But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;  
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,  
 And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde; (680)  
 But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;  
 But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon, 680  
 For it was trussed up in his walet.  
 Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe Iet;  
 Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.  
 Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.  
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe. 685

652. E. Ln. Hl. And; *rest* Ful. 655. Cm. Cp. erche-; E. erce-; Hl. arche-.  
 660. Cp. Ln. him; Hl. Pt. to; *rest om.* 661. Hl. Pt. saueth; E. sauith.  
 663. Hl. owne; E. owene. 668. E. bokeleer. 669. E. was; *rest* rood, rode. 670. E. Cm. Pt. Rounciuale. 672. E. soong.  
 676. E. heeng. 677, 678. E. hise. 680. But ] Cm. Hl. And. Hl. ne; *rest omit.*  
 683. E. Discheuelee. 685. Hl. Cp. on; *rest* vp on.

His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,  
 Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.  
 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot. (690)  
 No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,  
 As smothe it was as it were late y-shave; 690  
 I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.  
 But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,  
 Ne was ther swich another pardoner.  
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,  
 Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl: 695  
 He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
 That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente  
 Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente. (700)  
 He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,  
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700  
 But with thise relikes, whan that he fond  
 A povre person dwelling up-on lond,  
 Up-on a day he gat him more moneye  
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.  
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and Iapes, 705  
 He made the person and the peple his apes.  
 But trewely to tellen, atte laste,  
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste. (710)  
 Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,  
 But alderbest he song an offertorie; 710  
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
 He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,  
 To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;  
 Therefore he song so meriely and loude.  
 Now have I told you shortly, in a clause, 715  
 Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause  
 Why that assembled was this companye  
 In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye, (720)  
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.  
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720

686. Hl. lay; *which the rest omit.* 687. Hl. Cm. come; *rest comen.*  
 688. Hl. eny (*for hath a*). 690. Hn. yshaue; E. shaue. 695. *All oure.*  
 713. Hl. right (*for ful*). 714. Cp. Pt. Ln. so meriely; E. Hn. Cm. the  
 murierly. 715. E. Hl. shortly; *rest soothly.* 716. Hl. Thestat; Hn.  
 Thestaat; E. The staat; Cm. Cp. The estat. 718. E. as; *rest at.*

How that we baren us that ilke night,  
 Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.  
 And after wol I telle of our viage,  
 And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.  
 But first I pray yow, of your curteisye, 725  
 That ye narette it nat my vileinye,  
 Thogh that I pleynty speke in this matere,  
 To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere; (730)  
 Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.  
 For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730  
 Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,  
 He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,  
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
 Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;  
 Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe, 735  
 Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.  
 He may nat spare, al-though he were his brother;  
 He moot as wel seye o word as another. (740)  
 Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,  
 And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740  
 Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,  
 The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.  
 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,  
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degree  
 Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde; 745  
 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.  
 Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,  
 And to the soper sette he us anon; (750)  
 And served us with vitaille at the beste.  
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste. 750  
 A semely man our hoste was with-alle  
 For to han been a marshal in an halle;  
 A large man he was with eyen stepe,  
 A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:  
 Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught, 755  
 And of manhod him lakkede right naught.

724. E. oure (*but our in l. 723*). 725. E. youre; Hl. ȝour. 726. E. Hn. Cm. narette; Cp. Pt. Hl. ne rette. 734. E. or; Hl. ne; *rest and.* 741. *All but Hl. om. that.* 747. E. chiere. E. hoost (*see l. 751*). 752. Hl. han; *rest om.* 754. E. Hn. was. 755. E. Hn. Boold. 756. Cm. Cp. lakkede; E. lakked.

Eek therto he was right a mery man,  
 And after soper pleyen he bigan, (760)  
 And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,  
 Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges ; 760  
 And seyde thus : ‘ Now, lordinges, trewely,  
 Ye been to me right welcome hertely :  
 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,  
 I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye  
 At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765  
 Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.  
 And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,  
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght. (770)  
 Ye goon to Caunterbury ; God yow spede,  
 The blisful martir quyte yow your mede. 770  
 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,  
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye ;  
 For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon  
 To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon ;  
 And therfore wol I maken yow disport, 775  
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.  
 And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,  
 Now for to stonden at my Iugement, (780)  
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,  
 To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye, 780  
 Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,  
 But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.  
 Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.’  
 Our counseil was nat longe for to seche ;  
 Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, 785  
 And graunted him withouten more avys,  
 And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.  
 ‘ Lordinges,’ quod he, ‘ now herkneth for the beste ; (790)  
 But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn ;  
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn, 790  
 That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,

761. now] Hl. lo. 764. Hl. ne saugh; *rest* saugh nat (seigh not, &c.). Hl. Cm. mery; E. myrie. 774. a] E. the; Hn. *om.* 778. *All but* Hl. *om.* Now. 782. E. But if; *rest* But. E. myrie. Hl. merye smyteth of. 785. Hl. nas. 787. Cp. verdit; Pt. veredit; Hl. Ln. verdite; Cm. verdoit; E. Hn. voidit. 789. E. taak; Ln. tak; Cp. Pt. take; Hl. Hn. taketh. 791. Cp. Hl. your; *rest* our; *cf.* l. 803.

In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,  
 To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,  
 And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,  
 Of aventures that whylom han bifalle. 795  
 And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,  
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas  
 Tales of best sentence and most solas, (800)  
 Shal have a soper at our aller cost  
 Here in this place, sitting by this post, 800  
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.  
 And for to make yow the more mery,  
 I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,  
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.  
 And who-so wol my Iugement withseye 805  
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.  
 And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,  
 Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo, (810)  
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.'

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore 810  
 With ful glad herte, and preyden him also  
 That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,  
 And that he wolde been our governour,  
 And of our tales Iuge and reportour,  
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815  
 And we wold reuled been at his devys,  
 In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,  
 We been acorded to his Iugement. (820)  
 And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;  
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon, 820  
 With-outen any lenger taryinge.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,  
 Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,  
 And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,  
 And forth we riden, a litel more than pas, 825

795. Hl. ther (*for* whylom). 797, 798. E. caas, solaas. 802. E. Hn. Cp. mury. 803. Hl. my seluen gladly; E. my self goodly. 805. E. wole (*but* wol *in* l. 809). 812. E. would. 816. Hl. wolde; Pt. wold; *rest* wol, wolen, wiln, wil. 817. Hl. lowe; E. lough. 822. E. Hn. that; Hl. that the; *rest* the. E. gan for; Hn. Cp. Hl. bigan. 823. E. Hn. aller; Hl. althur; Cp. alther; Pt. Ln. alder. 825. E. paas.



Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.  
 And there our host bigan his hors areste,  
 And seyde ; ' Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste. (830)  
 Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.  
 If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830  
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.  
 As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,  
 Who-so be rebel to my Iugement  
 Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.  
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne ; 835  
 He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.  
 Sire knight,' quod he, ' my maister and my lord,  
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord. (840)  
 Cometh neer,' quod he, ' my lady prioresse ;  
 And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse, 840  
 Ne studieth noght ; ley hond to, every man.'  
 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,  
 And shortly for to tellen, as it was,  
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,  
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight, 845  
 Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight ;  
 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,  
 By forward and by composicioun, (850)  
 As ye han herd ; what nedeth wordes mo ?  
 And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850  
 As he that wys was and obedient  
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,  
 He seyde : ' Sin I shal biginne the game,  
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name !  
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.' 855  
 And with that word we riden forth our weye ;  
 And he bigan with right a mery chere  
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere. (860)

**Here endeth the prolog of this book ; and here biginneth  
 the first tale, which is the Knightes Tale.**

---

829. E. foreward (*badly*). E. Hn. *om.* I. 831. Hl. ferst a tale. 835. Cp. Pt. Ln. ferther ; Hl. forther. 836. E. Hn. shorteste. 840. E. shamefastnesse. 848, 852. E. foreward (*badly*). 850. *All insert that after saugh (needlessly)*. 854. Hl. thou (*for* the). 857. Cm. mery ; E. myrie. 858. *So* E. Hl. ; *rest* as ye may here. COLOPHON : *from* MS. Sloane 1685, *which has* Heere endith, heere, knyghte (*sic*).

## THE KNIGHTES TALE.

*Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis  
Prelia, laurifero, &c.*

[Statius, *Theb.* xii. 519.]

**W**HYLOM, as olde stories tellen us,  
 Ther was a duk that highte Theseus ; 860  
 Of Athenes he was lord and governour,  
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour,  
 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.  
 Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne ;  
 What with his wisdom and his chivalrye, 865  
 He conquered al the regne of Femenye,  
 That whylom was y-cleped Scithia ;  
 And weddede the quene Ipolita, (10)  
 And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree  
 With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee, 870  
 And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.  
 And thus with victorie and with melodye  
 Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,  
 And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.  
 And certes, if it nere to long to here, 875  
 I wolde han told yow fully the manere,  
 How wonnen was the regne of Femenye  
 By Theseus, and by his chivalrye ; (20)  
 And of the grete bataille for the nones  
 Bitwixen Athenës and Amazones ; 880  
 And how asseged was Ipolita,  
 The faire hardy quene of Scithia ;  
 And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,

---

QUOTATION ; so in E. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. 865. E. Hl. That ; rest What.  
 868. Cp. Hl. weddede ; Slo. weddide ; rest wedded. 871. E. faire ; Pt.  
 yenge ; rest yonge. 876. Hl. han told 3ow ; E. yow haue toold ; rest haue toold  
 (told). 880. Tyrwhitt *inserts* the *after* and ; but see 968, 973, 1023, &c.

And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge ;  
 But al that thing I moot as now forbere. 885  
 I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,  
 And wayke been the oxen in my plough.  
 The remenant of the tale is long y-nough. (30)  
 I wol nat letten eek noon of this route ;  
 Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute, 890  
 And lat see now who shal the soper winne ;  
 And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.

This duk, of whom I make menciou, n,  
 When he was come almost unto the toun,  
 In al his wele and in his moste pryde, 895  
 He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,  
 Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye  
 A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye, (40)  
 Ech after other, clad in clothes blake ;  
 But swich a cry and swich a wo they make, 900  
 That in this world nis creature livinge,  
 That herde swich another weymentinge ;  
 And of this cry they nolde never stenten,  
 Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.

‘What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-cominge 905  
 Perturben so my feste with cryinge?’  
 Quod Theseus, ‘have ye so greet envye  
 Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye? (50)  
 Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?  
 And telleth me if it may been amended; 910  
 And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak?’

The eldest lady of hem alle spak,  
 When she hadde swowned with a deedly chere,  
 That it was routhe for to seen and here,  
 And seyde: ‘Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven 915  
 Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,  
 Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour ;  
 But we biseken mercy and socour. (60)  
 Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.

889. Hl. lette eek non of al; rest letten, and omit al. 892. Hl. agayn; E. Hn. Cp. Pt. ayeyn. 897. E. om. hye; rest hye, heighe, hihe, highe, high. 912. Cm. eldest; E. eldeste. 914. E. routhe; Ln. rewthe; Slo. reuthe. Hl. or; rest and. 915. Hn. yiuen; E. yeuen. 916. Hn. conquerour; E. conqueror. 917. Hn. Hl. Noght; E. Pt. Ln. Nat. Hl. om. 2nd your.

Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse, 920  
 Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.  
 For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,  
 That she nath been a duchesse or a quene ;  
 Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene :  
 Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel, 925  
 That noon estat assureth to be weel.  
 And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,  
 Here in the temple of the goddesse Clemence (70)  
 We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight ;  
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might. 930  
 I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,  
 Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,  
 That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day !  
 And alle we, that been in this array,  
 And maken al this lamentacioun, 935  
 We losten alle our housbondes at that toun,  
 Whyll that the sege ther-aboutte lay.  
 And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway ! (80)  
 That lord is now of Thebes the citee,  
 Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee, 940  
 He, for despyt, and for his tyrannye,  
 To do the dede bodyes vileinye,  
 Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,  
 Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,  
 And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent, 945  
 Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,  
 But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.  
 And with that word, with-uten more respyt, (90)  
 They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,  
 'Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,  
 And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.' 950  
 This gentil duk down from his courser sterte  
 With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.  
 Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,  
 Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat, 955

922. Ill. nys ; *rest* is. 923. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. ne hath. 924. Cp. Hl.  
 caytifs ; E. Hn. Pt. caytyues. 931. E. erie ; Hn. Ill. waille ; Cp. Pt. weile.  
 938. *Only* Hl. *om.* now. 943. Ill. i-slawe. 944. E. He hath ; *rest* Hath.  
 955. E. maat.

That whylom weren of so greet estat.  
 And in his armes he hem alle up hente,  
 And hem conforteth in ful good entente ; (100)  
 And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knight,  
 He wolde doon so ferforthly his might 960  
 Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,  
 That al the peple of Greece sholde speke  
 How Creon was of Theseus y-served,  
 As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.  
 And right anoon, with-uten more abood, 965  
 His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood  
 To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde ;  
 No neer Athenës wolde he go ne ryde, (110)  
 Ne take his ese fully half a day,  
 But onward on his wey that night he lay ; 970  
 And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,  
 And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,  
 Un-to the toun of Athenës to dwelle ;  
 And forth he rit ; ther nis namore to telle.  
 The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe, 975  
 So shyneth in his whyte baner large,  
 That alle the feeldes gliteren up and down ;  
 And by his baner born is his penoun (120)  
 Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete  
 The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete. 980  
 Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,  
 And in his host of chivalrye the flour,  
 Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte  
 Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.  
 But shortly for to speken of this thing, 985  
 With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,  
 He faught, and slough him manly as a knight  
 In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flight ; (130)  
 And by assaut he wan the citee after,  
 And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter ; 990  
 And to the ladyes he restored agayn  
 The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,  
 To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.

956. E. estaat.  
 thoughte.

974. Hn. Cp. nys ; rest is.  
 992. E. weren.

984. Hn. thoghte ; E.

But it were al to long for to devyse  
 The grete clamour and the waymentinge 995  
 That the ladyes made at the brenninge  
 Of the bodyes, and the grete honour  
 That Theseus, the noble conquerour, (140)  
 Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente ;  
 But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000  
 Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,  
 Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,  
 Stille in that feeld he took al night his reste,  
 And dide with al the contree as him leste.  
 To ransake in the tas of bodyes dede, 1005  
 Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,  
 The pilours diden businesse and cure,  
 After the bataille and disconfiture. (150)  
 And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,  
 Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde, 1010  
 Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,  
 Bothe in oon armes, wrought ful richely,  
 Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,  
 And that other knight hight Palamon.  
 Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were, 1015  
 But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,  
 The heraudes knewe hem best in special,  
 As they that weren of the blood royal (160)  
 Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.  
 Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn, 1020  
 And han hem caried softe un-to the tente  
 Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente  
 To Athenës, to dwellen in prisoun  
 Perpetuelly, he nolde no raunsoun.  
 And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don, 1025  
 He took his host, and hoom he rood anon  
 With laurer crowned as a conquerour ;  
 And there he liveth, in Ioye and in honour, (170)  
 Terme of his lyf ; what nedeth wordes mo ?

---

996. Hl. Which that. 1005, 1009, 1020. E. Hn. Cm. taas ; Hl. cas ;  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. caas ; *read* tas. 1005. Hn. Cm. Hl. of ; *rest* of the. 1013,  
 1014. Hl. hight ; E. highte. 1022. E. Hl. ful soone he. 1023. Hl.  
 Tathenes for to. 1029. E. Cm. *om.* his. E. lyue ; *rest* lyf, lif.

And in a tour, in angwish and in wo, 1030  
 Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,  
 For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.  
 This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,  
 Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,  
 That Emelye, that fairer was to sene 1035  
 Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,  
 And fressher than the May with floures newe—  
 For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe, (180)  
 I noot which was the fairer of hem two—  
 Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, 1040  
 She was arisen, and al redy dight ;  
 For May wol have no slogardye a-night.  
 The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,  
 And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,  
 And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observaunce.' 1045  
 This maked Emelye have remembraunce  
 To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.  
 Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse ; (190)  
 Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,  
 Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse. 1050  
 And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,  
 She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste  
 She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,  
 To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,  
 And as an aungel hevenly she song. 1055  
 The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,  
 Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,  
 (Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun, (200)  
 Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)  
 Was evene Ioynant to the gardin-wal, 1060  
 Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.  
 Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,  
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,  
 As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,

1031. E. Cm. Hl. This Palamon and his felawe Arcite. 1036. Hl. on  
 hire. 1039. E. Hl. fyner ; Cm. fynere ; Hn. Cp. Pt. fairer. 1042. E.  
 slogardrie ; *rest* slogardye (sloggardye, sluggardie). 1049. E. Hn. Cm. Cp.  
 broyded ; Pt. breided ; Ln. Hl. browded. 1054. Ln. sotil ; Cp. sotyl ;  
 E. Hn. Cm. subtil ; Pt. subtile ; Hl. certeyn. 1055. Hl. Pt. heuently ; Cm.  
 heueneliche ; E. Hn. Cp. Ln. heuenyssbly. 1063. E. And this Palamon.

Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh, 1065  
 In which he al the noble citee seigh,  
 And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,  
 Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene (210)  
 Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.  
 This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun, 1070  
 Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,  
 And to him-self compleyning of his wo;  
 That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'  
 And so bifel, by aventure or cas,  
 That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre 1075  
 Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,  
 He caste his eye upon Emelya,  
 And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde 'a!' (220)  
 As though he stongen were un-to the herte.  
 And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterde, 1080  
 And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,  
 That art so pale and deedly on to see?  
 Why crydestow? who hath thee doon offence?  
 For Goddes love, tak al in pacience  
 Our prisoun, for it may non other be; 1085  
 Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.  
 Som wikke aspect or disposicioun  
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun, (230)  
 Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn;  
 So stood the heven whan that we were born; 1090  
 We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn.'  
 This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,  
 'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun  
 Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.  
 This prison caused me nat for to crye. 1095  
 But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë  
 In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.  
 The fairnesse of that lady that I see (240)  
 Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,  
 Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100  
 I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;

1065. Hl. Cp. Pt. on; rest an. 1091. Only E. om. it. 1096. Cm.  
 Pt. ye; Hn. Iye; Cp. Hl. yhe; E. eye. 1101. Cm. whejer; Hl. whejur.



But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.  
 And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,  
 And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil  
 Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure 1105  
 Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,  
 Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.  
 And if so be my destinee be shapen (250)  
 By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,  
 Of our linage have som compassioun, 1110  
 That is so lowe y-broght by tirannye.'  
 And with that word Arcite gan espye  
 Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.  
 And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,  
 That, if that Palamon was wounded sore, 1115  
 Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.  
 And with a sigh he seyde pitously:  
 'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly (260)  
 Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;  
 And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace, 1120  
 That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,  
 I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'  
 This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,  
 Dispitously he loked, and answerde:  
 'Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?' 1125  
 'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in earnest, by my fey!  
 God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'  
 This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye: (270)  
 'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet honour  
 For to be fals, ne for to be traytour 1130  
 To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother  
 Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,  
 That never, for to dyen in the peyne,  
 Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,  
 Neither of us in love to hindren other, 1135  
 Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;  
 But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me

1103. Hl. Cp. a doun. 1115. E. *wrongly om.* was. 1116. Hn. muche; E. moche. 1122. E. is; *rest nys.* 1125. E. Wheither. 1132. til] Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. to. 1134. E. Ln. Hl. *om.* the. 1135. E. hyndre; Cm. hynderyn.

In every cas, and I shal forthren thee. (280)  
 This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn ;  
 I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn. 1140  
 Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.  
 And now thou woldest falsly been aboute  
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,  
 And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.  
 Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so. 1145  
 I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo  
 As to my counseil, and my brother sworn  
 To forthre me, as I have told biforn. (290)  
 For which thou art y-bounden as a knight  
 To helpen me, if it lay in thy might, 1150  
 Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.’  
 ‘This Arcitë ful proudly spak ageyn,  
 ‘Thou shalt,’ quod he, ‘be rather fals than I ;  
 But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly ;  
 For *par amour* I loved hir first er thow. 1155  
 What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now  
 Whether she be a womman or goddesse !  
 Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse, (300)  
 And myn is love, as to a creature ;  
 For which I tolde thee myn aventure 1160  
 As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.  
 I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn ;  
 Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,  
 That ‘who shal yeve a lover any lawe?’  
 Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, 1165  
 Than may be yeve to any erthly man.  
 And therefore positif lawe and swich decree  
 Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree. (310)  
 A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.  
 He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed, 1170  
 Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.  
 And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,

1138. E. as; *rest* and. 1141, 1151. E. Hn. artow; *rest* art thou. 1145.  
 E. Nay; *rest* Now. 1147. E. Cm. and to my. 1154. E. Hn. And;  
*rest* But. Hl. Cm. uttirly; Cp. Pt. Ln. witterly; E. Hn. outrelly. 1156.  
 Cp. Pt. wilt thou; Hl. wolt thou. 1157. E. Wheither. 1163. Cm. Wist  
 thou; Hl. Ln. Wost thou; Pt. Woost thou. 1166. E. of; *rest* to. 1167.  
 Hl. om. And. 1168. E. Cm. broken. 1170. Hn. Cp. Pt. fleen; E. Hl. flee.

To stonden in hir grace ; namore shal I ;  
 For wel thou woost thy-selven, verrailly,  
 That thou and I be dampned to prisoun 1175  
 Perpetuelly ; us gayneth no raunsoun.  
 We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,  
 They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon ; (320)  
 Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,  
 And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe. 1180  
 And therefore, at the kinges court, my brother,  
 Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.  
 Love if thee list ; for I love and ay shal ;  
 And soothly, leve brother, this is al.  
 Here in this prisoun mote we endure, 1185  
 And everich of us take his aventure.'

Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,  
 If that I hadde leyser for to seye ; (330)  
 But to theeffect. It happed on a day,  
 ('To telle it yow as shortly as I may) 1190  
 A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,  
 That felawe was un-to duk Theseus  
 Sin thilke day that they were children lyte,  
 Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,  
 And for to pleye, as he was wont to do, 1195  
 For in this world he loved no man so :  
 And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.  
 So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn, (340)  
 That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,  
 His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle ; 1200  
 But of that story list me nat to wryte.  
 Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,  
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yeer ;  
 And fynally, at requeste and preyere  
 Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun, 1205  
 Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,  
 Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,  
 In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal. (350)

1177. Hn. Cm. Hl. stryue ; *rest* stryuen. 1179. E. *om.* that. *All but* Cm. Hl. *ins.* so *after* were. 1192. E. to ; Hl. to the ; *rest* un-to. 1195. E. won ; Cm. wone ; *rest* wont. 1197. E. Cp. als ; Hn. Cm. Hl. as. 1198. E. louede. 1200. Hn. soghte ; E. soughte. 1205. Hl. Cp. Pt. with-oute ; *rest* with-outen.

This was the forward, pleynty for tendyte,  
 Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite : 1210  
 That if so were, that Arcite were y-founde  
 Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde  
 In any contree of this Theseus,  
 And he were caught, it was acorded thus,  
 That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed ; 1215  
 Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,  
 But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde ;  
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde ! (360)  
 How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite !  
 The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte ; 1220  
 He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously ;  
 To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.  
 He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was born !  
 Now is my prison worse than biforn ;  
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle 1225  
 Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.  
 Allas ! that ever knew I Perotheus !  
 For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus (370)  
 Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.  
 Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo. 1230  
 Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,  
 Though that I never hir grace may deserve,  
 Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.  
 O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,  
 'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure, 1235  
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure ;  
 In prison ? certes nay, but in paradys !  
 Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys, (380)  
 That hast the sighte of hir, and I thabsence.  
 For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence, 1240  
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,  
 That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungeable,  
 Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.  
 But I, that am exyled, and bareyne  
 Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir, 1245

1217. Hl. (*alone*) took. 1223. that (1) Hn. Hl. the. E. he ; *rest* I. 1226.  
 Hn. Noght ; E. Nat ; Cm. Not ; *rest* Nought. E. *ins.* my *after* in. 1228.  
 Hl. dweld. 1237. Cp. Pt. Ln. *om.* in. 1242. E. (*alone*) *om.* by.

That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,  
 Ne creature, that of hem maked is,  
 That may me helpe or doon confort in this. (390)  
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;  
 Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse! 1250  
 Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune  
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,  
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse  
 Wel better than they can hem-self devyse?  
 Som man desyreth for to han richesse, 1255  
 That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse.  
 And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,  
 That in his hous is of his meynee slayn. (400)  
 Infinite harmes been in this matere;  
 We witen nat what thing we preyen here. 1260  
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;  
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,  
 But he noot which the righte wey is thider;  
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.  
 And certes, in this world so faren we; 1265  
 We seken faste after felicittee,  
 But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.  
 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I, (410)  
 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun,  
 That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun, 1270  
 Than hadde I been in Ioye and perfit hele,  
 Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.  
 Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,  
 I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.<sup>7</sup>  
 Up-on that other syde Palamon, 1275  
 Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,  
 Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour  
 Resouneth of his youling and clamour. (420)  
 The pure fettres on his shines grete  
 Weren of his bittre salte teres wete. 1280  
 ‘Allas!’ quod he, ‘Arcita, cosin myn,

1248. E. heele; *rest* helpe. 1256. Cp. Ln. mordre; E. Hn. moerdre; Cm. Pt. mordere; Hl. morthre. 1260. E. (*alone*) om. thing. 1262. E. Cm. wel that he. 1268. Hl. seyen; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. seyn. 1272. Ther] E. That. 1278. E. Resouned; *rest* Resouneth. Cp. Hl. yollyng; Pt. Ln. yellinge.

Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.  
 Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,  
 And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.  
 Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede, 1285  
 Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,  
 And make a werre so sharp on this citee,  
 That by som aventure, or som trettee, (430)  
 Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,  
 For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf. 1290  
 For, as by wey of possibilitee,  
 Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,  
 And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,  
 More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.  
 For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live, 1295  
 With al the wo that prison may me yive,  
 And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,  
 That doubleth al my torment and my wo.' (440)  
 Ther-with the fyr of Ielousye up-sterete  
 With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte 1300  
 So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde  
 The box-tree, or the asshen dede and colde.  
 Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe  
 This world with binding of your word eterne,  
 And wryten in the table of athamaunt 1305  
 Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,  
 What is mankinde more un-to yow holde  
 Than is the sheep, that rouketh in the folde? (450)  
 For slayn is man right as another beste,  
 And dwelleth eek in prison and areste, 1310  
 And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,  
 And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!  
 What governaunce is in this prescience,  
 That giltelees tormenteth innocence?  
 And yet encreseth this al my penaunce, 1315

1290. *All* moste, most, muste; *but read* mot: see l. 1295. 1296. Hl.  
 3yue; E. yeue. 1297. E. yeueth. 1299. Hl. Ielousye; E. Ialousie.  
 1303. Hl. Tho; E. Thanne. E. crueel gooddes (!). 1305. Hl. Cm. atha-  
 maunte; E. Athamaunt. 1309. Cm. Hl. beste; E. beest. 1310. Cm.  
 areste; Hl. arreste; E. arrest. 1312, 1314. Cm. Cp. Hl. gilteles; E. giltlees.  
 1315. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. encreseth; E. enresseth.

That man is bounden to his observaunce,  
 For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,  
 Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille. (460)

And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;  
 But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne, 1320  
 Though in this world he have care and wo:  
 With-uten doute it may stonden so.

The answere of this I lete to divynis,  
 But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.  
 Allas! I see a serpent or a theef, 1325

That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,  
 Goon at his large, and wher him list may turne.  
 But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne, (470)

And eek thurgh Iuno, Ialous and eek wood,  
 That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood 1330  
 Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.

And Venus sleeth me on that other syde  
 For Ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.'

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,  
 And lete him in his prison stille dwelle, 1335  
 And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.

The somer passeth, and the nightes longe  
 Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge (480)

Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.  
 I noot which hath the wofullere mester. 1340  
 For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun  
 Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,

In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed;  
 And Arcite is exyled upon his heed  
 For ever-mo as out of that contree, 1345  
 Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.

Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,  
 Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun? (490)

That oon may seen his lady day by day,  
 But in prison he moot dwelle alway. 1350  
 That other wher him list may ryde or go,

---

1320. *So* Hn. Cm. Hl.; *rest* after his deeth man. 1323. *So* Hl.; *rest* lete I.  
 1331. E. hise. 1333. E. Ialousie. 1337. E. (*alone*) sonne. 1338. E.  
 Encressen. 1344. Cm. Cp. Pt. vp (*perhaps rightly*). 1347. E. Now  
 (*wrongly*); *rest* Yow. 1350. Hn. Cp. Pt. moot he.

But seen his lady shal he never-mo.  
 Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,  
 For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

**Explicit prima Pars.      Sequitur pars secunda.**

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was, 1355  
 Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde 'allas,'  
 For seen his lady shal he never-mo.  
 And shortly to concluden al his wo, (500)  
 So muche sorwe had never creature  
 That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure. 1360  
 His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,  
 That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.  
 His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;  
 His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,  
 And solitarie he was, and ever allone, 1365  
 And wailling al the night, making his mone.  
 And if he herde song or instrument,  
 Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent; (510)  
 So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,  
 And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe 1370  
 His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.  
 And in his gere, for al the world he ferde  
 Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye  
 Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye  
 Engendred of humour malencolyk, 1375  
 Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.  
 And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun  
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun (520)  
 Of him, this woful love-re daun Arcite.  
 What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte? 1380  
 Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two  
 This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,  
 At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,  
 Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,

---

1353. Ln. liste; Cm. lyste; Hl. luste; *rest* list. 1359. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 1362. E. Pt. wexeth. 1364. Hl. Cm. Cp. falwe; E. Hn. falow. 1369. E. spiritz. 1376. E. Biforn his owene; Cm. Be-form hese owene; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Biforn his; Hl. Beforen in his. 1382. E. cruuel.



T. 1387-1424.] A. THE KNIGHTES TALE.	41
Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.	1385
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte ; An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.	(530)
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep) As he was whan that Argus took his sleep ;	1390
And seyde him thus : 'To Athenes shaltou wende ; Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'	
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte. 'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'	
Quod he, 'to Athenes right now wol I fare ; Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare	1395
To see my lady, that I love and serve ; In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.'	(540)
And with that word he caughte a greet mirour, And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,	1400
And saugh his visage al in another kinde. And right anoon it ran him in his minde,	
That, sith his face was so disfigured Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,	
He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe, Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,	1405
And seen his lady wel ny day by day. And right anon he chaunged his array,	(550)
And cladde him as a povre laborer, And al allone, save oonly a squyer,	1410
That knew his privetee and al his cas, Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,	
To Athenes is he goon the nexte way. And to the court he wente up-on a day,	
And at the gate he profreth his servyse, To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.	1415
And shortly of this matere for to seyn, He fil in office with a chamberleyn,	(560)
The which that dwelling was with Emelye. For he was wys, and coude soon aspye	1420
Of every servaunt, which that serveth here. Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,	

For he was yong and mighty for the nones,  
 And ther-to he was strong and big of bones  
 To doon that any wight can him devyse. 1425  
 A yeer or two he was in this servyse,  
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte ;  
 And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte. (570)  
 But half so wel biloved a man as he  
 Ne was ther never in court, of his degree ; 1430  
 He was so gentil of condicioun,  
 That thurghout al the court was his renoun.  
 They seyden, that it were a charitee  
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,  
 And putten him in worshipful servyse, 1435  
 Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.  
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge  
 Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge, (580)  
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer  
 That of his chambre he made him a squyer, 1440  
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree ;  
 And eek men broghte him out of his contree  
 From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente ;  
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,  
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde. 1445  
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he ladde,  
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,  
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre. (590)  
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,  
 And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte. 1450  
 In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun  
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,  
 Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse ;  
 Who feleth double soor and hevynesse  
 But Palamon? that love destreyneth so, 1455  
 That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo ;  
 And eek therto he is a prisoner  
 Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yeer. (600)  
 Who coude ryme in English proprely

1424. E. Cm. long ; *rest* strong. 1431. E. Hl. *ins.* his *after* of. 1441. E. Hn.  
 Cp. gaf. 1454. E. Hn. Pt. soor ; Cp. Ln. sore ; Cm. Hl. sorwe. E. *om.* and.

His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat I; 1460  
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,  
The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,  
That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)  
Were it by aventure or destinee, 1465

(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)  
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,  
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun, (610)

And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;  
For he had yive his gayler drinke so 1470

Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,  
With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,  
That al that night, thogh that men wolde him shake,  
The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;

And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may. 1475

The night was short, and faste by the day,  
That nedes-cost he moste him-selven hyde,  
And til a grove, faste ther besyde, (620)

With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.  
For shortly, this was his opinioun, 1480

That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,  
And in the night than wolde he take his way  
To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye  
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;

And shortly, outhere he wolde lese his lyf, 1485  
Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;  
This is theeffect and his entente pleyn.

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn, (630)

That litel wiste how ny that was his care,  
Til that fortune had broght him in the snare. 1490

The bisy larke, messenger of day,  
Saluëth in hir song the morwe gray;  
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,  
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,  
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves 1495

---

1470. Hl. ȝiue; E. yeue. 1472. E. Of; *rest* With. 1477. E. moot;  
*rest* moste, most, muste. 1479. E. Hn. Cm. thanne; *rest* than. 1488. E.  
Hn. Ln. to; *rest* vn-to. 1491. day] Hl. May. 1495. E. hise.

The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.  
 And Arcite, that is in the court royal  
 With Theseus, his squyer principal, (640)  
 Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.  
 And, for to doon his observaunce to May, 1500  
 Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,  
 He on a courser, stertering as the fyr,  
 Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,  
 Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye ;  
 And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde, 1505  
 By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,  
 To maken him a gerland of the greves,  
 Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves, (650)  
 And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene :  
 ' May, with alle thy floures and thy grene, 1510  
 Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,  
 I hope that I som grene gete may.'  
 And from his courser, with a lusty herte,  
 In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,  
 And in a path he rometh up and doun, 1515  
 Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun  
 Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,  
 For sore afered of his deeth was he. (660)  
 No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite :  
 God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte. 1520  
 But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,  
 That ' feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.'  
 It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,  
 For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.  
 Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe, 1525  
 That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,  
 For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.  
 Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille, (670)  
 And songen al the roundel lustily,  
 In-to a studie he fil sodeynly, 1530

1497. Hl. Arcite; *rest* Arcita. 1502. E. Hn. Cm. a; *rest* his. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. stertyng; E. Hn. startlynge; Cm. stertelynge. 1511. Hl. wel faire; *rest om.* wel. 1512. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. In; *rest* I. 1514. E. a; *rest* the. 1518. Hn. Hl. afered; Cm. ofered; *rest* aferd. E. (*alone*) *ins.* thanne *bef.* was. 1521. Hl. Pt. goon; Cm. Ln. gon; E. Hn. Cp. go. 1526. E. Hn. al; *rest* of. 1530. E. fil al; *rest om.* al.

As doon these loveres in hir queynte geres,  
 Now in the crophe, now down in the breres,  
 Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.  
 Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,  
 Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste, 1535  
 Right so can gery Venus overcaste  
 The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day  
 Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array. (68c)  
 Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.  
 Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke, 1540  
 And sette him doun with-outen any more:  
 'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!  
 How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,  
 Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?  
 Allas! y-brought is to confusioun 1545  
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphion;  
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man  
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan, (69c)  
 And of the citee first was crowned king,  
 Of his linage am I, and his of-spring 1550  
 By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:  
 And now I am so caitif and so thral,  
 That he, that is my mortal enemy,  
 I serve him as his squyer povrely.  
 And yet doth Iuno me wel more shame, 1555  
 For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;  
 But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,  
 Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte. (70c)  
 Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Iuno,  
 Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo, 1560  
 Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,  
 That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.  
 And over al this, to sleen me utterly,  
 Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly  
 Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte, 1565

1532. E. Hn. Cm. crop; Cp. Hl. Pt. crophe. 1536. E. Hn. Cm. kan; *rest*  
 gan. 1538. E. gereful; Cp. geerful; Hl. grisful; *rest* gerful. 1539. Hl.  
 wyke; Hn. Cp. wike; Pt. Ln. weke; Cm. wouke; E. wowke. 1551. Cm.  
 Pt. Hl. lyne. 1556. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. owne; E. owene. 1557. highte] Hl.  
 hote. 1560. E. kynrede; *rest* lynage (lignage). 1563. Hl. vtterly; E. outrely.

That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.  
 Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;  
 Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye. (710)  
 Of al the remenant of myn other care  
 Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a tare, 1570  
 So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!  
 And with that word he fil down in a traunce  
 A longe tyme; and after he up-sterterte.

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte  
 He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde, 1575  
 For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.  
 And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,  
 As he were wood, with face deed and pale, (720)  
 He sterterte him up out of the buskes thikke,  
 And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour wikke, 1580  
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,  
 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,  
 And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,  
 As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,  
 And hast by-iaiped here duk Theseus, 1585  
 And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;  
 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.  
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye, (730)  
 But I wol love hir only, and namo;  
 For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo. 1590  
 And though that I no wepne have in this place,  
 But out of prison am astert by grace,  
 I drede noght that outhur thou shalt dye,  
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.  
 Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte.' 1595

This Arcitë, with ful despitous herte,  
 Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,  
 As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd, (740)  
 And seyde thus: 'by God that sit above,  
 Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love, 1600

1573. So E.; *rest* afterward (*for* after). Hl. *om.* he. 1579. Hl. bussches; Cm. boschis; Ln. boskes. 1581. E. Hn. artow; *rest* art thou. 1584. told] E. Cm. seyde. 1589. E. Hn. namo; Hl. Cm. no mo. 1595. E. Hn. wolt. Hl. for; *rest* or. 1598. E. Hn. his; *rest* a. 1599. E. sit; Cm. set; *rest* sitteth.

And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,  
 Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,  
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.  
 For I defye the seurtee and the bond  
 Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee. 1605  
 What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,  
 And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!  
 But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight, (750)  
 And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,  
 Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle, 1610  
 With-uten witing of any other wight,  
 That here I wol be founden as a knight,  
 And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee;  
 And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.  
 And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe 1615  
 Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.  
 And, if so be that thou my lady winne,  
 And slee me in this wode ther I am inne, (760)  
 Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.  
 This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it thee.' 1620  
 And thus they been departed til a-morwe,  
 When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.  
 O Cupide, out of alle charitee!  
 O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!  
 Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lordshipe 1625  
 Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe;  
 Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.  
 Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun, (770)  
 And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,  
 Ful prively two harneys hath he dight, 1630  
 Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne  
 The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.  
 And on his hors, allone as he was born,  
 He carieth al this harneys him biforn;  
 And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set, 1635  
 This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.  
 Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;

1604. Hl. seurte; Cp. sewrte; E. seurete; Hn. seuretee. 1609. Cp. derreyne;  
 Hl. dereyne. 1614. Hn. chees; Cm. Hl. ches; rest chese. 1626. E. hir;  
 rest his. 1634. E. the; Hn. Cm. Hl. this. 1637. Hl. Tho; rest To.

Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace, (780)  
 That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,  
 Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere, 1640  
 And hereth him come russhing in the greves,  
 And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,  
 And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel enemy,  
 With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;  
 For outhur I mot sleen him at the gappe, 1645  
 Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe :'  
 So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,  
 As fer as everich of hem other knewe. (790)  
 Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing ;  
 But streight, with-uten word or rehersing, 1650  
 Everich of hem halp for to armen other,  
 As freendly as he were his owne brother ;  
 And after that, with sharpe speres stronge  
 They foynen ech at other wonder longe.  
 Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun 1655  
 In his fighting were a wood leoun,  
 And as a cruel tygre was Arcite :  
 As wilde bores gonne they to smyte, (800)  
 That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.  
 Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood. 1660  
 And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle ;  
 And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.  
 The destinee, ministre general,  
 That executeth in the world over-al  
 The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn, 1665  
 So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn  
 The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,  
 Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day (810)  
 That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.  
 For certainly, our appetytes here, 1670  
 Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,  
 Al is this reuled by the sighte above.  
 This mene I now by mighty Theseus,

1638. Hl. honterus ; rest hunters, hunterys ; ed. 1542. hunter. 1640. E. and ; rest or. 1651. Cm. halp ; Cp. hilp ; E. Hn. heelp ; Hl. Pt. helpeth ; Ln. helpe. Hl. Ln. om. for. 1652. E. owene. 1656. Tyrwhitt *ms.* as bef. a. 1659. E. Hu. whit. 1660. E. anlee. 1662. E. wole. 1672. this] Hl. it.



That for to honten is so desirous,  
 And namely at the grete hert in May, 1675  
 That in his bed ther daweth him no day,  
 That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde  
 With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde. (820)  
 For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,  
 That it is al his Ioye and appetyt 1680  
 To been him-self the grete hertes bane;  
 For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,  
 And Theseus, with alle Ioye and blis,  
 With his Ipolita, the fayre quene, 1685  
 And Emelye, clothed al in grene,  
 On hunting be they riden royally.  
 And to the grove, that stood ful faste by, (830)  
 In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,  
 Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde. 1690  
 And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,  
 For thider was the hert wont have his flight,  
 And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.  
 This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,  
 With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde. 1695

And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,  
 Under the sonne he loketh, and anon  
 He was war of Arcite and Palamon, (840)  
 That foughten breme, as it were bores two;  
 The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro 1700  
 So hidously, that with the leeste strook  
 It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;  
 But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.  
 This duk his courser with his spores smoot,  
 And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705  
 And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'ho!  
 Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.  
 By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed, (850)  
 That smyteth any strook, that I may seen!  
 But telleth me what mister men ye been, 1710

1693. E. Hl. in; *rest on.* 1695. Hn. Cp. Pt. that; *rest om.* 1699. E.  
 Cm. Hl. bores; *rest boles.* 1702. E. fille. 1706. E. cride; Hn. Cp. Pt.  
 cryed. 1707. E. Hn. Ln. vp-on; *rest vp.* 1710. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. myster;  
 E. mystiers; Ln. mester; Hl. mestir.

That been so hardy for to fighten here  
 With-uten Iuge or other officere,  
 As it were in a listes royally?’

This Palamon answerde hastily,  
 And seyde: ‘sire, what nedeth wordes mo? 1715  
 We have the deeth deserved bothe two.  
 Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,  
 That been encombred of our owne lyves; (860)  
 And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,  
 Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720  
 But slee me first, for seynte charitee;  
 But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.  
 Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe it lyte,  
 This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,  
 That fro thy lond is banished on his heed, 1725  
 For which he hath deserved to be deed.  
 For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,  
 And seyde, that he highte Philostrate. (870)  
 Thus hath he Iaped thee ful many a yeer,  
 And thou has makid him thy chief squyer;  
 And this is he that loveth Emelye. 1730  
 For sith the day is come that I shal dye,  
 I make pleynly my confessioun,  
 That I am thilke woful Palamoun,  
 That hath thy prison broken wikkedly. 1735  
 I am thy mortal fo, and it am I  
 That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,  
 That I wol dye present in hir sighte. (880)  
 Therefore I axe deeth and my Iuwyse;  
 But slee my felawe in the same wyse, 1740  
 For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.’

This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,  
 And seyde, ‘This is a short conclusioun:  
 Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,  
 Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde, 1745  
 It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde.  
 Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!’

---

1716. E. Hn. disserued. 1718. E. Hn. Cm. owene. 1723. Hl. Hn.  
 knowe; *rest* knowest. 1741. Ln. Hl. we haue. 1744. E. Hn. Cm. owene;  
 Hl. Cp. Pt. owne. 1747. Hn. Pt. shul; Cm. Hl. schul; E. shal.

The quene anon, for verray wommanhede, (890)  
 Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,  
 And alle the ladies in the companye. 1750  
 Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,  
 That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;  
 For gentil men they were, of greet estat,  
 And no-thing but for love was this debat;  
 And sawe hir bloddy woundes wyde and sore; 1755  
 And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,  
 'Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!'  
 And on hir bare knees adoun they falle, (900)  
 And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,  
 Til at the laste aslaked was his mood; 1760  
 For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.  
 And though he first for ire quook and sterte,  
 He hath considered shortly, in a clause,  
 The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause:  
 And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused, 1765  
 Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;  
 As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man  
 Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can, (910)  
 And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;  
 And eek his herte had compassioun 1770  
 Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;  
 And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,  
 And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'fy  
 Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,  
 But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede, 1775  
 To hem that been in repentaunce and drede  
 As wel as to a proud despitous man  
 That wol maynteyne that he first bigan! (920)  
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,  
 That in swich cas can no divisioun, 1780  
 But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.'  
 And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,  
 He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,  
 And spak these same wordes al on highte:—  
 'The god of love, a! *benedicite*, 1785

1753. E. estaat. 1754. E. debaat. 1767. Hn. Cm. Cp. As; *rest* And.  
 1770. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 1771. Hn. wepten; *rest* wepen.

How mighty and how greet a lord is he!  
 Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,  
 He may be cleped a god for his miracles; (930)  
 For he can maken at his owne gyse  
 Of everich herte, as that him list devyse. 1790  
 Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,  
 'That quitly weren out of my prisoun,  
 And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,  
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,  
 And that hir deeth lyth in my might also, 1795  
 And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,  
 Y-broght hem hider bothe for to dye!  
 Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye? (940)  
 Who may been a fool, but-if he love?  
 Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above, 1800  
 Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?  
 Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed  
 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!  
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse  
 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle! 1805  
 But this is yet the beste game of alle,  
 That she, for whom they han this Iolitee,  
 Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me; (950)  
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,  
 By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare! 1810  
 But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;  
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;  
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:  
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.  
 And therefore, sin I knowe of loves payne, 1815  
 And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,  
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,  
 I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas, (960)  
 At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,  
 And eek of Emelye, my suster dere. 1820  
 And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,

1788. E. hise. 1789. E. Hn. Cm. owene; Cp. Pt. owne. 1790. E.  
 diuyse. 1797. Hl. I-brought; *rest* Broght, Brought. 1799. *See note.*  
 Hl. if that; *rest* but if. 1810. E. Hn. Cp. of; *rest* or. 1811. and] Cm. Hl. or.  
 1817. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. laas; Cm. las; Hl. Ln. lace. 1818. E. Pt. trespas.

That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,  
 Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,  
 But been my freendes in al that ye may ;  
 I yow foryeve this trespas every del.' 1825

And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,  
 And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,  
 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde : (970)

    'To speke of royal linage and richesse,  
 Though that she were a quene or a princesse, 1830  
 Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,  
 To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees  
 I speke as for my suster Emelye,  
 For whom ye have this stryf and Ielousye ;  
 Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two 1835  
 At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo :  
 That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,  
 He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef ; (980)  
 This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,  
 Al be ye never so Ielous, ne so wrothe. 1840  
 And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,  
 That ech of yow shal have his destinee  
 As him is shape ; and herkneth in what wyse ;  
 Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

    My wil is this, for plat conclusioun, 1845  
 With-uten any replicacioun,  
 If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,  
 That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste (990)  
 Frely, with-uten raunson or daunger ;  
 And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner, 1850  
 Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,  
 Armed for listes up at alle rightes,  
 Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.  
 And this bihote I yow, with-uten faille,  
 Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight, 1855  
 That whether of yow bothe that hath might,  
 This is to seyn, that whether he or thou

1822. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. shal. contree ] Cp. Ln. Hl. coroune. 1825, 1826.  
 E. deel, weel ; Hn. Cm. Cp. del, wel. Hl. Pt. swore ; rest sworn, sworne,  
 sworyn. 1828. Hl. Cm. graunted. 1832. E. *wrongly repeats* doutelees.  
 1834. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 1837. E. Hn. Pt. lief. 1838. E. *om. go.*  
 1840. E. Hn. Cp. Ialouse. 1856, 7. E. wheither.

May with his hundred, as I spak of now, (1000)  
 Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,  
 Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve, 1860  
 To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.  
 The listes shal I maken in this place,  
 And God so wisly on my soule rewe,  
 As I shal even Iuge been and trewe.  
 Ye shul non other ende with me maken, 1865  
 That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.  
 And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,  
 Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd. (1010)  
 This is your ende and your conclusioun.<sup>7</sup>  
 Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun? 1870  
 Who springeth up for Ioye but Arcite?  
 Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,  
 The Ioye that is maked in the place  
 Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?  
 But down on knees wente every maner wight, 1875  
 And thanked him with al her herte and might,  
 And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.  
 And thus with good hope and with herte blythe (1020)  
 They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne they ryde  
 To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde. 1880

**Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.**

I trowe men wolde deme it negligence,  
 If I foryete to tellen the dispence  
 Of Theseus, that goth so bisily  
 To maken up the listes royally;  
 That swich a noble theatre as it was, 1885  
 I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.  
 The circuit a myle was aboute,  
 Walled of stoon, and diked al with-oute. (1030)  
 Round was the shap, in maner of compas,  
 Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas, 1890

1860. Hl. Hm; Cp. Ln. That; E. Hn. Thanne; Cm. Pt. Than. E. Cp. Ln.  
 Emelya; Hl. Hn. Emelye. 1872. E. Cm. Hl. om. it. 1876. Hl. thanked;  
 Cm. thankede; Cp. Pt. Ln. thonked; E. Hn. thonken. 1877. E. often;  
 Ln. oft; Pt. mony; rest ofte. 1886. Hl. that; rest om. 1889. E. compaas.

That, whan a man was set on o degree,  
 He letted nat his felawe for to see.  
 Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,  
 West-ward, right swich another in the opposit.  
 And shortly to concluden, swich a place 1895  
 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;  
 For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,  
 That geometrie or ars-metrik can, (1040)  
 Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,  
 That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages 1900  
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.  
 And for to doon his ryte and sacrificyse,  
 He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,  
 In worship of Venus, goddesses of love,  
 Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905  
 And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie  
 Of Mars, he maketh hath right swich another,  
 That coste largely of gold a fother. (1050)  
 And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,  
 Of alabastre whyt and reed coral 1910  
 An oratorie riche for to see,  
 In worship of Dyane of chastitee,  
 Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.  
 But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse  
 The noble kerving, and the portreitures, 1915  
 The shap, the countenance, and the figures,  
 That weren in these oratories three.  
 First in the temple of Venus maystow see (1060)  
 Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,  
 The broken sleses, and the sykes colde; 1920  
 The sacred teres, and the waymenting;  
 The fyry strokes of the desiring,  
 That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;  
 The othes, that hir covenants assuren;  
 Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardinesse, 1925  
 Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,

1892. E. lette; Cm. lettyth; *rest* letted. 1893. E. Hn. Hl. marbul.  
 1899. Hl. Hn. Cp. purtreyour; E. portreitour. 1900. Cp. Pt. Cm. him;  
 Hl. hem; *rest om.* 1906. *So* Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. (*wrongly*) And on the west-  
 ward in memorie. 1922. E. Hl. and; *rest of.*

Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,	
Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousye,	(1070)
That wered of yelwe goldes a gerland,	
And a cokkow sitting on hir hand ;	1930
Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,	
Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces	
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,	
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,	
And mo than I can make of mencion.	1935
For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,	
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,	
Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,	(1080)
With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.	
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,	1940
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,	
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,	
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—	
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes—	
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,	1945
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.	
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,	
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardinesse,	(1090)
Ne may with Venus holde champartye ;	
For as hir list the world than may she gye.	1950
Lo, alle these folk so caught were in hir las,	
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde ‘allas !’	
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,	
And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.	
The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,	1955
Was naked fleting in the large see,	
And fro the navele doun all covered was	
With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas.	(1100)
A citole in hir right hand hadde she,	
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,	1960
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smelling ;	

---

1928. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 1929. Hl. guldus. 1930. Cp. Ln. Cm. his. 1933. Cm. I reken and rekne schal; Hn. Hl. I rekned and rekne shal; E. I rekned haue and rekne shal (*too long*). 1942. E. Cm. And; *rest* Ne. 1943. E. Cm. And eek; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Ne yet; Hl. Ne eek. E. Hn. Cm. Hercules. 1948. E. Hn. Pt. *om.* ne.



- Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.  
 Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,  
 Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two ;  
 And blind he was, as it is ofte sene ; 1965  
 A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.  
 Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al  
 The portreiture, that was up-on the wal (1110)  
 With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede ?  
 Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede, 1970  
 Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,  
 That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,  
 In thilke colde frosty regioun,  
 Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.  
 First on the wal was peynted a foreste, 1975  
 In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,  
 With knotty knarry bareyn treës olde  
 Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde ; (1120)  
 In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,  
 As though a storm sholde bresten every bough : 1980  
 And downward from an hille, under a bente,  
 Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,  
 Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree  
 Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.  
 And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese, 1985  
 That it made al the gates for to rese.  
 The northren light in at the dores shoon,  
 For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon, (1130)  
 Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.  
 The dores were alle of adamant eterne, 1990  
 Y-clenched overthwart and endelong  
 With iren tough ; and, for to make it strong,  
 Every piler, the temple to sustene,  
 Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.  
 Ther saugh I first the derke imagining 1995

1965. E. it was ; *rest* it is. 1975. Hl. foreste ; E. forest. 1976. Hl. beste ; E. best. 1977. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. bareyne. 1979. E. rumbel ; Cm. rumbil ; Hn. rombul ; Cp. Ln. rombel ; Hl. swymbul. E. Pt. and ; *rest* in. 1980. Ln. berste ; Hl. berst. 1981. Hn. Hl. on (*for* from). 1983. E. Hn. the entree. 1985. Cp. vese ; Cm. wese ; E. Hn. Ln. veze ; Hl. prise. 1986. E. Hn. Cm. gate. Hl. rise. 1990. E. Hn. Pt. dore was. 1995. E. Hn. dirke.

Of felonye, and al the compassing ;  
 The cruel ire, reed as any glede ;  
 The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede ; (1140)  
 The smyler with the knyf under the cloke ;  
 The shepne brenning with the blake smoke ; 2000  
 The treson of the mordring in the bedde ;  
 The open werre, with woundes al bi-bledde ;  
 Contek, with bloody knyf and sharp manace ;  
 Al ful of chirking was that sory place.  
 The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther, 2005  
 His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer ;  
 The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night ;  
 The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-right. (1150)  
 Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,  
 With disconfort and sory contenaunce. 2010  
 Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage ;  
 Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage.  
 The careyne in the bush, with throte y-corve :  
 A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm y-storve ;  
 The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft ; 2015  
 The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.  
 Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres ;  
 The hunte strangled with the wilde beres : (1160)  
 The sowe freten the child right in the cradel ;  
 The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel. 2020  
 Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte ;  
 The carter over-riden with his carte,  
 Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.  
 Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,  
 The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith 2025  
 That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.  
 And al above, depeynted in a tour,  
 Saw I conquest sittinge in greet honour, (1170)  
 With the sharpe swerde over his heed  
 Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed. 2030  
 Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,

---

1996. E. Cm. *om.* al. 1998. E. Cm. *om.* eek. 2012. Cm. *outes.* 2013.  
 E. Cp. Ln. *busk* ; Cm. *bosch* ; Hn. Pt. *bussh.* 2014. E. *ins.* oon *after* nat.  
 2021. Hl. *om.* by. 2025. E. Cm. *laborer* ; *rest* *barbour.* 2029. Pt. Ln.  
*swerde* ; *rest* *swerd.* 2030. E. *soutil* ; Hn. Cp. Ln. *subtil.*

Of grete Nero, and of Antonius ;  
 Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,  
 Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,  
 By manasinge of Mars, right by figure ; 2035  
 So was it shewed in that portreiture  
 As is depeynted in the sterres above,  
 Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love. (1180)  
 Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,  
 I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde. 2040  
 The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,  
 Armed, and loked grim as he were wood ;  
 And over his heed ther shynen two figures  
 Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,  
 That oon Puella, that other Rubeus. 2045  
 This god of armes was arrayed thus :—  
 A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet  
 With eyen rede, and of a man he eet ; (1190)  
 With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,  
 In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie. 2050  
 Now to the temple of Diane the chaste  
 As shortly as I can I wol me haste,  
 To telle yow al the descripcioun.  
 Depeynted been the walles up and doun  
 Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee. 2055  
 Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,  
 Whan that Diane agreved was with here,  
 Was turned from a womman til a bere, (1200)  
 And after was she maad the lode-sterre ;  
 Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre ; 2060  
 Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.  
 Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,  
 I mene nat the goddesse Diane,  
 But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.  
 Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked, 2065  
 For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked ;  
 I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,

2037. Hl. sterres ; E. Pt. certres ; *rest* sertres. 2049. Cm. sotyl ; E. soutil.  
 All depeynted (*badly*) ; see C. 950. 2058. E. Pt. Ln. Hl. to ; *rest* til ; see  
 l. 2062. 2060. All peynted ; see l. 2049. Hl. *om.* yow. 2062. Hl.  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. turned. 2067. E. Hn. hise ; Cm. hese.

And freten him, for that they knewe him naught. (1210)  
 Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,  
 How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor, 2070  
 And Meleagre, and many another mo,  
 For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.  
 Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,  
 The whiche me list nat drawn to memorie.  
 This goddessse on an hert ful hye seet, 2075  
 With smale houndes al aboute hir feet ;  
 And undernethe hir feet she hadde a mone,  
 Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone. (1220)  
 In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,  
 With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas. 2080  
 Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,  
 Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.  
 A womman travailinge was hir biforn,  
 But, for hir child so longe was unborn,  
 Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle, 2085  
 And seyde, 'help, for thou mayst best of alle.'  
 Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,  
 With many a florin he the hewes boghte. (1230)  
 Now been these listes maad, and Theseus,  
 That at his grete cost arrayed thus 2090  
 The temples and the theatre every del,  
 Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.  
 But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,  
 And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.  
 The day approacheth of hir retourninge, 2095  
 That everich sholde an hundred knightes bringe,  
 The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde ;  
 And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde, (1240)  
 Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knightes  
 Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes. 2100  
 And sikerly, ther trowed many a man  
 That never, sithen that the world bigan,  
 As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,  
 As fer as God hath makid see or lond,

---

2069. E. om. was.      2071. E. Hn. Meleagre.      2075. E. Cp. Pt. *ins.*  
 wel *after* ful.      2089. thise] E. the.      2098. E. couenantz. Hl. om. for.

Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye. 2105  
 For every wight that lovede chivalrye,  
 And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name,  
 Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game; (1250)  
 And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.  
 For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas, 2110  
 Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,  
 That loveth paramours, and hath his might,  
 Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,  
 They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there.  
 To fighte for a lady, *benedicite!* 2115  
 It were a lusty sighte for to see.

And right so ferden they with Palamon.  
 With him ther wenten knightes many oon; (1260)  
 Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,  
 In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun; 2120  
 And somme woln have a peyre plates large;  
 And somme woln have a Pruce sheld, or a targe;  
 Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,  
 And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.  
 Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old. 2125  
 Armed were they, as I have you told,  
 Everich after his opinioun.

Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun (1270)  
 Ligure him-self, the grete king of Trace;  
 Blak was his berd, and manly was his face. 2130  
 The cercles of his eyen in his heed,  
 They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed;  
 And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,  
 With kempe heres on his browes stoute;  
 His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge, 2135  
 His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.  
 And as the gyse was in his contree,  
 Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he, (1280)  
 With foure whyte boles in the trays.  
 In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays, 2140  
 With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,

2108. E. preyd; Hn. prayd; Hl. Cm. preyed. 2110. E. Cp. Pt. Hl. caas.  
 2120. Hl. In a; E. And in; Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. And in a; Pt. And a. 2132. E.  
 Hn. bitwyxen. 2134, 5, 6. E. hise. 2141. Hn. Cm. yelwe; E. yelewe; Hl. yolwe.

He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.  
 His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,  
 As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak :  
 A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte, 2145  
 Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,  
 Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.  
 Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts, (1290)  
 Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,  
 To huntun at the leoun or the deer, 2150  
 And folwed him, with mosel faste y-bounde,  
 Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.  
 An hundred lordes hadde he in his route  
 Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.  
 With Arcita, in stories as men finde, 2155  
 The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,  
 Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,  
 Covered in cloth of gold diapred weel, (1300)  
 Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.  
 His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars, 2160  
 Couched with perles whyte and rounde and grete.  
 His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete ;  
 A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge  
 Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.  
 His crise heer lyk ringes was y-ronne, 2165  
 And that was yelow, and glitered as the sonne.  
 His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,  
 His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn, (1310)  
 A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,  
 Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd, 2170  
 And as a leoun he his loking caste.  
 Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.  
 His berd was wel bigonne for to springe ;  
 His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.  
 Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene 2175  
 A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.  
 Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,

2148. E. chaar. 2152. Pt. Ln. Colers; Cp. Coleres; Hl. Colerd; E. Hn. Colered; Cm. Colerid. E. tozrettes; Cp. Pt. torettes; Hl. torettz (*better* torets); Ln. turettes. 2154. E. Hn. stierne. 2155. E. Pt. Arcite; rest Arcita. 2163. E. Cm. Pt. mantel. 2164. E. Brat-ful.

An egle tame, as eny lillie whyt. (1320)  
 An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,  
 Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere, 2180  
 Ful richely in alle maner thinges.  
 For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,  
 Were gadered in this noble companye,  
 For love and for encrees of chivalrye.  
 Aboute this king ther ran on every part 2185  
 Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.  
 And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,  
 Ben on the Sunday to the citee come (1330)  
 Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.  
 This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight, 2190  
 Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,  
 And inned hem, everich in his degree,  
 He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour  
 To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,  
 That yet men weneth that no mannes wit 2195  
 Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.  
 The minstralcye, the service at the feste,  
 The grete yiftes to the moste and leste, (1340)  
 The riche array of Theseus paleys,  
 Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys, 2200  
 What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,  
 Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,  
 Ne who most felingly speketh of love :  
 What haukes sitten on the perche above,  
 What houndes ligger on the floor adoun : 2205  
 Of al this make I now no mencion ;  
 But al theeffect, that thinketh me the beste ;  
 Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste. (1350)  
 The Sunday night, er day bigan to springe,  
 When Palamon the larke herde singe, 2210  
 Although it nere nat day by houres two,  
 Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.  
 With holy herte, and with an heigh corage

2180. Hl. *om.* al. 2186. Hl. Cp. Ln. lepart ; E. leopard. 2192. E. in ; Pt. after ; *rest at.* 2195. E. maner. 2198. E. Hn. meeste ; Cm. Cp. meste ; *rest most.* 2205. E. Cm. Hl. in ; *rest on.* 2207. al] Hl. of. 2208. Hn. Hl. comth ; *rest cometh.* 2212. also] Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. right tho.

He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage  
 Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne, 2215  
 I mene Venus, honourable and digne.  
 And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas  
 Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was, (1360)  
 And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere  
 And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here. 2220  
 'Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,  
 Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vulcanus,  
 Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,  
 For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,  
 Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte, 2225  
 And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.  
 Allas ! I ne have no langage to telle  
 Theffectes ne the torments of myn helle ; (1370)  
 Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye ;  
 I am so confus, that I can nocht seye. 2230  
 But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel  
 My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,  
 Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,  
 As wisly as I shal for evermore,  
 Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be, 2235  
 And holden werre alwey with chastitee ;  
 That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.  
 I kepe nocht of armes for to yelpe, (1380)  
 Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,  
 Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie 2240  
 Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,  
 But I wolde have fully possessioun  
 Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse ;  
 Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.  
 I recche nat, but it may bettre be, 2245  
 To have victorie of hem, or they of me,  
 So that I have my lady in myne armes.  
 For though so be that Mars is god of armes, (1390)  
 Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,

2217. E. paas. 2219. E. with ful ; *rest* and with. 2220. E. and seyde  
 in this manere. 2222. to] Hn. Hl. of. of] *all but* E. Cm. to. 2226. E.  
 Cm. preyere ; Hn. prayere. at] Hl. to. 2227. to] Hl. for to. 2231, 2. Cm.  
 Hl. wel, fel ; *rest* wele, fele. 2239. Hl. aske. Hl. Ln. to morn.



That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love. 2250  
 Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo,  
 And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,  
 I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.  
 And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,  
 Than preyre I thee, to-morwe with a spere 2255  
 That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.  
 Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,  
 Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf. (1400)  
 This is theeffect and ende of my preyere,  
 Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.' 2260

Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,  
 His sacrifice he dide, and that anon  
 Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,  
 Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.  
 But atte laste the statue of Venus shook, 2265  
 And made a signe, wher-by that he took  
 That his preyere accepted was that day.  
 For thogh the signe shewed a delay, (1410)  
 Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone ;  
 And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone. 2270

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon  
 Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,  
 Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,  
 And to the temple of Diane gan hye.  
 Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde, 2275  
 Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,  
 Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al  
 That to the sacrificye longen shal ; (1420)  
 The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse ;  
 Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrificyse. 2280  
 Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,  
 This Emelye, with herte debonaire,  
 Hir body wessh with water of a welle ;  
 But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,  
 But it be any thing in general ; 2285

2261. Hl. thorisoun ; *rest* the orison (orisoun). 2263. E. Cm. circum-  
 stance. 2264. E. Cm. obseruance. 2274. Pt. Hl. *ins.* she *after* gan.  
 2276. E. ladde ; *rest* hadde. 2279. Cp. Pt. Ln. meth ; Hl. meth ; E.  
 meeth ; Hn. mede.

And yet it were a game to heren al;  
 To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:  
 But it is good a man ben at his large. (1430)  
 Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;  
 A coroune of a grene ook cerial 2290  
 Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.  
 Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,  
 And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde  
 In Stace of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.  
 Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere 2295  
 Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.  
 'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,  
 To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene, (1440)  
 Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,  
 Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe 2300  
 Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,  
 As keep me fro thy vengeance and thyn ire,  
 That Attheon aboughte cruelly.  
 Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I  
 Desire to been a mayden al my lyf, 2305  
 Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.  
 I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,  
 A mayde, and love hunting and venerye, (1450)  
 And for to walken in the wodes wilde,  
 And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe. 2310  
 Noght wol I knowe companye of man.  
 Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,  
 For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.  
 And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,  
 And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore, 2315  
 This grace I preye thee with-oute more,  
 As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;  
 And fro me turne away hir hertes so, (1460)  
 That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,  
 And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr 2320  
 Be queynt, or turned in another place;  
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,

2287. were] Hn. Cp. Ln. nere. 2289. E. kempt. 2303. Hl. Atheon.  
 cruelly] Hl. trewely. 2311. E. Hl. *ins.* the *after* knowe. 2317. Hn.  
 As; *rest* And; *see* l. 2325. 2322. not do me] E. Hl. Pt. do me no.

Or if my destinee be shapen so,  
 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,  
 As sende me him that most desireth me. 2325  
 Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,  
 The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.  
 Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle, (1470)  
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,  
 And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.' 2330  
 The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,  
 Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;  
 But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,  
 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,  
 And quiked agayn, and after that anon 2335  
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;  
 And as it queynte, it made a whisteling,  
 As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge, (1480)  
 And at the brondes ende out-ran anoon  
 As it were bloody dropes many oon;  
 For which so sore agast was Emelye, 2340  
 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,  
 For she ne wiste what it signified;  
 But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,  
 And weep, that it was pitee for to here. 2345  
 And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,  
 With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,  
 And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevinesse. (1490)  
 Among the goddes hye it is affermed,  
 And by eterne word write and confermed, 2350  
 Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho  
 That han for thee so muchel care and wo;  
 But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.  
 Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.  
 The fyres which that on myn auter brenne 2355  
 Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,  
 Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'  
 And with that word, the arwes in the cas (1500)

2323. E. And; *rest* Or. 2328. E. Cm. Cp. kepere. 2337. E. Hn. Cp.  
 whistlynge. 2338. Hl. (*only*) As doth a wete brond in his. 2344. Pt. Hl.  
 om. hath. 2350. Hl. write; Pt. writt; *rest* writen. 2356. E. Cp. Hl.  
 declare. 2358. E. caas.

Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,  
 And forth she wente, and made a vanissinghe; 2360  
 For which this Emelye astoned was,  
 And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!  
 I putte me in thy proteccioun,  
 Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'  
 And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye. 2365  
 This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.  
 The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,  
 Arcite un-to the temple walked is (1510)  
 Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrificyse,  
 With alle the rytes of his payen wyse. 2370  
 With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,  
 Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:  
 'O stronge god, that in the regnes colde  
 Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,  
 And hast in every regne and every lond 2375  
 Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,  
 And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,  
 Accept of me my pitous sacrificyse. (1520)  
 If so be that my youthe may deserve,  
 And that my might be worthy for to serve 2380  
 Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,  
 Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.  
 For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,  
 In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,  
 Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee 2385  
 Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,  
 And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,  
 Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille (1530)  
 Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,  
 And fond thee liggig by his wyf, allas! 2390  
 For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,  
 Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.  
 I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,  
 And, as I trowe, with love offended most,  
 That ever was any lyves creature; 2395  
 For she, that dooth me al this wo endure,

---

2369. E. Hn. fierse; Cm. ferse; Hl. fyry. 2385. Hl. the gret; rest om. gret.

Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.  
 And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete, (1540)  
 I moot with strengthe winne hir in the place ;  
 And wel I woot, withouten help or grace 2400  
 Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.  
 Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,  
 For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,  
 As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me ;  
 And do that I to-morwe have victorie. 2405  
 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie !  
 Thy sovereign temple wol I most honouren  
 Of any place, and alwey most labouren (1550)  
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,  
 And in thy temple I wol my baner honge, 2410  
 And alle the armes of my companye ;  
 And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,  
 Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.  
 And eek to this avow I wol me binde :  
 My berd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun, 2415  
 That never yet ne felte offensioun  
 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,  
 And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live. (1560)  
 Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,  
 Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.' 2420  
 The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,  
 The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,  
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,  
 Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.  
 The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte, 2425  
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte ;  
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,  
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf, (1570)  
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,  
 With othere rytes mo ; and atte laste 2430  
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe.  
 And with that soun he herde a murmuringe  
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victorie :'  
 For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.

2402. E. Hn. Thanne. 2420. *All ins.* the (Hl. thy) *after* me ; (*read* victorie).  
 2425. Hn. Cm. brende ; E. Cp. Hl. brenden. 2433. E. Hn. Hl. and ; *rest* that.

And thus with Ioye, and hope wel to fare, 2435  
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,  
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.  
 And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne (1580)  
 For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,  
 Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love, 2440  
 And Mars, the sterne god armipotent,  
 That Iupiter was bisy it to stente;  
 Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,  
 That knew so manye of adventures olde,  
 Fond in his olde experience an art, 2445  
 That he ful sone hath plesed every part.  
 As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet avantage;  
 In elde is bothe wisdom and usage; (1590)  
 Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-rede.  
 Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede, 2450  
 Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,  
 Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.  
 'My dere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,  
 'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,  
 Hath more power than wot any man. 2455  
 Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;  
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;  
 Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throte; (1600)  
 The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,  
 The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoning: 2460  
 I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun  
 Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.  
 Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,  
 The falling of the toures and of the walles  
 Up-on the mynour or the carpenter. 2465  
 I slow Sampsoun in shaking the piler;  
 And myne be the maladyes colde,  
 The derke tresons, and the castes olde; (1610)  
 My loking is the fader of pestilence.  
 Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence 2470  
 That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,

2436. E. Hn. Cm. in. 2441. E. stierne. 2445. an] E. Pt. and. 2449.  
 Hl. Pt. but; *rest* and. 2462. E. *om.* 1st the. 2466. Hl. in; *rest om.*  
 2468. Hl. tresoun.

Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight,  
 Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet nathelees  
 Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,  
 Al be ye noght of o complexioun, 2475  
 That causeth al day swich divisioun.  
 I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille ;  
 Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust fulfille.' (1620)

Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,  
 Of Mars, and of Venus, goddesse of love, 2480  
 And telle yow, as pleyntyly as I can,  
 The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

**Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.**

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,  
 And eek the lusty seson of that May  
 Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce, 2485  
 That al that Monday Iusten they and daunce,  
 And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.  
 But by the cause that they sholde ryse (1630)  
 Erly, for to seen the grete fight,  
 Unto hir reste wente they at night. 2490  
 And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,  
 Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe  
 Ther was in hostelryes al aboute ;  
 And to the paleys rood ther many a route  
 Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys. 2495  
 Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys  
 So uncouth and so riche, and wroght so weel  
 Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel ; (1640)  
 The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures ;  
 Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures ; 2500.  
 Lordes in paraments on hir coursers,  
 Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres  
 Nailinge the speres, and helmes bokelinge,  
 Gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lacinge ;

2489. Hl. Erly a-morwe for to see that fight. 2493. E. *ins.* the *after* in.  
 2500. Hl. Gold-beten. 2503. Nailinge] Hl. Rayhyng. 2504. Hl. Girdyng.

Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel; 2505  
 The fomy stedes on the golden brydel  
 Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also  
 With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro; (1650)  
 Yemen on fote, and communes many oon  
 With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon; 2510  
 Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,  
 That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;  
 The paleys ful of peples up and doun,  
 Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,  
 Divynge of thise Thebane knightes two. 2515  
 Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;  
 Somme helden with him with the blake berd,  
 Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd; (1660)  
 Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;  
 He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte. 2520  
 Thus was the halle ful of divynge,  
 Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.  
 The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked  
 With minstralcy and noyse that was maked,  
 Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche, 2525  
 Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche  
 Honoured, were into the paleys fet.  
 Duk Theseus was at a window set, (1670)  
 Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.  
 The peple preesseth thider-ward ful sone 2530  
 Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,  
 And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.  
 An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,  
 Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;  
 And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille, 2535  
 Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.  
 'The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun  
 Considered, that it were destruccioun (1680)  
 To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse  
 Of mortal bataille now in this emprise; 2540  
 Wherefore, to shapen that they shul not dye,

2511. E. nakerers (*wrongly*). 2513. Hl. pepul; Pt. puple; Ln. peple.  
 2533. E. Hn. Pt. oo. 2534. E. om. *and* the. 2535. E. Cm. the noyse of peple.



He wol his firste purpos modifye.  
 No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,  
 No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf  
 Into the listes sende, or thider bringe; 2545  
 Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,  
 No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.  
 Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde (1690)  
 But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;  
 Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were. 2550  
 And he that is at meschief, shal be take,  
 And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake  
 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;  
 But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.  
 And if so falle, the chieftayn be take 2555  
 On either syde, or elles slee his make,  
 No lenger shal the turneyng laste.  
 God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on faste. (1700)  
 With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.  
 Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.' 2560  
 The voys of peple touchede the hevене,  
 So loude cryden they with mery stevene:  
 'God save swich a lord, that is so good,  
 He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!'  
 Up goon the trompes and the melodye. 2565  
 And to the listes rit the companye  
 By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,  
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge. (1710)  
 Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,  
 Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde; 2570  
 And after rood the quene, and Emelye,  
 And after that another companye  
 Of oon and other, after hir degree.  
 And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,  
 And to the listes come they by tyme. 2575  
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,  
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,

2544. E. Cm. *om.* 1st ne. 2545. or] E. Cm. Ln. ne. 2547. E. Hl. *om.* it.  
 2555. falle] E. be. Cm. cheuynteyn; Cp. cheuentein; Hl. cheuentein. 2556.  
 Hl. sle; *rest* sleen (sclayn). 2559. Hl. fight; Ln. fihten; *rest* fighteth.  
 2561. Cm. Cp. touchede; Hl. touchith; *rest* touched. 2562. Cm. cryedyn;  
 E. cride. E. murie. 2570. E. Hn. Hl. Thebans; *see* l. 2623.

Ipolita the quene and Emelye, (1720)  
 And other ladies in degrees aboute.  
 Un-to the sectes preesseth al the route. 2580  
 And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,  
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,  
 With baner reed is entred right anon ;  
 And in that selve moment Palamon  
 Is under Venus, est-ward in the place, 2585  
 With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.  
 In al the world, to seken up and down,  
 So even with-outen variacioun, (1730)  
 Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.  
 For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye, 2590  
 That any hadde of other avauntage  
 Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,  
 So even were they chosen, for to gesse.  
 And in two renges faire they hem dresse.  
 Whan that hir names rad were everichoon, 2595  
 That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,  
 Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude :  
 'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude !' (1740)  
 The heraudes lefte hir priking up and down ;  
 Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun ; 2600  
 Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est  
 In goon the speres ful sadly in arest ;  
 In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.  
 Ther seen men who can Iuste, and who can ryde ;  
 Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke ; 2605  
 He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.  
 Up springen speres twenty foot on highte ;  
 Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte. (1750)  
 The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede ;  
 Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede. 2610  
 With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.  
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.  
 Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and down goth al.  
 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.  
 He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun, 2615

2593. E. om. they.      2598. Hl. Dooth.      2608. E. gooth ; rest goon.  
 2613. stomblen] E. Cm. semblen.

And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.  
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,  
 Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake, (1760)  
 As forward was, right ther he moste abyde ;  
 Another lad is on that other syde. 2620  
 And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,  
 Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.  
 Ful ofte a-day han this Thebanes two  
 Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo ;  
 Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye. 2625  
 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,  
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,  
 So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite (1770)  
 For Ielous herte upon this Palamoun :  
 Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun, 2630  
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,  
 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,  
 As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.  
 The Ielous strokes on hir helmes byte ;  
 Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede. 2635  
 Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede ;  
 For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,  
 The stronge king Emetreus gan hente (1780)  
 This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,  
 And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte ; 2640  
 And by the force of twenty is he take  
 Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.  
 And in the rescous of this Palamoun  
 The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun ;  
 And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe, 2645  
 Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,  
 So hitte him Palamon er he were take ;  
 But al for noght, he was broght to the stake. (1790)  
 His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught ;  
 He moste abyde, whan that he was caught 2650  
 By force, and eek by composicioun.  
 Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,  
 That moot namore goon agayn to fighte ?

2622. E. fresshen.

2643. E. rescus ; Pt. rescowe ; rest rescous.

And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,  
 Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon 2655  
 He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!  
 I wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.  
 Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye, (1800)  
 That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.'  
 Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne 2660  
 For Ioye of this, so loude and heigh with-alle,  
 It semed that the listes sholde falle.

What can now faire Venus doon above?  
 What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?  
 But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille, 2665  
 Til that hir teres in the listes fille;  
 She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'  
 Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy pees. (1810)  
 Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,  
 And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.' 2670

The trompes, with the loude minstralcye,  
 The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,  
 Been in hir wele for Ioye of daun Arcite.  
 But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,  
 Which a miracle ther bifel anon. 2675

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,  
 And on a courser, for to shewe his face,  
 He priketh endelong the large place, (1820)  
 Loking upward up-on this Emelye;  
 And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë, 2680  
 (For wommen, as to speken in comune,  
 They folwen al the favour of fortune),  
 And she was al his chere, as in his herte.  
 Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,  
 From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne, 2685  
 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,  
 And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;  
 And, er that Arcite may taken keep, (1830)  
 He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,

---

2671. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. trompours. 2676. Cm. ferse; E. Hn. fierse. 2679.  
 E. Pt. om. this. 2681. E. Hn. Cm. omit ll. 2681, 2682. 2683. Hn. she;  
 rest om. 2684. E. furie; Hn. Cm. furye; rest fyr, fir, fire, fyre; see note.

That in the place he lay as he were deed, 2690  
 His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.  
 As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,  
 So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.  
 Anon he was y-born out of the place  
 With herte soor, to Theseus paleys. 2695  
 Tho was he corven out of his harneys,  
 And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,  
 For he was yet in memorie and alyve, (1840)  
 And alway crying after Emelye.

Duk Theseus, with al his companye, 2700  
 Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,  
 With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.  
 Al be it that this aventure was falle,  
 He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.  
 Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye ; 2705  
 He shal ben heled of his maladye.  
 And of another thing they were as fayn,  
 That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn, (1850)  
 Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,  
 That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon. 2710  
 To othere woundes, and to broken armes,  
 Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes ;  
 Fermacies of herbes, and eek save  
 They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.  
 For which this noble duk, as he wel can, 2715  
 Conforteth and honoureth every man,  
 And made revel al the longe night,  
 Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right. (1860)  
 Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,  
 But as a Iustes or a tourneyinge ; 2720  
 For soothly ther was no disconfiture,  
 For falling nis nat but an aventure ;  
 Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake  
 Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,  
 O persone allone, with-outen mo, 2725  
 And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,  
 And eek his stede driven forth with staves,

---

269S. Hl. Pt. on lyue. 2714. limes] Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. lyues. 2726. E. Hn. Cm. arm.

With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves, (1870)  
 It nas aretted him no vileinye,  
 Ther may no man clepen it cowardye. 2730

For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,  
 To stinten alle rancour and envye,  
 The gree as wel of o syde as of other,  
 And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother ;  
 And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree, 2735  
 And fully heeld a feste dayes three ;  
 And conveyed the kinges worthily  
 Out of his toun a Iournee largely. (1880)

And hoom wente every man the righte way.  
 Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good day !'  
 Of this bataille I wol namore endyte, 2740  
 But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore  
 Encreesseth at his herte more and more.  
 The clothered blood, for any lechecraft, 2745  
 Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,  
 That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,  
 Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge. (1890)

The vertu expulsif, or animal,  
 Fro thilke vertu cleped natural 2750  
 Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.  
 The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,  
 And every lacerte in his brest adoun  
 Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.

Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf, 2755  
 Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif ;  
 Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,  
 Nature hath now no dominacioun. (1900)

And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,  
 Far-wel, phisyk ! go ber the man to chirche ! 2760  
 This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,  
 For which he sendeth after Emelye,  
 And Palamon, that was his cosin dere ;  
 Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.

'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte 2765

---

2737. E. conuoyed. 2740, 2760. E. fare ; Cm. Hl. far. 2746. Hl. Pt.  
 Corrupith.

Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte  
 To yow, my lady, that I love most ;  
 But I biquethe the service of my gost (1910)  
 To yow aboven every creature,  
 Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure. 2770  
 Allas, the wo ! allas, the peynes stronge,  
 That I for yow have suffred, and so longe !  
 Allas, the deeth ! allas, myn Emelye !  
 Allas, departing of our companye !  
 Allas, myn hertes quene ! allas, my wyf ! 2775  
 Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf !  
 What is this world ? what asketh men to have ?  
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave (1920)  
 Allone, with-uten any companye.  
 Far-wel, my swete fo ! myn Emelye ! 2780  
 And softe tak me in your armes tweye,  
 For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.  
 I have heer with my cosin Palamon  
 Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,  
 For love of yow, and for my Ielousye. 2785  
 And Iupiter so wis my soule gye,  
 To speken of a servant proprely,  
 With alle circumstaunces trewely, (1930)  
 That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,  
 Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede, 2790  
 Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,  
 So Iupiter have of my soule part,  
 As in this world right now ne knowe I non  
 So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,  
 That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf. 2795  
 And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,  
 Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.'  
 And with that word his speche faille gan, (1940)  
 For from his feet up to his brest was come  
 The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome. 2800  
 And yet more-over, in his armes two

2770. Tyrwhitt *has* ne may; ne *is not in the MSS.* 2781. E. taak.  
 2785. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 2789. Cp. Pt. Hl. and; *rest om.* 2799. For]  
 E. And. feet] E. Hl. Cm. herte. 2801. *All but Hl. ins. for before in.*

The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.  
 Only the intellect, with-outen more,  
 That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,  
 Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth, 2805  
 Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth.  
 But on his lady yet caste he his yë ;  
 His laste word was, 'mercy, Emelye !' (1950)  
 His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,  
 As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher. 2810  
 Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre ;  
 Of soules finde I nat in this registre,  
 Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle  
 Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.  
 Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye ; 2815  
 Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.  
 Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,  
 And Theseus his suster took anon (1960)  
 Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.  
 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day, 2820  
 To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe ?  
 For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,  
 Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,  
 That for the more part they sorwen so,  
 Or elles fallen in swich maladye, 2825  
 That at the laste certainly they dye.  
 Infinite been the sorwes and the teres  
 Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres, (1970)  
 In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban ;  
 For him ther wepeth bothe child and man ; 2830  
 So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,  
 Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-slayn,  
 To Troye ; allas ! the pitee that was ther,  
 Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.  
 'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye, 2835  
 'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye ?'  
 No man mighte gladen Theseus,  
 Savinge his olde fader Egeus, (1980)

2819. E. Hn. baar. 2822. Ill. can haue ; *rest om.* can. 2823. E.  
 nousbond is. 2828. E. eek ; *for 2nd* folk. 2834. E. Hn. Cm. Pt. rentynge.



That knew this worldes transmucioun,  
 As he had seyn it chaungen up and down, 2840  
 Ioye after wo, and wo after gladnesse :  
 And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.

‘Right as ther deyed never man,’ quod he,  
 ‘That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,  
 Right so ther livede never man,’ he seyde, 2845  
 ‘In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.

This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,  
 And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro ; (1990)  
 Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.’

And over al this yet seyde he muchel more 2850  
 To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte  
 The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,  
 Caste now wher that the sepulture  
 Of good Arcite may best y-maked be, 2855  
 And eek most honourable in his degree.

And at the laste he took conclusioun,  
 That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun (2000)  
 Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,

That in that selve grove, swote and grene, 2860  
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,  
 His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,

He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice  
 Funeral he mighte al accomplice ;  
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe 2865

The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe  
 In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne ;  
 His officers with swifte feet they renne (2010)

And ryde anon at his comaundement.  
 And after this, Theseus hath y-sent 2870  
 After a bere, and it al over-spradde

With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.  
 And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite ;  
 Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte ;

2840. Hn. chaungen ; Hl. torne ; *rest om.* 2843. Hn. deyed ; E. dyed.

2849. E. worldes. 2854. Hn. Caste ; E. Hl. Cast. now] Hl. busyly.

2861. E. amorous. 2863. E. the office ; Hl. thoffice. 2869. E. ryden.

Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene, 2875  
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.  
 He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,  
 Therwith he weep that pitee was to here. (2020)  
 And for the peple sholde seen him alle,  
 Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle, 2880  
 That roreth of the crying and the soun.  
 Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,  
 With flotery berd, and ruggy asschy heres,  
 In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres ;  
 And, passing othere of weping, Emelye, 2885  
 The rewfulleste of al the companye.  
 In as muche as the service sholde be  
 The more noble and riche in his degree, (2030)  
 Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,  
 That trapped were in steel al glitteringe, 2890  
 And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.  
 Up-on these stedes, that weren grete and whyte,  
 Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,  
 Another his spere up in his hondes heeld ;  
 The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys, 2895  
 Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys ;  
 And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere  
 Toward the grove, as ye shul after here. (2040)  
 The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were  
 Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere, 2900  
 With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,  
 Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,  
 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye  
 Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.  
 Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus, 2905  
 And on that other syde duk Theseus,  
 With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,  
 Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn ; (2050)  
 Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye ;  
 And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910  
 With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,

2875. Cp. Pt. III. croune ; *rest* coroune. 2883. E. rugged. 2892. Hl. that  
 weren ; *rest om.* 2893. E. Ln. sitten. 2894. E. *om.* up. 2901. Ln. slake  
 (*for* slakke) ; *rest* slak. 2904. Hl. al ; *rest om.*

To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparailinge  
 Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,  
 That with his grene top the heven raughte, 2915  
 And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte ;  
 This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.  
 Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode. (2060)  
 But how the fyr was maked up on highte,  
 And eek the names how the treës highte, 2920  
 As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,  
 Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,  
 Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippeltree,  
 How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me ;  
 Ne how the goddes ronnen up and down, 2925  
 Disherited of hir habitacioun,  
 In which they woneden in reste and pees,  
 Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides ; (2070)  
 Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle  
 Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle ; 2930  
 Ne how the ground agast was of the light,  
 That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright ;  
 Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,  
 And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,  
 And than with grene wode and spycerye, 2935  
 And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,  
 And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,  
 The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour ; (2080)  
 Ne how Arcite lay among al this,  
 Ne what richesse aboute his body is ; 2940  
 Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,  
 Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse ;  
 Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,  
 Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr ;  
 Ne what Ieweles men in the fyr tho caste, 2945  
 Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste ;  
 Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,

2912. So Hl. Cp.; *rest* the office. 2916. Hl. tharme. 2920. how] E. that.  
 2921. Hn. Hl. popler; *rest* popelere. 2924. E. fild. 2926. Hl. Disheryt.  
 2928. E. Cm. Nymphus. 2934, 5, 6. Pt. Ln. than; *rest* thanne. 2934. E.  
 Cp. stokkes; *rest* stikkes. 2943. E. om. the. 2945. Hl. tho; *rest* om.

And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were, (2090)  
 And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,  
 Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood; 2950  
 Ne how the Grekes with an huge route  
 Thryës riden al the fyr aboute  
 Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,  
 And thryës with hir speres clateringe;  
 And thryës how the ladies gonne crye; 2955  
 Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;  
 Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;  
 Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde (2100)  
 Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye  
 The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye; 2960  
 Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,  
 Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.  
 I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon  
 Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;  
 But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende, 2965  
 And maken of my longe tale an ende.  
 By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres  
 Al stinted is the moorning and the teres (2110)  
 Of Grekes, by oon general assent.  
 Than semed me ther was a parlement 2970  
 At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;  
 Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was  
 To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,  
 And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.  
 For which this noble Theseus anon 2975  
 Leet senden after gentil Palamon,  
 Unwist of him what was the cause and why;  
 But in his blake clothes sorwefully (2120)  
 He cam at his comaundement in hye.  
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye. 2980  
 Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,  
 And Theseus abiden hadde a space  
 Er any word cam from his wyse brest,  
 His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,

2952. *So all but III., which has* Thre tymes; *see l. 2954. E. place (for fyr).*  
 2956. E. Hn. And (*for* Ne). 2958. E. Hn. lych; *rest* liche.

And with a sad visage he syked stille, 2985  
 And after that right thus he seyde his wille.  
 'The firste moevere of the cause above,  
 Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love, (2130)  
 Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his entente;  
 Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente; 2990  
 For with that faire cheyne of love he bond  
 The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond  
 In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;  
 'That same prince and that moevere,' quod he,  
 'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun, 2995  
 Certeyne dayes and duracioun  
 To al that is engendred in this place,  
 Over the whiche day they may nat pace, (2140)  
 Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;  
 Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge, 3000  
 For it is preved by experience,  
 But that me list declaren my sentence.  
 Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,  
 That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.  
 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool, 3005  
 That every part deryveth from his hool.  
 For nature hath nat take his beginning  
 Of no partye ne cantel of a thing, (2150)  
 But of a thing that parfit is and stable,  
 Descending so, til it be corrupable. 3010  
 And therefore, of his wyse purveyaunce,  
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,  
 That spesces of thinges and progressiouns  
 Shullen enduren by successiouns,  
 And nat eterne be, with-oute lye: 3015  
 This maistow understonde and seen at eye.  
 'Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisslinge  
 From tyme that it first biginneth springe, (2160)

2994. Hn. Ln. that; *rest* (except Hl.) that same. Hl. and moeuere eek.  
 2995. Hl. Ln. stabled. 2997. Hl. alle that er; Cp. alle that beth. 3000. E.  
 Cp. *ins.* noght *bef.* noon. Hl. tallegge; Hn. to allegge; Cm. Cp. Pt. to legge.  
 3006. E. dirryueth. 3007. Hl. Ln. take; *rest* taken; E. Cm. *om.* nat. 3008.  
 Hl. ne; E. Hn. Pt. or of; Cm. or of a. 3015. *So* Hl.; *rest* eterne with-ouen  
 any lye. 3016. at] E. it.

And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,  
 Yet at the laste wasted is the tree. 3020  
 ‘Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon  
 Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,  
 Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.  
 The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.  
 The grete tounes see we wane and wende. 3025  
 Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.  
 ‘Of man and womman seen we wel also,  
 That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two, (2170)  
 This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,  
 He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page; 3030  
 Som in his bed, som in the depe see,  
 Som in the large feeld, as men may se;  
 Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.  
 Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.  
 What maketh this but Iupiter the king? 3035  
 The which is prince and cause of alle thing,  
 Converting al un-to his propre welle,  
 From which it is deryved, sooth to telle. (2180)  
 And here-agayns no creature on lyve  
 Of no degree availleth for to stryve. 3040  
 ‘Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,  
 To maken vertu of necessitee,  
 And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,  
 And namely that to us alle is due.  
 And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye, 3045  
 And rebel is to him that al may gye.  
 And certainly a man hath most honour  
 To dyen in his excellence and flour, (2190)  
 Whan he is siker of his gode name;  
 Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame. 3050  
 And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,  
 Whan with honour up-yolden is his breath,  
 Than whan his name apalled is for age;  
 For al forgeten is his vasselage.  
 Than is it best, as for a worthy fame, 3055  
 To dyen whan that he is best of name.

The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.  
 Why grucchen we? why have we hevinesse, (2200)  
 That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour  
 Departed is, with duetee and honour, 3060  
 Out of this foule prison of this lyf?  
 Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf  
 Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?  
 Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,  
 That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende, 3065  
 And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.  
 'What may I conlude of this longe serie,  
 But, after wo, I rede us to be merie, (2210)  
 And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?  
 And, er that we departen from this place, 3070  
 I rede that we make, of sorwes two,  
 O parfyt Ioye, lasting ever-mo ;  
 And loketh now, wher most sorwe is her-inne,  
 Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.  
 'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle assent, 3075  
 With al thavys heer of my parlement,  
 That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,  
 That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might, (2220)  
 And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,  
 That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe, 3080  
 And taken him for housbonde and for lord :  
 Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.  
 Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.  
 He is a kinges brother sone, pardee ;  
 And, though he were a povre bachelor, 3085  
 Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,  
 And had for yow so greet adversitee,  
 It moste been considered, leveth me ; (2230)  
 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.'  
 Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right ; 3090  
 'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning  
 To make yow assente to this thing.  
 Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.'

3056. Hl. whan a man. 3059. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. *ins.* the *bef.* flour. 3071.  
 Hl. that; *rest om.* 3077. your] E. thyn. 3082. Hn. Leen; *rest* Lene.

Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,  
 That highte matrimoine or mariage, 3095  
 By al the counseil and the baronage.  
 And thus with alle blisse and melodye  
 Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye. (2240)  
 And God, that al this wyde world hath wrought,  
 Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght. 3100  
 For now is Palamon in alle wele,  
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele ;  
 And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,  
 And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,  
 That never was ther no word hem bitwene 3105  
 Of Ielousye, or any other tene.  
 Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye ;  
 And God save al this faire companye !—Amen. (2250)

**Here is ended the Knightes Tale.**

3095. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. matrimoigne; Pt. matrimoyne; Hl. matrimoyn.  
 3100. E. om. hath. 3104. Hl. also; rest so. 3106. E. Hn. Cp.  
 Ialousye. Hl. ne of non othir teene. COLOPHON; so E. Hn.; Pt. Hl. endeth.



## THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

—♦—

Here folwen the wordes bitwene the Host and  
the Millere.

**W**HAN that the Knight had thus his tale y-told,  
 In al the route nas ther yong ne old 3110  
 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,  
 And worthy for to drawen to memorie ;  
 And namely the gentils everichoon.  
 Our Hoste lough and swear, 'so moot I goon,  
 This gooth aright ; unbokeled is the male ; 3115  
 Lat see now who shal telle another tale :  
 For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.  
 Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye conne, (10)  
 Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes tale.'  
 The Miller, that for-dronken was al pale, 3120  
 So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,  
 He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,  
 Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,  
 But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,  
 And swear by armes and by blood and bones, 3125  
 'I can a noble tale for the nones,  
 With which I wol now quyte the Knightes tale.'  
 Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke of ale, (20)  
 And seyde : 'abyd, Robin, my leve brother,  
 Som better man shal telle us first another : 3130  
 Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.'

---

HEADING. *From E.* E. Heere; hoost. 3118. E. on; *rest* ye. 3128.  
 Ll. oste; E. hoost; Hl. *has*—Oure hoost saugh wel how.

'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol nat I;  
 For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.'  
 Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel wey!  
 Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.' 3135

'Now herkneþ,' quod the Miller, 'alle and some!  
 But first I make a protestacioun  
 That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun; (30)  
 And therefore, if that I misspeke or seye,  
 Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow preye; 3140  
 For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
 Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,  
 How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.'

The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint thy clappe,  
 Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye. 3145  
 It is a sinne and eek a greet folye  
 To apeiren any man, or him diffame,  
 And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame. (40)  
 Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges seyn.'

This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn, 3150  
 And seyde, 'leve brother Osewold,  
 Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.  
 But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;  
 Ther been ful gode wyves many oon, 3154  
 And ever a thousand gode ayeyns oon badde, [T. om.  
 That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou madde. [T. om.  
 Why artow angry with my tale now?  
 I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou, (50)  
 Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,  
 Taken up-on me more than y-nogh, 3160  
 As demen of my-self that I were oon;  
 I wol beleve wel that I am noon.  
 An housbond shal nat been inquisitif  
 Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.  
 So he may finde goddes foyson there, 3165  
 Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.'

---

3134. Pt. hooste; Ln. oste; E. hoost. 3140. E. Hn. Cm. om. yow. 3147.  
 E. Ln. Hl. defame; rest diffame. 3150. E. dronke; Cm. dronkyn; rest  
 dronken. 3155, 6. These two lines are in E. Cm. Hl. only. 3160. Cm.  
 Takyn; rest Take, Tak. 3166. enquere] Cp. Pt. Ln. to enquere.

What sholde I more seyn, but this Millere  
 He nolde his wordes for no man forbere, (60)  
 But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;  
 Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here. 3170  
 And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,  
 For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye  
 Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce  
 Hir tales alle, be they better or werse,  
 Or elles falsen som of my matere. 3175  
 And therefore, who-so list it nat y-here,  
 Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;  
 For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale, (70)  
 Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,  
 And eek moralitee and holinesse; 3180  
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.  
 The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;  
 So was the Reve, and othere many mo,  
 And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.  
 Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame; 3185  
 And eek men shal nat make earnest of game.

**Here endeth the prologe.**

3170. E. Mathynketh; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. Me athynketh; Cm. Me thynkyth.  
 3172. demeth] Hl. as deme. 3173. E. yuel; Cm. euyl. 3177. Cp.  
 chees; Cm. ches; *rest* chese. 3185. E. Cm. *om.* and. E. Cp. putteth; *rest*  
 putte, put. 3186. E. Hn. Cm. maken; *rest* make. COLOPHON. *From* Cm.;  
 Pt. Thus endeth the prologe; Ln. Explicit prologus; Hl. Here endeth the  
 prologe of the Miller.

## THE MILLERES TALE.

—♦—

Here biginneth the Millere his tale.

**W**HYLOM ther was dwellinge at Oxenford  
 A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,  
 And of his craft he was a Carpenter.  
 With him ther was dwellinge a povre scoler, 3190  
 Had lerned art, but al his fantasye  
 Was turned for to lerne astrologye,  
 And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns  
 To demen by interrogaciouns,  
 If that men axed him in certein houres, 3195  
 Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures, (10)  
 Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle  
 Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem alle.  
 This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;  
 Of derne love he coude and of solas; 3200  
 And ther-to he was sleigh and ful privee,  
 And lyk a mayden meke for to see.  
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye  
 Allone, with-uten any companye,  
 Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote; 3205  
 And he him-self as swete as is the rote (20)  
 Of licorys, or any cetewale.  
 His Almageste and bokes grete and smale,  
 His astrelabie, longinge for his art,  
 His augrim-stones layen faire a-part 3210  
 On shelves couched at his beddes heed:  
 His presse y-covered with a falding reed.  
 And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,  
 On which he made a nightes melodye

3187. Cm. Pt. in (*for* at).  
 (=povre); Cp. Ln. pouer (=pover).

3190. Cm. Pt. Hl. pore; E. Hn. poure  
 3195, 7. E. asked; *rest* axed.

So swetely, that al the chambre rong ; 3215  
 And *Angelus ad virginem* he song ; (30)

And after that he song the kinges note ;  
 Ful often blessed was his mery throte.  
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente  
 After his freendes finding and his rente. 3220

This Carpenter had wedded newe a wyf  
 Which that he lovede more than his lyf ;  
 Of eightetene yeer she was of age.  
 Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,  
 For she was wilde and yong, and he was old 3225  
 And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold. (40)

He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,  
 That bad man sholde wedde his similitude.  
 Men sholde wedden after hir estaat,  
 For youthe and elde is often at debaat. 3230  
 But sith that he was fallen in the snare,  
 He moste endure, as other folk, his care.

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-with-al  
 As any wesele hir body gent and smal.  
 A ceynt she werede barred al of silk, 3235  
 A barmcloth eek as whyt as morne milk (50)

Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.  
 Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al bifore  
 And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,  
 Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-oute. 3240

The tapes of hir whyte voluper  
 Were of the same suyte of hir coler ;  
 Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye :  
 And sikerly she hadde a likerous yë.  
 Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes two, 3245  
 And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo. (60)

She was ful more blisful on to see  
 Than is the newe pere-ionette tree ;  
 And softer than the wolle is of a wether.  
 And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether 3250

3218. Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. mery ; E. myrie. 3223. Hl. eyghteteene ; *rest* xvij.  
 3225. E. yong and wyld. 3230. Cm. Hl. ben ; *rest* is. 3235. E. y-barred ; *rest* barred.  
 3236. Hl. eek ; *rest om.* 3238. Cp. brouded ; Hl. browdid ; Cm. I-brouded ; E. Hn. broyden.

Tasseld with silk, and perled with latoun.  
 In al this world, to seken up and doun,  
 There nis no man so wys, that coude thenche  
 So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.  
 Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe 3255  
 Than in the tour the noble y-forged newe. (70)  
 But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne  
 As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.  
 Ther-to she coude skippe and make game,  
 As any kide or calf folwinge his dame. 3260  
 Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,  
 Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.  
 Winsinge she was, as is a Ioly colt,  
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.  
 A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler, 3265  
 As brood as is the bos of a bocler. (80)  
 Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye ;  
 She was a prymerole, a pigges-nye  
 For any lord to leggen in his bedde,  
 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde. 3270  
 Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,  
 That on a day this hende Nicholas  
 Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,  
 Whyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,  
 As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte ; 3275  
 And prively he caughte hir by the queynte, (90)  
 And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my wille,  
 For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille.'  
 And heeld hir harde by the haunche-bones,  
 And seyde, 'lemman, love me al at-ones, 3280  
 Or I wol dyen, also god me save !'  
 And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave,  
 And with hir heed she wryed faste away,  
 And seyde, 'I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey,  
 Why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas, 3285

3251. E. Hn. Tasseled ; Ln. Tassilde ; Hl. Cp. Tassid. E. grene ; *rest* silk.  
 3253. E. nas ; Hn. Pt. Hl. nys ; Cm. Cp. Ln. is. 3261. Cm. Pt. Cp. Ln.  
 braket. 3265. Cm. lowe ; *rest* loue. 3266. Cp. bocler ; Hl. bocleer ;  
*rest* bokeler. 3283. Cm. wrythed. 3285. Pt. she ; Cm. Hl. sche ; Ln.  
 iche ; *rest* ich.

Or I wol crye out "harrow" and "allas."  
Do wey your handes for your curteisye!' (100)

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,  
And spak so faire, and profred hir so faste,  
That she hir love him graunted atte laste, 3290

And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent,  
That she wol been at his comandement,  
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espye.

'Myn housbond is so ful of Ialousye,  
That but ye wayte wel and been privee, 3295  
I woot right wel I nam but deed,' quod she. (110)

'Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.'  
'Nay ther-of care thee noght,' quod Nicholas,

'A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,  
But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.' 3300

And thus they been acorded and y-sworn  
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.  
Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,

And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,  
He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye, 3305  
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye. (120)

Than fil it thus, that to the parish-chirche,  
Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,  
This gode wyf wente on an haliday ;

Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day, 3310  
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.

Now was ther of that chirche a parish-clerk,  
The which that was y-cleped Absolon.  
Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,

And strouted as a fanne large and brode ; 3315  
Ful streight and even lay his Ioly shode. (130)

His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos ;  
With Powles window corven on his shoos,  
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.

Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely, 3320  
Al in a kirtel of a light wachet ;  
Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.

3289. E. hir ; *rest* him.

3319. Cm. hosyn ; Pt. hosen ; *rest* hoses.

3321. Hl. fyn (*for* light). Hl. Ln. wachet ; Cm. wachet ; *rest* waget.

And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surplys  
 As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.  
 A mery child he was, so god me save, 3325  
 Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and shave, (140)  
 And make a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.  
 In twenty manere coude he trippe and daunce  
 After the scole of Oxenforde tho,  
 And with his legges casten to and fro, 3330  
 And pleyen songes on a small rubible;  
 Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quible;  
 And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.  
 In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne  
 That he ne visited with his solas, 3335  
 Ther any gaylard tappestere was. (150)  
 But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous  
 Of farting, and of speche daungerous.  
 This Absolon, that Iolif was and gay,  
 Gooth with a sencer on the haliday, 3340  
 Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;  
 And many a lovely look on hem he caste,  
 And namely on this carpenteres wyf.  
 To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,  
 She was so propre and swete and likerous. 3345  
 I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous, (160)  
 And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.  
 This parish-clerk, this Ioly Absolon,  
 Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,  
 That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe; 3350  
 For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.  
 The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte shoon,  
 And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,  
 For paramours, he thoughte for to wake.  
 And forth he gooth, Iolif and amorous, 3355  
 Til he cam to the carpenteres hous (170)  
 A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;  
 And dressed him up by a shot-windowe

---

3325, 3344. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 3327. E. Hn. maken. 3329. E. Hn.  
 Oxenford; Cm. Oxenforthe; rest Oxenforde. 3333. E. his; rest a. 3347.  
 E. Hl. wold; rest wolde. 3350. Hn. Hl. ne; rest om.



That was up-on the carpenteres wal.  
 He singeth in his vois gentil and smal, 3360  
 'Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,  
 I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,'  
 Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge.  
 This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,  
 And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde anon, 3365  
 'What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon  
 (180)  
 That chaunteth thus under our boures wal?'  
 And she answerde hir housbond ther-with-al,  
 'Yis, god wot, Iohn, I here it every-del.'  
 This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel? 3370  
 Fro day to day this Ioly Absolon  
 So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.  
 He waketh al the night and al the day;  
 He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made him gay;  
 He woweth hir by menes and brocage, 3375  
 And swoor he wolde been hir owne page; (190)  
 He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;  
 He sente hir piment, meeth, and spycd ale,  
 And wafres, pyping hote out of the glede;  
 And for she was of toune, he profred mede. 3380  
 For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,  
 And som for strokes, and som for gentillesse.  
 Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,  
 He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.  
 But what availleth him as in this case? 3385  
 She loveth so this hende Nicholas, (200)  
 That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;  
 He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;  
 And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,  
 And al his earnest turneth til a Iape. 3390  
 Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,  
 Men seyn right thus, 'alwey the nye slye

---

3362. Cm. preye; Hl. praye; Ln. preie; E. Hn. Cp. Pt. pray. E. wole;  
 Cm. wele; Hn. Hl. wol; *rest* wil. E. thynke; *rest* rewe. 3364. E. om.  
 him. 3371. E. *repeats* to day. 3374. Cm. kempte; Hn. Ln. kembed;  
 Cp. kembede; E. Pt. kembeth. 3379. Cm. Pt. Ln. hote; E. Hn. Cp. hoot.  
 3380. E. profreth. 3384. Hl. Herodz; Ln. Heraude; *rest* Herodes, Her-  
 audes. Hl. on; *rest* vp on. 3390. Hl. Pt. to; *rest* til.

Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.'

For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,  
By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte, 3395  
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte. (210)

Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!  
For Absolon may waille and singe 'allas.'  
And so bifel it on a Saterdag,  
This carpenter was goon til Osenay; 3400  
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun  
Acorded been to this conclusioun,  
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle  
This sely Ialous housbond to bigyle;  
And if so be the game wente aright, 3405  
She sholde slepen in his arm al night, (220)  
For this was his desyr and hir also.

And right anon, with-uten wordes mo,  
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,  
But doth ful softe un-to his chambre carie 3410  
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or tweye,  
And to hir housbonde bad hir for to seye,  
If that he axed after Nicholas,  
She sholde seye she niste where he was,  
Of al that day she saugh him nat with yë; 3415  
She trowed that he was in maladye, (230)  
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;  
He nolde answer, for no-thing that mighte falle.

This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,  
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay, 3420  
And eet and sleep, or dide what him leste,  
Til Sunday, that the sonne gooth to reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet merveye  
Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him eyle,  
And seyde, 'I am adrad, by seint Thomas, 3425  
It stondesth nat aright with Nicholas. (240)  
God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!  
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;  
I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche

---

3415. Cm. Pt. ye; Hl. Iye; *rest eye*. 3418. Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. no thyng;  
Pt. Hl. nought; E. thyng. Pt. Hl. may bifalle. (*Read mighte as might*).

That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wirche. 3430

Go up,' quod he un-to his knave anoon,  
 'Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a stoon,  
 Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.'

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,  
 And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood, 3435  
 He cryde and knocked as that he were wood:— (250)  
 'What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholas?  
 How may ye slepen al the longe day?'

But al for noght, he herde nat a word;  
 An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord, 3440  
 Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe;  
 And at that hole he looked in ful depe,  
 And at the laste he hadde of him a sighte.  
 This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,  
 As he had kyked on the newe mone. 3445  
 Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister sone (260)  
 In what array he saugh this ilke man.

This carpenter to blessen him bigan,  
 And seyde, 'help us, seinte Frideswyde!  
 A man woot litel what him shal bityde. 3450

This man is falle, with his astromye,  
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye;  
 I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!  
 Men sholde nat knowe of goddes privetee.  
 Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man, 3455  
 That noght but oonly his bileve can! (270)

So ferde another clerk with astromye;  
 He walked in the feeldes for to pry  
 Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle,  
 Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle; 3460

He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas,  
 Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.  
 He shal be rated of his studying,  
 If that I may, by Iesus, hevене king!

Get me a staf, that I may underspore, 3465

---

3440. E. Hn. foond; Pt. foonde. 3444. E. Hn. Cp. capyng. 3445. Cp.  
 Ln. keked; Hl. loked. 3447. E. Pt. that; rest this. 3451. E. Hn.  
 Astromye; Ln. Arstromye; rest astronomye; but Astromye is mcant; see  
 l. 3457. 3457. So E. Hn.; rest astronomye. 3460. E. -put.

Whyl that thou, Robin, hevest up the dore. (280)  
 He shal out of his studying, as I gesse'—  
 And to the chambre-dore he gan him dresse.  
 His knave was a strong carl for the nones,  
 And by the haspe he haf it up atones; 3470  
 In-to the floor the dore fil anon.  
 This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,  
 And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.  
 This carpenter wende he were in despeir,  
 And hente him by the sholdres mightily, 3475  
 And shook him harde, and cryde spitously, (290)  
 'What! Nicholay! what, how! what! loke adoun!  
 Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;  
 I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes!'  
 Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-rightes 3480  
 On foure halves of the hous aboute,  
 And on the threshfold of the dore with-oute:—  
 'Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,  
 Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,  
 For nightes verye, the white *pater-noster!* 3485  
 Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?' (300)  
 And atte laste this hende Nicholas  
 Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, 'allas!  
 Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?'  
 This carpenter answerde, 'what seystow? 3490  
 What! thenk on god, as we don, men that swinke.'  
 This Nicholas answerde, 'fecche me drinke;  
 And after wol I speke in privetee  
 Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and thee;  
 I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.' 3495  
 This carpenter goth doun, and comth ageyn, (310)  
 And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;  
 And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,

3466. E. of; *rest* vp, vpe. 3470. Cm. Hl. haf; E. Hn. haaf; Cp. heef.  
 Hn. Pt. Ln. Hl. vp; *rest* of. 3473. E. Hn. caped; Hl. capyd; Cp. capede;  
*rest* gaped, gapede. 3477. Hl. man (*for 3rd* what); *rest om.* 3485. *All*  
*but* E. Hl. For the nyghtes. E. Hn. uerye; Cm. verie; Cp. Pt. verye; Ln.  
 very; Hl. verray. 3486. Cm. wonyst þou; Hl. wonestow; *after which* Cm.  
 Hl. *ins.* now. 3487. Hl. *om.* this. 3489. E. this; *rest* the. 3491. Hn.  
 Pt. Hl. thenk; *rest* thynk; *see* 3478. Cm. as men don whan they swinke.

This Nicholas his dore faste shette,  
And doun the carpenter by him he sette. 3500

He seyde, 'Iohn, myn hoste lief and dere,  
Thou shalt up-on thy trouthe swere me here,  
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;  
For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,  
And if thou telle it man, thou are forlore; 3505  
For this vengauce thou shalt han therfore, (320)  
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood!'

'Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy blood!'  
Quod tho this sely man, 'I nam no labbe,  
Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe. 3510  
Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never telle  
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!'

'Now John,' quod Nicholas, 'I wol nat lye;  
I have y-founde in myn astrologye,  
As I have loked in the mone bright, 3515  
That now, a Monday next, at quarter-night, (330)  
Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and wood,  
That half so greet was never Noës flood.

This world,' he seyde, 'in lasse than in an hour  
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour; 3520  
Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf.'

This carpenter answerde, 'allas, my wyf!  
And shal she drenche? alas! myn Alisoun!'  
For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,  
And seyde, 'is ther no remedie in this cas?' 3525

'Why, yis, for gode,' quod hende Nicholas, (340)  
'If thou wolt werken after lore and reed;  
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed.  
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,  
'Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe.' 3530

And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,  
I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,  
Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me  
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,

---

3501. Cp. Pt. hooste; Ln. ostee; Hl. host ful; E. Hn. hoost; Cm. ost.  
3505. E. om. it. 3510. E. Hl. am; rest nam, ne am. 3516. a] Hl. on.  
3519. Cm. Hl. om. 2nd in. 3525. Pt. Ln. om. ther. 3527. E. aftir.  
3534. E. hou.

Whan that our lord had warned him biforn 3535  
 'That al the world with water sholde be lorn?' (350)  
 'Yis,' quod this carpenter, 'ful yore ago.'  
 'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also  
 The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,  
 Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe? 3540  
 Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,  
 At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,  
 That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone.  
 And ther-fore, wostou what is best to done?  
 This asketh haste, and of an hastif thing 3545  
 Men may nat preche or maken taryng. (360)  
 Anon go gete us faste in-to this in  
 A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,  
 For ech of us, but loke that they be large,  
 In whiche we mowe swimme as in a barge, 3550  
 And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant  
 But for a day; fy on the remenant!  
 The water shal aslake and goon away  
 Aboute pryve up-on the nexte day.  
 But Robin may nat wite of this, thy knave, 3555  
 Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save; (370)  
 Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,  
 I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.  
 Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,  
 To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde. 3560  
 Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,  
 Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-aboute.  
 But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,  
 Y-geten us thise kneding-tubbes three,  
 Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye, 3565  
 That no man of our purveyaunce spye. (380)  
 And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,  
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyde,  
 And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo  
 When that the water comth, that we may go, 3570

3535. Hl. had; E. Hn. Cm. hadde. 3539. E. felawshipe. 3540. E.  
 brynge; rest gete. 3541. E. hadde; leure. 3544. E. woostou; doone.  
 3548. E. ellis. E. kymelyn; Hl. kemelyn. 3565. E. Thanne.

And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the gable,  
 Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,  
 That we may frely passen forth our way  
 Whan that the grete shour is goon away—  
 Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I undertake, 3575  
 As doth the whyte doke after hir drake. (390)

Than wol I clepe, "how! Alison! how! John!  
 Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon."  
 And thou wolt seyn, "hayl, maister Nicholay!  
 Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day." 3580  
 And than shul we be lordes al our lyf  
 Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.

But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,  
 Be wel avysed, on that ilke night  
 That we ben entred in-to shippes bord, 3585  
 That noon of us ne speke nat a word, (400)  
 Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his preyere;  
 For it is goddes owne heste dere.

Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-twinne,  
 For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne 3590  
 No more in looking than ther shal in dede;  
 This ordinance is seyde, go, god thee spede!  
 Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle aslepe,  
 In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,  
 And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace. 3595  
 Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space (410)  
 To make of this no lenger sermoning.  
 Men seyn thus, "send the wyse, and sey no-thing;"  
 Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat teche;  
 Go, save our lyf, and that I thee biseche.' 3600

This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.  
 Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weylaway,'  
 And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;  
 And she was war, and knew it bet than he,  
 What al this queynte cast was for to seye. 3605  
 But natheles she ferde as she wolde deye, (420)

3571. E. Pt. Ln. broke; *rest* breke. 3575. E. Thanne. E. shal I; *rest*  
 shaltow, shalt thou. 3577. E. Thanne. 3588. E. heeste. 3591. E. Hn.  
 Na. 3592. E. Pt. Hl. so; *rest* go. 3593. E. folk; Cm. we; *rest* men.  
 3598. E. sende. 3599. E. to preche; Cp. to teche; *rest* teche.

And seyde, 'allas! go forth thy wey anon,  
 Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;  
 I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf;  
 Go, dere spouse, and help to save our lyf.' 3610  
 Lo! which a greet thyng is affeccioune!  
 Men may dye of imaginacioun,  
 So depe may impressioun be take.  
 This sely carpenter biginneth quake;  
 Him thinketh verrailly that he may see 3615  
 Noës flood come walwing as the see (430)  
 To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.  
 He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,  
 He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.  
 He gooth and geteth him a kneding-trogh, 3620  
 And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,  
 And prively he sente hem to his in,  
 And heng hem in the roof in privetee.  
 His owne hand he made laddres three,  
 To climben by the ronges and the stalkes 3625  
 Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes, (440)  
 And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and tubbe,  
 With breed and chese, and good ale in a Iubbe,  
 Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.  
 But er that he had maad al this array, 3630  
 He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,  
 Up-on his nede to London for to go.  
 And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,  
 He shette his dore with-oute candel-light,  
 And dressed al thing as it sholde be. 3635  
 And shortly, up they clomben alle thre; (450)  
 They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.  
 'Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!' seyde Nicholay,  
 And 'clom,' quod John, and 'clom,' seyde Alisoun.  
 This carpenter seyde his devocioun, 3640  
 And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,

---

3608. Cm. er (*for or*). E. lost; *rest* dede, deede, ded. 3609. Cm. Hl. verray trewe. 3611. E. Auctor (*in margin*). 3612. Hl. A man. E. Hn. dyen. Pt. Hl. for; Cm. thour; *rest* of. 3624. E. om. he; Hl. has þan. 3626. E. In-to; Cm. Onto; *rest* Vnto. 3627. E. vitailleth. 3630. E. hadde. 3635. E. dresseth; *rest* dressed. E. Hn. Cm. alle. Hn. Cp. scholde; E. shal.



Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.

The dede sleep, for wery bisnesse,  
 Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,  
 Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more ; 3645  
 For travail of his goost he groneth sore, (460)

And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.  
 Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,  
 And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde ;  
 With-uten wordes mo, they goon to bedde 3650  
 Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.

Ther was the revel and the melodye ;  
 And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,  
 In bisnesse of mirthe and of solas,  
 Til that the belle of laudes gan to ringe, 3655  
 And freres in the chauncel gonne singe. (470)

This parish-clerk, this amorous Absolon,  
 That is for love alwey so wo bigon,  
 Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye  
 With companye, him to disporte and pleye, 3660  
 And axed up-on cas a cloisterer

Ful prively after Iohn the carpenter ;  
 And he drough him a-part out of the chirche,  
 And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche  
 Sin Saterdag ; I trow that he be went 3665  
 For timber, ther our abbot hath him sent ; (480)

For he is wont for timber for to go,  
 And dwellen at the grange a day or two ;  
 Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn ;  
 Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn.' 3670

This Absolon ful Ioly was and light,  
 And thoghte, 'now is tyme wake al night ;  
 For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe  
 Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.  
 So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe, 3675  
 Ful prively knocken at his windowe (490)

That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.

---

3643. Cm. Hl. verray ; rest wery. 3660. E. With a compaignye. 3661.  
 E. Cloistrer ; Pt. Ln. Cloystre. 3672. E. Hl. wake ; Cm. to wakyn ; rest  
 to wake. 3676. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. knocken ; E. Cm. knocke ; Hl. go knocke.

To Alison now wol I tellen al  
 My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse  
 That at the leste wey I shal hir kisse. 3680  
 Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,  
 My mouth hath icched al this longe day;  
 That is a signe of kissing atte leste.  
 Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.  
 Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or tweye, 3685  
 And al the night than wol I wake and pleye.' (500)

Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon  
 Up rist this Ioly lover Absolon,  
 And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.  
 But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys, 3690  
 To smellen swete, er he had kembd his heer.  
 Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,  
 For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.  
 He rometh to the carpenteres hous,  
 And stille he stant under the shot-windowe; 3695  
 Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe; (510)  
 And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun—  
 'What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?  
 My faire brid, my swete cinamome,  
 Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me! 3700  
 Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,  
 That for your love I swete ther I go.  
 No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;  
 I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.  
 Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-longinge, 3705  
 That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge; (520)  
 I may nat ete na more than a mayde.'  
 'Go fro the window, Iakke fool,' she sayde,  
 'As help me god, it wol nat be "com ba me,"  
 I love another, and elles I were to blame, 3710  
 Wel bet than thee, by Iesu, Absolon!  
 Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,

---

3690. E. of; *rest* and. 3696. E. brist. 3697. Hn. cogheth; Cp. coughed; Hl. cowhiith; Pt. kougheþ; Cm. coude; E. knokketh. 3701. Cp. Pt. thenken; *rest* thynken, thynke. 3709. E. Hn. com pa me; Cp. com pame; Cm. cumpame; Pt. compame; Hl. Ln. compaine; *several* MSS. come bame, combame; *see note*.

And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey !'

'Allas,' quod Absolon, 'and weylawey !  
That trewe love was ever so yvel biset ! 3715  
Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet, (530)  
For Iesus love and for the love of me.'

'Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?' quod she.

'Ye, certes, lemman,' quod this Absolon.

'Thanne make thee redy,' quod she, 'I come anon ;' 3720  
And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille, [T. om.  
'Now hust, and thou shalt laughen al thy fille.' [T. om.

This Absolon doun sette him on his knees,  
And seyde, 'I am a lord at alle degrees ;  
For after this I hope ther cometh more ! 3725  
Lemman, thy grace, and swete brid, thyn ore !' (54c)

The window she undoth, and that in haste,  
'Have do,' quod she, 'com of, and speed thee faste,  
Lest that our neighebores thee espye.'

This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful drye ; 3730  
Derk was the night as pich, or as the cole,  
And at the window out she putte hir hole,  
And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,  
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers  
Ful savourly, er he was war of this. 3735

Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was amis, (550)  
For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd ;  
He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,  
And seyde, 'fy ! allas ! what have I do ?'

'Tehee !' quod she, and clapte the window to ; 3740  
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.

'A berd, a berd !' quod hende Nicholas,  
'By goddes *corpus*, this goth faire and weel !'

This sely Absolon herde every deel,  
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte ; 3745  
And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee quyte !' (560)

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes

3716. Cp. Pt. Ln. kisse ; Hl. kisseth ; rest kys. 3718. E. om. ther-with.  
3721, 2. These 2 lines in E. only. 3724. E. om. a. 3728. Cm. don ; Hl.  
doon ; Pt. doo ; rest do. Hn. thee ; rest the. 3731. E. Dirk. 3732.  
E. pitte. 3736. E. Cm. stirte. 3743, 4. E. weel, deel ; Ln. wele, dele ;  
rest wel, del.

With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,  
 But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, 'allas!  
 My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas, 3750  
 But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod he,  
 'Of this despyt awroken for to be!  
 Allas!' quod he, 'allas! I ne hadde y-bleynt!  
 His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;  
 For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir ers, 3755  
 Of paramours he sette nat a kers, (570)  
 For he was heled of his maladye;  
 Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,  
 And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.  
 A softe paas he wente over the strete 3760  
 Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,  
 That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;  
 He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.  
 This Absolon knokketh al esily,  
 And seyde, 'undo, Gerveys, and that anon.' 3765  
 'What, who artow?' 'It am I, Absolon.' (580)  
 'What, Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,  
 Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *benedicite!*  
 What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,  
 Hath broght yow thus up-on the viritoot; 3770  
 By sēynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.'  
 This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene  
 Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;  
 He hadde more tow on his distaf  
 Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, 'freend so dere, 3775  
 That hote culter in the chimenee here, (590)  
 As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,  
 And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.'  
 Gerveys answerde, 'certes, were it gold,  
 Or in a poke nobles alle untold, 3780  
 Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smith;  
 Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-with?'

3753. Hl. nadde bleynt. 3759. Cm. wepte; Hl. wept. 3763. E. Hn. kultour; Cp. Pt. Ln. culter. 3766. E. I am heere; *rest* it am I. 3770. E. Hn. Cp. viritoot; Pt. Vyritote; Ln. veritote; Cm. merytot; Hl. verytrot. 3771. Pt. Ln. seynt; *rest* seinte. Pt. Hl. Noet. 3776. E. kultour. 3781. Hl. Ye schul him haue. 3782. Hl. fo; *rest* foo; ed. 1561, fote.

- ‘Ther-of,’ quod Absolon, ‘be as be may ;  
 I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day’—  
 And caughte the culter by the colde stele. 3785  
 Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele, (600)  
 And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.  
 He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-with-al  
 Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.
- This Alison answerde, ‘Who is ther 3790  
 That knokketh so? I warante it a theef.’  
 ‘Why, nay,’ quod he, ‘god woot, my swete leef,  
 I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!  
 Of gold,’ quod he, ‘I have thee broght a ring ;  
 My moder yaf it me, so god me save, 3795  
 Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave; (610)  
 This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse !’
- This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,  
 And thoghte he wolde amenden al the Iape,  
 He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape. 3800  
 And up the windowe dide he hastily,  
 And out his ers he putteth prively  
 Over the buttoke, to the haunche-bon ;  
 And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,  
 ‘Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou art.’ 3805
- This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart, (620)  
 As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,  
 That with the strook he was almost y-blent ;  
 And he was redy with his iren hoot,  
 And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot. 3810
- Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,  
 The hote culter brende so his toute,  
 And for the smert he wende for to dye.  
 As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye—  
 ‘Help ! water ! water ! help, for goddes herte !’ 3815
- This carpenter out of his slomber sterte, (630)  
 And herde oon cryen ‘water’ as he were wood,

---

3785, 3812. E. kultour. 3793. E. Hn. my ; Cm. myn ; Hl. O my ; Cp. thi ; Pt. thine ; Ln. þin. E. deerelyng ; Hn. Cm. Cp. derelyng. 3800. E. om. ers. 3810. E. om. the. 3813. And] Hn. That.

And thoghte, 'Allas ! now comth Nowelis flood !'  
 He sit him up with-uten wordes mo,  
 And with his ax he smoot the corde a-two, 3820  
 And doun goth al ; he fond neither to selle,  
 Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the selle  
 Up-on the floor ; and ther aswowne he lay.

Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,  
 And cryden 'out' and 'harrow' in the strete. 3825  
 The neighebores, bothe smale and grete, (640)  
 In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,  
 That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan ;  
 For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm ;  
 But stonde he moste un-to his owne harm. 3830  
 For whan he spak, he was anon bore doun  
 With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.

They tolden every man that he was wood,  
 He was agast so of 'Nowelis flood'  
 Thurgh fantasye, that of his vanitee 3835  
 He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes three, (650)  
 And hadde hem hanged in the roof above ;  
 And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,  
 To sitten in the roof, *par companye*.

The folk gan laughen at his fantasye ; 3840  
 In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,  
 And turned al his harm un-to a Iape.  
 For what so that this carpenter answerde,  
 It was for noght, no man his reson herde ;  
 With othes grete he was so sworn adoun, 3845  
 That he was holden wood in al the toun ; (660)  
 For every clerk anon-right heeld with other.  
 They seyde, 'the man is wood, my leve brother ;'  
 And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.

Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf, 3850

3818. E. Hn. Nowelis ; Cp. Noweles (*intentionally*) ; Cm. Newelis ; Pt.  
 Ln. Hl. noes. 3821. Hl. he goth (*for* goth al). E. Hn. foond. 3828.  
 E. Hn. he ; *rest om.* 3831. Pt. Ln. Hl. born. 3834. E. Hn. Nowelis ;  
 Cp. Ln. the Nowels ; Pt. þe Noes ; Hl. Noes. 3837. E. roue ; *see l.* 3839.  
 3838. E. Hn. Ln. preyde. 3841. E. Hn. Cp. cape. 3846. E. holde.  
 3848. E. Hn. Hl. was ; *rest is.* 3849. E. of this ; Hn. at this ; *rest at his.*  
 3850. E. this ; *rest the.*

For al his keping and his Ialousye ;  
 And Absolon hath kist hir nether yë ;  
 And Nicholas is scalded in the toute. (667)  
 This tale is doon, and god save al the route! 3854

**Here endeth the Millere his tale.**

---

3852. Pt. Hl. ye; Hn. Iye; E. Ln. eye. 3853. E. Hn. the; *rest* his.  
 COLOPHON. So E. (*with* Heere); Hl. Pn. Here endeth the Millers tale; Hn.  
 Here is ended the Millerys tale; Cp. Ln. Explicit fabula Molendinarii.

## THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE.

— \*\* —

### The prologe of the Reves tale.

**W**HAN folk had laughen at this nyce cas 3855  
 Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,  
 Diverse folk diversely they seyde ;  
 But, for the more part, they loughe and pleyde,  
 Ne at this tale I saugh no man him greve,  
 But it were only Osewold the Reve, 3860  
 By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.  
 A litel ire is in his herte y-laft,  
 He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.  
 'So theek,' quod he, 'ful wel coude I yow quyte (10)  
 With blering of a proud milleres yë, 3865  
 If that me liste speke of ribaudye.  
 But ik am old, me list not pley for age ;  
 Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,  
 This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,  
 Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres, 3870  
 But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers ;  
 That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,  
 Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.  
 We olde men, I drede, so fare we ; (20)  
 Til we be roten, can we nat be rype ; 3875  
 We hoppen ay, whyl that the world wol pype.  
 For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,  
 To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,  
 As hath a leek ; for thogh our might be goon,  
 Our wil desireth folie ever in oon. 3880  
 For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke ;  
 Yet in our asshen olde is fyr y-reke.  
 Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,  
 Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse ; (30)

---

3862. E. Pt. *om.* is.      3865. E. Ln. eye.      3867. E. Hn. no (*for* not).  
 3869. Hl. My (*for* This).      3870. E. mowled also.      3872. E. leng ; Ln. longe :  
*rest* lenger.      3876. E. ay whil that ; Hn. alwey whil pat ; *rest* alwey while.



These foure sparkles longen un-to elde. 3885  
 Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,  
 But wil ne shal nat failen, that is sooth.  
 And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,  
 As many a yeer as it is passed henne  
 Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to renne. 3890  
 For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon  
 Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;  
 And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,  
 Til that almost al empty is the tonne. (40)  
 The stream of lyf now droppeth on the chimbe; 3895  
 The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe  
 Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;  
 With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.'

Whan that our host hadde herd this sermoning,  
 He gan to speke as lordly as a king; 3900  
 He seide, 'what amounteth al this wit?  
 What shul we speke alday of holy writ?  
 The devel made a reve for to preche,  
 And of a souter a shipman or a leche. (50)  
 Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme, 3905  
 Lo, Depford! and it is half-way pryme.  
 Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is inne;  
 It were al tyme thy tale to biginne.'

'Now, sires,' quod this Osewold the Reve,  
 'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve, 3910  
 Thogh I answeere and somdel sette his howve;  
 For leweful is with force force of-showve.

This dronke millere hath y-told us heer,  
 How that bigyled was a carpenteer, (60)  
 Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon. 3915  
 And, by your leve, I shal him quyte anoon;  
 Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.  
 I pray to god his nekke mote breke;  
 He can wel in myn yē seen a stalke,  
 But in his owne he can nat seen a balke. 3920

3885. E. eelde. 3886. E. vnweelde. 3893. Hn. sith; E. sithe. 3904.  
 E. Cm. And; rest Or. All but Hn. om. 2nd a. 3907. Cp. Pt. Ln. that (for  
 ther). 3908. Pt. hie (for al). 3912. In margin of E.—vim vi repellere.  
 3918. Hl. tobreke; Pt. alto-breke. 3919. Pt. ye; Cp. 3e; rest eye.

## THE REVES TALE.

—♦—

Here biginneth the Reves tale.

A T Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,  
 Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,  
 Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a melle ;  
 And this is verray soth that I yow telle.  
 A Miller was ther dwelling many a day ; 3925  
 As eny peccok he was proud and gay.  
 Pypen he coude and fisshe, and nettes bete,  
 And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and shete ;  
 And by his belt he baar a long panade,  
 And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade. 3930  
 A Ioly popper baar he in his pouche ; (11)  
 Ther was no man for peril dorste him touche.  
 A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose ;  
 Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.  
 As piled as an ape was his skulle. 3935  
 He was a market-beter atte fulle.  
 Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him legge,  
 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.  
 A thief he was for sothe of corn and mele,  
 And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele. 3940  
 His name was hoten dëynous Simkin. (21)  
 A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin ;  
 The person of the toun hir fader was.  
 With hir he yaf ful many a panne of bras,  
 For that Simkin sholde in his blood allye. 3945

---

3923. E. Hn. Cm. which ; *rest* whiche. 3928. Hl. wrastle wel (*om.* and).  
 3934. Hl. camois ; Pt. camoyse. 3939. E. was of corn and eek of Mele.  
 3941. E. Cp. Hl. hoote ; Cm. hotyn ; *rest* hoten. Pt. deyneouse. 3944.  
 panne] Cm. peny.

She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;  
 For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,  
 But she were wel y-norissed and a mayde,  
 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.  
 And she was proud, and pert as is a pye. 3950  
 A ful fair sighte was it on hem two; (31)  
 On haly-dayes biforn hir wolde he go  
 With his tipet bounden about his heed,  
 And she cam after in a gyte of reed;  
 And Simkin hadde hosen of the same. 3955  
 Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but 'dame.'  
 Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye  
 That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,  
 But-if he wolde be slayn of Simkin  
 With panade, or with knyf, or boydekin. 3960  
 For Ialous folk ben perilous evermo, (41)  
 Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.  
 And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,  
 She was as digne as water in a dich;  
 And ful of hoker and of bisemare. 3965  
 Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,  
 What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye  
 That she had lerned in the nonnerye.  
 A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two  
 Of twenty yeer, with-outen any mo, 3970  
 Savige a child that was of half-yeer age; (51)  
 In cradel it lay and was a propre page.  
 This wenche thikke and wel y-grownen was,  
 With camuse nose and yën greye as glas;  
 With buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye, 3975  
 But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.  
 The person of the toun, for she was feir,  
 In purpos was to maken hir his heir

3948. E. But if; *rest* But. 3949. Hn. Cm. Pt. yemanrye. 3950. E. Hn. Pt. peert. 3951. Cm. Hl. on; *rest* vp-on. 3953. Cm. boundyn; Pt. bounden; Hn. Cp. Ln. wounden; Hl. ybounde. 3956. Hl. ma dame. 3958. Hl. elles (*for* ones). 3959. Hl. Symekyn. 3965. Hn. Cm. And; *rest* As. Hl. bissemare; Cp. bisemare; E. Hn. Pt. Ln. bismare. 3974. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. camoys. MSS. eyen, ey3en. 3975. E. Cm. *om.* With. 3977. E. Cm. This; *rest* The.

Bothe of his catel and his messuage,  
 And straunge he made it of hir mariage. 3980  
 His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye (61)  
 In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye ;  
 For holy chirches good moot been despended  
 On holy chirches blood, that is descended.  
 Therefore he wolde his holy blood honoure, 3985  
 Though that he holy chirche sholde deuoure.

Gret soken hath this miller, out of doute,  
 With whete and malt of al the land aboute ;  
 And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,  
 Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cantebregge, 3990  
 Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde. (71)  
 And on a day it happed, in a stounde,  
 Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye ;  
 Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.  
 For which this miller stal bothe mele and corn 3995  
 An hundred tyme more than biforn ;  
 For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,  
 But now he was a thief outrageously,  
 For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.  
 But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare ; 4000  
 He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so. (81)

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two,  
 That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.  
 Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,  
 And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye, 4005  
 Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,  
 To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde  
 To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde ;  
 And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,  
 The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke 4010  
 Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve ; (91)  
 And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.  
 Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight that other ;  
 Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,

---

3987. E. Cm. sokene. 4002. Pt. Ln. Than ; *rest* Thanne. 4004. Pt.  
 Teestif. 4005. Ln. revelrie ; *rest* reuerye ; ed. 1561, reuely. 4013.  
 E. highte (1st) ; heet (2nd). Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. hight.

Fer in the north, I can nat telle where. 4015

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,  
 And on an hors the sak he caste anon.  
 Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also Iohn,  
 With good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde.  
 Iohn knew the wey, hem nedede no gyde, 4020  
 And at the mille the sak adoun he layth. (101)

Aleyn spak first, 'al hayl, Symond, y-fayth ;  
 How fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf ?'  
 'Aleyn ! welcome,' quod Simkin, 'by my lyf,  
 And Iohn also, how now, what do ye heer ?' 4025

'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede has na peer ;  
 Him boës serve him-selve that has na swayn,  
 Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.  
 Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,  
 Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed. 4030  
 And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn, (111)  
 To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn ;  
 I pray yow spede us hethen that ye may.'

'It shal be doon,' quod Simkin, 'by my fay ;  
 What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande ?' 4035

'By god, right by the hoper wil I stande,'  
 Quod Iohn, 'and se how that the corn gas in ;  
 Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,  
 How that the hoper waggis til and fra.'

Aleyn answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow swa, 4040  
 Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun, (121)  
 And se how that the mele falles doun  
 In-to the trough ; that sal be my disport.  
 For Iohn, in faith, I may been of your sort ;  
 I is as ille a miller as are ye.' 4045

This miller smyled of hir nycetee,  
 And thoghte, 'al this nis doon but for a wyle ;

4019. E. Cm. Pt. *om.* with. 4020. Cp. *nedede* (*see* l. 4161) ; E. Hn. Pt. *neded* ; Cm. Hl. *nedyth* ; Ln. *nedep.* 4022. Hn. *Symkyn* ; *rest* *Symond*, *Symon* ; *see* l. 4026. 4027. E. *boes* (= North. E. *bus*) ; Hn. Cp. *bihoues* ; Pt. Ln. *byhouep* ; Cm. *muste* ; Hl. *falles.* 4033. E. Hn. Cp. *heythen* ; Ln. *hethen* (*the right form*) ; Cm. *hene* ; Pt. *hepen* (*for hepen*). 4036. E. *hopur.* 4040. Cp. Hl. *and* ; *rest om.* 4044. E. Cm. *yfayth.* 4045. Cm. Pt. *is* (*for are*) ; Ln. *es.*

They wene that no man may hem bigyle ;  
 But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir yē  
 For al the sleighte in hir philosophye. 4050  
 The more queynte creakes that they make, (131)  
 The more wol I stele whan I take.

In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem bren.  
 "The gretteste clerkes been noght the wysest men,"  
 As whylom to the wolf thus spak the mare ; 4055  
 Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.'

Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,  
 Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly ;  
 He loketh up and doun til he hath founde  
 The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-bounde 4060  
 Bihinde the mille, under a levesel ; (141)  
 And to the hors he gooth him faire and wel ;  
 He strepeth of the brydel right anon.  
 And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth gon  
 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne, 4065  
 Forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.

This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,  
 But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,  
 Til that hir corn was faire and wel y-grounde.  
 And whan the mele is sakked and y-bounde, 4070  
 This Iohn goth out and fynt his hors away, (151)  
 And gan to crye 'harrow' and 'weylaway !  
 Our hors is lorn ! Alayn, for goddes banes,  
 Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at anes !  
 Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.' 4075  
 This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn,  
 Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye.  
 'What? whilk way is he geen?' he gan to crye.

The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,  
 She seyde, 'allas ! your hors goth to the fen 4080  
 With wilde mares, as faste as he may go. (161)

4049. E. Ln. eye. 4051. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. creakes; Hl. knakkes. 4053.  
 E. stide. 4054. E. Cm. Hl. *om.* the. 4056. Cm. I counte; Hl. ne counte I;  
*rest* counte I. 4061. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. lenesel; E. lefsel; Hn. leefsel. 4064.  
 E. Hn. Cp. Ln. laus; Hl. loos; Cm. los; Pt. louse; *see* l. 4138. 4069. E.  
 weel. 4074. E. out; Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. of; Hl. on. 4078. E. geen;  
 Hn. Ln. gane; Hl. gan; Cm. Cp. Pt. gon.

Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,  
And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne.'

'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,  
Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn alswa ; 4085  
I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa ;  
By goddes herte he sal nat scape us bathe.  
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe ?  
Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne !'

This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne 4090  
To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek Iohn. (171)

And whan the miller saugh that they were gon,  
He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,  
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.  
He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were aferd ; 4095  
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd  
For al his art ; now lat hem goon hir weye.  
Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children pleye ;  
They gete him nat so lightly, by my croun !'

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun 4100  
With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa, warderere, (181)  
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here !'  
But shortly, til that it was verray night,  
They coude nat, though they do al hir might,  
Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste, 4105  
Til in a dich they caughte him atte laste.

Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,  
Comth sely Iohn, and with him comth Aleyn.  
'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'the day that I was born !  
Now are we drive til hething and til scorn. 4110  
Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle, (191)  
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,  
And namely the miller ; weylaway !'

Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goth by the way  
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond. 4115  
The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,

4082. E. Hn. boond. 4084. E. Cm. om. Iohn. 4087. E. Hn. god ;  
*rest* goddes, goddis. 4088. E. Hn. Cm. pit ; *rest* put (putte). 4094. E.  
*om.* a. 4101. Cm. ware þe rere ; Hl. ware derere ; *rest* warderere ; ed. 1561,  
wartherere. 4104. E. do ; Cm. don ; *rest* dide (did). 4107. Cm. beste ; E.  
Hn. beest. 4110. E. Hl. dryue ; *rest* dryuen (dreven). 4111. E. stoln me.

For it was night, and forther mighte they noght ;  
 But, for the love of god, they him bisoght  
 Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.

The miller seyde agayn, 'if ther be eny, 4120  
 Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part. (201)

Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art ;  
 Ye conne by argumentes make a place  
 A myle brood of twenty foot of space.  
 Lat see now if this place may suffyse, 4125  
 Or make it roun with speche, as is youre gyse.'

'Now, Symond,' seyde Iohn, 'by seint Cutberd,  
 Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd.  
 I have herd seyde, man sal taa of twa thinges  
 Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he bringes. 4130

But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere, (211)  
 Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,  
 And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.  
 With empty hand men may na haukes tulle ;  
 Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.' 4135

This miller in-to toun his doghter sende  
 For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,  
 And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon loos ;  
 And in his owne chambre hem made a bed  
 With shetes and with chalons faire y-sprede, 4140  
 Noght from his owne bed ten foot or twelve. (221)

His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,  
 Right in the same chambre, by and by ;  
 It mighte be no bet, and cause why,  
 Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place. 4145  
 They soupen and they speke, hem to solace,  
 And drinken ever strong ale atte beste.

Aboute midnight wente they to reste.

Wel hath this miller vernissed his heed ;

4123. E. Hn. Argumentz; Cm. argumentis; Cp. Hl. argumentes. 4126.  
 E. in (*for* is). 4128. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. mery; E. Hn. myrie. 4129. E.  
 taa; Cm. tan; Pt. taken; Hn. tak; Cp. take. 4131. E. Hn. hoost; Hl.  
 host ful; Pt. hooste; Cp. Ln. ooste. 4134. Hl. na; Cp. naan; E. Hn. Cm.  
 none; Pt. not. 4138. E. Hn. Cp. boond. E. nat; Cm. not; Hn. namoore;  
 Cp. namore; Pt. Ln. Hl. no more. 4147. E. drynke; Hn. Cp. Pt. drynken;  
 Hl. Cm. dronken.



Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed. 4150  
 He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose (231)  
 As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.  
 To bedde he gooth, and with him goth his wyf.  
 As any Iay she light was and Iolyf,  
 So was hir Ioly whistle wel y-wet. 4155  
 The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,  
 To rokken, and to yeve the child to souke.  
 And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,  
 To bedde went the doghter right anon ;  
 To bedde gooth Aleyn and also Iohn ; 4160  
 Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale. (241)  
 This miller hath so wisly bibbed ale,  
 That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,  
 Ne of his tayl bihinde he took no keep.  
 His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong, 4165  
 Men mighte hir routing here two furlong ;  
 The wenche routeth eek *par compaignye*.  
 Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,  
 He poked Iohn, and seyde, 'slepestow ?  
 Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now ? 4170  
 Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle ! (251)  
 A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle !  
 Wha herkned ever slyk a ferly thing ?  
 Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.  
 This lange night ther tydes me na reste ; 4175  
 But yet, na fors ; al sal be for the beste.  
 For Iohn,' seyde he, 'als ever moot I thryve,  
 If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.  
 Som esement has lawe y-shapen us ;  
 For Iohn, ther is a lawe that says thus, 4180  
 That gif a man in a point be y-greved, (261)  
 That in another he sal be releved.

4151. Hl. yoxeth. 4160. E. wente ; *rest* gooth (goth). 4161. Cp. needede (*see* l. 4020) ; *rest* neded. 4162. Hl. wysly ; Cm. wysely ; E. wisely ; *rest* wisly. 4166. Hl. Cp. a (*for* two). 4170. Cp. Herdestow ; Cm. Ln. Herdist thou ; Hl. Herdistow ; E. Herdtow ; Hn. Herd thow. 4171. E. whilk ; Hn. Cp. Ln. swilke ; Cm. swich ; Pt. scliffe ; Hl. slik. 4171. Ln. compline ; Hn. conplyng ; Pt. conplinge ; Hl. couplyng (*wrongly*) ; E. cowplyng ; Cm. copil. 4181. Hl. (*margin*) Qui in vno grauatur in alio debet releuari.

Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,  
 And we han had an il fit al this day.  
 And sin I sal have neen amendement, 4185  
 Agayn my los I wil have esement.

By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!’

This Iohn answerde, ‘Alayn, avyse thee,  
 The miller is a perilous man,’ he seyde,  
 ‘And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde, 4190  
 He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.’ (271)

Aleyn answerde, ‘I count him nat a flye;’  
 And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.  
 This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,  
 Til he so ny was, er she mighte espye, 4195  
 That it had been to late for to crye,  
 And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;  
 Now pley, Aleyn! for I wol speke of Iohn.

This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,  
 And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo: 4200  
 ‘Allas!’ quod he, ‘this is a wikked Iape;’ (281)  
 Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.

Yet has my felawe som-what for his harm;  
 He has the milleris doghter in his arm.  
 He auntred him, and has his nedes sped, 4205  
 And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed;  
 And when this Iape is tald another day,  
 I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!

I wil aryse, and auntre it, by my fayth!  
 “Unhardy is unsely,” thus men sayth.’ 4210  
 And up he roos and softly he wente (291)  
 Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,  
 And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.

Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,  
 And gan awake, and wente hir out to pisse, 4215  
 And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel misse,  
 And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.  
 ‘Allas!’ quod she, ‘I hadde almost misgoon;

---

4183. E. Cm. shortly; *rest* sothly. E. is; *rest* it is. Hn. Hl. na; E. ne; *rest* no (non). 4185. E. neen; Hn. naan; Hl. nan; *rest* non (noon); *so in* 4187. 4206. E. Cm. sek; *rest* sak. 4213. E. the; *rest* his. 4217. E. Hn. Pt. foond.

I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.  
 Ey, *benedicite!* thanne hadde I foule y-sped:’ 4220  
 And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond. (301)  
 She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,  
 And fond the bed, and thoghte noght but good,  
 By-cause that the cradel by it stood,  
 And niste wher she was, for it was derk; 4225  
 But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,  
 And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.  
 With-inne a whyl this Iohn the clerk up leep,  
 And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.  
 So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore; 4230  
 He priketh harde and depe as he were mad. (311)  
 This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad  
 Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.  
 Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,  
 For he had swonken al the longe night; 4235  
 And seyde, ‘far wel, Malin, swete wight!  
 The day is come, I may no lenger byde;  
 But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,  
 I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!’  
 ‘Now dere lemman,’ quod she, ‘go, far weel! 4240  
 But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle, (321)  
 Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,  
 Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,  
 Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde  
 That was y-maked of thyn owne mele, 4245  
 Which that I heelp my fader for to stele.  
 And, gode lemman, god thee save and kepe!’  
 And with that word almost she gan to wepe.  
 Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, ‘er that it dawe,  
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe; 4250  
 And fond the cradel with his hand anon, (331)  
 ‘By god,’ thoghte he, ‘al wrang I have misgon;  
 Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,  
 That maketh me that I go nat aright.

---

4223. E. Hn. foond. 4226. to] Cm. bi. 4230. E. myrie; om. ne.  
 4231. E. soore; Cm. sore; rest depe (deepe). 4234. Cm. Ln. Pt. wex; rest wax.  
 4236. Cm. Cp. Hl. far; rest fare; see note. 4246. Cm. halp; E. Hn. heelp.

I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo, 4255  
 Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.  
 And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,  
 Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.  
 He wende have copen by his felawe Iohn;  
 And by the miller in he creep anon, 4260  
 And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak: (341)  
 He seyde, 'thou, Iohn, thou swynes-heed, awak  
 For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.  
 For by that lord that called is seint Iame,  
 As I have thryes, in this shorte night, 4265  
 Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,  
 Whyl thow hast as a coward been agast.'  
 'Ye, false harlot,' quod the miller, 'hast?  
 A! false traitour! false clerk!' quod he,  
 'Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee! 4270  
 Who dorste be so bold to disparage (351)  
 My doghter, that is come of swich linage?'  
 And by the throte-bolle he caughte Alayn.  
 And he hente hym despitously agayn,  
 And on the nose he smoot him with his fest. 4275  
 Doun ran the bloody strem up-on his brest;  
 And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,  
 They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke.  
 And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,  
 Til that the miller sporned at a stoon, 4280  
 And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf, (361)  
 That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf;  
 For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight  
 With Iohn the clerk, that waked hadde al night.  
 And with the fal, out of hir sleep she breyde— 4285  
 'Help, holy croys of Bromeholm,' she seyde,  
*In manus tuas!* lord, to thee I calle!  
 Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,  
 Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but deed;  
 There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn heed; 4290

4277. in] Hn. on. 4278. Hl. walweden as pigges. 4280. Hn. on; Cm. a3en; rest at. 4283. E. lite; Cm. lyte; rest litel. 4286. Cm. Pt. Ln. Bromeholm; rest Bromholm. 4290. Cp. Ln. vp (*twice*). E. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. vp on (*for 1st up*). E. Cm. Pt. Hl. on (Hn. vp); *for 2nd vp*.

Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.' (371)

This Iohn sterte up as faste as ever he mighte,  
And graspeth by the walles to and fro,  
To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,  
And knew the estres bet than dide this Iohn. 4295

And by the wal a staf she fond anon,  
And saugh a litel shimmering of a light,  
For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;  
And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,  
But sikerly she niste who was who, 4300  
But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yë. (381)

And whan she gan the whyte thing espye,  
She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer.  
And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,  
And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle, 4305  
And smoot the miller on the pyled skulle,  
That doun he gooth and cryde, 'harrow! I dye!'

These clerkes bete him weel and lete him lye;  
And greythen hem, and toke hir hors anon,  
And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they gon. 4310  
And at the mille yet they toke hir cake (391)  
Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.

Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,  
And hath y-lost the grinding of the whete,  
And payed for the soper every-deel 4315  
Of Aleyn and of Iohn, that bette him weel.

His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;  
Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!  
And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,  
'Him thar nat wene wel that yvel dooth; 4320  
A gylour shal him-self bigyled be.' (401)

And God, that sitteth heighe in magestec,  
Save al this companye grete and smale!  
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

**Here is ended the Reves tale.**

---

4292. E. Cm. stirte. E. soone (*for* faste). 4296. E. Hn. foond; Hl. took.  
4301. Hl. ye; Hn. Iye; *rest* eye. 4307. E. Cm. Hl. And; *rest* That.  
4309. Hl. greyth; Cm. hastede. 4320. E. Hn. yuele; Cm. euele. 4322.  
E. Trinitee; *rest* magestee (mageste). COLOPHON. Hn. Hl. Here endeth the  
Reves tale.

## THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

—••—

### The prologe of the Cokes Tale.

**T**HE Cook of London, whyl the Reve spak, 4325  
 For Ioye, him thoughte, he clawed him on the bak,  
 ‘Ha! ha!’ quod he, ‘for Cristes passioun,  
 This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun  
 Upon his argument of herbergage!  
 Wel seyde Salomon in his langage, 4330  
 “Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn hous;”  
 For herberwing by nighte is perilous.  
 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be  
 Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee. (10)  
 I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care, 4335  
 If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,  
 Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.  
 He hadde a Iape of malice in the derk.  
 But god forbede that we stinten here;  
 And therefore, if ye vouche-sauf to here 4340  
 A tale of me, that am a povre man,  
 I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can  
 A litel Iape that fil in our citee.’  
 Our host answerde, and seide, ‘I graunte it thee; (20)  
 Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good; 4345  
 For many a pastee hastow laten blood,  
 And many a Iakke of Dover hastow sold  
 That hath been twyes hoot and twyes cold.  
 Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,

---

4325. E. whil that the.      4332. Hl. herburgage.      4336. Hn. sith; E.  
 sitthe; Hl. sibbe; Cp. Pt. Ln. sithen.      4339. Hn. Hl. stynten; E. stynte.  
 4339, 4340. *Last two words glossed hic and audire in E. Hn.*      4347. E.  
 Hn. Cm. Ln. Douere. E. Hn. soold.      4348. E. Hn. coold.

For of thy persly yet they fare the wors, 4350  
 That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos ;  
 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.  
 Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.  
 But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game, (30)  
 A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.' 4355  
 'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger, 'by my fey,  
 But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the Fleming seith ;  
 And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,  
 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,  
 Though that my tale be of an hostileer. 4360  
 But natheles I wol nat telle it yit,  
 But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit.'  
 And ther-with-al he lough and made chere,  
 And seyde his tale, as ye shul after here. (40)

Thus endeth the Prologe of the Cokes tale.

---

4350. Hl. persly ; Hn. persle ; E. percely. 4355. Hl. omits. 4357. E.  
 Cm. quaad ; Cp. Hl. quad ; rest quade. 4359. E. na (for nat). COLOPHON.  
 In Pt. ; Ln. Explicit prologus.

## THE COKES TALE.

## Heer bigynneth the Cokes tale.

**A** PRENTIS whylom dwelled in our citee, 4365  
 And of a craft of vitaillers was he ;  
 Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the shawe,  
 Broun as a berie, a propre short felawe,  
 With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.  
 Dauncen he coude so wel and Iolily, 4370  
 That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.  
 He was as ful of love and paramour  
 As is the hyve ful of hony swete ;  
 Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete. (10)  
 At every brydale wolde he singe and hoppe, 4375  
 He loved bet the tavernne than the shoppe.  
 For whan ther any ryding was in Chepe,  
 Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.  
 Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,  
 And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn. 4380  
 And gadered him a meince of his sort  
 To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disport.  
 And ther they setten steven for to mete  
 To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete. (20)  
 For in the tounne nas ther no prentys, 4385  
 That fairer coude caste a paire of dys  
 Than Perkin coude, and ther-to he was free  
 Of his dispense, in place of privetee.  
 That fond his maister wel in his chaffare ;  
 For often tyme he fond his box ful bare. 4390  
 For sikerly a prentis revelour,  
 That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,

---

4366. E. vitailliers. 4369. E. ykempd ; Hn. ykembd ; rest ykempt. 4380.  
 E. ayeyn. 4383. Pt. Ln. steuen ; rest steuene. 4385. Pt. Ln. tounne ; rest  
 toun.



His maister shal it in his shoppe aby,  
 Al have he no part of the minstralcy; (30)  
 For thefte and riot, they ben convertible, 4395  
 Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribible.  
 Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,  
 They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.  
 This Ioly prentis with his maister bood,  
 Til he were ny out of his prentishood, 4400  
 Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,  
 And somtyme lad with revel to Newgate;  
 But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,  
 Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte, (40)  
 Of a proverbe that seith this same word, 4405  
 'Wel bet is roten appel out of hord  
 Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'  
 So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;  
 It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,  
 Than he shende alle the servants in the place. 4410  
 Therefore his maister yaf him acquitance,  
 And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance;  
 And thus this Ioly prentis hadde his leve.  
 Now lat him riote al the night or leve. (50)  
 And for ther is no theef with-oute a louke, 4415  
 That helpeth him to wasten and to souke  
 Of that he brybe can or borwe may,  
 Anon he sente his bed and his array  
 Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,  
 That lovede dys and revel and disport, 4420  
 And hadde a wyf that heeld for countenance  
 A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance. 4422

\* \* \* \* \*

Of this Cokes tale maked Chaucer na more.

[For The Tale of Gamelin, see the Appendix.]

---

4396. E. Ln. ribible; *rest* rubible. 4397. E. lowe. 4402. E. Newgate.  
 4404. E. Hn. Hl. papir. 4406. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. Appul. 4410. E. seruantz.  
 4415-22. Hl. *omits*. 4415. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. lowke; Pt. louke; Cm. loke.  
 4416. Pt. souke; *rest* sowke. 4419. E. compeer; Hn. compeer; Cp. Pt.  
 Ln. conpere. COLOPHON. In Hn. only. Blank space in E.

GROUP B.  
INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF  
LAW'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 4421-4446.)



The wordes of the Hoost to the companye.

OUR Hoste sey wel that the brighte sonne  
 The ark of his artificial day had ronne  
 The fourthe part, and half an houre, and more ;  
 And though he were not depe expert in lore,  
 He wiste it was the eightetethe day 5  
 Of April, that is messenger to May ;  
 And sey wel that the shadwe of every tree  
 Was as in lengthe the same quantitee  
 That was the body erect that caused it.  
 And therfor by the shadwe he took his wit 10  
 That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,  
 Degrees was fyve and forty clombe on highte ;  
 And for that day, as in that latitude,  
 It was ten of the clokke, he gan conclude,  
 And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute. 15  
 ‘Lordinges,’ quod he, ‘I warne yow, al this route,  
 The fourthe party of this day is goon ;  
 Now, for the love of god and of seint Iohn,  
 Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may ;  
 Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and day, 20  
 And steleth from us, what prively slepinge,  
 And what thurgh necligence in our wakinge,  
 As dooth the stream, that turneth never agayn,  
 Descending fro the montaigne in-to playn.  
 Wel can Senek, and many a philosophre 25  
 Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.

---

1. Hl. Hoste ; Ln. oste ; *rest* hoost (oost). *On sey, see note.* 2. E. Hn. Hl. hath ; *rest* had. 4. Cm. *wanting* ; Cp. Pt. Ln. expert ; E. Hn. ystert ; Hl. *om.* 5. Hn. xvijjthe ; Cp. xvijje ; Pt. Ln. xvij ; E. eighte and twentithe ; Hl. threttenthe. 14. Cm. Pt. Hl. of the ; E. Hn. at the ; Cp. atte ; Ln. att.

"For los of catel may recovered be,  
 But los of tyme shendeth us," quod he.  
 It wol nat come agayn, with-ouen drede,  
 Na more than wol Malkins maydenhede, 30  
 Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse ;  
 Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.  
 Sir man of lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye blis,  
 Tel us a tale anon, as forward is ;  
 Ye been submitted thurgh your free assent 35  
 To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.  
 Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,  
 Than have ye doon your devoir atte leste.'  
 'Hoste,' quod he, '*depardieux* ich assente,  
 To breke forward is not myn entente. 40  
 Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn  
 Al my biheste ; I can no better seyn.  
 For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,  
 He sholde him-selven usen it by right ;  
 Thus wol our text ; but natheles certeyn 45  
 I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,  
 But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly  
 On metres and on ryming craftily,  
 Hath seyde hem in swich English as he can  
 Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man. 50  
 And if he have not seyde hem, leve brother,  
 In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.  
 For he hath told of loveres up and down  
 Mo than Ovyde made of mencioun  
 In his Epistelles, that been ful olde. 55  
 What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde ?  
 In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,  
 And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,  
 These noble wyves and these loveres eke.  
 Who-so that wol his large volume seke 60  
 Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupyde,  
 Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde  
 Of Lucesse, and of Babilan Tisbee ;

37. Hl. and holdeth ; *rest* now of (*badly*). 38. E. do. 43. Cm. man ;  
*rest* a man. 45. E. wole ; Hn. wol. 47. MS. Camb. Dd. 4. 24 *has* But ;  
*rest* That ; *see note*. 55. Hl. Cm. Epistelles ; E. Hn. Cp. Epistles. 56. E.  
 Hn. telle ; *rest* tellen.

The swerd of Dido for the false Enee ;  
 The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon ; 65  
 The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,  
 Of Adriane and of Isiphilee ;  
 The bareyne yle standing in the see ;  
 The dreynte Leander for his Erro ;  
 The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo 70  
 Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladamëa ;  
 The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,  
 Thy litel children hanging by the hals  
 For thy Iason, that was of love so fals !  
 O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75  
 Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste !  
 But certainly no word ne wryteth he  
 Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,  
 That lovede hir owne brother sinfully ;  
 Of swiche cursed stories I sey 'fy' ; 80  
 Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,  
 How that the cursed king Antiochus  
 Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,  
 That is so horrible a tale for to rede,  
 Whan he hir threw up-on the pavement. 85  
 And therfor he, of ful avyusement,  
 Nolde never wryte in none of his sermons  
 Of swiche unkinde abhominaciouns,  
 Ne I wol noon reherse, if that I may.  
 But of my tale how shal I doon this day? 90  
 Me were looth be lykned, doutelees,  
 To Muses that men clepe Pierides—  
*Metamorphoseos* wot what I mene :—  
 But nathelees, I recche noght a bene  
 Though I come after him with hawe-bake ; 95  
 I speke in prose, and lat him rymes make.'  
 And with that word he, with a sobre chere,  
 Bigan his tale, as ye shal after here.

---

64. Hl. sorwe; *rest* swerd. 66. E. Cm. Hl. Diane; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Dianire, or Dyanyre. 69. E. Hn. Ln. Leandre. 70. E. *omits* eek. 71. E. *omits* of. 72. Cp. Hl. queen; *rest* quene. 74. E. Cm. in; *rest* of. 75. E. Hn. Cm. Penolopee. 76. E. withede. 95. Hn. Cp. Pt. Hl. hawe bake; E. hawebake; Cm. aw bake; Ln. halve bake.

## The Prologe of the Mannes Tale of Lawe.

O hateful harm ! condicion of poverte !  
 With thurst, with cold, with hunger so confounded ! 100  
 To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte ;  
 If thou noon aske, with nede artow so wounded,  
 That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid !  
 Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence  
 Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy despence ! 105  
 Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,  
 He misdeparteth richesse temporal ;  
 Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully, (10)  
 And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath al.  
 'Parfay,' seistow, 'somytyme he rekne shal, 110  
 Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,  
 For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir nede.'  
 Herkne what is the sentence of the wyse :—  
 'Bet is to dyën than have indigence ;'  
 Thy selve neighebour wol thee despyse ; 115  
 If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence !  
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence :—  
 'Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke ;' (20)  
 Be war therfor, er thou come in that prikke !  
 If thou be povre, thy brother hateth thee, 120  
 And alle thy freendes fleen fro thee, alas !  
 O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,  
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas !  
 Your bagges been nat filled with *ambes as*,  
 But with *sis cink*, than renneth for your chaunce ; 125  
 At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce !  
 Ye seken lond and see for your winniges,  
 As wyse folk ye knowen al thestaat (30)  
 Of regnes ; ye ben fadres of tydinges  
 And tales, bothe of pees and of debat. 130  
 I were right now of tales desolat,  
 Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a yere,  
 Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal here.

102. So Hn. ; Cp. Pt. art þou so ; Ln. þou art so ; Hl. so art thou ; but E. so soore artow ywoundid. 109. E. Hn. lite ; rest litel. 118. E. om. the. 119. E. Hn. Hl. to ; Cp. Pt. Ln. in. 124. E. fild.

## THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE.



## Here beginneth the Man of Lawe his Tale.

**I**N Surrie whylom dwelte a companye  
 Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe, 135  
 That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,  
 Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe;  
 Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe, (40)  
 That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare  
 With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir ware. 140

Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort  
 Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende;  
 Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,  
 Non other message wolde they thider sende,  
 But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the ende; 145  
 And in swich place, as thoughte hem avantage  
 For her entente, they take her herbergage.

Soiourned han thise marchants in that toun (50)  
 A certain tyme, as fel to hir plesance.  
 And so bifel, that the excellent renoun 150  
 Of themperoures doghter, dame Custance,  
 Reported was, with every circumstance,  
 Un-to thise Surrien marchants in swich wyse,  
 Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune vois of every man— 155  
 ‘Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,  
 A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,  
 To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee, (60)  
 Nas never swich another as is she;

I prey to god in honour hir sustenc, 160  
And wolde she were of al Europe the quene.

In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,  
Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye;  
To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,  
Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tyrannye. 165  
She is mirour of alle curteisye;  
Hir herte is verray chambre of holinesse,  
Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.' (70)

And ai this vois was soth, as god is trewe,  
But now to purpos lat us turne agayn; 170  
These marchants han doon fraught hir shippes newe,  
And, whan they han this blisful mayden seyn,  
Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,  
And doon her nedes as they han don yore,  
And liven in wele; I can sey yow no more. 175

Now fel it, that these marchants stode in grace  
Of him, that was the sowdan of Surrye;  
For whan they came from any strange place, (80)  
He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,  
Make hem good chere, and bisily espye 180  
Tydings of sondry regnes, for to lere  
The wondres that they mighte seen or here.

Amonges othere thinges, specially  
These marchants han him told of dame Custance,  
So gret noblesse in ernest, ceriously, 185  
That this sowdan hath caught so gret plesance  
To han hir figure in his remembrance,  
That al his lust and al his bisy cure (90)  
Was for to love hir whyl his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book 190  
Which that men clepe the heven, y-writen was  
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,  
That he for love shulde han his deeth, allas!  
For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,  
Is writen, god wot, who-so coude it rede, 195  
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn,  
 Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles, (100)  
 Of Pompey, Iulius, er they were born ;  
 The stryf of Thebes ; and of Ercules, 200  
 Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates  
 The deeth ; but mennes wittes been so dulle,  
 That no wight can wel rede it atte fulle.

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,  
 And, shortly of this mater for to pace, 205  
 He hath to hem declared his entente,  
 And seyde hem certein, 'but he mighte have grace  
 To han Custance with-inne a litel space, (110)  
 He nas but deed ;' and charged hem, in hye,  
 To shapen for his lyf som remedye. 210

Diverse men diverse thinges seyden ;  
 They argumenten, casten up and down ;  
 Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden,  
 They speken of magik and abusioun ;  
 But finally, as in conclusioun, 215  
 They can not seen in that non avantage,  
 Ne in non other wey, save mariage.

Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee (120)  
 By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn,  
 By-cause that ther was swich diversitee 220  
 Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,  
 They trowe 'that no cristen prince wolde fayn  
 Wedden his child under oure lawes swete  
 That us were taught by Mahoun our prophete.'

And he answerde, 'rather than I lese 225  
 Custance, I wol be cristned doutelees ;  
 I not ben hires, I may non other chese.  
 I prey yow holde your arguments in pees ; (130)  
 Saveth my lyf, and beeth nocht recchelees  
 To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure ; 230  
 For in this wo I may not longe endure.'



What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?  
 I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,  
 And by the popes mediacioun,  
 And al the chirche, and al the chivalrye, 235  
 That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,  
 And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,  
 They ben acorded, so as ye shal here ; (140)

How that the sowdan and his baronage  
 And alle his liges shulde y-cristned be, 240  
 And he shal han Custance in mariage,  
 And certein gold, I noot what quantitee,  
 And her-to founden suffisant seurtee ;  
 This same acord was sworn on eyther syde ;  
 Now, faire Custance, almighty god thee gyde ! 245

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,  
 That I shulde tellen al the purveyance  
 That themperour, of his grete noblesse, (150)  
 Hath shapen for his doghter dame Custance.  
 Wel may men knowe that so gret ordinance 250  
 May no man tellen in a litel clause  
 As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

Bisshopes ben shapen with hir for to wende,  
 Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun,  
 And other folk y-nowe, this is the ende ; 255  
 And notifyed is thurgh-out the toun  
 That every wight, with gret devocioun,  
 Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage (160)  
 Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departinge, 260  
 I sey, the woful day fatal is come,  
 That ther may be no lenger taryinge,  
 But forthward they hem dresen, alle and some ;  
 Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,  
 Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende ; 265  
 For wel she seeth ther is non other ende.

Allas! what wonder is it though she wepte,  
 That shal be sent to strange nacioun (170)  
 Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,  
 And to be bounden under subieccioun 270  
 Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.  
 Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,  
 That knowen wyves, I dar say yow no more.  
 'Fader,' she sayde, 'thy wrecched child Custance,  
 Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe, 275  
 And ye, my moder, my soverayn plesance  
 Over alle thing, out-taken Crist on-lofte,  
 Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte (180)  
 Un-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,  
 Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë. 280  
 Allas! un-to the Barbre nacioun  
 I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;  
 But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,  
 So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfille;  
 I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille. 285  
 Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,  
 And to ben under mannes governance.'  
 I trowe, at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal (190)  
 Or Ylion brende, at Thebes the citee,  
 Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hanibal 290  
 That Romayns hath venquissed tymes thre,  
 Nas herd swich tendre weping for pitee  
 As in the chambre was for hir departinge;  
 Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.  
 O firste moevyng cruel firmament, 295  
 With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay  
 And hurlest al from Est til Occident,  
 That naturelly wolde holde another way, (200)  
 Thy crowding set the heven in swich array  
 At the beginning of this fiers viage, 300  
 That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

282. E. goon; *rest* anon. 283. E. sauacioun; *rest* redempcioun. 289.  
 Cm. at; *rest om.* (Or *means ere, and brende is intransitive.*) 290. E. Hn.  
 Cm. Nat (*for Ne at*); Hl. Ne at.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,  
 Of which the lord is helpes falle, allas!  
 Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous.  
 O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas! 305  
 O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!  
 Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,  
 Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved. (210)

Imprudent emperour of Rome, allas!  
 Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun? 310  
 Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?  
 Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,  
 Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,  
 Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y-knowe?  
 Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe. 315

To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde  
 Solempnely, with every circumstance.  
 'Now Iesu Crist be with yow alle,' she sayde; (220)  
 Ther nis namore but 'farewel! faire Custance!'  
 She peyneth hir to make good countenance, 320  
 And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,  
 And turne I wol agayn to my matere.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,  
 Espyëd hath hir sones pleyn entente,  
 How he wol lete his olde sacrifyces, 325  
 And right anon she for hir conseil sente;  
 And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.  
 And when assembled was this folk in-fere, (230)  
 She sette hir doun, and sayde as ye shal here.

'Lordes,' quod she, 'ye knowen everichon, 330  
 How that my sone in point is for to lete  
 The holy lawes of our Alkaron,  
 Yeven by goddes message Makomete.  
 But oon avow to grete god I hete,  
 The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte 335  
 Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

306. E. Hn. Cp. fieble. 316. E. come; *rest* brought. 330. E. she seyde;  
*rest* quod she. 333. Cp. Pt. Ln. messenger; Hl. messenger; *see note*.

What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe  
 But thraldom to our bodies and penance? (240)  
 And afterward in helle to be drawe  
 For we reneyed Mahoun our creance? 340  
 But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,  
 As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,  
 And I shall make us sauf for evermore?'

They sworn and assenten, every man,  
 To live with hir and dye, and by hir stonde; 345  
 And everich, in the beste wyse he can,  
 To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes fonde;  
 And she hath this empyrse y-take on honde, (250)  
 Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,  
 And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse. 350

'We shul first feyne us cristendom to take,  
 Cold water shal not greve us but a lyte;  
 And I shal swich a feste and revel make,  
 That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.  
 For though his wyf be cristned never so whyte, 355  
 She shal have nede to wasshe away the rede,  
 Thogh she a font-ful water with hir lede.'

O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee, (260)  
 Virago, thou Semyram the secoude,  
 O serpent under femininitee, 360  
 Lyk to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde,  
 O feyned womman, al that may confounde  
 Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,  
 Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day 365  
 That thou were chased from our heritage,  
 Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!  
 Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage. (270)  
 Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.  
 Thyn instrument so, weylawey the whyle! 370  
 Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyle.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warie,  
 Leet prively hir conseil goon hir way.  
 What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?  
 She rydeth to the sowdan on a day, 375  
 And seyde him, that she wolde reneye hir lay,  
 And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,  
 Repenting hir she hethen was so longe, (280)

Biseching him to doon hir that honour,  
 That she moste han the cristen men to feste; 380  
 'To plesen hem I wol do my labour.'  
 The sowdan seith, 'I wol don at your heste,'  
 And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.  
 So glad he was, he niste what to seye;  
 She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth hir weye. 385

**Explicit prima pars.      Sequitur pars secunda.**

Arryved ben this cristen folk to londe,  
 In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,  
 And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde, (290)  
 First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,  
 And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of doute, 390  
 And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the quene,  
 The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray  
 Of Surriens and Romayns met y-fere;  
 The moder of the sowdan, riche and gay, 395  
 Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere  
 As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,  
 And to the nexte citee ther bisyde (300)  
 A softe pas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumphe of Iulius, 400  
 Of which that Lucan maketh swich a bost,  
 Was royaller, ne more curious  
 Than was thassemblee of this blisful host.  
 But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,

The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe, 405  
Caste under this ful mortally to stinge.

The sowdan comth him-self sone after this  
So royally, that wonder is to telle, (310)  
And welcometh hir with alle Ioye and blis.  
And thus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem dwelle. 410  
The fruyt of this matere is that I telle.  
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste  
That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste.

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse  
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde, 415  
And to the feste cristen folk hem dresse  
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.  
Here may men feste and royaltee biholde, (320)  
And deyntees mo than I can yow devyse,  
But al to dere they boughte it er they ryse. 420

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour  
To worldly blisse, spreynd with bitterness;  
Thende of the Ioye of our worldly labour;  
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.  
Herke this conseil for thy sikernesse, 425  
Up-on thy glade day have in thy minde  
The unwar wo or harm that comth bihinde.

For shortly for to tellen at o word, (330)  
The sowdan and the cristen everichone  
Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the bord, 430  
But it were only dame Custance allone.  
This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,  
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,  
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted 435  
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,  
That he nas al to-hewe er he astered.  
And Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot, (340)  
And in a shippe al sterelees, god woot,

411. E. Cm. Cp. matiere; Hn. Pt. matere. 413. E. The; *rest* That.  
418. E. bihold. 423. *So* Cm.; *rest* The ende. 428. E. soothly; *rest*  
shortly. 432. Pt. Hl. this cursed; *rest omit* this. 435. E. *omits* ther.

They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle 440  
 Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

A certain tresor that she thider ladde,  
 And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee  
 They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,  
 And forth she sayleth in the salte see. 445  
 O my Custance, ful of benignitee,  
 O emperoures yonge doghter dere,  
 He that is lord of fortune be thy stere! (350)

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys  
 Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde she, 450  
 'O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,  
 Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,  
 That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,  
 Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,  
 That day that I shal drenchen in the depe. 455

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,  
 That only worthy were for to bere  
 The king of heven with his woundes newe, (360)  
 The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the spere,  
 Flemer of feendes out of him and here 460  
 On which thy limes feithfully extenden,  
 Me keep, and yif me might my lyf tamenden.'

Yeres and dayes fleet this creature  
 Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the strayte  
 Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure; 465  
 On many a sory meel now may she bayte;  
 After her deeth ful often may she wayte,  
 Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryve (370)  
 Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

---

440. Hn. Cm. bidde; Cp. Pt. bidden; Ln. beden; E. biddeth; Hl. bad.  
 442. E. with hire; *rest* thider. 451. E. woful; *rest* welful, wilful, weleful.  
 453. E. wesshe; Cm. wesch; Pt. wessh. 462. Cm. Ln. kep; Hn. Pt.  
 Hl. kepe; Cp. keepe; E. helpe. 463. E. fleteth; *but* Hn. Cp. Pt. fleet.  
 469. *Read* placé; Hl. *alone inserts* as *after* ther.

Men mighten asken why she was not slayn? 470  
 Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?  
 And I answeere to that demaunde agayn,  
 Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,  
 Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,  
 Was with the leoun frete er he asterte? 475  
 No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful miracle  
 In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty werkes; (380)  
 Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,  
 By certein menes ofte, as knowen clerkes, 480  
 Doth thing for certein ende that ful derk is  
 To mannes wit, that for our ignorance  
 Ne conne not knowe his prudent purveyance.

Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,  
 Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the see? 485  
 Who kepte Ionas in the fisshes mawe  
 Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?  
 Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he (390)  
 That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drenchinge,  
 With drye feet thurgh-out the see passinge. 490

Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,  
 That power han tanoyen land and see,  
 'Bothe north and south, and also west and est,  
 Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?'  
 Sothly, the comaundour of that was he, 495  
 That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte  
 As wel whan [that] she wook as whan she slepte.

Wher mighte this womman mete and drinke have? (400)  
 Three yeer and more how lasteth hir vitaille?  
 Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the cave, 500  
 Or in desert? no wight but Crist, sans faille.  
 Fyve thousand folk it was as gret mervaille  
 With loves fyve and fisshes two to fede.  
 God sente his foison at hir grete nede.



She dryveth forth in-to our ocean 505  
 Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,  
 Under an hold that nempnen I ne can,  
 Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste, (410)  
 And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,  
 That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde, 510  
 The wille of Crist was that she shulde abyde.

The constable of the castel doun is fare  
 To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte,  
 And fond this verry womman ful of care ;  
 He fond also the tresor that she broghte. 515  
 In hir langage mercy she bisoghte  
 The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,  
 Hir to delivere of wo that she was inne. (420)

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,  
 But algates ther-by was she understonde ; 520  
 The constable, whan him list no lenger seche,  
 This woful womman broghte he to the londe ;  
 She kneleth doun, and thanketh goddes sonde.  
 But what she was, she wolde no man seye,  
 For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde deye. 525

She seyde, she was so mased in the see  
 That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe ;  
 The constable hath of hir so greet pitee, (430)  
 And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routhe,  
 She was so diligent, with-outen slouthe, 530  
 To serve and plesen everich in that place,  
 That alle hir loven that loken on hir face.

This constable and dame Hermengild his wyf  
 Were payens, and that contree every-where ;  
 But Hermengild lovede hir right as hir lyf, 535  
 And Custance hath so longe soiourned there,  
 In orisons, with many a bitter tere,  
 Til Iesu hath converted thurgh his grace (440)  
 Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that place.

---

531. MSS. plese. 532. E. Cm. in; rest on. 536. soiourned] III. herberwed.

In al that lond no cristen durste route, 540  
 Alle cristen folk ben fled fro that contree  
 Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute  
 The plages of the North, by land and see ;  
 To Walis fled the cristianitee  
 Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle ; 545  
 Ther was hir refut for the mene whyle.

But yet nere cristen Britons so exyled  
 That ther nere somme that in hir privetee (450)  
 Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigyled ;  
 And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three. 550  
 That oon of hem was blind, and mighte nat see  
 But it were with thilke yën of his minde,  
 With whiche men seen, after that they ben blinde.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres day,  
 For which the constable and his wyf also 555  
 And Custance han y-take the righte way  
 Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,  
 To pleyen and to romen to and fro ; (460)  
 And in hir walk this blinde man they mette  
 Croked and old, with yën faste y-shette. 560

‘In name of Crist,’ cryde this blinde Britoun,  
 ‘Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte agayn.’  
 This lady wex affrayed of the soun,  
 Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to sayn,  
 Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han slayn, 565  
 Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche  
 The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.

The constable wex abashed of that sight, (470)  
 And seyde, ‘what amounteth al this fare?’  
 Custance answerde, ‘sire, it is Cristes might, 570  
 That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.’  
 And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,  
 That she the constable, er that it were eve,  
 Converted, and on Crist made him bileve.

---

553. E. whan ; *rest* after.      561. E. olde ; Hl. old ; *rest* blynde, blynd.  
 574. Hl. Cm. Conuerted ; *rest* Conuerteth. E. maketh ; Ln. maad ; *rest* made.

This constable was no-thing lord of this place 575  
 Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,  
 But kepte it strongly, many wintres space,  
 Under Alla, king of al Northumberlond, (480)  
 That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond  
 Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel here, 580  
 But turne I wol agayn to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,  
 Saugh of Custance al hir perfeccioun,  
 And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir whyle,  
 And made a yong knight, that dwelte in that toun, 585  
 Love hir so hote, of foul affeccoun,  
 That verraily him thoughte he shulde spille  
 But he of hir mighte ones have his wille. (490)

He woweth hir, but it availleth noght,  
 She wolde do no sinne, by no weye; 590  
 And, for despyt, he compassed in his thoght  
 To maken hir on shamful deth to deye.  
 He wayteth whan the constable was aweye,  
 And prively, up-on a night, he crepte  
 In Hermengildes chambre whyl she slepte. 595

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,  
 Slepeþ Custance, and Hermengild also.  
 This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns, (500)  
 Al softly is to the bed y-go,  
 And kitte the throte of Hermengild a-two, 600  
 And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance,  
 And wente his wey, ther god yeve him meschance!

Sone after comth this constable hoom agayn,  
 And eek Alla, that king was of that lond,  
 And saugh his wyf despitously y-slayn, 605  
 For which ful ofte he weep and wrong his hond,  
 And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond  
 By dame Custance; allas! what mighte she seye? (510)  
 For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

598. E. Hn. Sathans; Hl. Satanas; *but* Sathanas in Cp. Pt. Ln. 606. E. Hn. weep; Cm. Cp. Pt. wepte; Hl. wept. E. wroong.

To king Alla was told al this meschance, 610  
 And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wyse  
 That in a ship was founden dame Custance,  
 As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.

The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,  
 Whan he saugh so benigne a creature 615  
 Falle in disese and in misaventure.

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,  
 So stant this innocent bifore the king ; (520)  
 This false knight that hath this tresoun wroght  
 Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing. 620  
 But nathelees, ther was greet moorning  
 Among the peple, and seyn, 'they can not gesse  
 That she hath doon so greet a wikkednesse.

For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,  
 And loving Hermengild right as her lyf.' 625  
 Of this bar wisse everich in that hous  
 Save he that Hermengild slow with his knyf.  
 This gentil king hath caught a gret motyf (530)  
 Of this wisse, and thoghte he wolde enquere  
 Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 630

Allas ! Custance ! thou hast no champioun,  
 Ne fighte canstow nought, so weylawey !  
 But he, that starf for our redempcioun  
 And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he lay)  
 So be thy stronge champioun this day ! 635  
 For, but-if Crist open miracle kythe,  
 Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe.

She sette her doun on knees, and thus she sayde, (540)  
 'Immortal god, that savedest Susanne  
 Fro false blame, and thou, merciful mayde, 640  
 Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,  
 Bifore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,  
 If I be gitlees of this felonye,  
 My socour be, for elles I shal dye !'

620. *So in E.*; *rest Bereth.* 621. *All moorning (mornynge)*; Tyrwhitt *has*  
*murmuring*; *see note.* 626. *E. baar.* 638. *E. sit*; *Hn. Cm. Pt. sette*;  
*Hl. set.* 644. *E. or*; *rest for.*

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face, 645  
 Among a prees, of him that hath be lad  
 Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no grace,  
 And swich a colour in his face hath had, (550)  
 Men mighte knowe his face, that was bistad,  
 Amonges alle the faces in that route : 650  
 So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,  
 Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,  
 Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee ;  
 An emperoures doghter stant allone ; 655  
 She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.  
 O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,  
 Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede ! (560)

This Alla king hath swich compassioun,  
 As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee, 660  
 That from his yën ran the water doun.  
 ‘Now hastily do fecche a book,’ quod he,  
 ‘And if this knight wol sweren how that she  
 This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse  
 Whom that we wole that shal ben our Iustyse.’ 665

A Briton book, writen with Evangyles,  
 Was fet, and on this book he swoor anon  
 She gilty was, and in the mene whyles (570)  
 A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,  
 That doun he fil atones as a stoon, 670  
 And bothe his yën broste out of his face  
 In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd in general audience,  
 And seyde, ‘thou hast desclaundred giltelees  
 The doghter of holy chirche in hey presence ; 675  
 Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees.’  
 Of this mervaille agast was al the prees ;  
 As mased folk they stoden everichone, (580)  
 For drede of wreche, save Custance allone.

Greet was the drede and eek the repentance 680  
 Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun  
 Upon this sely innocent Custance;  
 And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,  
 And by Custances mediacioun,  
 The king, and many another in that place, 685  
 Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe  
 By Iugement of Alla hastily; (590)  
 And yet Custance hadde of his deeth gret routhe.  
 And after this Iesus, of his mercy, 690  
 Made Alla wedden ful solempnely  
 This holy mayden, that is so bright and shene,  
 And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a quene.

But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,  
 Of this wedding but Donegild, and na mo, 695  
 The kinges moder, ful of tirannye?  
 Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast a-two;  
 She wolde noght hir sone had do so; (600)  
 Hir thoughte a despit, that he sholde take  
 So strange a creature un-to his make. 700

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree  
 Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.  
 What sholde I tellen of the royaltée  
 At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,  
 Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn? 705  
 The fruit of every tale is for to seye;  
 They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and singe, and pleye.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right; (610)  
 For, thogh that wyves been ful holy thinges,  
 They moste take in pacience at night 710  
 Swich maner necessities as been plesinges  
 To folk that han y-wedded hem with ringes,  
 And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde  
 As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.

701. Cm. nor; E. or; rest ne.  
 rest mariage; Hl. Of mariage.

704. E. Hn. mariages; Ln. þe mariage;  
 705. a] E. the; Hn. Pt. omit.

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon, 715  
 And to a bishop and his constable eke  
 He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is goon  
 To Scotland-ward, his fo-men for to seke ; (620)  
 Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,  
 So longe is goon with childe, til that stille 720  
 She halt hir chambre, abyding Cristes wille.

The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber ;  
 Mauricius at the font-stoon they him calle ;  
 This Constable dooth forth come a messenger,  
 And wroot un-to his king, that cleped was Alle, 725  
 How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,  
 And othere tydings speedful for to seye ;  
 He takth the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye. (630)

This messenger, to doon his avantage,  
 Un-to the kinges moder rydeth swythe, 730  
 And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,  
 'Madame,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and blythe,  
 And thanke god an hundred thousand sythe ;  
 My lady quene hath child, with-uten doute,  
 To Ioye and blisse of al this regne aboute. 735

Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,  
 That I mot bere with al the haste I may ;  
 If ye wol aught un-to your sone the king, (640)  
 I am your servant, bothe night and day.'  
 Donegild answerde, 'as now at this tyme, nay ; 740  
 But heer al night I wol thou take thy reste,  
 Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.'

This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,  
 And stolen were his lettres prively  
 Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn ; 745  
 And countrefeted was ful subtilly  
 Another lettre, wroght ful sinfully,  
 Un-to the king direct of this matere (650)  
 Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

728. Hn. tath ; Cm. taath ; *rest* taketh.  
 thanketh ; Cm. thankede ; Pt. Ln. thonketh.  
 740. Hl. *om.* at.

733. Cp. Hl. thanke ; E. Hn.  
 735. E. Cm. to ; *rest* of.

The lettre spak, 'the queen delivered was 750  
 Of so horrible a feendly creature,  
 That in the castel noon so hardy was  
 That any whyle dorste ther endure.  
 The moder was an elf, by aventure  
 Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye, 755  
 And every wight hateth hir companye.'

Wo was this king whan he this lettre had seyn,  
 But to no wighte he tolde his sorwes sore, (660)  
 But of his owene honde he wroot ageyn,  
 'Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore 760  
 To me, that am now lerned in his lore ;  
 Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce,  
 My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce !

Kepeþ this child, al be it foul or fair,  
 And eek my wyf, un-to myn hoom-cominge ; 765  
 Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heir  
 More agreable than this to my lykinge.'  
 This lettre he se leth, prively wepinge, (670)  
 Which to the messenger was take sone,  
 And forth he gooth ; ther is na more to done. 770

O messenger, fulfild of dronkenesse,  
 Strong is thy breeth, thy limes faltren ay,  
 And thou biwreyst alle secreenesse.  
 Thy mind is lorn, thou Ianglest as a Iay,  
 Thy face is turned in a newe array ! 775  
 Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,  
 Ther is no conseil hid, with-outen doute.

O Donegild, I ne have noon English digne (680)  
 Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye !  
 And therfor to the feend I thee resigne, 780  
 Let him endyten of thy traitorye !  
 Fy, mannish, fy ! o nay, by god, I lye,  
 Fy, *feendly* spirit, for I dar wel telle,  
 Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in helle !

750. MSS. queene, queen.  
*om.* wight; Hl. man.

755. E. Hn. Cm. Y-comen.

756. E. Hn.



This messenger comth fro the king agayn, 785  
 And at the kinges modres court he lighte,  
 And she was of this messenger ful fayn,  
 And plesed him in al that ever she mighte. (690)  
 He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.  
 He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse 790  
 Al night, un-til the sonne gan aryse.

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon  
 And countrefeted lettres in this wyse ;  
 'The king comandeth his constable anon,  
 Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh Iuÿse, 795  
 That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse  
 Custance in-with his regne for tabyde  
 Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde; (700)

But in the same ship as he hir fond,  
 Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir gere, 800  
 He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the lond,  
 And charge hir that she never eft come there.'  
 O my Custance, wel may thy goost have fere  
 And sleping in thy dreem been in penance,  
 When Donegild caste al this ordinance! 805

This messenger on morwe, whan he wook,  
 Un-to the castel halt the nexte wey,  
 And to the constable he the lettre took; (710)  
 And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,  
 Ful ofte he seyde 'allas!' and 'weylawey!'  
 'Lord Crist,' quod he, 'how may this world endure?  
 So ful of sinne is many a creature!

O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,  
 Sith thou art rightful Iuge, how may it be  
 That thou wolt suffren innocents to spille, 815  
 And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?  
 O good Custance, allas! so wo is me  
 That I mot be thy tormentour, or deye (720)  
 On shames death; ther is noon other weye!'

---

791. Hl. vn-to; Pt. to; *rest til*; *but vn-til (as in Tyrwhitt) seems better.*  
 795. *So E. Hn.*; Cm. and heigh; Cp. on a heih; Pt. on an high; Hl. of an  
 heigh; Ln. or an hihe. 797. regne] E. Reawme. 819. shames] Hl. schamful.

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place, 820  
 Whan that the king this cursed lettre sente,  
 And Custance, with a deedly pale face,  
 The ferthe day toward hir ship she wente.  
 But natheles she taketh in good entente  
 The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the stronde, 825  
 She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!  
  
 He that me kepte fro the false blame  
 Why! I was on the londe amonges yow, (730)  
 He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame  
 In salte see, al-thogh I se nat how. 830  
 As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.  
 In him triste I, and in his moder dere,  
 That is to me my seyl and eek my stere.'  
  
 Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,  
 And kneling, pitously to him she seyde, 835  
 'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.'  
 With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde,  
 And over his litel yën she it leyde; (740)  
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,  
 And in-to heven hir yën up she caste. 840  
  
 'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright, Marye,  
 Sooth is that thurgh wommannes eggement  
 Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,  
 For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;  
 Thy blisful yën sawe al his torment; 845  
 Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene  
 Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.  
  
 Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thyn yën, (750)  
 And yet now liveth my litel child, parfay!  
 Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryën, 850  
 Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire may,  
 Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,  
 Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse  
 Rewest on every rewful in distresse!

823. E. Ln. the; rest hir. 837. Ln. Hl. kerchef; Pt. keercchef; E. Hn. couerchief; Cm. couerchif; Cp. couerchef. E. Hn. Cm. ouer (*wrongly*); rest of. 849. E. Ln. om. litel; rest have it.

O litel child, allas ! what is thy gilt, 855  
 That never wroughtest sinne as yet, pardee,  
 Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt ?  
 O mercy, dere Constable !' quod she ; (760)  
 'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee ;  
 And if thou darst not saven him, for blame, 860  
 So kis him ones in his fadres name !'

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,  
 And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routhlees !'  
 And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde  
 Toward the ship ; hir folweth al the prees, 865  
 And ever she preyeth hir child to holde his pees ;  
 And taketh hir leve, and with an holy entente  
 She blesseth hir ; and in-to ship she wente. (770)

Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,  
 Habundantly for hir, ful longe space, 870  
 And other necessities that sholde nede  
 She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes grace !  
 For wind and weder almighty god purchase,  
 And bringe hir hoom ! I can no bettre seye ;  
 But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye. 875

**Explicit secunda pars.      Sequitur pars tercia.**

Alla the king comth hoom, sone after this,  
 Unto his castel of the which I tolde,  
 And axeth wher his wyf and his child is. (780)  
 The constable gan aboute his herte colde,  
 And pleyonly al the maner he him tolde 880  
 As ye han herd, I can telle it no bettre,  
 And sheweth the king his seel and [eek] his lettre,

---

861. E. Yet ; *rest* So.      862. E. Ln. Hl. looked ; *rest* looketh, loketh.  
 868. Hn. Pt. Hl. blesseth ; Cm. Cp. Ln. blisseth ; E. blissed.      882. *The*  
*word eek seems wanted ; but is not in the MSS.*

And seyde, 'lord, as ye comaunded me  
 Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.'  
 This messenger tormented was til he 885  
 Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,  
 Fro night to night, in what place he had leyn.  
 And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe, (790)  
 Ymaged was by whom this harm gan springe.

The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot, 890  
 And al the venim of this cursed dede,  
 But in what wyse, certainly I noot.  
 Theeffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,  
 His moder slow, that men may pleinely rede,  
 For that she traitour was to hir ligeaunce, 895  
 Thus endeth olde Donegild with meschaunce.

The sorwe that this Alla, night and day,  
 Maketh for his wyf and for his child also, (800)  
 Ther is no tonge that it telle may.  
 But now wol I un-to Custance go, 900  
 That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,  
 Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes sonde,  
 Er that hir ship approached un-to londe.

Under an hethen castel, atte laste,  
 Of which the name in my text noght I finde, 905  
 Custance and eek hir child the see up-caste.  
 Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,  
 Have on Custance and on hir child som minde, (810)  
 That fallen is in hethen land eft-sonde,  
 In point to spille, as I shal telle yow sone. 910

Doun from the castel comth ther many a wight  
 To gauren on this ship and on Custance.  
 But shortly, from the castel, on a night,  
 The lordes styward—god yeve him meschaunce!—  
 A theef, that had reneyed our creauce, 915  
 Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he sholde  
 Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde.

903. So Hn. Cp. Pt. Hl.; E. Ln. vn-to the; Cm. to the.  
 rest saueith. 916. E. Cm. in-to the; rest omit the.

907. E. saued;

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon, (820)  
 Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously ;  
 But blisful Marie heelp hir right anon ; 920  
 For with hir strugling wel and mightily  
 The theef fil over bord al sodeinly,  
 And in the see he dreynte for vengeance ;  
 And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.

O foule lust of luxurie ! lo, thyn ende ! **Auctor.** 925  
 Nat only that thou feyntest mannes minde,  
 But verrailly thou wolt his body shende ;  
 Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes blinde (830)  
 Is compleyning, how many-oon may men finde  
 That noght for werk som-tyme, but for thentente 930  
 To doon this sinne, ben outhere sleyn or shente !

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe  
 Hir to defende agayn this renegat ?  
 O Goliath, unmesurable of lengthe,  
 How mighte David make thee so mat, 935  
 So yong and of armure so desolat ?  
 How dorste he loke up-on thy dredful face ?  
 Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes grace ! (840)

Who yaf Iudith corage or hardinesse  
 To sleen him, Olofernus, in his tente, 940  
 And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse  
 The peple of god ? I seye, for this entente,  
 That, right as god spirit of vigour sente  
 To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,  
 So sente he might and vigour to Custance. 945

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth  
 Of Iubaltar and Septe, dryving ay,  
 Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and South, (850)  
 And som-tyme Est, ful many a wery day,  
 Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay !) 950

920. E. Hn. heelp; Hl. hilp; Cm. Cp. halp; Pt. halpe; Ln. helped. 938. E. Hl. nas; Ln. is; *the rest* was. 940. E. Oloferne; Hl. Olefernes; *the rest* Olofernus, Olefernus, or Olesphernus; *see note*. 947. E. alway; *rest* ay. (*The latter is better, but recurs in l. 950.*) 948. *All but* Hl. *ins.* and *after* West.

Hath shapen, thurgh hir endeless goodnesse,  
To make an ende of al hir hevinesse.

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe,  
And speke we of the Romain Emperour,  
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe 955  
The slaughtre of cristen folk, and dishonour  
Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,  
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse, (860)  
That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anoon 960  
His senatour, with royal ordinance,  
And othere lordes, got wot, many oon,  
On Surriens to taken heigh vengeance.  
They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to meschance  
Ful many a day; but shortly, this is thende, 965  
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie  
To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally, (870)  
And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie,  
In which Custance sit ful pitously. 970  
No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why  
She was in swich array; ne she nil seye  
Of hir estaat, althogh she sholde deye.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf  
He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also; 975  
And with the senatour she ladde her lyf.  
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo  
Woful Custance, and many another mo. (880)  
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,  
In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace. 980

971. E. Cm. *om.* ne before knew; *the rest have it.*  
Ft. though that; *rest* thogh, though, thow.

973. Hl. although;

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,  
 But for al that she knew hir never the more ;  
 I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,  
 But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,  
 That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore, 985  
 I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance  
 Under the senatoures governance.

King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn, (890)  
 Upon a day fil in swich repentance,  
 That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain, 990  
 To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance ;  
 And putte him in the popes ordinance  
 In heigh and low, and Iesu Crist bisoghte  
 Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born, 995  
 How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,  
 By herbergeours that wenten him biforn ;  
 For which the senatour, as was usage, (900)  
 Rood him ageyn, and many of his linage,  
 As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence 1000  
 As to don any king a reverence.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour  
 To king Alla, and he to him also ;  
 Everich of hem doth other greet honour ;  
 And so bifel that, in a day or two, 1005  
 This senatour is to king Alla go  
 To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,  
 Custances sone wente in his companye. (910)

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,  
 This senatour hath lad this child to feste ; 1010  
 I may nat tellen every circumstance,  
 Be as be may, ther was he at the leste.  
 But soth is this, that, at his modres heste,  
 Biforn Alla, during the metes space,  
 The child stood, loking in the kinges face. 1015

---

985. E. *puls* wepeth *after* That. 995. E. thurgh out the toun ; *rest* thurgh Rome toun. 996. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. comen. 999. E. Hn. agayns.

This Alla king hath of this child greet wonder,  
 And to the senatour he seyde anon,  
 'Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?' (920)  
 'I noot,' quod he, 'by god, and by seint Iohn!  
 A moder he hath, but fader hath he non 1020  
 That I of woot'—but shortly, in a stounde,  
 He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.

'But god wot,' quod this senatour also,  
 'So vertuous a livere in my lyf,  
 Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo 1025  
 Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of wyf;  
 I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf  
 Thurgh-out her breste, than been a womman wikke; (930)  
 Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that prikke.'

Now was this child as lyk un-to Custance 1030  
 As possible is a creature to be.  
 This Alla hath the face in remembrance  
 Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he  
 If that the childes moder were aught she  
 That was his wyf, and prively he sighte, 1035  
 And spedde him fro the table that he mighte.

'Parfay,' thoghte he, 'fantome is in myn heed!  
 I oghte deme, of skilful Iugement, (940)  
 That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'  
 And afterward he made his argument— 1040  
 'What woot I, if that Crist have hider y-sent  
 My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente  
 To my contree fro thennes that she wente?'

And, after noon, hoom with the senatour  
 Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce. 1045  
 This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,  
 And hastifly he sente after Custaunce.  
 But trusteth weel, hir liste nat to daunce (950)  
 Whan that she wiste wherefor was that sonde.  
 Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte stonde. 1050

1026. Hl. Cm. Ln. mayden; *rest* mayde. Cm. nor; Hl. Ln. or; *rest* ne.  
 1041. E. haue; *rest* hath. E. ysent; Cm. I-sent; *rest* sent. 1047. E.  
 Pt. hastifly; *rest* hastily, hastily.



When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir grette,  
 And weep, that it was routhe for to see.  
 For at the firste look he on hir sette  
 He knew wel verrailly that it was she.  
 And she for sorwe as domb stant as a tree; 1055  
 So was hir herte shet in hir distresse  
 Whan she remembred his unkindenesse.

Twyës she swowned in his owne sighte; (960)  
 He weep, and him excuseth pitously:—  
 ‘Now god,’ quod he, ‘and alle his halwes brighte 1060  
 So wisly on my soule as have mercy,  
 That of your harm as giltelees am I  
 As is Maurice my sone so lyk your face;  
 Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!’

Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne 1065  
 Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse;  
 Greet was the pitee for to here hem pleyne,  
 Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encesse. (970)  
 I prey yow al my labour to relesse;  
 I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe, 1070  
 I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But fynally, when that the sooth is wist  
 That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,  
 I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist,  
 And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two 1075  
 That, save the Ioye that lasteth evermo,  
 Ther is non lyk, that any creature  
 Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world may dure. (980)

Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,  
 In relief of hir longe pitous pyne, 1080  
 That he wold preyde hir fader specially  
 That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne  
 To vouche-sauf som day with him to dyne;  
 She preyde him eek, he sholde by no weye  
 Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye. 1085

1060. Hl. alle; *which the rest omit.* 1074. Hl. they ben. 1084. E.  
 wolde; *rest sholde.*

Som men wold seyn, how that the child Maurice  
 Doth this message un-to this emperour ;  
 But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce (990)  
 To him, that was of so sovereyn honour  
 As he that is of cristen folk the flour, 1090  
 Sente any child, but it is bet to deme  
 He wente him-self, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly  
 To come to diner, as he him bisoghte ;  
 And wel rede I, he loked bisily 1095  
 Up-on this child, and on his doghter thoghte.  
 Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,  
 Arrayed for this feste in every wyse (1000)  
 As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse, 1100  
 And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete ;  
 And forth they ryde in Ioye and in gladnesse.  
 And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,  
 She lighte doun, and falleth him to fete.  
 'Fader,' quod she, 'your yonge child Custance 1105  
 Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.

I am your doghter Custance,' quod she,  
 'That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye. (1010)  
 It am I, fader, that in the salte see  
 Was put allone and dampned for to dye. 1110  
 Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,  
 Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,  
 But thonketh my lord heer of his kindenesse.'

Who can the pitous Ioye tellen al  
 Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus y-mette? 1115  
 But of my tale make an ende I shal ;  
 The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.  
 This glade folk to diner they hem sette ; (1020)  
 In Ioye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle  
 A thousand fold wel more than I can telle. 1120

This child Maurice was sithen emperour  
 Maad by the pope, and lived cristenly.  
 To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;  
 But I lete al his storie passen by,  
 Of Custance is my tale specially. 1125  
 In olde Romain gestes may men finde  
 Maurices lyf; I bere it nocht in minde.

This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey, (1030)  
 With his Custance, his holy wyf so swete,  
 To Engelond been they come the righte wey, 1130  
 Wher-as they live in Ioye and in quiete.  
 But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,  
 Ioye of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde;  
 Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde.

Who lived ever in swich delyt o day 1135  
 That him ne moeved outhur conscience,  
 Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,  
 Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence? (1040)  
 I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,  
 That litel whyl in Ioye or in plesance 1140  
 Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low his rente,  
 When passed was a yeer, even as I gesse,  
 Out of this world this king Alla he hente,  
 For whom Custance hath ful gret hevinesse. 1145  
 Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!  
 And dame Custance, fynally to seye,  
 Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir weye. (1050)

To Rome is come this holy creature,  
 And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and sounde: 1150  
 Now is she scaped al hir aventure;  
 And whan that she hir fader hath y-founde,  
 Doun on hir kneës falleth she to grounde;

---

1126. E. Hn. Cm. In the; *rest om.* the. 1137. E. som kynnes; Cm.  
 sumkenys; Hl. som maner; Hn. Cp. Pt. som kyn; Ln. sumkin. 1146. E.  
 praye to; Hl. pray that; *rest* preyen, prayen, preien, or preyne. 1150. Hl.  
 And fynt hir frendes ther bothe hool and sound. *The rest omit* ther.

Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,  
 She herieth god an hundred thousand sythe. 1155

In vertu and in holy almes-dede  
 They liven alle, and never a-sonder wende ;  
 Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede. (1060)

And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende.  
 Now Iesu Crist, that of his might may sende 1160  
 Ioye after wo, governe us in his grace,  
 And kepe us alle that ben in this place ! Amen.

**Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe ; and next  
 folweth the Shipmannes Prolog.**

\* \* For l. 5583 in Tyrwhitt's Text, see Group D, l. 1.

COLOPHON. *The latter part is from MS. Arch. Selden B. 14. Many MSS have The prolog of the squyers tale, or the prolog of the Squier. The Petworth MS. and some others have here an ill-written and spurious Prologue to the Shipman's Tale, which is here subjoined :*

‘Now freendes,’ seide our Hoost so dere,  
 ‘How lyketh you by Iohn the Pardonere ?  
 For he hath unbokeled wel the male ;  
 He hath us told right a thrifty tale  
 As touching of misgovernaunce—  
 I preye to God, yeve him good chaunce !—  
 As ye han herd of these riotoures three.  
 Now, gentil Mariner, hertely I preye thee,  
 Telle us a good tale, and that right anon.’  
 ‘It shall be doon, by god and by seint Iohn,’  
 Seyde this Mariner, ‘as wel as ever I can,’  
 And right anon his tale he bigan.

## THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE.

### Here biginneth the Shipmannes Prolog.

\* \* *In Tyrwhitt's text, ll. 12903-12924.*

**O**UR hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,  
 And seyde, 'good men, herkneth everich on;  
 This was a thrifty tale for the nones! 1165  
 Sir parish prest,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,  
 Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore.  
 I see wel that ye lerned men in lore  
 Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!'

The Persone him answerde, '*benedicite*!' 1170  
 What eyleth the man, so sinfully to swere?'

Our hoste answerde, 'O Iankin, be ye there?' (10)  
 I smelle a loller in the wind,' quod he.  
 'How! good men,' quod our hoste, 'herkneth me;  
 Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun, 1175  
 For we shal han a predicacioun;  
 This loller heer wil prechen us som-what.'

'Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be nat,'  
 Seyde the Shipman; 'heer he shal nat preche,  
 He shal no gospel glosen heer ne teche. 1180  
 We leve alle in the grete god,' quod he,  
 'He wolde sowen som difficultee, (20)  
 Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;  
 And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,

---

1163-1190. *From Cp., collated with Hl. Pt. Ln. Seld. Royal, and Sloane; E. Hn. Cm. omit.*

1164, 1174. Cp. herkeneth; Hl. herkneth. 1174. Hl. Now; rest How  
 (Howe). 1175. Hl. omits. 1179. Seld. has Shipman; Roy. Slo. Cp. Pt.  
 Ln. squier; Hl. sompnour. 1181. Seld. Hl. We leuen; Roy. Cp. Pt. Ln.  
 He leueth. 1182. Seld. Hl. quod, which Cp. Pt. Ln. Roy. Slo. omit.

My Ioly body shal a tale telle,	1185
And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,	
That I shal waken al this companye ;	
But it shal nat ben of philosophye,	
Ne <i>physices</i> , ne termes queinte of lawe ;	(27)
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.'	1190

**Here endeth the Shipman his Prolog.**

1186-90. Hl. *omits*. 1189. Tyrwhitt *has* of physike ; *the MSS. have the unmeaning word* phislyas (Sloane phillyas ; Ln. fisleas) ; *read* physices ; *see note*. COLOPHON. *From* Seld.

## THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

## Here biginneth the Shipmannes Tale.

**A** Marchant whylom dwelled at Seint Denys,  
 That riche was, for which men helde him wys;  
 A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,  
 And compaignable and revelous was she,  
 Which is a thing that causeth more dispence 1195  
 Than worth is al the chere and reverence  
 That men hem doon at festes and at daunces;  
 Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces  
 Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal.  
 But wo is him that payen moot for al; 1200  
 The sely housbond, algate he mot paye; (11)  
 He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye,  
 Al for his owene worship richely,  
 In which array we daunce Iolily.  
 And if that he noght may, par-aventure, 1205  
 Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,  
 But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,  
 Than moot another payen for our cost,  
 Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.  
 This noble Marchant heeld a worthy hous, 1210  
 For which he hadde alday so greet repair (21)  
 For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,  
 That wonder is; but herkneth to my tale.  
 Amonges alle his gestes, grete and smale,  
 Ther was a monk, a fair man and a bold, 1215  
 I trowe of thritty winter he was old,  
 That ever in oon was drawing to that place.

---

1191. Hl. hild.      1196. E. chiere.      1201. E. housbonde.      Hn.  
 moot; Pt. mot; *rest* moste.      1205. Pt. Hl. may not.      1206. E. ellis.  
 1208. E. Thanne.      1214. E. Hn. hise; Hl. these; *rest* his.      1216. E.  
 of; Hn. Cp. Ln. a; *rest om.*      1217. E. comynge; *rest* drawyng.

This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,  
 Aqueinted was so with the gode man,  
 Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan, 1220  
 That in his hous as famulier was he (31)  
 As it possible is any freend to be.

And for as muchel as this gode man  
 And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,  
 Were bothe two y-born in o village, 1225  
 The monk him claimeth as for cosinage;  
 And he again, he seith nat ones nay,  
 But was as glad ther-of as fowel of day;  
 For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.  
 Thus been they knit with eterne alliaunce, 1230  
 And ech of hem gan other for tassure (41)  
 Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may dure.

Free was daun Iohn, and namely of dispence,  
 As in that hous; and ful of diligence  
 To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage. 1235  
 He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page  
 In al that hous; but, after hir degree,  
 He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynee,  
 When that he cam, som maner honest thing;  
 For which they were as glad of his coming 1240  
 As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne up-ryseth. (51)  
 Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day  
 Shoop him to make redy his array  
 Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare, 1245  
 To byën ther a porcioun of ware;  
 For which he hath to Paris sent anon  
 A messenger, and preyed hath daun Iohn  
 That he sholde come to Seint Denys to pleye  
 With him and with his wyf a day or tweye, 1250  
 Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse. (61)

This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,  
 Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,  
 By-cause he was a man of heigh prudence,

1220-3. Pt. *omits.* 1222. E. *om.* is; Hl. *possibil* is; *rest* is possible.  
 1231. E. Hn. Pt. *ech*; Hl. *ilk*; *rest* *ilke*. Cp. for to assure; Hl. Ln. to assure  
 (*om. for*). 1237. E. *the*; *rest* *that*.



And eek an officer, out for to ryde, 1255

To seen hir graunges and hir bernes wyde ;

And un-to Seint Denys he comth anon.

Who was so welcome as my lord daun Iohn,

Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye ?

With him broghte he a Iubbe of Malvesye, 1260

And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage, (71)

And volatyl, as ay was his usage.

And thus I lete hem ete and drinke and pleye,

This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.

The thridde day, this marchant up aryseth, 1265

And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,

And up in-to his countour-hous goth he

To rekene with him-self, as wel may be,

Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,

And how that he despended hadde his good ; 1270

And if that he encessed were or noon. (81)

His bokes and his bagges many oon

He leith biforn him on his counting-bord ;

Ful riche was his tresor and his hord,

For which ful faste his countour-dore he shette ; 1275

And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lette

Of his accountes, for the mene tyme ;

And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.

Daun Iohn was risen in the morwe also,

And in the gardin walketh to and fro, 1280

And hath his thinges seyde ful curteisly. (91)

This gode wyf cam walking prively

In-to the gardin, ther he walketh softe,

And him saleweth, as she hath don ofte.

A mayde child cam in hir companye, 1285

Which as hir list she may governe and gye,

For yet under the yerde was the mayde.

'O dere cosin myn, daun Iohn,' she sayde,

'What eyleth yow so rathe for to ryse ?'

'Nece,' quod he, 'it oghte y-nough suffyse 1290

Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night, (101)

1261. Cp. Ln. good (*for* fyn) ; Hl. wyn. 1262. Hl. volantyn (!). 1263.  
E. om. ete and. 1266, 1272, 1277. E. hise. 1268. Pt. Hl. as ; rest om.

But it were for an old appalled wight,  
 As been thise wedded men, that lye and dare  
 As in a forme sit a wery hare,  
 Were al for-straught with houndes grete and smale. 1295  
 But dere nece, why be ye so pale?  
 I trowe certes that our gode man  
 Hath yow laboured sith the night bigan,  
 That yow were nede to resten hastily?  
 And with that word he lough ful merily, 1300  
 And of his owene thought he wex al reed. (111)  
 This faire wyf gan for to shake hir heed,  
 And seyde thus, 'ye, god wot al,' quod she;  
 'Nay, cosin myn, it stant nat so with me.  
 For, by that god that yaf me soule and lyf, 1305  
 In al the reme of France is ther no wyf  
 That lasse lust hath to that sory pley.  
 For I may singe "allas" and "weylawey,  
 That I was born," but to no wight,' quod she,  
 'Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me. 1310  
 Wherefore I thinke out of this land to wende, (121)  
 Or elles of my-self to make an ende,  
 So ful am I of drede and eek of care.'  
 This monk bigan up-on this wyf to stare,  
 And seyde, 'allas, my nece, god forbede 1315  
 That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,  
 Fordo your-self; but telleth me your grief;  
 Paraventure I may, in your meschief,  
 Conseille or helpe, and therfore telleth me  
 Al your anoy, for it shal been secree; 1320  
 For on my porthors here I make an ooth, (131)  
 That never in my lyf, for lief ne looth,  
 Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye.'  
 'The same agayn to yow,' quod she, 'I seye;  
 By god and by this porthors, I yow swere, 1325  
 Though men me wolde al in-to peces tere,

1294. E. fourme; *rest* forme. 1300. E. murily. 1301. E. Cp. wax.  
 1304. E. *repeats* nay. 1306. Cp. Pt. rewme; Hl. Ln. reme; E. Hn. Reawme;  
*see* B. 4326. 1317. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. telleth; E. tel. E. me of;  
 Cp. Ln. forth; *rest* me. 1318. E. I yow may; *rest om.* yow. 1321. Cm.  
 here; *rest om.* 1326. E. pieces; *rest* peces, peeces.

Ne shal I never, for to goon to helle,  
 Biwreye a word of thing that ye me telle,  
 Nat for no cosinage ne alliance,  
 But verrailly, for love and affiance.' 1330  
 Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon they kiste, (141)  
 And ech of hem tolde other what hem liste.  
 'Cosin,' quod she, 'if that I hadde a space,  
 As I have noon, and namely in this place,  
 Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf, 1335  
 What I have suffred sith I was a wyf  
 With myn housbonde, al be he your cosyn.'  
 'Nay,' quod this monk, 'by god and seint Martyn,  
 He is na more cosin un-to me  
 Than is this leef that hangeth on the tree! 1340  
 I clepe him so, by Seint Denys of Fraunce, (151)  
 To have the more cause of aqueintaunce  
 Of yow, which I have loved specially  
 Aboven alle wommen sikerly;  
 This swere I yow on my professioun. 1345  
 Telleth your grief, lest that he come adoun,  
 And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.'  
 'My dere love,' quod she, 'o my daun Iohn,  
 Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,  
 But out it moot, I may namore abyde. 1350  
 Myn housbond is to me the worste man (161)  
 That ever was, sith that the world bigan.  
 But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me  
 To tellen no wight of our privetee,  
 Neither a bedde, ne in non other place; 1355  
 God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his grace!  
 A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde  
 But al honour, as I can understonde;  
 Save un-to yow thus muche I tellen shal;  
 As help me god, he is noght worth at al 1360  
 In no degree the value of a flye. (171)  
 But yet me greveth most his nigardye;  
 And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly

---

1335. E. Thanne. 1337. your cosyn] E. of youre kyn. 1338. and] E.  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. and by. 1340. E. lief. 1351. E. housbonde. 1355. Hl. om.

Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I.

They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be 1365

Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther-to free,

And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde.

But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,

For his honour, my-self for to arraye,

A Sondag next, I moste nedes paye 1370

An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn. (181)

Yet were me lever that I were unborn

Than me were doon a sclandre or vileinye ;

And if myn housbond eek it mighte espye,

I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye 1375

Lene me this somme, or elles moot I deye.

Daun Iohn, I seye, lene me thise hundred frankes ;

Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thankes,

If that yow list to doon that I yow praye.

For at a certein day I wol yow paye, 1380

And doon to yow what plesance and servyce (191)

That I may doon, right as yow list devyse.

And but I do, god take on me vengeance

As foul as ever had Geniloun of France !'

This gentil monk answerde in this manere ; 1385

'Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,

I have,' quod he, 'on yow so greet a routhe,

That I yow swere and plighte yow my trouthe,

That whan your housbond is to Flaundes fare,

I wol delivere yow out of this care ; 1390

For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes.' (201)

And with that word he caughte hir by the flankes,

And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir ofte.

'Goth now your wey,' quod he, 'al stille and softe,

And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may ; 1395

For by my chilindre it is pryme of day.

Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.'

'Now, elles god forbede, sire,' quod she,

And forth she gooth, as Iolif as a pye,

And bad the cokes that they sholde hem hye, 1400

---

1367. to] E. Hn. Cm. unto.      1371, 1376. E. ellis.      1371. E. Ln. Hl.  
 I am ; *rest* am I.      1374, 1389. E. housbonde.      1376-9. Hl. *omits.*  
 1384. E. hadde.

So that men mighte dyne, and that anon. (211)

Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,  
And knocketh at his countour boldely.

‘*Qui la?*’ quod he. ‘Peter! it am I,’  
Quod she, ‘what, sire, how longe wol ye faste?’ 1405

How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste  
Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?

The devel have part of alle swiche rekeninges!

Ye have y-nough, pardee, of goddes sonde;

Come down to-day, and lat your bagges stonde. 1410

Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun Iohn (221)

Shal fasting al this day elenge goon?

What! lat us here a messe, and go we dyne.’

‘Wyf,’ quod this man, ‘litel canstow devyne  
The curious bisnesse that we have. 1415

For of us chapmen, al-so god me save,

And by that lord that cleped is Seint Yve,

Scarsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve,

Continuelly, lastinge un-to our age.

We may wel make chere and good visage, 1420

And dryve forth the world as it may be, (231)

And kepen our estaat in privetee,

Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye

A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.

And therfor have I greet necessitee 1425

Up-on this queinte world tavyse me;

For evermore we mote stonde in drede

Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.

To Flaundes wol I go to-morwe at day,  
And come agayn, as sone as ever I may. 1430

For which, my dere wyf, I thee biseke, (241)

As be to every wight buxom and meke,

And for to kepe our good be curious,

And honestly governe wel our hous.

Thou hast y-nough, in every maner wyse, 1435

That to a thrifty household may suffyse.

---

1404. E. Hn. Who ther (*with Qi la in margin*); Hl. Qy la; Cp. Pt. Qy la; Ln. Que la. 1408. Hl. Cm. of; rest on. 1412. E. Cm. alenge; rest elenge. 1413. E. om. What. 1417. E. clepid. 1418. E. xij. 1420. E. chiere. 1426. E. Hn. Cm. tauyse; rest to auyse.

Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,  
 Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.  
 And with that word his countour-dore he shette,  
 And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette, 1440  
 But hastily a messe was ther seyde, (251)  
 And spedily the tables were y-leyde,  
 And to the diner faste they hem spedde ;  
 And richely this monk the chapman fedde.

At-after diner daun Iohn sobrelly 1445  
 This chapman took a-part, and prively  
 He seyde him thus, 'cosyn, it standeth so,  
 That wel I see to Brugges wol ye go.  
 God and seint Austin spede yow and gyde !  
 I prey yow, cosyn, wysly that ye ryde ; 1450  
 Governeth yow also of your diete (261)  
 Atemprelly, and namely in this hete.  
 Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare ;  
 Fare-wel, cosyn ; god shilde yow fro care.  
 If any thing ther be by day or night, 1455  
 If it lye in my power and my might,  
 That ye me wol comande in any wyse,  
 It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.

O thing, er that ye goon, if it may be,  
 I wolde prey yow ; for to lene me 1460  
 An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye, (271)  
 For certein beestes that I moste beye,  
 To store with a place that is oures.  
 God help me so, I wolde it were youres !  
 I shal nat faille surely of my day, 1465  
 Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.  
 But lat this thing be secree, I yow preye,  
 For yet to-night these beestes moot I beye ;  
 And fare-now wel, myn owene cosyn dere,  
 Graunt mercy of your cost and of your chere.' 1470

This noble marchant gentilly anon (281)  
 Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosyn myn, daun Iohn,  
 Now sikerly this is a smal requeste ;  
 My gold is youre, whan that it yow leste.

1441. E. Hn. But ; *rest* And. 1445. E. Hn. Cm. At ; *rest* And.  
 1455. E. Hn. And if that any thyng by day or night. 1465. E. at ; *rest* of.

And nat only my gold, but my chaffare; 1475  
 Take what yow list, god shilde that ye spare.

But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,  
 Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir plogh.  
 We may creauce whyl we have a name,  
 But goldlees for to be, it is no game. 1480  
 Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese; (291)  
 After my might ful fayn wolde I yow plese.'

This hundred frankes he fette forth anon,  
 And prively he took hem to daun Iohn.  
 No wight in al this world wiste of this lone, 1485  
 Savinge this marchant and daun Iohn allone.  
 They drinke, and speke, and rome a whyle and pleye,  
 Til that daun Iohn rydeth to his abbeye.

The morwe cam, and forth this marchant rydeth  
 To Flaundes-ward; his prentis wel him gydeth, 1490  
 Til he cam in-to Brugges merily. (301)

Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily  
 Aboute his nede, and byeth and creauceth.  
 He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daunceth;  
 But as a marchant, shortly for to telle, 1495  
 He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.

The Sunday next this Marchant was agon,  
 To Seint Denys y-comen is daun Iohn,  
 With crowne and berd all fresh and newe y-shave.  
 In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave, 1500  
 Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn, (311)  
 For that my lord daun Iohn was come agayn.

And shortly to the point right for to gon,  
 This faire wyf accorded with daun Iohn,  
 That for these hundred frankes he sholde al night 1505  
 Have hir in his armes bolt-upright;  
 And this acord parfourned was in dede.  
 In mirthe al night a bisy lyf they lede  
 Til it was day, that daun Iohn wente his way,  
 And bad the meynee 'fare-wel, have good day!' 1510

1479. Cm. encrece (*for* creauce). 1483. E. fette hym forth; *rest om.*  
 hym. 1491. E. Hn. murily. 1494. E. Cm. *om.* the. 1496. E. Hn. let;  
 Cm. lat; Hl. Pt. lad; Cp. leet; Ln. leteþ (let=ledeth). 1502. E. Hn. Cm.  
*om.* For. 1503. E. right to the point. 1506. E. hise.

For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun, (321)  
 Hath of daun Iohn right no suspecioun.  
 And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,  
 Or where him list ; namore of him I seye.

This marchant, whan that ended was the faire, 1515  
 To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,  
 And with his wyf he maketh feste and chere,  
 And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,  
 That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce.

For he was bounde in a reconissaunce 1520  
 To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon. (331)

For which this marchant is to Paris gon,  
 To borwe of certein frendes that he hadde  
 A certein frankes ; and somme with him he ladde.  
 And whan that he was come in-to the toun, 1525

For greet chertee and greet affecciou, n.  
 Un-to daun Iohn he gooth him first, to pleye ;  
 Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,  
 But for to wite and seen of his welfare,  
 And for to tellen him of his chaffare, 1530  
 As freendes doon whan they ben met y-fere. (341)

Daun Iohn him maketh feste and mery chere ;  
 And he him tolde agayn ful specially,  
 How he hadde wel y-boght and graciously,  
 Thanked be god, al hool his marchandyse. 1535  
 Save that he moste, in alle maner wyse,  
 Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste,  
 And thanne he sholde been in Ioye and reste.

Daun Iohn answerde, 'certes, I am fayn  
 That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn. 1540  
 And if that I were riche, as have I blisse, (351)  
 Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat misse,  
 For ye so kindly this other day

Lente me gold ; and as I can and may,  
 I thanke yow, by god and by seint Iame ! 1545  
 But natheless I took un-to our dame,  
 Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn

---

1517, 1532. E. feeste.      1519, 1537. E. cheuyssaunce.      1520. Hl.  
 bounde ; *rest* bounden.      1526. Pt. cheertee ; Ln. chere ; *rest* chiertee.  
 1532. E. murye.      1540. ar] Cp. Pt. Ln. be.



Upon your bench ; she woot it wel, certeyn,  
 By certein tokenes that I can hir telle.  
 Now, by your leve, I may no lenger dwelle, 1550  
 Our abbot wol out of this toun anon ; (361)  
 And in his companye moot I gon.

Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece swete,  
 And fare-wel, dere cosin, til we mete !'

This Marchant, which that was ful war and wys, 1555  
 Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,  
 To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,  
 The scmme of gold, and gat of hem his bond ;  
 And hoom he gooth, mery as a papeiay.  
 For wel he knew he stood in swich array, 1560  
 That nedes moste he winne in that viage (371)  
 A thousand frankes above al his costage.

His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,  
 As she was wont of old usage algate,  
 And al that night in mirthe they bisette ; 1565  
 For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.  
 Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace  
 His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir face,  
 And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.

'Namore,' quod she, 'by god, ye have y-nough !' 1570  
 And wantounly agayn with him she pleyde ; (381)  
 Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,  
 'By god,' quod he, 'I am a litel wrooth  
 With yow, my wyf, al-thogh it be me looth.  
 And woot ye why? by god, as that I gesse, 1575  
 That ye han maad a maner straungenesse  
 Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun Iohn.

Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,  
 That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed  
 By redy tokene ; and heeld him yvel apayed, 1580  
 For that I to him spak of chevisaunce, (391)  
 Me semed so, as by his contenance.  
 But nathelees, by god our hevene king,

1549. E. Hn. Cm. yow ; rest hir. 1558. E. hadde ; Hl. took ; rest gat.  
*Over bond is the gloss—obligacionem.* 1559. E. murie. E. papeiay ; rest  
 papyniay, popiniay. 1562. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. abouen ; rest aboue. 1571. E.  
 wantownely. 1572. Cp. Pt. þat ; Hl. þus ; rest om. 1574. E. were ; rest be.

I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.  
 I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so ; 1585  
 Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,  
 If any dettour hath in myn absence  
 Y-payëd thee ; lest, thurgh thy necligence,  
 I mighte him axe a thing that he hath payed.<sup>7</sup>  
 This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed, 1590  
 But boldely she seyde, and that anon : (401)  
 ‘ Marie, I defye the false monk, daun Iohn !  
 I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel ;  
 He took me certein gold, that woot I weel !  
 What ! yvel thedom on his monkes snoute ! 1595  
 For, god it woot, I wende, withouten doute,  
 That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,  
 To doon ther-with myn honour and my prow,  
 For cosinage, and eek for bele chere  
 That he hath had ful ofte tymes here. 1600  
 But sith I see I stonde in this disioint, (411)  
 I wol answeere yow shortly, to the point.  
 Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I !  
 For I wol paye yow wel and redily  
 Fro day to day ; and, if so be I faille, 1605  
 I am your wyf ; score it up-on my taille,  
 And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may.  
 For, by my trouthe, I have on myn array,  
 And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.  
 And for I have bistowed it so weel 1610  
 For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye, (421)  
 As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.  
 Ye shal my Ioly body have to wedde ;  
 By god, I wol nat paye yow but a-bedde.  
 Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere ; 1615  
 Turne hiderward and maketh better chere.<sup>7</sup>  
 . This marchant saugh ther was no remedye,  
 And, for to chyde, it nere but greet folye,  
 Sith that the thing may nat amended be.

1584. E. axen ; *rest* axe. E. Hl. *om.* of. 1585. E. as ; Hl. *om.* ; *rest* ne.  
 1586. Hn. Hl. Tel ; Ln. Til ; *rest* Telle. 1592. Cm. defye ; *rest* deffie. 1595.  
 E. Hn. Cp. thedam. 1597. E. hadde. 1599. E. beele ; Cm. beel ; *rest*  
 bele. 1601. E. Hn. Hl. this ; *rest* suche, such. 1611. E. Hn. For ; *rest* To.

'Now, wyf,' he seyde, 'and I foryeve it thee ; 1620  
But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large ; (431)  
Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in charge.'  
Thus endeth now my tale, and god us sende  
Taling y-nough un-to our lyves ende. Amen.

**Here endeth the Shipmannes Tale.**

---

1622. E. that ; *rest* this. 1623. E. Hn. *om.* now. 1624. Cm. Talynge ;  
Hl. Talyng ; E. Hn. Pt. Taillynge ; Cp. L̄n. Toylyng (!). COLOPHON. *So* E.  
Hn. Cp. Pt.

## THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 13365-13382.)

-----♦-----

Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to the Shipman  
and to the lady Prioresse.

‘WEL seyde, by *corpus dominus*,’ quod our hoste, 1625  
‘Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,  
Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!  
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!  
A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a Iape!  
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape, 1630  
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!  
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.  
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,  
Who shal now telle first, of al this route, (10)  
Another tale;’ and with that word he sayde, 1635  
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,  
‘My lady Prioresse, by your leve,  
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,  
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde  
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde. 1640  
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?’  
‘Gladly,’ quod she, and seyde as ye shal here. (18)

*Explicit.*

---

HEADING. So E. (*with* Bihoold, murie, Hoost); Hn. Herke the myrie  
Wordes of the Worthy Hoost; Pt. And here bygynneth the prologe of the  
piores; Ln. Incipit prologus Priorisse. 1625. E. Hn. Hoost. 1626. E.  
Hn. moote; Ln. Hl. mot; *rest* mote. E. saille; cost. 1628. E. this; *rest*  
the. Hn. quaad; *rest* quade. 1642. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. sayde in this manere.

## THE PRIORESSES TALE.

## The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale.

*Domine, dominus noster.*

O LORD our lord, thy name how merveillous  
 Is in this large worlde y-sprad—quod she:—  
 For noght only thy laude precious 1645  
 Parfourned is by men of dignitee,  
 But by the mouth of children thy bountee  
 Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge  
 Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may, 1650  
 Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour  
 Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway, (10)  
 To telle a storie I wol do my labour;  
 Not that I may encresen hir honour;  
 For she hir-self is honour, and the rote 1655  
 Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules bote.—

O moder mayde! o mayde moder free!  
 O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses sighte,  
 That ravisdest doun fro the deitee,  
 Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in thalighte, 1660  
 Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,  
 Conceived was the fadres sapience, (20)  
 Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

---

HEADING. *From E. Hn. (Hn. proheme, for prologe). Cp. has—Here begynneth the tale of Alma redemptoris, the prioresses Tale. Prolog. Domine Dominus noster. 1651. E. om. whyte. 1660. Hl. Cp. the alight.*

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,  
 Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee 1665  
 Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;  
 For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,  
 Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,  
 And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,  
 To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere. 1670

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,  
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse, (30)  
 That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,  
 But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,  
 That can unnethes any word expresse, 1675  
 Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,  
 Gydeh my song that I shal of yow seye.

*Explicit.*

**Here biginneth the Prioresses Tale.**

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,  
 Amonges cristen folk, a Iewerye,  
 Sustened by a lord of that contree 1680  
 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,  
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye; (40)  
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,  
 For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood 1685  
 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were  
 Children an heep, y-comen of cristen blood,  
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yere  
 Swich maner doctrine as men used there,  
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede, 1690  
 As smale children doon in hir childhede.

---

1669. Hn. Slo. Ln. Hl. the] E. thurgh; Cp. Pt. to. E. Hn. of; *but the rest* thurgh. 1675. Cp. Pt. Hl. vnnethes; E. Hn. vnnethe. HEADING. *From* E. Hn. *has*—Here biggyneth the Prioresse tale of Alma redemptoris mater.

Among thise children was a widwes sone, (50)  
 A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,  
 That day by day to scole was his wone,  
 And eek also, wher-as he saugh thimage 1695  
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,  
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye  
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught  
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere, 1700  
 To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,  
 For sely child wol alday sone lere; (60)  
 But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,  
 Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,  
 For he so yong to Crist did reverence. 1705

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,  
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,  
 He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,  
 As children lerned hir antiphoner;  
 And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner, 1710  
 And herkned ay the wordes and the note,  
 Til he the firste vers coude al by rote. (70)

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,  
 For he so yong and tendre was of age;  
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye 1715  
 Texpounden him this song in his langage,  
 Or telle him why this song was in usage;  
 This preyde he him to construe and declare  
 Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he, 1720  
 Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have herd seye,  
 Was maked of our blisful lady free, (80)  
 Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye  
 To been our help and socour whan we deye.  
 I can no more expounde in this matere; 1725  
 I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

---

1695. Cp. Pt. Ln. the ymage. 1696. E. he hadde. 1701. E. Pt. forgate.  
 1702. Hn. Hl. alwey. 1719. E. Hl. often. 1725. E. Hn. na.

‘And is this song maked in reverence  
 Of Cristes moder?’ seyde this innocent ;  
 ‘Now certes, I wol do my diligence  
 To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went ; 1730  
 Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,  
 And shal be beten thryës in an houre, (90)  
 I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.’

His felaw taughte him homward prively,  
 Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote, 1735  
 And than he song it wel and boldely  
 Fro word to word, acording with the note ;  
 Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,  
 To scoleward and homward whan he wente ;  
 On Cristes moder set was his entente. 1740

As I have seyde, thurgh-out the Iewerye  
 This litel child, as he cam to and fro, (100)  
 Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye  
*O Alma redemptoris* ever-mo.

The swetnes hath his herte perced so 1745  
 Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,  
 He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,  
 That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,  
 Up swal, and seide, ‘o Hebraik peple, allas ! 1750  
 Is this to yow a thing that is honest,  
 That swich a boy shal walken as him lest (110)  
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,  
 Which is agayn your lawes reverence?’

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han conspyred 1755  
 This innocent out of this world to chace ;  
 An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,  
 That in an aley hadde a privee place ;  
 And as the child gan for-by for to pace,  
 This cursed Iew him hente and heeld him faste, 1760  
 And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

---

1733. Cp. Pt. Hl. *omit* for. 1741. E. Iuerie. 1743. Slo. Cp.  
 Pt. Ln. Hl. than ; E. Hn. *omit*. 1745. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. hath ; E. Hn.  
*omit*. 1754. Hl. your ; Pt. Ln. 3oure ; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. oure.



I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe (120)  
 Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.  
 O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,  
 What may your yvel entente yow availle? 1765  
 Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,  
 And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,  
 The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souted to virginitee,  
 Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon 1770  
 The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,  
 'Of which the grete evangelist, seint Iohn, (130)  
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon  
 Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,  
 That never, fleshly, wommen they ne knewe.' 1775

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night  
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght ;  
 For which, as sone as it was dayes light,  
 With face pale of drede and bisy thought,  
 She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght, 1780  
 Til finally she gan so fer espye  
 That he last seyn was in the Iewerye. (140)

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,  
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,  
 To every place wher she hath supposed 1785  
 By lyklihede hir litel child to finde ;  
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde  
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,  
 Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously 1790  
 To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place,  
 To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by. (150)  
 They seyde, 'nay' ; but Iesu, of his grace,  
 Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,  
 That in that place after hir sone she cryde, 1795  
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

1767. thonour] Cp. Pt. Ln. honour.  
 withinne.

1794. inwith] Cm. Cp. Hl.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude  
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might !  
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,  
 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright, 1800  
 Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,  
 He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe (160)  
 So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,  
 In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing, 1805  
 And hastily they for the provost sente ;  
 He cam anon with-uten taryng,  
 And herieth Crist that is of heven king,  
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,  
 And after that, the Iewes leet he binde. 1810

This child with pitous lamentacioun  
 Up-taken was, singing his song alway ; (170)  
 And with honour of greet processioun  
 They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.  
 His moder swowning by the bere lay ; 1815  
 Unnethe might the peple that was there  
 This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon  
 This provost dooth thise Iewes for to sterve  
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon ; 1820  
 He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.  
 Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve. (180)  
 Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,  
 And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent 1825  
 Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,  
 And after that, the abbot with his covent  
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste ;  
 And whan they holy water on him caste,

---

1805. Cp. Pt. wondren on ; Ln. wonderne of ; E. Hn. wondre vpon ; Hl. wonder vpon ; Cm. wonderyn vp-on. 1815. E. Hn. his ; *rest* the ; *see* l. 1817. 1817. Cm. Hl. the ; *rest* his. 1819. E. the ; *rest* thise, these. 1822. E. Cm. shal he ; Pt. he shal ; *rest omit* he. 1825. Hn. Hl. his ; *the rest* this. 1826. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. the masse ; Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit* the. 1827. Hl. thabbot.

Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was holy water, 1830  
And song—‘*O Alma redemptoris mater!*’

This abbot, which that was an holy man (190)  
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,  
This yonge child to coniure he bigan,  
And seyde, ‘o dere child, I halse thee, 1835  
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,  
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,  
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?’

‘My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,’  
Seyde this child, ‘and, as by wey of kinde, 1840  
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,  
But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde, (200)  
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,  
And, for the worship of his moder dere,  
Yet may I singe “*O Alma*” loude and clere. 1845

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,  
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;  
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,  
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe  
This antem verrailly in my deyinge, 1850  
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,  
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge. (210)

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn  
In honour of that blisful mayden free,  
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn; 1855  
And afterward thus seyde she to me,  
“My litel child, now wol I fecche thee  
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;  
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.”

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I, 1860  
His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,  
And he yaf up the goost ful softely. (220)  
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,  
His salte teres trikked down as reyn,

1850. Cm. Cp. Pt. anteme; Ln. antime; Hl. antym; Hn. antheme; E. Anthe-  
phen. 1864. E. Hn. Cm. trikked; Cp. Pt. stryked; Ln. strikked; Hl. striken.

And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde, 1865  
 And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement  
 Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,  
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,  
 And toke away this martir fro his bere, 1870  
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere  
 Enclosen they his litel body swete; (230)  
 Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also  
 With cursed Iewes, as it is notable, 1875  
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago;  
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,  
 That, of his mercy, god so merciabile  
 On us his grete mercy multiplye, (237)  
 For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen. 1880

**Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.**

1866. Cp. Hl. ben; Pt. Ln. bene; E. Hn. Cm. leyn. 1869. Hl. thay  
 went; *rest* been, ben, bene went. 1870. E. tooken; Hl. took; *rest* toke.  
 1871. E. temple; *rest* tombe, toumbe. 1873. E. alle for; *rest omit* alle.  
 1876. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. nys; E. Hn. Cm. is. COLOPHON. *From* E.

## PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

(F. 13621-13641.)



**Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to Chaucer.**

**W**HAN seyde was al this miracle, every man  
 As sobre was, that wonder was to se,  
 Til that our hoste Iapen tho bigan,  
 And than at erst he loked up-on me,  
 And seyde thus, 'what man artow?' quod he;      1885  
 'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,  
 For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.  
 Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have place;  
 He in the waast is shape as wel as I;      1890  
 This were a popet in an arm tenbrace      (11)  
 For any womman, smal and fair of face.  
 He semeth elvish by his contenance,  
 For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han sayd;      1895  
 Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anon;—  
 'Hoste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvel apayd,  
 For other tale certes can I noon,  
 But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.'  
 'Ye, that is good,' quod he; 'now shul we here      1900  
 Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere.'      (21)

*Explicit.*

---

HEADING. *From E.* E. Bihoold; Hoost. 1883. *Only Hl. inserts to*  
*before Iapen.* Cm. Cp. tho; E. to; Hn. he; Pt. Ln. Hl. *omit.* 1888. E.  
 murily; Hl. merily. 1897. Cp. Ln. Oste; E. Hn. Cm. Hoost. 1900. E.  
 ye; *rest we.*

## SIR THOPAS.



## Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas.

L ISTETH, lordes, in good entent,  
 And I wol telle verrayment  
 Of mirthe and of solas ;  
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent 1905  
 In bataille and in tourneyment,  
 His name was sir Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,  
 In Flaundes, al biyonde the see,  
 At Popering, in the place ; 1910  
 His fader was a man ful free, (10)  
 And lord he was of that contree,  
 As it was goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,  
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn, 1915  
 His lippes rede as rose ;  
 His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,  
 And I yow telle in good certayn,  
 He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun, 1920  
 That to his girdel raughte adoun ; (20)  
 His shoon of Cordewane.  
 Of Brugges were his hosen broun,  
 His robe was of ciclatoun,  
 That coste many a Iane. 1925

---

HEADING. *From E. (E. Heere). 1922. E. shoos; Hn. Pt. shoon; ; est  
 schoon, schon, schone.*

He coude hunte at wilde deer,  
 And ryde an hauking for riveer,  
 With grey goshawk on honde ;  
 Ther-to he was a good archeer,  
 Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,  
 Ther any ram shal stonde.

1930  
(30)

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,  
 They moorne for him, paramour,  
 Whan hem were bet to slepe ;  
 But he was chast and no lechour,  
 And sweet as is the bremble-flour  
 That bereth the rede hepe.

1935

And so bifel up-on a day,  
 For sothe, as I yow telle may,  
 Sir Thopas wolde out ryde ;  
 He worth upon his stede gray,  
 And in his honde a launcegay,  
 A long swerd by his syde.

1940  
(40)

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,  
 Ther-inne is many a wilde best,  
 Ye, bothe bukke and hare ;  
 And, as he priketh north and est,  
 I telle it yow, him hadde almost  
 Bitid a sory care.

1945

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,  
 The lycorys and cetewale,  
 And many a clowe-gilofre ;  
 And notemuge to putte in ale,  
 Whether it be moyste or stale,  
 Or for to leye in cofre.

1950  
(50)

1955

---

1927. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. for ; Cp. by þe ; Pt. Ln. for þe. 1931. E. Hn. Cm.  
 Hl. shal ; Cp. schulde ; Pt. shulde ; Ln. scholde. 1938. Hn. Hl. it fel ; Cm.  
 it fil. 1949. Cm. Hl. Bytid ; rest Bitidde, Betydde (!).

The briddes singe, it is no nay,  
 The sparhawk and the papeiay,  
     That Ioye it was to here ;  
 The thrustelcok made eek his lay,  
 The wodedowvre upon the spray 1960  
     She sang ful loude and clere. (60)

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge  
 Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,  
     And priked as he were wood :  
 His faire stede in his prikinge 1965  
 So swatte that men mighte him wringe,  
     His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so very was  
 For prikinge on the softe gras,  
     So fiers was his corage, 1970  
 That doun he leyde him in that plas (70)  
 To make his stede som solas,  
     And yaf him good forage.

‘O seinte Marie, *ben:dicite* !  
 What eyleth this love at me 1975  
     To binde me so sore?  
 Me dremed al this night, pardee,  
 An elf-queen shal my lemman be,  
     And slepe under my gore.

An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis, 1980  
 For in this world no womman is (80)  
     Worthy to be my make [T. 13722  
   In toune ; [T. 13722  
 Alle othere women I forsake, [T. 13723  
 And to an elf-queen I me take 1985  
     By dale and eek by doune !’

---

1959. E. hir ; *rest* his. 1960. E. a ; *rest* the. 1980. Hn. Cm. Hl. haue ;  
*rest* loue.



In-to his sadel he clamb noon,  
 And priketh over style and stoon  
 An elf-queen for tespye,  
 Til he so longe had riden and goon 1990  
 That he fond, in a privee woon, (90)  
 The contree of Fairye [T. 13731  
 So wilde ; [T. 13734  
 For in that contree was ther noon  
 That to him dorste ryde or goon, 1995  
 Neither wyf ne childe.

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,  
 His name was sir Olifaunt,  
 A perilous man of dede ;  
 He seyde, 'child, by Termagaunt, 2000  
 But-if thou prike out of myn haunt, (100)  
 Anon I slee thy stede [T. 13743  
 With mace. [T. 13743  
 Heer is the queen of Fayerye,  
 With harpe and pype and simphonye 2005  
 Dwelling in this place.'

The child seyde, 'al-so mote I thee,  
 Tomorwe wol I mete thee  
 Whan I have myn armour ;  
 And yet I hope, *par ma fay*, 2010  
 That thou shalt with this launcegay (110)  
 Abyen it ful soure ; [T. 13752  
 Thy mawe [T. 13752  
 Shal I percen, if I may,  
 Er it be fully pryme of day, 2015  
 For heer thou shalt be slawe.'

---

1989. *So* E. Hn. Cm.; Cp. Pt. Ln. to asprie; Hl. to spye. 1995. *Not in*  
*the best MSS.*; *supplied from* MS. Reg. 17 D. 15 (Tyrwhitt). 2000. Hl.  
 swar; *rest* seyde. 2004 Cp. Hl. fayerye; E. Hn. Cm. Fairye. 2005.  
 Hl. lute; *rest* pype or pipe. 2008. E. Hl. meete with; *rest omit* with.  
 2012. E. Hn. sowre; Cm. soure; *rest* sore. 2014. E. Cm. Thyn hauberk  
 shal I percen, if I may; *but the rest rightly omit* Thyn hauberk.

Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste ;  
 This geaunt at him stones caste  
     Out of a fel staf-slinge ;  
 But faire escapeth child Thopas, 2020  
 And al it was thurgh goddes gras, (120)  
     And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale  
 Merier than the nightingale,  
     For now I wol yow rounne 2025  
 How sir Thopas with sydes smale,  
 Priking over hil and dale,  
     Is come agayn to tounne.

His merie men comanded he  
 To make him bothe game and glee, 2030  
     For nedes moste he fighte (130)  
 With a geaunt with hevedes three,  
 For paramour and Iolitee  
     Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales, 2035  
 And gestours, for to tellen tales  
     Anon in myn arminge ;  
 Of romances that been royales,  
 Of popes and of cardinales,  
     And eek of love-lykinge.' 2040

They fette him first the swete wyn, (140)  
 And mede eek in a maselynn,  
     And royal spicerye ;  
 Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,  
 And lycorys, and eek comyn, 2045  
     With sugre that is so trye.

---

2020. E. Cm. sire ; *rest* child. 2025. Cp. Pt. Ln. *insert* For now, *which the rest omit.* 2027. hil] Hl. hul ; Cp. Pt. Ln. downe. 2028. E. Cm. comen. 2032. E. Hn. heuedes ; Hl. heedes ; Cm. hedis ; Cp. Pt. Ln. hedes. 2038. Hn. Pt. Hl. reales. 2041. E. sette ; *rest fette or fet.* E. Hn. Cm. *omit* the. 2044. E. And ; Hn. Cm. Hl. Of. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit* ll. 2042-4. 2046. E. *alone retains* so.

He dide next his whyte lere  
 Of clooth of lake fyn and clere  
     A breech and eek a sherte ;  
 And next his sherte an aketoun,                             2050  
 And over that an habergeoun                                 (150)  
     For percinge of his herte ;  
  
 And over that a fyn hauberk,  
 Was al y-wrought of Iewes werk,  
     Ful strong it was of plate ;                                 2055  
 And over that his cote-armour  
 As whyt as is a lily-flour,  
     In which he wol debate.  
  
 His sheeld was al of gold so reed,  
 And ther-in was a bores heed,                                 2060  
     A charbocle bisyde ;   (160)  
 And there he swoor, on ale and breed,  
 How that 'the geaunt shal be deed,  
     Bityde what bityde !'  
  
 His Iambeux were of quirboilly,                             2065  
 His swerdes shethe of yvory,  
     His helm of laton bright ;  
 His sadel was of rewel-boon,  
 His brydel as the sonne shoon,  
     Or as the mone light.   2070  
  
 His spere was of fyn ciprees,                                 (170)  
 That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,  
     The heed ful sharpe y-grounde ;  
 His stede was al dappel-gray,  
 It gooth an ambel in the way                                 2075  
     Ful softly and rounde   [T. 13815  
   In londe.   [T. 13815  
 Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit !  
 If ye wol any more of it,  
     To telle it wol I fonde.   2080

2058. Cm. wolde ; Hl. wold ; *rest* wol, wole, wil.   2061. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl.  
 by his syde ; Cp. him besyde.   2063. Cm. Cp. Ln. schulde.   2068. Pt.  
 Hl. rowel ; Cp. Ln. ruel.   2071. E. it was ; *rest omit* it.

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*, (180)  
Bothe knight and lady free,

And herkneþ to my spelle ;  
Of bataille and of chivalry,  
And of ladyes love-drury 2085  
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,  
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,  
Of Bevis and sir Gy,  
Of sir Libeux and Pleyndamour ; 2090  
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour (190)  
Of royal chivalry.

His gode stede al he bistrood,  
And forth upon his wey he glood  
As sparkle out of the bronde ; 2095  
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,  
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour,  
God shilde his cors fro shonde !

And for he was a knight auntrous,  
He nolde slepen in non hous, 2100  
But liggen in his hode ; (200)  
His brighte helm was his wonger,  
And by him baiteth his dextrer  
Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-self drank water of the wel, 2105  
As did the knight sir Percivel,  
So worthy under wede,  
Til on a day—— (207)

**Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.**

2084. E. batailles; Hn. bataille; *rest* bataile, batail, batell. 2089. E. Pt. and of; *rest omit* of. 2094. E. rood; *rest* glood, glod, glode. 2095. Hl. Pt. spark; Cp. Ln. sparcles. 2107. Hl. worthy; E. Hn. worly; Pt. worthely; Cm. Cp. Ln. *omit* ll. 2105-8. COLOPHON. *From* E. (E. Heere; Hoost).

## PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

(T. 13847-13875.)



'NO more of this, for goddes dignitee,'  
 Quod oure hoste, 'for thou makest me 2110  
 So wery of thy verray lewednesse  
 That, also wisly god my soule blesse,  
 Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche ;  
 Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche !  
 This may wel be rym dogerel,' quod he. 2115  
 'Why so?' quod I, 'why wiltow lette me  
 More of my tale than another man,  
 Sin that it is the beste rym I can?' (10)  
 'By god,' quod he, 'for pleynly, at a word,  
 Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord ; 2120  
 Thou doost nought elles but despendest tyme,  
 Sir, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme.  
 Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in geste,  
 Or telle in prose somewhat at the leste  
 In which ther be som mirthe or som doctryne.' 2125  
 'Gladly,' quod I, 'by goddes swete pyne,  
 I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,  
 That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose, (20)  
 Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.  
 It is a moral tale vertuous, 2130  
 Al be it told som-tyme in sondry wyse  
 Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse.  
 As thus ; ye woot that every evangelist,  
 That telleth us the peyne of Iesu Crist,  
 Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw dooth, 2135  
 But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,  
 And alle acorden as in hir sentence,

Al be ther in hir telling difference. (30)  
 For somme of hem seyn more, and somme lesse,  
 Whan they his pitous passioun expresse; 2140  
 I mene of Marke, Mathew, Luk and Iohn;  
 But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.  
 Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,  
 If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,  
 As thus, thogh that I telle som-what more 2145  
 Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,  
 Comprehended in this litel tretis here,  
 To enforce with the theffect of my matere, (40)  
 And thogh I nat the same wordes seye  
 As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye, 2150  
 Blameth me nat; for, as in my sentence,  
 Ye shul not fynden moche difference  
 Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte  
 After the which this mery tale I wryte.  
 And therfor herkneth what that I shal seye, 2155  
 And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.' (48)

*Explicit.*


---

2139. E. Hn. Ln. somme seyn; but Cp. Pt. Hl. omit 2nd seyn. 2141. Ed.  
 1561, Marke; E. Cp. Pt. Hl. Marke (?); Hn. Ln. Mark. 2144. E. Hl.  
 yow; rest ye. Cp. Ln. om. as. 2146. Cp. prouerbis. 2152. Cm. Cp.  
 Ln. Ye schal not fynden moche; E. Hn. Pt. Hl. Shul ye nowher fynden.  
 2154. E. murye; Hn. myry; Hl. litil; rest mery.

## THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

## Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Melibee.

§ 1. A yong man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, bigat up-on his wyf that called was Prudence, a doghter which that called was Sophie./

§ 2. Upon a day bifel, that he for his desport is went in-to the feeldes him to pleye. / His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast y-shette. / Thre of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes been entred, / and betten his wyf, <sup>2160</sup> and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places; / this is to seyn, in hir feet, in hir handes, in hir eres, in hir nose, and in hir mouth; and leften hir for deed, and wenten away. /

§ 3. Whan Melibeus retourned was in-to his hous, and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man, rendinge his clothes, gan to wepe and crye. /

§ 4. Prudence his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte him of his weping for to stinte; / but nat for-thy he gan to crye and wepen ever lenger the more. / <sup>2165</sup>

§ 5. This noble wyf Prudence remembered hir upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is The Remedie of Love, wher-as he seith; / 'he is a fool that destourbeth the moder to wepen in the deeth of hir child, til she have wept hir fille, as for a certain tyme; / and thanne shal man doon his diligence with amiable wordes hir to reconforte, and preyen hir of hir weping for to stinte.' / For which resoun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbond for to wepe and crye as for a certain space; / and whan she saugh hir tyme, she seyde him in this wyse. 'Allas, my lord,' quod she, 'why make ye your-self for to be lyk a fool? / For <sup>2170</sup>

HEADING. *From* E. 2159. inwith] Ln. Cp. within. 2160. Thre] Cp. Ln. Foure. E. hise. E. foes; Hn. Cp. Ln. Ill. foos. by the] E. Hn. om. the. 2162. E. erys. 2163. E. Hn. Ln. rentyng; rest rendyng.

sothe, it aperteneth nat to a wys man, to maken swiche a sorwe. /  
 Your doghter, with the grace of god, shal warisshe and escape. /  
 And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oghte  
 nat as for hir deeth your-self to destroye. / Senek seith: "the  
 wise man shal nat take to greet disconfort for the deeth of his  
 children, / but certes he sholde suffren it in pacience, as wel as he  
 2175 abyde the deeth of his owene propre persone." /

§ 6. This Melibeus answerde anon and seyde, 'What man,'  
 quod he, 'sholde of his weping stinte, that hath so greet a cause  
 for to wepe? / Iesu Crist, our lord, him-self wepte for the deeth  
 of Lazarus his freend.' / Prudence answerde, 'Certes, wel I woot,  
 attempree weping is no-thing defended to him that sorweful is,  
 amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. /  
 The Apostle Paul un-to the Romayns wryteth, "man shal reioyse  
 with hem that maken Ioye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen." /  
 But thogh attempree weping be y-graunted, outrageous weping  
 2180 certes is defended. / Mesure of weping sholde be considered,  
 after the lore that techeth us Senek. / "Whan that thy freend is  
 deed," quod he, "lat nat thyne eyen to moyste been of teres, ne to  
 muche drye; although the teres come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat  
 falle." / And whan thou hast for-goon thy freend, do diligence  
 to gete another freend; and this is more wysdom than for to wepe  
 for thy freend which that thou hast lorn; for ther-inne is no bote. /  
 And therefore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out  
 of your herte. / Remembre yow that Iesus Syrak seith: "a man  
 that is Ioyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florissing in  
 2185 his age; but soothly sorweful herte maketh his bones drye." / He  
 seith eek thus: "that sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man." /  
 Salomon seith: "that, right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth  
 to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth  
 sorwe to the herte." / Wherefore us oghte, as wel in the deeth  
 of our children as in the losse of our goodes temporels, have  
 pacience. /

§ 7. Remembre yow up-on the pacient Iob, whan he hadde  
 lost his children and his temporel substance, and in his body

2172. Cp. Ln. be warissshed; Hl. warischt be. 2173. Only E. Cp. Ln.  
*insert to before* destroye. 2176. E. Pt. stente. 2178, 2180. E. deffended.  
 2182. E. teeris. 2185. E. florissyng. 2187. E. Hl. Motthes; Pt. Cm.  
 mothes; Hn. moththes; Cp. moughtes. 2188. E. othere (*for our before*  
 goodes); *rest* oure, our. 2189. E. temporeel.



endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacioun ; yet seyde he thus : / “our lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath biraft it me ; right as our lord hath wold, right so it is doon ; blessed be the name of our lord.” / To thise foreseide thinges answerde <sup>2190</sup> Melibeus un-to his wyf Prudence : ‘Alle thy wordes,’ quod he, ‘been sothe, and ther-to profitable ; but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevously, that I noot what to done.’ / ‘Lat calle,’ quod Prudence, ‘thy trewe freendes alle, and thy linage whiche that been wyse ; telleth your cas, and herkneþ what they seye in conseiling, and yow governe after hir sentence. / Salomon seith : “werk alle thy thinges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente.”’ /

§ 8. Thanne, by the conseil of his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet callen a greet congregacioun of folk ; / as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of hise olde enemys reconciled as by hir semblaunt to his love and in-to his grace ; / and ther- <sup>2195</sup> with-al ther comen somme of hise neighebores that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. / Ther comen also ful many subtile flatereres, and wyse advocats lerned in the lawe. /

§ 9. And whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful wyse shewed hem his cas ; / and by the manere of his speche it semed that in herte he bar a cruel ire, redy to doon vengeance up-on hise foom, and sodeynly desired that the werre sholde biginne ; / but nathelees yet axed he hir conseil upon this matere. / A surgien, by licence and assent of swiche as <sup>2200</sup> weren wyse, up roos and un-to Melibeus seyde as ye may here. /

§ 10. ‘Sir,’ quod he, ‘as to us surgiens aperteneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher-as we been with-holde, and to our pacients that we do no damage ; / wherfore it happeth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien heleth hem bothe ; / wherfore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. / But certes, as to the warisshinge of your doghter, al-be-it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif businesse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and

2190. Cp. hap þoue [*read* yeuen] it me; Ln. yaue it me; Hl. it sent vnto me; *rest omit*; *only* Cp. Ln. Hl. *repeat* our lord. 2191. E. therwith; *rest* ther-to. 2196, 7. E. coomen. 2199. E. *only ins.* wel *after* semed. E. baar a cruel; foes. 2200. E. Cm. matiere; Hl. matier. 2201. E. Hl. to (*for* un-to).

2205 sound as sone as is possible.' / Almost right in the same wyse the  
 phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more : /  
 'That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so  
 shul men warisshe werre by vengeance.' / His neighebores, ful  
 of envye, his feyned freendes that semeden reconsiled, and his  
 flatereres, / maden semblant of weping, and empeireden and  
 agreggeden muchel of this matere, in preising greetly Melibee of  
 might, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despysinge the power  
 of his adversaries, / and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken  
 2210 him on his foos and biginne werre. /

§ 11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by  
 conseil of othere that were wyse, and seyde : / ' Lordinges, the nede  
 for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevy thing and  
 an heigh matere, / by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse  
 that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that  
 in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause ; / and  
 eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe ; /  
 for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this  
 2215 matere. / Wherefore, Melibeus, this is our sentence : we conseil  
 yow aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in  
 kepinge of thy propre persone, in swich a wyse that thou ne wante  
 noon espye ne wacche, thy body for to save. / And after that we  
 conseil, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that  
 they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende. / But certes, for  
 to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat  
 demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. / Wherefore we  
 axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. /  
 For the commune proverbe seith thus : " he that sone demeth,  
 2220 sone shal repente." / And eek men seyn that thilke Iuge is wys,  
 that sone understondeth a matere and Iuggeth by leyser. / For  
 al-be-it so that alle taryng be anoyful, algates it is nat to repreve  
 in yevynge of Iugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffi-  
 sant and resonable. / And that shewed our lord Iesu Crist by en-  
 sample ; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie  
 was brought in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with  
 hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he

---

2209, 2212, 2215. E. matiere. 2210. E. foes. 2216. E. *om.* 1st. ne. E.  
 persone (*for* body). 2217. E. sufficient; Cp. suffisaunt; Hn. Pt. suffisant.  
 2218. or] *so* E. Pt; *rest* ne. 2221. E. matiere. 2222. E. sufficient;  
 Cp. Pt. suffisaunt; Hn. Ln. suffisant. 2223. Cm. Pt. Hl. of (*for* with).

wolde answere, yet ne wolde he nat answere sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes. / And by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseille thee thing that shal be profitable.' /

§ 12. Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden : that, / right so as whyl that 2225 iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe ; and with loud voyes they cryden, 'werre ! werre !' /

Up roos tho oon of thise olde wyse, and with his hand made contenance that men sholde holden hem stille and yeven him audience. / 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'ther is ful many a man that cryeth "werre ! werre !" that woot ful litel what werre amounteth. / Werre at his biginning hath so greet an entree and so large, that every wight may entre whan him lyketh, and lightly finde werre. / But, certes, what ende that shal ther-of bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. / For sothly, whan that werre is 2230 ones bigonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his moder, that shal sterve yong by-cause of that ilke werre, or elles live in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. / And ther-fore, er that any werre biginne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacioun.' / And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resons, wel ny alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for to breken his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes for to abregge. / For soothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth. / For Iesus Syrak seith : that "musik in wepinge is anoyous thing ;" this is to seyn : as muche availleth to speken bifore folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe biforn him that wepeth. / And whan this wyse man saugh that him 2235 wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agayn. / For Salomon seith : "ther-as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke." / 'I see wel,' quod this wyse man, 'that the commune proverbe is sooth ; that "good conseil wanteth whan it is most nede."' /

§ 13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that

2225. E. *om.* han.                      2229. Hn. entree ; Cm. Pt. Hl. entre ; E. Cp. Ln. entryng.                      2235. Hn. Cm. Hl. a noyous ; E. anoyous ; Cp. annoyous ; Pt. noyous.                      Cm. doth ; *rest* it is (*badly*).                      2236. E. *om.* whan.                      E. and al (*for* al).                      2238. E. *om.* nede.

prively in his ere conseilled him certeyn thing, and conseilled him the contrarie in general audience. /

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anon he  
 2240 consented to hir conseilling, and fully affermed hir sentence. /  
 Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoop him for to wreken him on his foos, and to biginne werre, she in ful humble wyse, when she saugh hir tyme, seide him thise wordes : / ‘My lord,’ quod she, ‘I yow biseche as hertely as I dar and can, ne haste yow nat to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeveth me audience. / For Piers Alfonse seith : “who-so that dooth to that other good or harm, haste thee nat to quytten it ; for in this wyse thy freend wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger live in drede.” / The proverbe seith : “he hasteth wel that wysely can abyde ;” and in wikked haste is no profit.’ /

§ 14. This Melibee answerde un-to his wyf Prudence : ‘I purpose nat,’ quod he, ‘to werke by thy conseil, for many causes and resouns. For certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a  
 2245 fool ; / this is to seyn, if I, for thy conseilling, wolde chaungen things that been ordeyned and affermed by so manye wyse. / Secoundly I seye, that alle wommen been wikke and noon good of hem alle. For “of a thousand men,” seith Salomon, “I fond a good man : but certes, of alle wommen, good womman fond I never.” / And also certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it sholde seme that I hadde yeve to thee over me the maistrie ; and god forbede that it so were. / For Iesus Syrak seith ; “that if the wyf have maistrie, she is contrarious to hir housbonde.” / And Salomon seith : “never in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thy-self. For better it were that thy children aske of thy persone things that hem nedeth,  
 2250 than thou see thy-self in the handes of thy children.” / And also, if I wolde werke by thy conseilling, certes my conseilling moste som tyme be secree, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe ; and this ne may nocht be. / [For it is witen, that “the Ianglerie of wommen can hyden things that they witen nocht.” /

2241. E. foes; to him (*rest om. to*). 2242. Pt. guerdons; Cp. Ln. Hl. guerdouns; E. Hn. gerdons. 2247. E. Hn. foond; Cm. fond. 2248. E. weere. 2250. see] E. be; Pt. sese. 2251. E. *om.* also. 2252, 3. *Not in the MSS., but necessary; see ll. 2274, 2280, and see Note.*

Furthermore, the philosophre seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" and for thise resouns I ne owe nat usen thy conseil.']/

§ 15. Whanne dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked for to seye, thanne axed she of him licence for to speke, and seyde in this wyse. / 'My lord,' quod she, 'as to your firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered. For I seye, that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thing is chaunged; or elles whan the thing semeth otherweyes than it was bi'orn. / And more-over I <sup>2255</sup> seye, that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourne your emprise, and nathelees ye weyve to perfourne thilke same emprise by Iuste cause, men sholde nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer ne forsworn. / For the book seith, that "the wyse man maketh no lesing whan he turneth his corage to the bettre." / And al-be-it so that your emprise be establissed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce but yow lyke. / For the trouthe of thinges and the profit been rather founden in fewe folk that been wyse and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth and clatereth what that him lyketh. Soothly swich multitude is nat honeste. / As to the seconde resoun, where-as ye seyn that "alle wommen been wikke," save your grace, certes ye despysen alle wommen in this wyse; and "he that alle despyseth alle displeseth," as seith the book. / And Senek seith that "who-so wole have sapiencie, shal <sup>2260</sup> no man dispreise; but he shal gladly techen the science that he can, with-outen presumpcioun or pryde. / And swiche thinges as he nought ne can, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquere of lasse folk than him-self." / And sir, that ther hath been many a good womman, may lightly be preved. / For certes, sir, our lord Iesu Crist wolde never have descended to be born of a womman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke. / And after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, our lord Iesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deeth to lyve, appeered rather to a womman than to his apostles. / And though that Salomon seith, that "he <sup>2265</sup> ne fond never womman good," it folweth nat therfore that alle wommen ben wikke. / For though that he ne fond no good

2258. E. Cp. Ln. *om.* same.2260. E. (*only*) *om.* and he that *to* book.2261. E. Ln. *despise*; *rest* *dispreise*.2266. 7. E. Hn. *foond*; Cm. *fond*.

womman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe. / Or elles per-aventure the entente of Salomon was this ; that, as in sovereyn bountee, he fond no womman ; / this is to seyn, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee save god allone ; as he him-self recordeth in his Evaungelie. / For ther nis no creature so good that him ne  
 2270 wanteth somwhat of the perfeccioun of god, that is his maker. / Your thridde resoun is this : ye seyn that “if ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie and the lordshipe over your persone.” / Sir, save your grace, it is nat so. For if it were so, that no man sholde be conseilled but only of hem that hadden lordshipe and maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte. / For soothly, thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free chois, wheither he wole werke by that conseil or noon. / And as to your fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn that “the Ianglerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot noght,” as who seith, that “a womman can nat hyde that she woot ;” / sir, these wordes been understonde of  
 2275 wommen that been Iangleresses and wikked ; / of whiche wommen, men seyn that “three thinges dryven a man out of his hous ; that is to seyn, smoke, dropping of reyn, and wikked wyves ;” / and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that “it were bettre dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous.” / And sir, by your leve, that am nat I ; / for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience ; and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to hyde. / And soothly, as to your fifthe resoun, wher-as ye seyn, that “in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men ;” god woot, thilke resoun stant here  
 2280 in no stede. / For understond now, ye asken conseil to do wikkednesse ; / and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and your wyf restreyneth thilke wikked purpos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil ; / certes, your wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. / Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophre that seith, “in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe hir housbondes.” / And ther-as ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yet been ; and hir conseils ful  
 2285 hoolsome and profitable. / Eek som men han seyde, that “the

2271. E. *om.* that.

2274. E. wiste noght.

2277. E. Cp. Pt. *om.* of.

conseillinge of wommen is outhere to dere, or elles to litel of prys." /  
 But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and hir conseil  
 vile and noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good  
 womman, and ful discrete and wise in conseillinge. / Lo, Iacob,  
 by good conseil of his moder Rebekka, wan the benisoun of  
 Ysaak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle his bretheren. /  
 Iudith, by hir good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in  
 which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofernus, that hadde  
 it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it. / Abigail delivered  
 Nabal hir housbonde fro David the king, that wolde have slayn  
 him, and apaysed the ire of the king by hir wit and by hir good  
 conseilling. / Hester by hir good conseil enhaunced greetly the <sup>2290</sup>  
 peple of god in the regne of Assuerus the king. / And the same  
 bountee in good conseilling of many a good womman may men  
 telle. / And moreover, whan our lord hadde creat Adam our  
 forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse: / "it is nat good to been a  
 man allone; make we to him an help semblable to himself." /  
 Here may ye se that, if that wommen were nat goode, and hir  
 conseils goode and profitable, / our lord god of hevене wolde <sup>2295</sup>  
 never han wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather  
 confusioun of man. / And ther seyde ones a clerk in two vers:  
 "what is better than gold? Iaspere. What is better than Iaspere?  
 Wisdom. / And what is better than wisdom? Womman. And  
 what is better than a good womman? No-thing." / And sir, by  
 manye of othre resons may ye seen, that manye wommen been  
 goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable. / And therefore sir,  
 if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restore yow your doghter  
 hool and sound. / And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye <sup>2300</sup>  
 shul have honour in this cause.' /

§ 16. Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf  
 Prudence, he seyde thus: / 'I se wel that the word of Salomon is  
 sooth; he seith, that "wordes that been spoken discreetly by  
 ordinaunce, been honycombes; for they yeven swetnesse to the  
 soule, and hoolsomnesse to the body." / And wyf, by-cause of  
 thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete  
 sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in  
 alle thing.' /

§ 17. 'Now sir,' quod dame Prudence, 'and sin ye vouche-sauf

2291. E. (*only*) puts by . . conseil after greetly.

2297. S. E. wisdom.

to been governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye  
 2305 shul governe your-self in chesinge of your conseilours. / Ye shul  
 first, in alle your werkes, mekely biseken to the heighe god that  
 he wol be your conseilour; / and shapeth yow to swich entente,  
 that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. /  
 "At alle tymes thou shalt blesse god, and praye him to dresse thy  
 weyes"; and looke that alle thy conseils been in him for evermore. /  
 Seint Iame eek seith: "if any of yow have nede of sapience,  
 axe it of god." / And afterward thanne shul ye taken conseil in  
 your-self, and examine wel your thoghtes, of swich thing as yow  
 2310 thinketh that is best for your profit. / And thanne shul ye dryve  
 fro your herte three thinges that been contrariouse to good  
 conseil, / that is to seyn, ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse. /

§ 18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste  
 been with-uten ire, for manye causes. / The firste is this: he that  
 hath greet ire and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may  
 do thing that he may nat do. / And secoundely, he that is irous  
 2315 and wroth, he ne may nat wel deme; / and he that may nat wel  
 deme, may nat wel conseille. / The thridde is this; that "he that  
 is irous and wrooth," as seith Senek, "ne may nat speke but he  
 blame thinges;" / and with his viciouse wordes he stireth other  
 folk to angre and to ire. / And eek sir, ye moste dryve coveitise  
 out of your herte. / For the apostle seith, that "coveitise is rote  
 2320 of alle harmes." / And trust wel that a coveitous man ne can  
 noght deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his coveitise; /  
 and certes, that ne may never been accompliced; for ever the  
 more habundaunce that he hath of richesse, the more he desyareth. /  
 And sir, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastifnesse; for  
 certes, / ye ne may nat deme for the beste a sodeyn thought that  
 falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte. / For  
 as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this, that "he that  
 2325 sone demeth, sone repenteth." /

§ 19. Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; / for certes,  
 som thing that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do,  
 another tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie. /

§ 20. Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by  
 good deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, / thanne rede I  
 yow, that ye kepe it secree. / Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone,



but-if so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying,  
 your condicioun shal be to yow the more profitable. / For Iesus <sup>2330</sup>  
 Syrak seith : “ neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat  
 thy secree ne thy folie ; / for they wol yeve yow audience and  
 loking and supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn  
 absence.” / Another clerk seith, that “ scarsly shaltou finden any  
 persone that may kepe conseil secreely.” / The book seith : “ whyl  
 that thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy  
 prisoun : / and whan thou biwreyst thy conseil to any wight, he  
 holdeth thee in his snare.” / And therefore yow is bettre to hyde <sup>2335</sup>  
 your conseil in your herte, than praye him, to whom ye han  
 biwreied your conseil, that he wole kepen it cloos and stille. / For  
 Seneca seith : “ if so be that thou ne mayst nat thyn owene conseil  
 hyde, how darstou prayen any other wight thy conseil secreely to  
 kepe?” / But nathelees, if thou wene sikerly that the biwreying  
 of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in  
 the bettre plyt, thanne shaltou tellen him thy conseil in this wyse. /  
 First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees  
 or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn en-  
 tente ; / for trust wel, that comunly thise conseillours been flater-  
 eres, / namely the conseillours of grete lordes ; / for they enforcen <sup>2340</sup>  
 hem alwey rather to speken plesante wordes, enclynge to the  
 lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable. / And  
 therefore men seyn, that “ the riche man hath seld good conseil  
 but-if he have it of him-self.” / And after that, thou shalt considere  
 thy freendes and thyne enemys. / And as touchinge thy freendes,  
 thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most feithful and  
 most wyse, and eldest and most approved in conseilling. / And <sup>2345</sup>  
 of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil, as the caas requireth. /

§ 21. I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes  
 that been trewe. / For Salomon seith : that “ right as the herte of  
 a man delyteth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of  
 trewe freendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule.” / He seith also :  
 “ ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend.” / For certes, gold  
 ne silver beth nat so mucche worth as the gode wil of a trewe freend. / <sup>2350</sup>  
 And eek he seith, that “ a trewe freend is a strong deffense ; who-so  
 that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour.” / Thanne

2332. E. to (*after* loking) ; *rest* and.      2333, 7. E. sikerly ; *rest* secreely.  
 2336. E. hem ; *rest* him.      2339. E. wheither.      2340. E. comenli.      2343.  
 E. seeld.      2345. E. wiche. been] E. Hn. that been.

shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: "axe alwey thy conseil of hem that been wyse." / And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges, and been approved in conseillinges. / For the book seith, that "in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence." / And Tullius seith: that "grete thinges ne been nat ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by delivernesse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age, but  
 2355 certes they enforcen and encreesen day by day." / And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule. First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale; / for Salomon seith: "manye freendes have thou; but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseilour." / For al-be-it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be nede. / But loke alwey that thy conseilours have thilkethrecondicions that I have seyde bifore; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. / And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon conseilour allone; for somtyme bihoveth it  
 2360 to been counselled by manye. / For Salomon seith: "salvacoun of thinges is wher-as ther been manye conseilours." /

§ 22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counselled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. / First ye shul eschewe the conseilling of foles; for Salomon seith: "taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can nocht conseille but after his owene lust and his affeccoun." / The book seith: that "the propretee of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in him-self." / Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseilling of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone  
 2365 by flaterye than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. /

§ 23. 'Wherfore Tullius seith: "amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste is flaterye." And therefore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. / The book seith: "thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flateringe preiseres, than fro the egre

---

2355. E. Hn. fieble; Cp. Pt. Hl. feble; Cm. feblid; Ln. fiebled. E. encreescen. 2362. Hn. Cm. Hl. that; Pt. what; rest om. 2365. E. om. alle.

wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes."/ Salomon seith, that "the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents."/ He seith also, that "he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him."/ And therefore seith Tullius: "encline nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterye."/ And <sup>2370</sup> Caton seith: "avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce."/ And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseilling of thyne olde enemys that been reconciled./ The book seith: that "no wight retourneth sauflly in-to the grace of his olde enemy."/ And Isope seith: "ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had som-tyme werre or enmittee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil."/ And Seneca telleth the cause why. "It may nat be," seith he, "that, where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse."/ And therefore seith <sup>2375</sup> Salomon: "in thyn olde foo trust never."/ For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconciled and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never./ For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee more for his profit than for any love of thy persone; by-cause that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre./ And Peter Alfonse seith: "make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it in-to wikkednesse."/ And eek thou most eschewe the conseilling of hem that been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence; for peraventure they seyn it more for drede than for love./ And <sup>2380</sup> therefore seith a philosophre in this wyse: "ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth."/ And Tullius seith: "ther nis no might so greet of any emperour, that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede."/ Thou shalt also eschewe the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe; for they ne can no conseil hyde./ For Salomon seith: "ther is no privetee ther-as regneth dronkenesse."/ Ye shul also han in suspect the conseilling of swich folk as conseilte yow a thing prively, and conseilte yow the contrarie openly./ For <sup>2385</sup>

2368. E. chacche (*for* cacche). Pt. to cacchen innocentes withe; *rest* (*except* E.) *om.* with. 2370. E. Cp. Ln. the wordes; *rest om.* the. 2374. E. Hn. enemytee. 2377. E. chiere. 2378. E. nat winne; *rest* nat haue. 2380. E. doon; *rest* seyn. 2382. E. for drede; *rest om.* for. 2383. E. *om.* ne.

Cassidorie seith: that "it is a maner sleighte to hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly and werketh prively the contrarie." / Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseilling of wikked folk. For the book seith: "the conseilling of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude:" / And David seith: "blisful is that man that hath nat folwed the conseilling of shrewes." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseilling of yong folk; for hir conseil is nat rype. /

§ 24. Now sir, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul  
 2390 take your conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, /  
 now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after  
 the doctrine of Tullius. / In the examininge thanne of your  
 conseillour, ye shul considere manye thinges. Alderfirst thou shalt  
 considere, that in thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what  
 thing thou wolt have conseil, that verrey trouthe be seyde and  
 conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale. / For he that  
 seith fals may nat wel be conseilled, in that cas of which he lyeth. /  
 And after this, thou shalt considere the thinges that acorden to  
 that thou purposest for to do by thy conseillours, if resoun  
 2395 accorde therto; / and eek, if thy might may atteine ther-to; and  
 if the more part and the bettre part of thy conseillours acorde  
 ther-to, or no. / Thanne shaltou considere what thing shal  
 folwe of that conseilling; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profit, or  
 damage; and manye othere thinges. / And in alle these thinges  
 thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle othere thinges. /  
 Thanne shaltou considere of what rote is engendred the matere  
 of thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceyve and engendre. /  
 Thou shalt eek considere alle these causes, fro whennes they  
 2400 been sprongen. / And whan ye han examined your conseil as  
 I have seyde, and which partie is the bettre and more profitable,  
 and hast approved it by manye wyse folk and olde; / thanne  
 shaltou considere, if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it a  
 good ende. / For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde  
 biginne a thing, but-if he mighte parfourne it as him oghte. /  
 Ne no wight sholde take up-on hym so hevye a charge that he  
 mighte nat bere it. / For the proverbe seith: "he that to muche  
 2405 embraceth, distreyneth litel." / And Catoun seith: "assay to do  
 swich thing as thou hast power to doon, lest that the charge

2388. E. sherewes. 2396. or no] E. or noon; Pt. anoon. 2397. of  
 that] E. after hir. 2398. E. Thanne of; rest And in. 2399. E. matiere.  
 conceyve] E. Hl. consereue.

opresse thee so sore, that thee bihoveth to weyve thing that thou hast bigonne." / And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst parfourne a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than biginne. / And Piers Alphonce seith: "if thou hast might to doon a thing of which thou most repente thee, it is better 'nay' than 'ye';" / this is to seyn, that thee is better holde thy tonge stille, than for to speke. / Thanne may ye understonde by stronger resons, that if thou hast power to parfourne a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than biginne. / Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye <sup>2410</sup> any thing of which he is in doute, whether he may parfourne it or no. / And after, whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde bifore, and knowen wel that ye may parfourne youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende. /

§ 25. Now is it resoun and tyme that I shewe yow, whanne, and wherfore, that ye may change your conseil with-outen your repreve. / Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth. / For the lawe seith: that "upon thinges that newly bityden bihoveth newe conseil." / And Senek seith: "if thy conseil is comen to <sup>2415</sup> the eres of thyn enemy, change thy conseil." / Thou mayst also change thy conseil if so be that thou finde that, by errour or by other cause, harm or damage may bityde. / Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishoneste cause, change thy conseil. / For the lawes seyn: that "alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value." / And eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept. / <sup>2420</sup>

§ 26. And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly that it may nat be changed, for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked. /

§ 27. This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse. / 'Dame,' quod he, 'as yet in-to this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me as in general, how I shal governe me in the chesinge and in the with-holdinge of my conseilours. / But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde condescende in especial, / and telle me how lyketh yow,

2407, 2411. E. wheither.      2411. Hn. Cm. no; *rest* noon (non).      2413. Ill. conseil; *rest* conseilours.      2416. E. eeris.      2417. finde] E. mayst finde.      2420. E. Cp. if; *rest* if it.      2423. in-to] Cp. Ln. vnto.      E. couenablely.

or what semeth yow, by our conseilours that we han chosen in  
2425 our present nede.’/

§ 28. ‘My lord,’ quod she, ‘I biseke yow in al humblesse, that  
ye wol nat wilfully repleye agayn my resouns, ne distempre your  
herte thogh I speke thing that yow displese. / For god wot that,  
as in myn entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and  
for your profite eke. / And soothly, I hope that your benignitee  
wol taken it in pacience. / ‘Trusteth me wel,’ quod she, ‘that  
your conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly,  
be called a conseilling, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye ;/  
2430 in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse. /

§ 29. First and forward, ye han erred in thassemblinge of  
your conseilours. / For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk  
to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it  
hadde been nede. / But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your  
conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anoyous  
for to here. / Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only  
have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, /  
ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres,  
and enemys reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence with-  
2455 outen love. / And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with  
yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse ;/ the whiche  
three thinges been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and pro-  
fitable ;/ the whiche three thinges ye han nat anientissed or  
destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseilours, as yow  
oghte. / Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseilours  
your talent, and your affeccion to make werre anon and for to  
do vengeance ;/ they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye  
2440 been enclined. / And therefore han they rather conseilled yow to  
your talent than to your profit. / Ye han erred also, for it semeth  
that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by thise conseilours  
only, and with litel avys ;/ wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a  
nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours, and more deli-  
beracioun to parfourne your emprise. / Ye han erred also, for ye  
han nat examined your conseil in the forseide manere, ne in  
due manere as the caas requireth. / Ye han erred also, for ye  
han maked no divisioun bitwixe your conseilours ; this is to

2428. E. benyngnytee. 2438. E. om. thinges. Hl. om. hem. 2442.  
Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. yow ; E. it. 2445. E. nat maked ; rest om. nat.

seyne, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseilours ; / <sup>2445</sup>  
 ne ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and  
 wyse ; / but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and  
 enclnyed your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre ;  
 and ther been ye condescended. / And sith ye wot wel that men  
 shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, / and  
 therfore the conseils that been at congregaciouns and multitudes  
 of folk, ther-as men take more reward to the nombre than to the  
 sapience of persones, / ye see wel that in swiche conseilinges  
 foles han the maistrie.' / Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde : <sup>2450</sup>  
 'I graunte wel that I have erred ; / but ther-as thou hast told  
 me heer-biforn, that he nis nat to blame that chaungeth hise  
 conseilours in certein caas, and for certeine Iuste causes, / I  
 am al redy to change my conseilours, right as thow wolt  
 devyse. / The proverbe seith : that "for to do sinne is man-  
 nish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the  
 devel." /

§ 30. To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and  
 seyde : / 'Examineth,' quod she, 'your conseil, and lat us see <sup>2455</sup>  
 the whiche of hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow  
 best conseil. / And for-as-muche as that the examinacioun is  
 necessarie, lat us biginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens,  
 that first speken in this matere. / I sey yow, that the surgiens  
 and phisiciens han seyde yow in your conseil discretly, as hem  
 oughte ; / and in hir speche seyden ful wysly, that to the office of  
 hem aperteneth to doon to every wight honour and profit, and no  
 wight for to anoye ; / and, after hir craft, to doon greet diligence  
 un-to the cure of hem whiche that they han in hir governaunce. / <sup>2460</sup>  
 And sir, right as they han answered wysly and discretly, / right  
 so rede I that they been heighly and sovereynly guerdoned for  
 hir noble speche ; / and eek for they sholde do the more ententif  
 bisnesse in the curacioun of your doghter dere. / For al-be-it so  
 that they been your freendes, therfore shal ye nat suffren that they  
 serve yow for noht ; / but ye oghte the rather guerdone hem and  
 shewe hem your largesse. / And as touchinge the proposicioun <sup>2465</sup>

---

2447. E. partie ; *rest* part. 2455. E. answereth ; *rest* answerde (answered).  
 2456. E. resonably. 2457. E. matiere. 2459. E. seyde ; Hn. Cm. Hl.  
 seyden. 2460. E. in ; *rest* after. 2462. E. Hn. gerdoned ; *rest* guerdoned.  
 2465. E. Hn. Pt. gerdone.

which that the phisiciens entreteden in this caas, this is to seyn, /  
 that, in maladyes, that oon contrarie is warissed by another  
 contrarie, / I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text,  
 and what is your sentence.' / 'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'I under-  
 stonde it in this wyse :/ that, right as they han doon me a  
 2470 contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. / For right as  
 they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I  
 venge me upon hem and doon hem wrong ;/ and thanne have I  
 cured oon contrarie by another.'

§ 31. 'Lo, lo !' quod dame Prudence, 'how lightly is every  
 man enclnyed to his owene desyr and to his owene plesaunce !/  
 Certes,' quod she, 'the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat  
 han been understonden in this wyse. / For certes, wikkednesse  
 is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne  
 2475 wrong to wrong ; but they been semblable. / And therfore, o  
 vengeaunce is nat warissed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong  
 by another wrong ; / but everich of hem encreesceth and aggreg-  
 geth other. / But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde  
 been understonden in this wyse :/ for good and wikkednesse  
 been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suf-  
 fraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thinges. / But  
 certes, wikkednesse shal be warissed by goodnesse, discord by  
 2480 accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thinges. / And  
 heer-to accordeth Seint Paul the apostle in manye places. / He  
 seith : "ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for  
 wikked speche ;/ but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and  
 blesse him that seith to thee harm." / And in manye othere  
 places he amonesteth pees and accord. / But now wol I speke  
 to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of  
 2485 lawe and the wyse folk, / that seyden alle by oon accord as ye  
 han herd bifore ;/ that, over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your  
 diligence to kepen your persone and to warnestore your hous. /  
 And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful  
 avysely and with gret deliberacioun. / And sir, as to the firste  
 point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone ;/ ye shul  
 understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mekely and  
 2490 devoutly preyen biforn alle thinges, / that Iesus Crist of his grete

2466. E. encreesceden ; Hn. Ln. encreesceden ; Cp. Cm. encrecseden ; Pt.  
 encrecsden ; Hl. han schewed ; ed. 1561, entreteden. 2468. thilke] E. this.  
 2488. E. Ln. Hl. yow ; rest ye. 2491. E. grete ; rest om.



mercy wol han him in his proteccioun, and been his sovereyn helping at his nede. / For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly withouten the keping of our lord Iesu Crist. / To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith : / “if god ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth.” / Now sir, thanne shul ye committe the keping of your persone to your trewe freendes that been approved and y-knowe ; / and of hem shul ye axen help your persone for to kepe. 2495  
 For Catoun seith : “if thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy freendes ; / for ther nis noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe freend.” / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres, and have alwey in suspect hir companye. / For Piers Alfonse seith : “ne tak no companye by the weye of a straunge man, but-if so be that thou have knowe him of a lenger tyme. / And if so be that he falle in-to thy companye par-  
 aventure withouten thyn assent, / enquire thanne, as subtilly as 2500  
 thou mayst, of his conversacioun and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy wey ; seye that thou goost thider as thou wolt nat go ; / and if he bereth a spere, hold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, hold thee on the lift syde.” / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle swich manere peple as I have seyde bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe. / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, / that for any presumpcioun of your strengthe, that ye ne dispyse nat ne acounte nat the might of your adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keping of your persone for your presumpcioun ; / for every wys man dredeth 2505  
 his enemy. / And Salomon seith : “weleful is he that of alle hath drede ; / for certes, he that thurgh the hardinesse of his herte and thurgh the hardinesse of him-self hath to greet presumpcioun, him shal yvel bityde.” / Thanne shul ye evermore countreyte embusshements and alle espiaille. / For Senek seith : that “the wyse man that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes ; / ne he ne falleth in-to perils, that perils escheweth.” / 2510  
 And al-be-it so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in kepinge of thy persone ; / this is to seyn, ne be nat negligent to kepe thy persone, nat only fro

2492. E. sufficeantly ; Hn. suffisantly. 2495. y-knowe] E. knowe. 2499. E. taak ; compaignye. E. strange men ; Cp. strange man ; rest a strange man. 2500. he] E. he be. 2502. E. his lift ; rest the lift. 2510. E. he dredeth ; rest that dredeth. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. escheweth harmes ; rest om. 2513. fro] E. Hl. for.

thy gretteste enemys but fro thy leeste enemy. / Senek seith :  
 "a man that is wel avyсед, he dredeth his leste enemy." / Ovide  
 seith : that "the litel wesele wol slee the grete bole and the wilde  
 2515 hert." / And the book seith : "a litel thorn may prikke a greet  
 king ful sore ; and an hound wol holde the wilde boor." / But  
 nathelees, I sey nat thou shalt be so coward that thou doute ther  
 wher-as is no drede. / The book seith : that "somme folk han  
 greet lust to deceyve, but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved." /  
 Yet shaltou drede to been empoisoned, and kepe yow from the  
 companye of scorneres. / For the book seith : "with scorneres  
 2520 make no companye, but flee hir wordes as venim." /

§ 32. Now as to the seconde point, wher-as your wyse con-  
 seillours conselled yow to warnestore your hous with gret dili-  
 gence, / I wolde fayn knowe, how that ye understonde thilke  
 wordes, and what is your sentence. /

§ 33. Melibeus answerde and seyde, 'Certes I understande it  
 in this wise ; that I shal warnestore myn hous with toures, swiche  
 as han castelles and othere manere edifices, and armure and  
 artelleries, / by whiche thinges I may my persone and myn hous  
 so kepen and defenden, that myne enemys shul been in drede  
 myn hous for to approche.' /

§ 34. To this sentence answerde anon Prudence ; 'warnes-  
 toring,' quod she, 'of heighe toures and of grete edifices apper-  
 2525 teneth som-tyme to pryde ; / and eek men make heighe toures and  
 grete edifices with grete costages and with greet travaille ; and whan  
 that they been accompliced, yet be they nat worth a stree, but-if  
 they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. /  
 And understond wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison  
 that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise  
 goodes, is / that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with hise  
 neighbores. / For thus seith Tullius : that "ther is a maner  
 garnison that no man may venquisse ne disconfite, and that is, /  
 2530 a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple." /

§ 35. Now sir, as to the thridde point ; wher-as your olde and  
 wise conseillours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne  
 hastily proceden in this nede, / but that yow oghte purveyen and

---

2514. E. *omits* Senek . . . enemy ; *the rest have it.* 2517. E. *om.* so. 2523.  
 Cm. artelleries ; E. Hn. artelries ; Hl. artilleries ; Cp. Ln. archers. 2525, 6.  
 E. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. *omit* apperteneth . . . edifices ; Cp. Ln. *have it ; see note.*

apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun ;/ trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth./ For Tullius seith, “in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence.”/ Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring, / er 2535  
thow biginne, I rede that thou apparaille thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacioun./ For Tullius seith: that “long apparailing biforn the bataille maketh short victorie.”/ And Cassidorus seith: “the garnison is stronger when it is longe tyme avysed.”/

§ 36. But now lat us spoken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighebores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, / your olde enemys reconciled, your flatereres / that conseilled 2540  
yow certeyne thinges prively, and openly conseilleden yow the contrarie ;/ the yonge folk also, that conseilleden yow to venge yow and make werre anon./ And certes, sir, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil ;/ which conseillours been y-nogh reprevd by the resouns afore-seyd. / But nathelees, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. / 2545  
Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquire ;/ for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, / and how manye trespasours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye. / And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. / For Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth “consentinge,” this is to seyn ;/ who been they and how manye, and 2550  
whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. / And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your adversaries. / And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel known whiche folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse ;/ for trewely, alle tho that conseilleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your freendes. / Lat us now considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly your freendes as to your persone. / For al-be-it so that ye be mighty 2555

2537. E. Ln. The longe; *rest* that long. 2251. E. *om.* and whiche been they; *see* 2252. Hl. consentid; *rest* consenten (*for* consenteden); *see* 2252.

and riche, certes ye ne been nat but allone. / For certes, ye ne han no child but a doghter ; / ne ye ne han bretheren ne cosins germayns, ne noon other neigh kinrede, / wherfore that your enemys, for drede, sholde stinte to plede with yow or to destroye your persone. / Ye knowen also, that your riches moten been  
2560 dispended in diverse parties ; / and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth. / But thyne enemys been three, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede ; / and, though so were that thou haddest slayn of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther y-nowe to wreken hir deeth and to slee thy persone. / And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, / yet nathelees your kinrede nis but a fer  
2565 kinrede ; they been but litel sib to yow, / and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in that, hir condicioun is bet than youre. / Thanne lat us considere also if the conseilling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, whether it accorde to resoun ? / And certes, ye knowe wel “nay.” / For as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the Iuge that hath the Iuridiccioun of it, / whan it is graunted him to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attemprely,  
2570 as the lawe requireth. / And yet more-over, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth “consenting,” / thou shalt considere if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffyse to thy wilfulnesse and to thy conseillours. / And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that “nay.” / For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only swich thing as we may doon rightfully. / And certes, right-  
2575 fully ne mowe ye take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee. / Thanne mowe ye seen, that your power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with your wilfulnesse. / Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius clepeth “consequent.” / Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposest for to take is the consequent. / And ther-of folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre ; and othere damages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. / And as touchinge the  
2580 fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth “engendringe,” / thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys ; / and of the vengeance-takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of riches, as I seyde.

§ 37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth "causes," which that is the laste point, / thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. / 2585  
 The fer cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle thinges. / The neer cause is thy three enemys. / The cause accidental was hate. / The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. / The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. / The cause final was 2590  
 for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. / But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by coniectinge and by supposinge. / For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, / by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith: "selden or with greet peyne been causes y-broght to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne." /

§ 38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answeere as for no sothfastnesse. / For thapostle seith, that "the sciences and 2595  
 the Iuggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; / ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly." / Nathelees, by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and bileve / that god, which that is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by Iuste cause resonable. /

§ 39. Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, "a man that drinketh hony." / Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete 2600  
 temporel riches and delices and honours of this world, / that thou art dronken; and hast forgotten Iesu Crist thy creatour; / thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte. / Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith: / "under the hony of the godes of the body is hid the venim that sleeth the soule." / And Salomon seith, "if 2605  
 thou hast founden hony, ete of it that suffyseth; / for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe," and be nedey and povre. / And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde; / and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thou

2610 hast y-trespased. / Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist ; /  
 for certes, the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the  
 flesh, the feend, and the world, / thou hast suffred hem entre in-to  
 thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, / and hast nat  
 defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temp-  
 taciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places ; /  
 this is to seyn, the deedly sinnes that been entred in-to thyn  
 herte by thy fyve wittes. / And in the same manere our lord  
 Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemys been entred  
 2615 in-to thyn hous by the windowes, / and han y-wounded thy  
 doghter in the fore-seyde manere.' /

§ 40. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I see wel that ye enforce yow  
 muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal  
 nat venge me of myne enemys ; / shewing me the perils and the  
 yveles that mighten falle of this vengeance. / But who-so wolde  
 considere in alle vengeances the perils and yveles that mighte  
 sewe of vengeance-takinge, / a man wolde never take vengeance,  
 2620 and that were harm ; / for by the vengeance-takinge been the  
 wikked men dissevered fro the gode men. / And they that han  
 wil to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos, whan they  
 seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours.' / [And  
 to this answerde dame Prudence : 'Certes,' seyde she, 'I graunte  
 wel that of vengeance cometh muchel yvel and muchel good ; /  
 but vengeance-taking aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only  
 unto Iuges and unto hem that han Iuridiccoun upon the  
 trespassours.] / And yet seye I more, that right as a singular  
 2625 persone sinneth in takinge vengeance of another man, / right so  
 sinneth the Iuge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han  
 deserved. / For Senek seith thus : "that maister," he seith, "is good  
 that proveth shrewes." / And as Cassidore seith : "A man  
 dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth that it dis-  
 pleseth to the Iuges and sovereyns." / And another seith : "the  
 Iuge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes." / And Seint  
 Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un-to the  
 2630 Romayns : that "the Iuges beren nat the spere with-outen cause ;" /  
 but they beren it to punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for  
 to defende the gode men. / If ye wol thanne take vengeance of

---

2623, 2624. *Not in the MSS. Supplied by translating the French text.*  
 2626. E. Hn. disserued. 2629. E. om. And. 2631. E. Ln. om. for.

your enemys, ye shul retourne or have your recours to the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccion up-on hem ; / and he shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth.’ /

§ 41. ‘A!’ quod Melibee, ‘this vengeance lyketh me no-thing. / I bithenke me now and take hede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me to passe many a strong pas. / Now wol I assayen hir, trowinge, with goddes help, that she 2635 shal helpe me my shame for to venge.’ /

§ 42. ‘Certes,’ quod Prudence, ‘if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shul nat assaye fortune by no wey ; / ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hir, after the word of Senek : / for “things that been folily doon, and that been in hope of fortune, shullen never come to good ende.” / And as the same Senek seith : “the more cleer and the more shyning that fortune is, the more brotil and the sonner broken she is.” / Trusteth nat in hir, for she nis nat 2640 stidefast ne stable ; / for whan thow trowest to be most seur or siker of hir help, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee. / And wheras ye seyn that fortune hath norissed yow fro your childhede, / I seye, that in so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hir and in hir wit. / For Senek seith : “what man that is norissed by fortune, she maketh him a greet fool.” / Now thanne, sin ye desyre and 2645 axe vengeance, and the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and bifore the Iuge ne lyketh yow nat, / and the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perilous and uncertein, / thanne have ye noon other remedie but for to have your recours unto the sovereyn Iuge that vengeth alle vileinyes and wronges ; / and he shal venge yow after that him-self witnesseth, wher-as he seith : / “leveth the vengeance to me, and I shal do it.”’ / 2650

§ 43. Melibee answerde, ‘if I ne venge me nat of the vileinye that men han doon to me, / I sompne or warne hem that han doon to me that vileinye and alle othere, to do me another vileinye. / For it is writen : “if thou take no vengeance of an old vileinye, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee a newe vileinye.” / And also, for my suffrance, men wolden do to me so muchel vileinye, that I mighte neither bere it ne sustene ; / and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe. / For men seyn : “in muchel 2655 suffringe shul manye thinges falle un-to thee whiche thou shalt nat mowe suffre.”’ /

§ 44. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'I graunte yow that over muchel suffraunce nis nat good ; / but yet ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every persone to whom men doon vileinye take of it vengeance ; / for that aperteneth and longeth al only to the Iuges, for they shul venge the vileinyes and iniuries. / And therfore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyd above, been only understonden  
 2660 in the Iuges ; / for whan they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileinyes to be doon withouten punisshinge, / they sompne nat a man al only for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it. / Also a wys man seith : that "the Iuge that correcteth nat the sinnere comandeth and biddeth him do sinne." / And the Iuges and sovereyns mighten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and misdoeres, / that they sholden by swich suffrance, by proces of tyme, wexen of swich power and might, that they sholden putte  
 2665 out the Iuges and the sovereyns from hir places, / and atte laste maken hem lesen hir lordshipes. /

§ 45. But lat us now putte, that ye have leve to venge yow. / I seye ye been nat of might and power as now to venge yow. / For if ye wole maken comparisoun un-to the might of your adversaries, ye shul finde in manye thinges, that I have shewed yow er this, that hir condicioun is bettre than youres. / And therefore  
 2670 seye I, that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient. /

§ 46. Forther-more, ye knowen wel that, after the comune sawe, "it is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a strengre or a more mighty man than he is him-self ; / and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril ; / and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie." / And therefore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. / For Salomon seith : "it is a greet worship to a man to kepen  
 2675 him fro noyse and stryf." / And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, / studie and bisie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. / For Senek seith : that "he putteth him in greet peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he is him-self." / And Catoun seith : "if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee anoy or grevaunce, suffre him ; / for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and  
 2680 helpe." / Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to



venge yow. / I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance-takinge, / and make yow for to encline to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. / First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene persone, / for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyde yow heer-biform. / For the poete seith, that "we oghte paciently taken <sup>2685</sup> the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thinken and consideren that we han deserved to have hem." / And Seint Gregorie seith : that "whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, / the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym ; / and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevy and grevous, / in-so-muche semeth his peyne the lighter and the esier un-to him." / Also ye owen <sup>2690</sup> to encline and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles : / "Iesu Crist," he seith, "hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him ; / for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous word out of his mouth : / whan men cursed him, he cursed hem noght ; and whan men betten him, he manaced hem noght." / Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-ouen hir desert or gilt, / oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. / <sup>2695</sup> Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, / consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel wyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. / And the Ioye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle : / "the Ioye of god," he seith, "is perdurable," that is to seyn, everlastinge. / Also troweth and <sup>2700</sup> bileveth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience. / For Salomon seith : that "the doctrine and the wit of a man is knowen by pacience." / And in another place he seith : that "he that is pacient governeth him by greet prudence." / And the same Salomon seith : "the angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempred hem and stilleth." / He seith also : "it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong ; / and he that <sup>2705</sup> may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than

he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees." / And therefore seith seint Iame in his epistle : that "paciencie is a greet vertu of perfeccioun." /

§ 47. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that paciencie is a greet vertu of perfeccioun ;/ but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken ;/ ne I nam nat of  
2710 the nombre of right parfite men, / for myn herte may never been in pees un-to the tyme it be venged. / And al-be-it so that it was greet peril to myne enemys, to do me a vileinye in takinge vengeance up-on me, / yet token they noon hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wikked wil and hir corage. / And therefore, me thinketh men oghten nat repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, / and though I do a greet excesse, that is to seyn,  
2715 that I venge oon outrage by another.' /

§ 48. 'A !' quod dame Prudence, 'ye seyn your wil and as yow lyketh ;/ but in no caas of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen him. / For Cassidore seith : that "as yvel doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage." / And therefore ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage. / And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of your  
2720 adversaries in other maner than right comandeth, ye sinnen ;/ and therefore seith Senek : that "a man shal never vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse." / And if ye seye, that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fighting by fighting, / certes ye seye sooth, whan the defense is doon anon with-outen intervalle or with-outen taryng or delay, / for to defenden him and nat for to vengen him. / And it bihoveth that a man putte swich  
2725 attemperance in his defence, / that men have no cause ne matere to repreven him that defendeth him of excesse and outrage ; for elles were it agayn resoun. / Pardee, ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow ;/ and so seweth it that ye han no wil to do your dede attemprely. / And therefore, me thinketh that paciencie is good. For Salomon seith : that "he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm." /

§ 49. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, that whan

2724-7. E. defenden, deffense.  
seweth,

2728. E. sheweth ; Ill. semeth ; *rest*

a man is impacient and wroth, of that that toucheth him noight and that aperteneth nat un-to him, though it harme him, it is no wonder. / For the lawe seith : that “he is coupable that entre- 2730  
metteth or medleth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat un-to him.” / And Salomon seith : that “he that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lyk to him that taketh an hound by the eres.” / For right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eres is outhewhyle biten with the hound, / right in the same wyse is it resoun that he have harm, that by his impacience medleth him of the noyse of another man, wher-as it aperteneth nat un-to him. / But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disese, toucheth me right ny. / And therefore, though 2735  
I be wroth and impacient, it is no merueille. / And savege your grace, I can nat seen that it mighte greetly harme me though I toke vengeance ; / for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemys been. / And wel knowen ye, that by moneye and by havinge grete possessions been all the thinges of this world governed. / And Salomon seith : that “alle thinges obeyen to moneye.” / 2740

§ 50. Whan Prudence hadde herd hir housbonde avanten him of his richesse and of his moneye, dispreisinge the power of hise adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wyse : / ‘certes, dere sir, I graunte yow that ye been rich and mighty, / and that the richesces been goode to hem that han wel y-geten hem and wel conne usen hem. / For right as the body of a man may nat liven with-oute the soule, namore may it live with-uten temporel goodes. / And by richesces may a man gete him grete freendes. / 2745  
And therefore seith Pamphilles : “if a net-herdes doghter,” seith he, “be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde ; / for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir.” / And this Pamphilles seith also : “if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt find a greet nombre of felawes and freendes. / And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewel freendshipe and felaweshipe ; / for thou shalt be allone with-uten any companye, but-if it be the companye of povre folk.” / And yet seith this 2750  
Pamphilles moreover : that “they that been thralle and bonde of

2744. E. temporeel. 2745. by] E. for. 2746. All Pamphilles. Hn. Hl. which she . . housbonde ; *rest om.* 2750. E. Hn. al alloone ; *rest omit al.*

linage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the richesesses."/ And right so as by richesesses ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverte come ther manye harmes and yveles. / For greet poverte constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. / And therfore clepeth Cassidore poverte "the moder of ruine," / that is to seyn,  
 2755 the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge down. / And therfore seith Piers Alfonc: "oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is / whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverte to eten the almesse of his enemy." / And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes; he seith: that "sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger; / for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger; / and if he axe, he dyeth  
 2760 for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth him to axe." / And therfore seith Salomon: that "bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverte." / And as the same Salomon seith: "bette it is to dye of bitter death than for to liven in swich wyse." / By this resons that I have seid un-to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, / I graunte yow that richesesses been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho richesesses. / And therfore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, and how ye shul bere yow in gaderinge of richesesses, and in  
 2765 what manere ye shul usen hem. /

§ 51. First, ye shul geten hem with-uten greet desyr, by good leyser sokingly, and nat over hastily. / For a man that is to desyringe to gete richesesses abaundoneth him first to thefte and to alle other yveles. / And therfore seith Salomon: "he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent." / He seith also: that "the richesse that hastily cometh to a man, sone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; / but that richesse that  
 2770 cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and multiplyeth." / And sir, ye shul geten richesesses by your wit and by your travaille un-to your profit; / and that with-uten wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone. / For the lawe seith: that "ther maketh no man himselven riche, if he do harm to another wight; /" this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make him-self riche un-to the harm of another persone. / And Tullius seith: that "no sorwe ne no drede of death, ne no-thing  
 2775 that may falle un-to a man / is so muchel agayns nature, as a man to

encressen his owene profit to the harm of another man. / And though the grete men and the mighty men geten riches more lightly than thou, / yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit ; for thou shalt in alle wyse flee ydelnesse." / For Salomon seith : that "ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles." / And the same Salomon seith : that "he that travailleth and bisieth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed ; / but he that is ydel and casteth him to no bisnesse ne occupacioun, shal falle in-to poverte, and dye for hunger." / And he that is ydel and slow can never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. / For ther is a versifiour seith : that "the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold ; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete." / For these causes seith Caton : "waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe ; for over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices." / And therefore seith seint Ierome : "doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne finde yow nat unoccupied." / For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un-to his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes." /

§ 52. Thanne thus, in getinge riches, ye mosten flee ydelnesse. / And afterward, ye shul use the riches, whiche ye have geten by your wit and by your travaille, / in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to fool-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender. / For right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and chincherye, / in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largely. / And therefore seith Caton : "use," he seith, "thy riches that thou hast geten / in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chinche ; / for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs." / He seith also : "the goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure," that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably ; / for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, / whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man. / I seye thanne, that ye shul fleen avarice ; / usinge your riches in swich manere, that men seye nat that your riches been y-buried, / but that ye have hem in

2785. E. goodes ; *rest* goode dedes.  
Hl. chyncherye.

2790. E. chyngerie ; Hn. Cm. Ft.

2800 your might and in your weeldinge. / For a wys man repreveþ the  
 avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers : / “wherto and why  
 burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel  
 that nedes moste he dye ; / for deeth is the ende of every man  
 as in this present lyf.” / And for what cause or enchesoun  
 Ioyneþ he him or knitteth he him so faste un-to hise goodes, /  
 2805 from hise goodes ; / and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan  
 he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with him out of this world. /  
 And ther-fore seith seint Augustin : that “the avaricious man  
 is likned un-to helle ; / that the more it swelweth, the more  
 desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure.” / And as wel as ye wolde  
 eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, / as wel  
 sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men  
 2810 calle yow nat fool-large. / Therfore seith Tullius : “the goodes,”  
 he seith, “of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos  
 but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee ;” /  
 that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede ; / “ne  
 thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes  
 goodes.” / Afterward, in getinge of your riches and in usinge  
 hem, ye shul alwey have three thinges in your herte ; / that is to  
 2815 seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. / First, ye shul  
 have god in your herte ; / and for no riches ye shullen do no-  
 thing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour  
 and maker. / For after the word of Salomon : “it is bettre  
 to have a litel good with the love of god, / than to have muchel good  
 and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god.” / And the  
 prophete seith : that “bettre it is to been a good man and have  
 2820 litel good and tresour, / than to been holden a shrewe and have  
 grete riches.” / And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde  
 alwey doon your bisnesse to gete yow riches, / so that ye gete  
 hem with good conscience. / And thapostle seith : that “ther nis  
 thing in this world, of which we sholden have so greet Ioye as  
 whan our conscience bereth us good witness.” / And the wyse  
 man seith : “the substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is  
 2825 nat in mannes conscience.” / Afterward, in getinge of your  
 riches, and in usinge of hem, / yow moste have greet bisnesse  
 and greet diligence, that your goode name be alwey kept and con-  
 served. / For Salomon seith : that “bettre it is and more it avail-  
 leth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete riches.” /

And therfore he seith in another place : “ do greet diligence,” seith Salomon, “ in keeping of thy freend and of thy gode name ; / for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious.” / And certes he sholde nat be called a gentil man, <sup>2830</sup> that after god and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne dooth his diligence and businesse to kepen his good name. / And Cassidore seith : that “ it is signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desyreth to han a good name.” / And therfore seith seint Augustin : that “ ther been two thinges that arn necessarie and nedefulle, / and that is good conscience and good loos ; / that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owene persone inward, and good loos <sup>2835</sup> for thy neighebores outward.” / And he that trusteth him so muchel in his gode conscience, / that he displeseth and setteth at noght his gode name or loos, and rekketh noght though he kepe nat his gode name, nis but a cruel cherl. /

§ 53. Sire, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getinge riches, and how ye shullen usen hem ; / and I se wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre riches, ye wole moeve werre and bataille. / I conseilte yow, that ye biginne no werre in trust of your riches ; for they ne suffysen noght werres to mayntene. / <sup>2840</sup> And therfore seith a philosopre : “ that man that desyreth and wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce ; / for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship and victorie.” / And Salomon seith : that “ the gretter riches that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath.” / And dere sire, al-be-it so that for your riches ye mowe have muchel folk, / yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good, to biginne werre, where-as ye mowe in other manere have pees, un-to your worship and profit. / For the victories of batailles that been in <sup>2845</sup> this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or multitude of the peple ne in the vertu of man ; / but it lyth in the wil and in the hand of our lord god almighty. / And therfore Iudas Machabeus, which was goddes knight, / whan he sholde fighte agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre, and a gretter multitude of folk and stronger than was this peple of Machabee, / yet he reconforted his litel companye, and seyde right in this wyse : / “ als lightly,” quod <sup>2850</sup> he, “ may our lord god almighty yeve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk ; / for the victorie of bataille cometh nat by the grete

2837. E. crueel.

2852. E. Hn. a bataille ; *rest om. a.* E. comth.

nombre of peple, / but it cometh from our lord god of hevене." /  
 And dere sir, for as muchel as there is no man certein, if he be  
 worthy that god yeve him victorie, [namore than he is certein  
 whether he be worthy of the love of god] or naught, after that  
 Salomon seith, / therfore every man sholde greetly drede werres to  
 2855 biginne. / And by-cause that in batailles fallen manye perils, / and  
 happeth outhere-while, that as sone is the grete man sleyn as the  
 litel man ; / and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges,  
 "the dedes of batailles been aventureuse and nothing certeyne ;" /  
 for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another. / And for  
 ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschewe  
 2860 werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly. / For Salomon seith :  
 "he that loveth peril shal falle in peril." /

§ 54. After that Dame Prudence hadde spoken in this manere,  
 Melibee answerde and seyde, / ' I see wel, dame Prudence, that  
 by your faire wordes and by your resons that ye han shewed me,  
 that the werre lyketh yow no-thing ; / but I have nat yet herd your  
 conseil, how I shal do in this nede.' /

§ 55. ' Certes,' quod she, ' I conseilte yow that ye accorde  
 2865 with youre adversaries, and that ye haue pees with hem. / For  
 seint Iame seith in hise epistles : that "by concord and pees the  
 smale richesses wexen grete, / and by debaat and discord the grete  
 richesses fallen down." / And ye knowen wel that oon of the  
 gretteste and most sovereyn thing, that is in this world, is unitee  
 and pees. / And therfore seyde oure lord Iesu Crist to hise  
 apostles in this wyse : / "wel happy and blessed been they that  
 2870 loven and purchacen pees ; for they been called children of god." /  
 ' A !' quod Melibee, ' now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour  
 ne my worshipe. / Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han  
 bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage ; / and ye see wel  
 that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat  
 to be reconsiled. / Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and  
 obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy ? / For sothe, that were  
 2875 nat my worship. / For right as men seyn, that "over-greet homli-  
 nesse engendreth dispreysinge," so fareth it by to greet humylitee  
 or mekenesse.' /

---

2853. E. come ; *rest* cometh.      2854. E. he be ; *rest* it be. *I supply from*  
 namore to god ; see Note.      2866. seint Iame] F. text, Seneques.      2872.  
 E. bryge ; Hn. Cm. Hl. brige ; Cp. Pt. brigge (F. text, *brigue*).



§ 56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, / ‘certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon ; / ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. / And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconsiliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyde amis. / 2885  
For the wyse man seith : “the dissensioun biginneth by another man, and the reconsiling bi-ginneth by thy-self.” / And the prophete seith : “flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse ; / seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is.” / Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow ; / for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted, that ye wol do no-thing for me. / And Salomon seith : “he that hath over- 2885  
hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistyde.” /

§ 57. Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wyse, / ‘dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displeasid of thinges that I seye ; / for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder ; / and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. / 2890  
Therefore the prophete seith : that “troubled eyen han no cleer sighte.” / But seyeth and conseileth me as yow lyketh ; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre ; / and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the more holden to love yow and to preyse yow. / For Salomon seith : that “he that repreveth him that doth folye, / he shal finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes.” / 2895

§ 58. Thanne seide dame Prudence, ‘I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. / For Salomon seith : “he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewing him semblant of wratthe, / than he that supporteth him and preyseth him in his misdoinge, and laugheth at his folye.” / And this same Salomon seith afterward : that “by the sorweful visage of a man,” that is to seyn, by the sory and hevy countenance of a man, / “the fool correcteth and amendeth him-self.” / 2900

§ 59. Thanne seyde Melibee, ‘I shal nat conne answeere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen. / Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfille and parfourne it.’ /

2893. to preyse] E. om. to.

2898. E. peyseth (*for* preyseth).

§ 60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, / 'I conseilte yow,' quod she, 'aboven alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwene god and yow; / and beth reconciled un-to him  
 2905 and to his grace. / For as I have seyde yow heer-biforn, god hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for your sinnes. / And if ye do as I sey yow, god wol sende your adversaries un-to yow, / and maken hem fallen at your feet, redy to do your wil and your comandements. / For Salomon seith: "whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, / he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him  
 2910 of pees and of grace." / And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries in privee place; / for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your assent. / And thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseilte yow the more seurlly.' /

§ 61. 'Dame,' quod Melibee, 'dooth your wil and your lykinge, /  
 2915 for I putte me hoolly in your disposicioun and ordinaunce.' /

§ 62. Thanne Dame Prudence, whan she saugh the gode wil of her housbonde, delibered and took avys in hir-self, / thinkinge how she mighte bringe this nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende. / And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for these adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee place, / and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, / and the  
 2920 grete harmes and perils that been in werre; / and seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentaunce / of the iniurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter. /

§ 63. And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, / they weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so greet Ioye of hir, that wonder was to telle. / 'A! lady!' quod they, 'ye han shewed un-to us "the blessinge of swetnesse," after the  
 2925 sawe of David the prophete; / for the reconcilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, / but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humilitee, / ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us. / Now see we wel that the science and the conninge of Salomon is ful trewe; / for he seith: that "swete wordes multiplen and encresen freendes, and maken shrewes to  
 2930 be debonaire and meke." /

---

2913. E. seurely; Hn. Cp. Hl. seurlly. 2921. Cm. oughte; Cp. Hl. aughte; rest oughten. 2924. Hl. surprised; Cm. suppreysed; rest suppressed.

§ 64. 'Certes,' quod they, 'we putten our dede and al our matere and cause al hoolly in your goode wil ; / and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. / And therefore, dere and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowen, / that it lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes ; / for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure ; / so ferforth, that we be nat of power <sup>2935</sup> to maken hise amendes. / And therefore we oblige and binden us and our freendes to doon al his wil and hise comandements. / But peraventure he hath swich hevynesse and swich wratthe to us-ward, by-cause of our offence, / that he wole enioyne us swich a peyne as we mowe nat bere ne sustene. / And therefore, noble lady, we biseke to your wommanly pitee, / to taken swich avyse- <sup>2940</sup> ment in this nede, that we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our folye.' /

§ 65. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'it is an hard thing and right perilous, / that a man putte him al outrely in the arbitracioun and Iuggement, and in the might and power of hise enemys. / For Salomon seith : "leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn ; I seye," quod he, "ye peple, folk, and governours of holy chirche, / to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy brother / <sup>2945</sup> ne yeve thou never might ne maistrie of thy body, whyl thou livest." / Now sithen he defendeth, that man shal nat yeven to his brother ne to his freend the might of his body, / by a strengre resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven him-self to his enemy. / And natheles I conseilte you, that ye mistruste nat my lord. / For I woot wel and knowe verraily, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteys, / and nothing desyrous ne coveitous of <sup>2950</sup> good ne richesse. / For ther nis no-thing in this world that he desyreth, save only worship and honour. / Forther-more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing doon in this nede with-outen my conseil. / And I shal so werken in this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been reconciled un-to us.' /

§ 66. Thanne seyden they with o vois, 'worshipful lady, we putten us and our goodes al fully in your wil and disposicioun ; / <sup>2955</sup> and been redy to comen, what day that it lyke un-to your noblesse to limite us or assigne us, / for to maken our obligacioun and bond as strong as it lyketh un-to your goodnesse ; / that we mowe fulfillle the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee.' /

§ 67. Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of  
 thise men, she bad hem goon agayn prively; / and she retourned  
 to hir lord Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries  
 2960 ful repentant, / knowleching ful lowely hir sinnes and trespas,  
 and how they were redy to suffren al peyne, / requiringe and  
 preyinge him of mercy and pitee. /

§ 68. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'he is wel worthy to have  
 pardoun and foryifnesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat his sinne, /  
 but knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence. /  
 For Senek seith: "ther is the remissioun and foryifnesse, where-  
 2965 as confessioun is;" / for confession is neighebre to innocence. /  
 And he seith in another place: "he that hath shame for his  
 sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy remissioun." And therefore I  
 assente and conferme me to have pees; / but it is good that we  
 do it nat with-outen the assent and wil of our freendes.' /

§ 69. Thanne was Prudence right glad and Ioyeful, and seyde, /  
 2970 'Certes, sir,' quod she, 'ye han wel and goodly answered. / For  
 right as by the conseil, assent, and help of your freendes, ye han  
 been stired to venge yow and maken werre, / right so with-outen  
 hir conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with your  
 adversaries. / For the lawe seith: "ther nis no-thing so good  
 by wey of kinde, as a thing to been unbounde by him that it was  
 y-bounde.'" /

§ 70. And thanne dame Prudence, with-outen delay or taryinge,  
 sente anon hir messages for hir kin, and for hir olde freendes  
 whiche that were trewe and wyse, / and tolde hem by ordre, in the  
 presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is aboven expressed and  
 2975 declared; / and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and  
 conseil, what best were to doon in this nede. / And whan  
 Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the  
 forseide matere, / and hadden examined it by greet businesse and  
 greet diligence, / they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; /  
 and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries  
 2980 to foryifnesse and mercy. /

§ 71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir  
 lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, / accorde with hir  
 wille and hir entencioun, / she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and

---

2967. E. Cm. *omit from* And he *to* remissioun; Hn. Cp. Hl. *om. only* is  
 worthy remissioun, *which occurs in* Pt., *where* Ln. *has* is worthi haue mercy.  
 E. *corforme (sic)*; *rest conferme.* 2976. E. *om.* hem.

seyde : / ‘ther is an old proverbe,’ quod she, ‘seith : that “the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it ; / and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til to-morwe.” / And therfore I conseille that ye <sup>2985</sup> sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, / un-to your adversaries ; tellinge hem, on your bihalve, / that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, / that they shape hem, with-outen delay or taryng, to comen un-to us.’ / Which thing parfourned was in dede. / And whanne these trespassours and repentinge <sup>2990</sup> folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, / hadden herd what these messagers seyden un-to hem, / they weren right glad and Ioyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, / yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye ; / and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee. / <sup>2995</sup>

§ 72. And right anon they token hir wey to the court of Melibee, / and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for hem and for to been hir borwes. / And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem these wordes : / ‘it standeth thus,’ quod Melibee, ‘and sooth it is, that ye, / causeless, and with-outen skile and resoun, / <sup>3000</sup> han doon grete iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also. / For ye han entred in-to myn hous by violence, / and have doon swich outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth ; / and therfore wol I knowe and wite of yow, / whether ye wol putte the punissement and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence ; or ye wol nat ?’ / <sup>3005</sup>

§ 73. Thanne the wyseste of hem three answerde for hem alle, and seyde : / ‘sire,’ quod he, ‘we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to comen un-to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been. / For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, / that trewely we han deserved the deeth. / But yet, for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee that all the world witnesseth of your persone, / we submitten us to the excellence and benignitee of your <sup>3010</sup> gracious lordshipe, / and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements ; / bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol

considerere our grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, / and  
 graunten us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespas and offence. /  
 For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy strecchen  
 hem ferther in-to goodnesse, than doon our outrageous giltes and  
 3015 trespas in-to wikkednesse ; / al-be-it that cursedly and dampnably  
 we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.' /

§ 74. Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful  
 benignely, / and receyved hir obligaciouns and hir bondes by hir  
 othes up-on hir plegges and borwes, / and assigned hem a certeyn  
 day to retourne un-to his court, / for to accepte and receyve the  
 sentence and Iugement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon  
 3020 on hem by the causes afore-seyd ; / whiche thinges ordeyned, every  
 man retorned to his hous. /

§ 75. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she  
 freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, / what vengeance he thoughte  
 to taken of hise adversaries ? /

§ 76. To which Melibee answerde and seyde, 'certes,' quod he,  
 ' I thinke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that ever  
 3025 they han, and for to putte hem in exil for ever.' /

§ 77. ' Certes,' quod dame Prudence, ' this were a cruel sen-  
 tence, and muchel agayn resoun. / For ye been riche y-nough,  
 and han no nede of other mennes good ; / and ye mighte lightly  
 in this wyse gete yow a covetous name, / which is a vicious thing,  
 and oghte been eschewed of every good man. / For after the  
 3030 sawe of the word of the apostle : " covetise is rote of alle harmes." /  
 And therefore, it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of  
 your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. / For  
 bettre it is to lesen good with worshipe, than it is to winne good  
 with vileinye and shame. / And every man oghte to doon his dili-  
 gence and his bisinesse to geten him a good name. / And yet  
 shal he nat only bisie him in kepinge of his good name, / but he  
 shal also enforcen him alwey to do som-thing by which he may  
 3035 renouvelle his good name ; / for it is writen, that " the olde good loos  
 or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat  
 newed ne renouvelled." / And as touchinge that ye seyn, ye wole  
 exile your adversaries, / that thinketh me muchel agayn resoun  
 and out of mesure, / considered the power that they han yeve yow

3013. E. lough ; rest lowe.  
 crueel.

3032. E. om. good (*twice*).

3016. E. Hn. dampnably.

3036. or] E. and.

3026. E.

up-on hem-self. / And it is writen, that "he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him." / And I sette cas ye mighte enioyne hem that peyne by 3040 right and by lawe, / which I trowe ye mowe nat do, / I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per-aventure, / and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn. / And therefore, if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste demen more curteisly ; / this is to seyn, ye moste yeven more esy 3045 sentences and Iugements. / For it is writen, that "he that most curteisly comandeth, to him men most obeyen." / And therefore, I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome your herte. / For Senek seith : that "he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes." / And Tullius seith : "ther is nothing so comendable in a greet lord / as whan he is debonaire and 3050 meke, and appeseth him lightly." / And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance, / in swich a manere, that your goode name may be kept and conserved ; / and that men mowe have cause and matere to preyse yow of pitee and of mercy ; / and that ye have no cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. / For 3055 Senek seith : "he overcometh in an yvel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie." / Wherefore I pray yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, / to theffect and entente that god almighty have mercy on yow in his laste Iugement. / For seint Iame seith in his epistle : "Iugement withouten mercy shal be doon to him, that hath no mercy of another wight." /

§ 78. Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, / 3060 his herte gan encline to the wil of his wyf, consideringe hir trewe entente ; / and conformed him anon, and assented fully to werken after hir conseil ; / and thonked god, of whom procedeth al vertu and alle goodnesse, that him sente a wyf of so greet discrecioun. / And whan the day cam that hise adversaries sholde apperen in his presence, / he spak unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in this wyse : / 'al-be-it so that of your pryde and pre- 3065 sumpcioun and folie, and of your necligence and unconninge, / ye have misborn yow and trespassed un-to me ; / yet, for as much as I see and biholde your grete humilitee, / and that ye

3051. E. *om.* him.  
E. Hn. appieren.

3057. E. in youre mynde and ; *rest om.*

3064.

been sory and repentant of your giltes, / it constreyneth me to  
 3070 doon yow grace and mercy. / Therefore I receyve yow to my  
 grace, / and foryeve yow outrely alle the offences, iniuries, and  
 wronges, that ye have doon agayn me and myne; / to this effect  
 and to this ende, that god of his endeles mercy / wole at the  
 tyme of our dyinge foryeven us our giltes that we han trespassed  
 to him in this wrecched world. / For doutelees, if we be sory  
 and repentant of the sinnes and giltes whiche we han trespassed  
 3075 in the sighte of our lord god, / he is so free and so merciable, /  
 that he wole foryeven us our giltes, / and bringen us to his blisse  
 3078 that never hath ende. Amen.<sup>7</sup> /

**Here is ended Chaucers Tale of Melibee and of  
 Dame Prudence.**

---

3078. E. his; Hn. Pt. Hl. the; Cp. Ln. thilke. *After ende, Cp. Ln. have this spurious couplet* :—

To whiche blisse he us bringe  
 That blood on crosse for us gan springe.

followed by—*Qui cum patre, &c.*

COLOPHON. *From E.*; Hn. *has*—Here is endid Chaucers tale of Melibe;  
 Hl. *has*—Here endith Chaucer his tale of Melibe.



## THE MONK'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 13895-13924.)

### The mery wordes of the Host to the Monk.

**W**HAN ended was my tale of Melibee,  
 And of Prudence and hir benignitee, 3080  
 Our hoste seyde, 'as I am faithful man,  
 And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,  
 I hadde lever than a barel ale  
 That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!  
 For she nis no-thing of swich pacience 3085  
 As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.  
 By goddes bones! whan I bete my knaves,  
 She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves, (10)  
 And cryeth, "slee the dogges everichoon,  
 And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon." 3090  
 And if that any neighebor of myne  
 Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,  
 Or be so hardy to hir to trespase,  
 Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth in my face,  
 And cryeth, "false coward, wreek thy wyf, 3095  
 By *corpus* bones! I wol have thy knyf,  
 And thou shalt have my distaf and go spinne!"  
 Fro day to night right thus she wol biginne;— (20)  
 "Allas!" she seith, "that ever I was shape  
 To wedde a milksop or a coward ape, 3100  
 That wol be overlad with every wight!  
 Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right!"  
 This is my lyf, but-if that I wol fighte;  
 And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,  
 Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I 3105  
 Be lyk a wilde leoun fool-hardy.  
 I woot wel she wol do me slee som day  
 Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey. (30)

---

HEADING. *From* E.; Hn. Here bigynneth The Prologe of the Monkes tale.  
 E. murye. 3082. the] E. Hn. that. 3085. E. Hn. omit For. 3094. Pt.  
 hoom; Hl. hom; Cp. Ln. home; E. Hn. omit. 3099. E. Hn. euere that I.

\*\*\*\*

R

For I am perilous with knyf in honde,  
 Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde, 3110  
 For she is big in armes, by my feith,  
 That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or seith.  
 But lat us passe away fro this matere.  
 My lord the Monk,' quod he, 'be mery of chere ;  
 For ye shul telle a tale trewely. 3115  
 Lo ! Rouchestre stant heer faste by !  
 Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat our game,  
 But, by my trouthe, I knowe nat your name, (40)  
 Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan Iohn,  
 Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon? 3120  
 Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin ?  
 I vow to god, thou hast a ful fair skin,  
 It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost ;  
 Thou art nat lyk a penaunt or a goost.  
 Upon my feith, thou art som officer, 3125  
 Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,  
 For by my fader soule, as to my doom,  
 Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom ; (50)  
 No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,  
 But a governour, wyly and wys. 3130  
 And therwithal of brawnes and of bones  
 A wel-faring persone for the nones.  
 I pray to god, yeve him confusioun  
 That first thee broghte un-to religioun ;  
 Thou woldest han been a trede-foul aright. 3135  
 Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast might  
 To parfourne al thy lust in engendrure,  
 Thou haddest bigeten many a creature. (60)  
 Alas ! why werestow so wyd a cope ?  
 God yeve me sorwe ! but, and I were a pope, 3140  
 Not only thou, but every mighty man,  
 Thogh he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,  
 Sholde have a wyf ; for al the world is lorn !  
 Religioun hath take up al the corn  
 Of treading, and we borel men ben shrimpes ! 3145  
 Of feble trees ther comen wrecched impes.

3110. E. Cp. Ln. hire nat ; Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. nat hire. 3114. E. Hn. myrie.  
 3119, 20. E. daun. 3129. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. cloistrer. 3138. E. Hn. ful many.

This maketh that our heires been so sclendre  
And feble, that they may nat wel engendre. (70)

This maketh that our wyves wol assaye  
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye 3150  
Of Venus payements than mowe we ;  
God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye !  
But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye ;  
Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd seye.'

This worthy monk took al in pacience, 3155  
And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,  
As fer as souneth in-to honestee,  
To telle yow a tale, or two, or three. (80)

And if yow list to herkne hiderward,  
I wol yow seyn the lyf of seint Edward ; 3160  
Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle  
Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.

Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,  
As olde bokes maken us memorie,  
Of him that stood in greet prosperitee 3165  
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree  
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.

And they ben versifyed comunly (90)  
Of six feet, which men clepe *exametron*.

In prose eek been endyted many oon, 3170  
And eek in metre, in many a sondry wyse.  
Lo ! this declaring oughthe y-nough suffise.

Now herkneth, if yow lyketh for to here ;  
But first I yow biseke in this matere,  
Though I by ordre telle nat these thinges, 3175  
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,

After hir ages, as men writen finde,  
But telle hem som bifore and som bihinde, (100)  
As it now comth un-to my remembraunce ;  
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.' 3180

*Explicit.*

---

3147, 8. E. *om. these lines; from* Hn.; Hn. Cm. sklendre; Cp. Pt. sclendre (sclendere). 3151. E. *paiementz*. 3152. E. Hn. lussheburgh; Cp. lussheburghes; Hl. lusscheburghes. 3160. E. *omits* yow. 3163. Cp. Pt. Ln. for to; *rest omit* for. 3168. E. *communely*; Cm. *comounly*; Hn. Hl. *comunly*.

## THE MONKES TALE.

Here biginneth the Monkes Tale, de Casibus  
Virorum Illustrium.

I WOL biwayle in maner of Tragedie  
 The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,  
 And fillen so that ther nas no remedie  
 To bringe hem out of hir adversitee ;  
 For certein, whan that fortune list to flee, 3185  
 Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde ;  
 Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee ;  
 Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

## LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,  
 And nat a man, at him I wol biginne ; 3190  
 For, thogh fortune may non angel dere, (11)  
 From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne  
 Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.  
 O Lucifer ! brightest of angels alle,  
 Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat twinne 3195  
 Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

## ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene,  
 With goddes owene finger wroght was he,  
 And nat bigeten of mannes sperme unclene,  
 And welte al Paradys, saving o tree. 3200

---

HEADING. *From E. (E. Heere).* 3188. E. Pt. of; *rest by.* 3191. E. though; Hn. thogh. 3197. Cm. Hl. Damassene; E. Hn. Damysseene.

Had never worldly man so heigh degree (21)  
 As Adam, til he for misgovernaunce  
 Was drive out of his hye prosperitee  
 To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

## SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat 3205  
 By thangel, longe er his nativitee,  
 And was to god almighty consecrat,  
 And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte see.  
 Was never swich another as was he,  
 To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardinesse ; 3210  
 But to his wyves tolde he his secree, (31)  
 Through which he slow him-self, for wrecchednesse.

Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,  
 Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,  
 He slow and al to-rente the leoun, 3215  
 Toward his wedding walking by the weye.  
 His false wyf coude him so plese and preye  
 Til she his conseil knew, and she untrew  
 Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwreye,  
 And him forsook, and took another newe. 3220

Three hundred foxes took Sampson for ire, (41)  
 And alle hir tayles he togider bond,  
 And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,  
 For he on every tayl had knit a brond ;  
 And they brende alle the cornes in that lond, 3225  
 And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek.  
 A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,  
 And had no wepen but an asses cheek.

Whan they were slayn, so thursted him that he  
 Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to preye 3230  
 That god wolde on his peyne han som pitee, (51)  
 And sende him drinke, or elles moste he deye ;

And of this asses cheke, that was dreye,  
 Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,  
 Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to seye, 3235  
 Thus heelp him god, as *Judicum* can telle.

By verray force, at Gazan, on a night,  
 Maugree Philistiens of that citee,  
 The gates of the toun he hath up-plaint,  
 And on his bak y-caried hem hath he 3240  
 Hye on an hille, that men mighte hem see. (61)  
 O noble almighty Sampson, leef and dere,  
 Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,  
 In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!

This Sampson never sicer drank ne wyn, 3245  
 Ne on his heed cam rasour noon ne shere,  
 By precept of the messenger divyn,  
 For alle his strengthes in his heres were ;  
 And fully twenty winter, yeer by yeer,  
 He hadde of Israel the governaunce. 3250  
 But sone shal he wepen many a tere, (71)  
 For wommen shal him bringen to meschaunce!

Un-to his lemman Dalida he tolde  
 That in his heres al his strengthe lay,  
 And falsly to his fo-men she him solde. 3255  
 And sleping in hir barme up-on a day  
 She made to clippe or shere his heer away,  
 And made his fo-men al his craft espyen ;  
 And whan that they him fonde in this array,  
 They bounde him faste, and putten out his yën. 3260

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave, (81)  
 Ther was no bond with which men might him binde ;  
 But now is he in prisoun in a cave,  
 Wher-as they made him at the querne grinde.

---

3235. E. anon ; *rest* ynogh, ynough, ynouhe, &c. 3245. E. Hn. sicer (*for*  
 sicer) ; Hl. siser ; Cm. Pt. Ln. sythir ; Cp. cyder. 3257. E. Hl. heres ; *rest*  
 heer, here. 3258. E. Hn. this craft ; *rest* his craft. 3261. E. were ; *rest*  
 was ; *see l.* 332S.

O noble Sampson, strongest of mankinde, 3265  
 O whylom Iuge in glorie and in richesse,  
 Now maystow wepen with thyn yën blinde,  
 Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.

Thende of this caytif was as I shal seye ;  
 His fo-men made a feste upon a day, 3270  
 And made him as hir fool bifore hem pleye, (91)  
 And this was in a temple of greet array.  
 But atte laste he made a foul affray ;  
 For he two pilers shook, and made hem falle,  
 And doun fil temple and al, and ther it lay, 3275  
 And slow him-self, and eek his fo-men alle.

This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,  
 And eek three thousand bodies wer ther slayn  
 With falling of the grete temple of stoon.  
 Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn. 3280  
 Beth war by this ensample old and playn (101)  
 That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves  
 Of swich thing as they wolde han secree fayn,  
 If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves.

## HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour 3285  
 Singen his workes laude and heigh renoun ;  
 For in his tyme of strengthe he was the flour.  
 He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun ;  
 He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun ;  
 He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes felle ; 3290  
 He golden apples rafte of the dragoun ; (111)  
 He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle :

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,  
 And made his hors to frete him, flesh and boon ;  
 He slow the fryr serpent venimous ; 3295  
 Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon ;

3271. E. Cm. a ; *rest* hire, here. 3274. E. the ; *rest* two. 3294. E.  
 flessch. 3296. E. Cm. hornes two ; *rest* two hornes.

And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;  
 He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge;  
 He slow the grisly boor, and that nooon,  
 And bar the heven on his nekke longe. 3300

Was never wight, sith that the world bigan, (121)  
 That slow so many monstres as dide he.  
 Thurgh-out this wyde world his name ran,  
 What for his strengthe, and for his heigh bountee,  
 And every reaume wente he for to see. 3305  
 He was so strong that no man mighte him lette;  
 At bothe the worldes endes, seith Trophee,  
 In stede of boundes, he a piler sette.

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,  
 That highte Dianira, fresh as May; 3310  
 And, as this clerkes maken mencion, (131)  
 She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.  
 Allas! this sherte, allas and weylaway!  
 Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,  
 That, er that he had wered it half a day, 3315  
 It made his flesh al from his bones falle.

But natheles somme clerkes hir excusen  
 By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;  
 Be as be may, I wol hir noght accusen;  
 But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked, 3320  
 Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked. (141)  
 And whan he sey noon other remedye,  
 In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,  
 For with no venim deynd him to dye.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules; 3325  
 Lo, who may truste on fortune any throwe?  
 For him that folweth al this world of prees,  
 Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.  
 Ful wys is he that can him-selven knowe.  
 Beth war, for whan that fortune list to glose, 3330  
 Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe (151)  
 By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

3308. E. stide; pileer.

3310, 2. E. fressh.

3316. E. flessh.



## NABUGODONOSOR (NEBUCHADNEZZAR).

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,  
 The glorious ceptre and royal magestee  
 That hadde the king Nabugodonosor, 3335  
 With tonge unnethe may discryved be.  
 He twyes wan Ierusalem the citee ;  
 The vessel of the temple he with him ladde.  
 At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,  
 In which his glorie and his delyt he hadde. 3340

The fairest children of the blood royal (161)  
 Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,  
 And maked ech of hem to been his thral.  
 Amonges othere Daniel was oon,  
 That was the wysest child of everichoon ; 3345  
 For he the dremes of the king expounded,  
 Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther noon  
 That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned.

This proude king leet make a statue of golde,  
 Sixty cubytes long, and seven in brede, 3350  
 To which image bothe yonge and olde (171)  
 Comaunded he to loute, and have in drede ;  
 Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede  
 He shal be brent, that wolde noght obeye.  
 But never wolde assente to that dede 3355  
 Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This king of kinges proud was and claat,  
 He wende that god, that sit in magestee,  
 Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat :  
 But sodeynly he loste his dignitee, 3360  
 And lyk a beste him semed for to be, (181)  
 And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute ;  
 In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,  
 Til certein tyme was y-come aboute.

---

3336. Hl. *vnmethes*. 3351. E. The; *rest* To. E. Hn. Cm. he bothe;  
*rest omit* he. 3352. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* he.

And lyk an egles fetheres wexe his heres, 3365  
 His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were ;  
 Til god relessed him a certein yeres,  
 And yaf him wit ; and than with many a tere  
 He thanked god, and ever his lyf in fere  
 Was he to doon amis, or more trespace, 3370  
 And, til that tyme he leyd was on his bere, (191)  
 He knew that god was ful of might and grace.

BALTHASAR (BELSHAZZAR).

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,  
 That heeld the regne after his fader day,  
 He by his fader coude nought be war, 3375  
 For proud he was of herte and of array ;  
 And eek an ydolastre was he ay.  
 His hye estaat assured him in pryde.  
 But fortune caste him doun, and ther he lay,  
 And sodeynly his regne gan divyde. 3380

A feste he made un-to his lordes alle (201)  
 Up-on a tyme, and bad hem blythe be,  
 And than his officeres gan he calle—  
 ‘Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,’ [tho] quod he,  
 ‘Which that my fader, in his prosperitee, 3385  
 Out of the temple of Ierusalem birafte,  
 And to our hye goddes thanke we  
 Of honour, that our eldres with us lafte.’

His wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes  
 Ay dronken, whyl hir appetytes laste, 3390  
 Out of these noble vessels sundry wynes ; (211)  
 And on a wal this king his yēn caste,  
 And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful faste,  
 For fere of which he quook and syked sore.  
 This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste, 3395  
 Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na-more.

---

3365. *Wexe is the right reading, whence Cm. wexsyn, and Hl. Cp. were (for wexe) ; E. Hn. wax ; Pt. Ln. was (for wax). 3377. E. he was ; rest was he. 3384. I supply tho. For vessels, see 3391, 3416, 3418.*

In al that lond magicien was noon  
 That coude expoune what this lettre mente ;  
 But Daniel expounded it anoon,  
 And seyde, 'king, god to thy fader lente 3400  
 Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente : (221)  
 And he was proud, and no-thing god ne dradde,  
 And therfor god gret wreche up-on him sente,  
 And him biraftē the regne that he hadde.

He was out cast of mannes companye, 3405  
 With asses was his habitacioun,  
 And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,  
 Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,  
 That god of heven hath dominacioun  
 Over every regne and every creature ; 3410  
 And thanne had god of him compassioun, (231)  
 And him restored his regne and his figure.

Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud also,  
 And knowest alle these thinges verraily,  
 And art rebel to god, and art his fo. 3415  
 Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely ;  
 Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully  
 Dronke of the same vessels sondry wynes,  
 And heriest false goddes cursedly ;  
 Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne is. 3420

This hand was sent from god, that on the walle (241)  
 Wroot *mane*, *techel*, *phares*, truste me ;  
 Thy regne is doon, thou weyest nought at alle ;  
 Divyded is thy regne, and it shal be  
 To Medes and to Perses yeven,' quod he. 3425  
 And thilke same night this king was slawe,  
 And Darius occupyeth his degree,  
 Thogh he therto had neither right ne lawe.

---

3400. Hn. lente ; rest sente (*but see l. 3403*). 3422. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. truste ; Pt. trest ; Ln. trust ; Cm. trust to. See B. 4214. 3425. E. om. yeven.

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye take  
 How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse; 3430  
 For whan fortune wol a man forsake, (251)  
 She bereth away his regne and his richesse,  
 And eek his freendes, bothe more and lesse;  
 For what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,  
 Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse: 3435  
 This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commune.

## CENOBIA (ZENOBIA).

Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,  
 As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,  
 So worthy was in armes and so kene,  
 That no wight passed hir in hardinesse, 3440  
 Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse. (261)  
 Of kinges blode of Perse is she descended;  
 I seye nat that she hadde most fairnesse,  
 But of hir shape she mighte nat been amended.

From hir childhede I finde that she fledde 3445  
 Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;  
 And many a wilde hertes blood she shedde  
 With arwes brode that she to hem sente.  
 She was so swift that she anon hem hente,  
 And whan that she was elder, she wolde kille 3450  
 Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente, (271)  
 And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille.

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,  
 And rennen in the montaignes al the night,  
 And slepen under a bush, and she coude eke 3455  
 Wrastlen by verray force and verray might  
 With any yong man, were he never so wight;  
 Ther mighte no-thing in hir armes stonde.  
 She kepte hir maydenhod from every wight,  
 To no man deigned hir for to be bonde. 3460

---

3435. E. as I; *the rest omit as.* 3437. *So E. Hn. Cm.; and Cp. has the heading—De Cenobia Palymerie regina.*  
 nor in; Hn. ne; Cm. nor; (ne in = n'in). 3441. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. ne in; E.  
 3455. E. Hn. Cm. the; *rest a.*  
 E. bussh.

But atte laste hir frendes han hir maried (281)  
 To Odenake, a prince of that contree,  
 Al were it so that she hem longe taried ;  
 And ye shul understonde how that he  
 Hadde swiche fantasyes as hadde she. 3465  
 But nathelees, whan they were knit in-fere,  
 They lived in Ioye and in felicitee ;  
 For ech of hem hadde other leef and dere.

Save o thing, that she never wolde assente  
 By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye 3470  
 But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente (291)  
 To have a child, the world to multiplye ;  
 And al-so sone as that she mighte espye  
 That she was nat with childe with that dede,  
 Than wolde she suffre him doon his fantasye 3475  
 Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.

And if she were with childe at thilke cast,  
 Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game  
 Til fully fourty dayes weren past ;  
 Than wolde she ones suffre him do the same. 3480  
 Al were this Odenake wilde or tame, (301)  
 He gat na-more of hir, for thus she seyde,  
 ' It was to wyves lecherye and shame  
 In other cas, if that men with hem pleyde.'

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she, 3485  
 The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure ;  
 But now un-to our tale turne we.  
 I seye, so worshipful a creature,  
 And wys therwith, and large with mesure,  
 So penible in the werre, and curteis eke, 3490  
 Ne more labour mighte in werre endure, (311)  
 Was noon, thogh al this world men sholde seke.

---

3462. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake ; Cp. Ln. Hl. Odenake ; Pt. Odonak. 3468.  
 E. oother lief. 3481, 5. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake ; rest Odenake. 3485. E. om.  
 this. 3492. E. though ; Hn. thogh. E. wolde ; rest sholde (schulde).

Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told  
 As wel in vessel as in hir clothing ;  
 She was al clad in perree and in gold, 3495  
 And eek she lafte noght, for noon hunting,  
 To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,  
 Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to entende  
 To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,  
 How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dispende. 3500

And, shortly of this storie for to trete, (321)  
 So doughty was hir housbonde and eek she,  
 That they conquered many regnes grete  
 In the orient, with many a fair citee,  
 Apertenaunt un-to the magestee 3505  
 Of Rome, and with strong hond helde hem ful faste ;  
 Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem flee,  
 Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste.

Hir batailes, who-so list hem for to rede,  
 Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo, 3510  
 And how that al this proces fil in dede, (331)  
 Why she conquered and what title had therto,  
 And after of hir meschief and hir wo,  
 How that she was biseged and y-take,  
 Let him un-to my maister Petrark go, 3515  
 That writ y-nough of this, I undertake.

When Odenake was deed, she mightily  
 The regnes heeld, and with hir propre honde  
 Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly,  
 That ther nas king ne prince in al that londe 3520  
 That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde, (341)  
 That she ne wolde up-on his lond werreye ;  
 With hir they made alliaunce by bonde  
 To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and pleye.

---

3501. E. proces; *rest* storie. 3508. III. Odenakes; *rest* Onedakes, Odenake.  
 3511. E. *omits* that. 3512. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. had; *which* E. Hn. Cm. *omit*.  
 3517. So Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. Onedake. 3518. E. honde; Pt.  
 honde; Ln. hande; *rest* hond. 3523. *MSS.* made; *read* maden?

The emperour of Rome, Claudius, 3525  
 Ne him bifore, the Romayn Galien,  
 Ne dorste never been so corageous,  
 Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,  
 Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,  
 Within the feld that dorste with hir fighte 3530  
 Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes slen, (351)  
 Or with hir meynee putten hem to flighte.

In kinges habit wente hir sones two,  
 As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,  
 And Hermanno, and Thymalaö 3535  
 Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.  
 But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;  
 This mighty quene may no whyl endure.  
 Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle  
 To wrecchednesse and to misaventure. 3540

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce (361)  
 Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,  
 He shoop up-on this queen to do vengeance,  
 And with his legiouns he took his weye  
 Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye, 3545  
 He made hir flee, and atte laste hir hente,  
 And fettred hir, and eek hir children tweye,  
 And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome he wente.

Amonges othere things that he wan,  
 Hir char, that was with gold wrought and perree, 3550  
 This grete Romayn, this Aurelian, (371)  
 Hath with him lad, for that men sholde it see.  
 Biforen his triumphe walketh she  
 With gilte cheynes on hir nekke hanging;  
 Corouned was she, as after hir degree, 3555  
 And ful of perree charged hir clothing.

---

3530. Cp. feeld; Hl. feld; Ln. felde; Pt. feelde; E. Hn. Cm. feeldes.  
 3553. MSS. Eiforn, Bifore (Hl. Bifore this). 3555. E. omits as.

Allas, fortune! she that whylom was  
 Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,  
 Now gaureth al the peple on hir, allas!  
 And she that helmed was in starke stoures, 3560  
 And wan by force tounes stronge and toures, (381)  
 Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;  
 And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures  
 Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte. [T. 14380.]

(NERO follows in T.; see p. 259.)

DE PETRO REGE ISPANIE.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spayne, [T. 14685.]  
 Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee, 3566  
 Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth complayne!  
 Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee;  
 And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,  
 Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his tente, 3570  
 Wher-as he with his owene hond slow thee, (391)  
 Succeding in thy regne and in thy rente.

The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne, [T. 14693.]  
 Caught with the lymrod, coloured as the glede,  
 He brew this cursednes and al this sinne. 3575  
 The 'wikked nest' was werker of this nede;  
 Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede  
 Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike  
 Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,  
 Broghte this worthy king in swich a brike. 3580

DE PETRO REGE DE CIPRO.

O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also, (401)  
 That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,  
 Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,  
 Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,  
 And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye, 3585  
 They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the morwe.  
 Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and gye,  
 And out of Ioye bringe men to sorwe. [T. 14708.]

---

3560. E. shoures. 3562. Hl. wyntermyte. 3564. Hn. Cm. Ln. cost; Pt. coste; E. Cp. costes; Hl. self. 3570. E. Hn. Cm. bitrayed. 3577. E. Hn. Cm. took ay; rest ay took.



## DE BARNABO DE LUMBARDIA.

Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,  
 God of delyt, and scourge of Lombardye, 3590  
 Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte, (411)  
 Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?  
 Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,  
 For he thy newew was, and sone-in-lawe,  
 With-inne his prisoun made thee to dye; 3595  
 But why, ne how, noot I that thou were slawe.

## DE HUGELINO, COMITE DE PIZE.

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour  
 Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;  
 But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,  
 In whiche tour in prisoun put was he, 3600  
 And with him been his litel children three. (421)  
 The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.  
 Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee  
 Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage!  
 Dampned was he to deye in that prisoun, 3605  
 For Roger, which that bisshop was of Pyse,  
 Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,  
 Thurgh which the peple gan upon him ryse,  
 And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse  
 As ye han herd, and mete and drink he hadde 3610  
 So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse, (431)  
 And therwith-al it was ful povre and badde.  
 And on a day bifil that, in that hour,  
 Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,  
 The gayler shette the dores of the tour. 3615  
 He herde it wel,—but he spak right noght,  
 And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght,  
 That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen.  
 ‘Allas!’ quod he, ‘allas! that I was wroght!’  
 Therwith the teres fillen from his yën. 3620

3597. E. Pyze; Hn. Pize; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3599. E. Hn. Cm.  
 Pize; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3606. E. Hn. Pize; Cm. Pyze; Cp.  
 Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3611. E. Pt. omit wel. 3616. E. Hn. spak  
 right; Cp. Hl. saugh it; Pt. seegh it; Ln. sawe it.

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age, (441)  
 Un-to him seyde, 'fader, why do ye wepe? -  
 Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage,  
 Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?  
 I am so hungry that I may nat slepe. 3625  
 Now wolde god that I mighte slepen ever!  
 Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe;  
 Ther is no thing, save breed, that me were lever.'

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,  
 Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay, 3630  
 And seyde, 'far-wel, fader, I moot dye,' (451)  
 And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day.  
 And whan the woful fader deed it sey,  
 For wo his armes two he gan to byte,  
 And seyde, 'allas, fortune! and weylaway! 3635  
 Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!'

His children wende that it for hunger was  
 That he his armes gnou, and nat for wo,  
 And seyde, 'fader, do nat so, allas!  
 But rather eet the flesh upon us two; 3640  
 Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro (461)  
 And eet y-nough:' right thus they to him seyde,  
 And after that, with-in a day or two,  
 They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde.

Him-self, despaired, eek for hunger starf; 3645  
 Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;  
 From heigh estaat fortune away him carf.  
 Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffyse.  
 Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,  
 Redeth the grete poete of Itaille, 3650  
 That highte Dant, for he can al devyse (471)  
 Fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille. [T. 14772.

3622. E. Hn. *repeat* fader. 3628. Ln. Hl. saue; Cp. Pt. sauf; E. Hn. but. 3632. E. Hl. dyde; Hn. Cp. deyde; see l. 3644. 3640. E. flessh. 3641. E. flessh. E. Hn. *omit* vs *after* yaf. 3646. See note to l. 3597.

(For T. 14773, see p. 269; for T. 14380, see p. 256.)

## NERO.

Although that Nero were as vicious [T. 14381.  
 As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,  
 Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius, 3655  
 This wyde world hadde in subieccioun,  
 Both Est and West, South and Septemtrioun ;  
 Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte  
 Were alle his clothes brouded up and down ;  
 For he in gemmes gretly gan delyte. 3660  
  
 More delicat, more pompous of array, (481)  
 More proud was never emperour than he ;  
 That ilke cloth, that he had wered o day,  
 After that tyme he nolde it never see.  
 Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret plentee 3665  
 To fissue in Tybre, whan him liste pleye.  
 His lustes were al lawe in his decree,  
 For fortune as his freend him wolde obeye.  
  
 He Rome brende for his delicacye ;  
 The senatours he slow up-on a day. 3670  
 To here how men wolde wepe and crye ; (491)  
 And slow his brother, and by his sister lay.  
 His moder made he in pitous array ;  
 For he hir wombe slitte, to biholde  
 Wher he conceyved was ; so weilaway ! 3675  
 That he so litel of his moder tolde !  
  
 No tere out of his yën for that sighte  
 Ne cam, but seyde, 'a fair womman was she.'  
 Gret wonder is, how that he coude or mighte  
 Be domesman of hir dede beautee. 3680  
 The wyn to bringen him comaunded he, (501)  
 And drank anon ; non other wo he made.  
 Whan might is Ioynd un-to crueltee,  
 Allas ! to depe wol the venim wade !

3653. E. Hn. Cm. omit as. 3654. E. in helle; rest full lowe. 3657. E.  
 Hn. Cm. North (but read South); Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl omit! 3673, 6. E. mooder.  
 3682. E. noon oother.

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour, 3685  
 To teche him letterure and curteisye,  
 For of moralitee he was the flour,  
 As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;  
 And whyl this maister hadde of him maistrye,  
 He makend him so conning and so souple 3690  
 That longe tyme it was er tyrannye (511)  
 Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,  
 By-cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,  
 For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse 3695  
 Discreetly as by worde and nat by dede;—  
 ‘Sir,’ wolde he seyn, ‘an emperour moot nede  
 Be vertuous, and hate tyrannye’—  
 For which he in a bath made him to blede  
 On bothe his armes, til he moste dye. 3700

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce (521)  
 In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,  
 Which afterward him thoughte a greet grevaunce;  
 Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse.  
 But natheles this Seneca the wyse 3705  
 Chees in a bath to deye in this manere  
 Rather than han another tormentyse;  
 And thus hath Nero slayn his maister dere.

Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger  
 The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce; 3710  
 For though that he were strong, yet was she strengre; (531)  
 She thoughte thus, ‘by god, I am to nyce  
 To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce  
 In heigh degree, and emperour him calle.  
 By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce; 3715  
 When he leest weneth, sonest shal he falle.’

---

3694. Cm. Bycause that. 3695. Hn. Cm. ay; *rest omit.* [3699-  
*Misnumbered 520 in the Aldine Edition; but corrected further on.*] 3703.  
 E. (*only*) omits a. 3707. E. any oother. 3711. E. Hn. was; *the rest were.*

The peple roos up-on him on a night  
 For his defaute, and whan he it espyde,  
 Out of his dores anon he hath him dight  
 Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed, 3720  
 He knocked faste, and ay, the more he cryed, (541)  
 The faster shette they the dores alle ;  
 Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self misgyed,  
 And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.

The peple cryde and rombled up and doun, 3725  
 That with his eres herde he how they seyde,  
 ‘Wher is this false tyraunt, this Neroun?’  
 For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,  
 And to his goddes pitously he preyde  
 For socour, but it mighte nat bityde. 3730  
 For drede of this, him thoughte that he deyde, (551)  
 And ran in-to a gardin, him to hyde.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye  
 That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,  
 And to thise cherles two he gan to preye 3735  
 To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,  
 That to his body, whan that he were deed,  
 Were no despyt y-doon, for his defame.  
 Him-self he slow, he coude no better reed,  
 Of which fortune lough, and hadde a game. 3740

## DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).

Was never capitayn under a king (561)  
 That regnes mo putte in subieccioun,  
 Ne strenger was in feeld of alle thing,  
 As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,  
 Ne more pompous in heigh presumpcioun 3745  
 Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste  
 So likerously, and ladde him up and doun  
 Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

3723. E. Hn. *wrongly repeat* l. 3731 *here*. 3733. E. Hn. foond. 3734.  
 E. Hn. Cm. *omit* ful.

Nat only that this world hadde him in awe  
 For lesinge of richesse or libertee, 3750  
 But he made every man reneye his lawe. (571)  
 'Nabugodonosor was god,' seyde he,  
 'Noon other god sholde adoured be.'  
 Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespace  
 Save in Bethulia, a strong citee, 3755  
 Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern ;  
 Amidde his host he dronke lay a night,  
 With-inne his tente, large as is a bern,  
 And yit, for al his pompe and al his might, 3760  
 Iudith, a womman, as he lay upright, (581)  
 Sleping, his heed of smoot, and from his tente  
 Ful prively she stal from every wight,  
 And with his heed unto hir toun she wente.

## DE REGE ANTHIOCHO ILLUSTR.

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus 3765  
 To telle his hye royal magestee,  
 His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?  
 For swich another was ther noon as he.  
 Rede which that he was in Machabee,  
 And rede the proude wordes that he seyde, 3770  
 And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee, (591)  
 And in an hil how wrechedly he deyde.

Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde  
 That verraily he wende he mighte attayne  
 Unto the sterres, upon every syde, 3775  
 And in balance weyen ech montayne,  
 And alle the flodes of the see restrayne.  
 And goddes peple hadde he most in hate,  
 Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,  
 Wening that god ne mighte his pryde abate. 3780

3751. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. *omit* he. 3753. E. Hn. Cm. adoured ; Cp. Pt. Ln.  
 Hl. honoured. 3754. E. Hn. dorste ; *rest* dar. 3777. Cm. flodys ; *rest*  
 floodes. 3778. E. Hn. moost.

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee (601)  
 Of Iewes weren venquissed mightily,  
 Unto the Iewes swich an hate hadde he  
 That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,  
 And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously, 3785  
 Unto Ierusalem he wolde eft-sone,  
 To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly ;  
 But of his purpos he was let ful sone.

God for his manace him so sore smoot  
 With invisible wounde, ay incurable, 3790  
 That in his guttes carf it so and boot (611)  
 That his peynes weren importable.  
 And certainly, the wreche was resonable,  
 For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne ;  
 But from his purpos cursed and dampnable 3795  
 For al his smert he wolde him nat restreyne ;

But bad anon apparailen his host,  
 And sodeynly, er he of it was war,  
 God daunted al his pryde and al his bost.  
 For he so sore fil out of his char, 3800  
 That it his limes and his skin to-tar, (621)  
 So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,  
 But in a chayer men aboute him bar,  
 Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.

The wreche of god him smoot so cruelly 3805  
 That thurgh his body wikked wormes crepte ;  
 And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,  
 That noon of al his meynee that him kepte,  
 Whether so he wook or elles slepte,  
 Ne mighte noght for stink of him endure. 3810  
 In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte, (631)  
 And knew god lord of every creature.

---

3784. E. greithen; Hn. greithe; Cm. ordeyne. E. Hn. chaar; Cm. char.  
 3797, 9. E. hoost, boost. 3801. E. lemes; Hn. Cp. Hl. lymes; Cm. lymys;  
 Ln. limes. 3807. E. om. so; E. horriblely. 3809. E. Hn. Cm. so; Pt.  
 Hl. that; Cp. Ln. so that. 3810. E. Hn. for; rest the.

To al his host and to him-self also  
 Ful wlatson was the stink of his careyne ;  
 No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro. 3815  
 And in this stink and this horrible peyne  
 He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.  
 Thus hath this robbour and this homicyde,  
 That many a man made to wepe and pleyne,  
 Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde. 3820

## DE ALEXANDRO.

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune, (641)  
 That every wight that hath discrecioun  
 Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.  
 This wyde world, as in conclusioun,  
 He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun 3825  
 They weren glad for pees un-to him sende.  
 The pryde of man and beste he leyde adoun,  
 Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende.

Comparisoun might never yit be makid  
 Bitwixe him and another conquerour ; 3830  
 For al this world for drede of him hath quaked, (651)  
 He was of knighthode and of fredom flour ;  
 Fortune him made the heir of hir honour ;  
 Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte aswage  
 His hye entente in armes and labour ; 3835  
 So was he ful of leonyn corage.

What preys were it to him, though I yow tolde  
 Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,  
 Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,  
 Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem in-to wo? 3840  
 I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go, (661)  
 The world was his, what sholde I more devyse?  
 For though I write or tolde you evermo  
 Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse.

---

3827. beste] Hl. bost. 3830. E. Hn. Bitwixcn. 3832. E. Hn. Cm.  
*omit* was. 3834. E. man : *rest* thing. 3837. Cm. preys ; E. Hn. pris :  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. pite. 3843. Hl. *omits*.



Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Machabee ; 3845  
 Philippes sone of Macedoyne he was,  
 That first was king in Grece the contree.  
 O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas !  
 That ever sholde fallen swich a cas !  
 Empoisoned of thyn owene folk thou were ; 3850  
 Thy *sys* fortune hath turned into *as*, (671)  
 And yit for thee ne weep she never a tere !

Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne  
 The deeth of gentillesse and of fraunchyse,  
 That al the world welded in his demeyne, 3855  
 And yit him thoughte it mighte nat suffyse ?  
 So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.  
 Allas ! who shal me helpe to endyte  
 False fortune, and poison to despyse,  
 The whiche two of al this wo I wyte ? 3860

## DE IULIO CESARE.

By wisdom, manhede, and by greet labour (681)  
 Fro humble bed to royal magestee,  
 Up roos he, Iulius the conquerour,  
 That wan al thoccident by lond and see,  
 By strengthe of hond, or elles by trettee, 3865  
 And un-to Rome made hem tributarie ;  
 And sitthe of Rome the emperour was he,  
 Til that fortune wex his adversarie.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye  
 Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe, 3870  
 That of thorient hadde al the chivalrye (691)  
 As fer as that the day biginneth dawe,  
 Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem take and slawe,  
 Save fewe folk that with Pompeius fledde,  
 Thurgh which thou putttest al thorient in awe. 3875  
 Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde !

---

3851. E. Hn. Cm. aas ; Cp. Pt. Hl. an aas ; Ln. an as. 3852. E. Hn.  
 Cm. *omit* yit ; Hl. *has* right. 3861. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit* greet. 3862. E.  
 Hn. Cm. Hl. humble bed ; Pt. Cp. Ln. humbledede. 3870. MSS. Pompeus,  
 Pompus.

But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille  
 This Pompeius, this noble governour  
 Of Rome, which that fleigh at this bataille ;  
 I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour, 3880  
 His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour (701)  
 Of Iulius, and him the heed he broghte.  
 Allas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,  
 That fortune unto swich a fyn thee broghte !

To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius 3885  
 With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,  
 But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,  
 That ever hadde of his hye estaat envye,  
 Ful prively hath maad conspiracye  
 Ageins this Iulius, in subtil wyse, 3890  
 And cast the place, in whiche he sholde dye (711)  
 With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse.

This Iulius to the Capitolie wente  
 Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,  
 And in the Capitolie anon him hente 3895  
 This false Brutus, and his othere foon,  
 And stikede him with boydekins anoon  
 With many a wounde, and thus they lete him lye ;  
 But never gronte he at no strook but oon,  
 Or elles at two, but-if his storie lye. 3900

So manly was this Iulius at herte (721)  
 And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,  
 That, though his deedly woundes sore smerte,  
 His mantel over his hippes casteth he,  
 For no man sholde seen his privitee. 3905  
 And, as he lay on deyng in a traunce,  
 And wiste verraily that deed was he,  
 Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce.

---

[3881. *Misnumbered 700 in the Aldine edition.*] 3887. *So in the MSS.; observe hath in l.* 3889. 3904.  *Cm. castyth; rest caste, cast.* 3906.  *Cm. on deyng; Pt. on dyinge; Ln. in deynge; E. Hn. of dyng.*

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,  
 And to Sweton, and to Valerie also, 3910  
 That of this storie wryten word and ende, (731)  
 How that to these grete conqueroures two  
 Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.  
 No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,  
 But have hir in awayt for ever-mo. 3915  
 Witnesse on alle these conqueroures stronge.

CRESUS.

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,  
 Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,  
 Yit was he caught amidde al his pryde,  
 And to be brent men to the fyr him ladde. 3920  
 But swich a reyn down fro the welkne shadde (741)  
 That slow the fyr, and made him to escape ;  
 But to be war no grace yet he hadde,  
 Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.

Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente 3925  
 For to biginne a newe werre agayn.  
 He wende wel, for that fortune him sente  
 Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,  
 That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn ;  
 And eek a sweven up-on a night he mette, 3930  
 Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn, (751)  
 That in vengeance he al his herte sette.

Up-on a tree he was, as that him thoughte,  
 Ther Iuppiter him wesh, bothe bak and syde,  
 And Phebus eek a fair towaille him broughte 3935  
 To drye him with, and ther-for wex his pryde ;  
 And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,  
 Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,  
 He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,  
 And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde. 3940

---

3910. Hl. Valerien; rest Valerius; ed. 1561, Valerie. 3911. *The MSS.*  
*have word (for ord); see the note.* 3913. E. sitthe; Hl. siththen; Hn.  
 Cm. siththe a. 3936. Cm. Pt. Ln. wex; rest wax.

'The tree,' quod she, 'the galwes is to mene, (761)  
 And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,  
 And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,  
 Tho ben the sonne stremes for to seyn ;  
 Thou shalt anhanged be, fader, certeyn ; 3945  
 Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye ;'  
 Thus warned she hir ful plat and ful pleyn,  
 His doughter, which that called was Phanye.

Anhanged was Cresus, the proude king,  
 His royal trone mighte him nat availle.— 3950  
 Tragedie is noon other maner thing, (771)  
 Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,  
 But for that fortune alwey wol assaille  
 With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude ;  
 For when men trusteth hir, than wol she faille, 3955  
 And covere hir brighte face with a cloude. [See p. 256.

*Explicit Tragedia.*

**Here stinteth the Knight the Monk of his Tale.**

3944. E. bemes; *rest* stremes. 3947. Pt. Ln. Hl. she; *rest omit.* 3951.  
 Cm. Tragedy is; *so* Cp. Pt.; Ln. Tregedrye in; E. Hn. Tragedies; Hl. Teg-  
 redis (!). 3953. Cm. Hl. for; *rest omit.* [3956. *Reckoned as 775 in the*  
 Aldine edition; *but really 776.*] *After l.* 3956, E. Hn. Cm. have ll.  
 3565-3652. COLOPHON. *From E.* Hn. Here is ended the Monkes tale.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE  
PRESTES TALE.

(T. 14773-14798).

The prologue of the Nonne Preestes Tale.

‘H O!’ quod the knight, ‘good sir, na-more of this,  
That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,  
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse  
Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I gesse. 3960  
I seye for me, it is a greet disese  
Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and ese,  
To heren of hir sodeyn fal, allas!  
And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,  
As whan a man hath been in povre estaat, 3965  
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat, (10)  
And ther abydeth in prosperitee,  
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,  
And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.’  
‘Ye,’ quod our hoste, ‘by seint Poules belle, 3970  
Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he clappeth loude,  
He spak how “fortune covered with a cloude”  
I noot never what, and als of a “Tragedie”  
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie  
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne 3975  
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne, (20)  
As ye han seyde, to here of hevinesse.  
Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow blesse!  
Your tale anoyeth al this companye;  
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye; 3980  
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.  
Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by your name,

I preye yow hertely, telle us somewhat elles,  
 For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,  
 That on your brydel hange on every syde, 3985  
 By heven king, that for us alle dyde, (30)  
 I sholde er this han fallen doun for slepe,  
 Although the slough had never been so depe;  
 Than had your tale al be told in vayn.  
 For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn, 3990  
 "Wher-as a man may have noon audience,  
 Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence."  
 And wel I woot the substance is in me,  
 If any thing shal wel reported be.  
 Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow preye.' 3995  
 'Nay,' quod this monk, 'I have no lust to pleye; (40)  
 Now let another telle, as I have told.'  
 Than spak our host, with rude speche and bold,  
 And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest anon,  
 'Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou sir Iohn, 4000  
 Tel us swich thing as may our hertes glade,  
 Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a Iade.  
 What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,  
 If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;  
 Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.' 4005  
 'Yis, sir,' quod he, 'yis, host, so mote I go, (50)  
 But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed:—  
 And right anon his tale he hath attamed,  
 And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,  
 This swete preest, this goodly man, sir Iohn. 4010

*Explicit.*


---

4002. though] Hl. al-though.    4004. Pt. III. rek.    4005. E. Hn. murie;  
 rest mery.    4006. Cp. Ln. Yis, ost, quod he, so mote I ryde or go.

## THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

Here biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok  
and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote.

A POVRE widwe, somdel stope in age,  
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,  
Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.  
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,  
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf, 4015  
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,  
For litel was hir catel and hir rente ;  
By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,  
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.  
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo, 4020  
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle. (11)  
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,  
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.  
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.  
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte ; 4025  
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.  
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk ;  
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,  
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.  
The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce, 4030  
Napoplexye shente nat hir heed ; (21)  
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed ;  
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,  
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,  
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye, 4035  
For she was as it were a maner deye.

4011. E. Hn. stape ; Ln. stoupe ; *rest* stope. 4013. E. greue. 4021.  
E. keen ; Hn. Hl. Cp. kyn. 4031. E. Hn. Napoplexie ; *rest* Ne poplexie.

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute  
 With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,  
 In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,  
 In al the land of crowing nas his peer. 4040  
 His vois was merier than the mery yrgon (31)  
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;  
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,  
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.  
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun 4045  
 Of equinoxial in thilke toun;  
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,  
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.  
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,  
 And batailed, as it were a castel-wal. 4050  
 His bile was blak, and as the Ieet it shoon;  
 (41)  
 Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;  
 His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,  
 And lyk the burned gold was his colour.  
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce 4055  
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,  
 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,  
 And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.  
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte  
 Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote. 4060  
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire, (51)  
 And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,  
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,  
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold  
 Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith; 4065  
 He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.  
 But such a Ioye was it to here hem singe,  
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,  
 In swete accord, 'my lief is faren in londe.'  
 For thilke tyme, as I have understonde, 4070  
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe. (61)

---

4039. E. Hn. heet; Cp. that highte; *rest* that hight. 4041. E. Hn. Cm.  
 murier. E. Cm. murie. 4045. Hl. knew he; E. Pt. he crew; *rest* he knew.  
 4046. E. Ln. *ins.* the *after* Of. 4051. Hl. geet; Pt. Ln. gete. 4054. Hl.  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. burnischt. 4062. Hl. ful (*for* so). 4068. E. Cm. Ln. bigan.



And so bifel, that in a daweninge,  
 As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle  
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,  
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote, 4075  
 This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,  
 As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.  
 And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,  
 She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,  
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere? 4080  
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!' (71)  
 And he answerde and seyde thus, 'madame,  
 I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:  
 By god, me mette I was in swich meschief  
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright. 4085  
 Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche aright,  
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!  
 Me mette, how that I romed up and doun  
 Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,  
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste 4090  
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed. (81)  
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;  
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,  
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;  
 His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye. 4095  
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;  
 This caused me my groning, doutelees.'  
 'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!  
 Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,  
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love; 4100  
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith. (91)  
 For certes, what so any womman seith,  
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be,  
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,  
 And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool, 4105  
 Ne him that is agast of every tool,  
 Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!  
 How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,

4072. a] E. Pt. the. 4079. E. o; *rest om.* 4084. mette] E. thoughte. 4086.  
 E. Hn. recche; Cm. reche; *rest rede, reed.* 4091. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* wolde.

That any thing mighte make yow aferd?  
 Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd? 4110  
 Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis? (101)  
 No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.  
 Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,  
 And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,  
 Whan humours been to habundant in a wight. 4115  
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,  
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee  
 Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,  
 Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes  
 Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes, 4120  
 Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte, (111)  
 Of contek, and of whelpes grete and lyte;  
 Right as the humour of malencolye  
 Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,  
 For fere of blake beres, or boles blake, 4125  
 Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.  
 Of othere humours coude I telle also,  
 That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;  
 But I wol passe as lightly as I can.  
 Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man, 4130  
 Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes? (121)  
 Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,  
 For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;  
 Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,  
 I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye, 4135  
 That bothe of colere and of malencolye  
 Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,  
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,  
 I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,  
 That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow; 4140  
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde, (131)  
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,  
 To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.  
 Forget not this, for goddes owene love!

4117. E. *om.* the, and has greet. 4119. E. Hn. Cm. dreden; *rest*  
 dremen; *see* 4159. 4121. E. grete; *rest* rede. 4125. *So* E. Hn. Cm.;  
 Cp. of beres and of boles; Ln. Pt. of beres and boles; Hl. of beres or of  
 boles. 4132. E. ye; *rest* we. 4136, 7. Hl. *om.*

Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun. 4145  
 Ware the sonne in his ascencioun  
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote ;  
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,  
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane,  
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 4150  
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves (141)  
 Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,  
 Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,  
 Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,  
 Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis, 4155  
 Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is ;  
 Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.  
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin !  
 Dredeth no dreem ; I can say yow na-more.'  
 'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of your lore. 4160  
 But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun, (151)  
 That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,  
 Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,  
 By god, men may in olde bokes rede  
 Of many a man, more of auctoritee 4165  
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,  
 Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,  
 And han wel founden by experience,  
 That dremes ben significaciouns,  
 As wel of Ioye as tribulaciouns 4170  
 That folk endure in this lyf present. (161)  
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument ;  
 The verray preve sheweth it in dede.  
 Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede  
 Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente 4175  
 On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente ;  
 And happed so, thay come into a toun,  
 Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun  
 Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,  
 That they ne founde as muche as o cotage, 4180

4155. Cp. Ln. gaytres ; E. gaitrys ; Hn. gaytrys ; Hl. gaytre ; Cm. gattris ;  
 Pt. gatys. 4156. Ln. that ; Hn. they ; *rest* ther. 4166. Hn. Cm. Cp.  
 mote ; E. moot. 4167. his] E. Pt. this. 4170. E. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. *ins.*  
 of *after* as. 4174. Cm. autourys ; Hl. auctorite ; *rest* auctour (*sic*). 4177.  
 E. Hn. coomen in ; Cm. comyn in.

In which they bothe mighte y-logged be. (171)  
 Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,  
 As for that night, departen compaignye;  
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,  
 And took his logging as it wolde falle. 4185  
 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,  
 Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;  
 That other man was logged wel y-nough,  
 As was his aventure, or his fortune,  
 That us governeth alle as in commune. 4190  
 And so bifel, that, longe er it were day, (181)  
 This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,  
 How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,  
 And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle  
 This night I shal be mordred ther I lye. 4195  
 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;  
 In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.  
 'This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;  
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,  
 He turned him, and took of this no keep; 4200  
 Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee. (191)  
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.  
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe  
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe;  
 Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde! 4205  
 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,  
 And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,  
 'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,  
 In which my body is hid ful prively;  
 Do thilke carte aresten boldely. 4210  
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;' (201)  
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,  
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.  
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;  
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day, 4215  
 To his felawes in he took the way;  
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,

---

4181. E. logged. 4194. Hl. Cp. Ln. oxen. 4196. er] Ln. ar; E. Hn. Hl.  
 or. 4200. E. it; *rest* this. 4210. E. arresten. 4217. Hl. Cp. Ln. oxen.

After his felawe he bigan to calle.

The hostiler answered him anon,  
And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon, 4220  
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.' (211)

This man gan fallen in suspeciou, n,  
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,  
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,  
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond 4225  
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,  
That was arrayed in the same wyse

As ye han herd the dede man devyse ;  
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye  
Vengeaunce and Iustice of this felonye:— 4230  
'My felawe mordred is this same night, (221)  
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.

I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,  
'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee ;  
Harrow ! allas ! her lyth my felawe slayn !' 4235  
What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn ?

The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to grounde,  
And in the middel of the dong they founde  
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.

O blisful god, that art so Iust and trewe ! 4240  
Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre alway ! (231)  
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.

Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable  
To god, that is so Iust and resonable,  
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be ; 4245  
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,  
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.

And right anoon, ministres of that toun  
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,  
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned, 4250  
That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon, (241)  
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.

Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.

---

4219. Cp. Hl. answered ; E. Hn. answerde. 4222. Hl. *ins.* a *after* in ;  
Cp. Pt. Ln. *ins.* gret (grete). 4226. Hn. Cm. Hl. wente as it were ; Cp. Pt.  
Ln. as he wente. 4232. E. Hn. Cm. *ins.* heere *after* carte. 4247. E. Hn.  
Cm. this (this is *being pronounced* this) ; *rest* this is. 4248. Hl. *ins.* the  
*after* anoon.

And certes, in the same book I rede,  
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this, 4255  
 (I gabbe nat, so have I Ioye or blis,)  
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,  
 For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,  
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,  
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie, 4260  
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde. (251)  
 But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,  
 The wind gan change, and blew right as hem leste.  
 Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,  
 And casten hem ful erly for to saille; 4265  
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.  
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,  
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;  
 Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,  
 And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde, 4270  
 And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende, (261)  
 'Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'  
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,  
 And preyde him his viage for to lette;  
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde. 4275  
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,  
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.  
 'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte agaste,  
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.  
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges, 4280  
 For swevenes been but vanitees and Iapes. (271)  
 Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,  
 And eke of many a mase therwithal;  
 Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne shal.  
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde, 4285  
 And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,  
 God wot it reweth me; and have good day.'  
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.  
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,

---

4256. Cp. Ln. and (*for* or). 4266. *All ins.* herkneth (herken) *after* But.  
 4274. E. Hn. Hl. *om.* for; *cf.* l. 4265. 4275. E. Hn. byde. 4282. E.  
 Hn. or; *rest* and. 4283. Hl. eke; *rest om.*

Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,	4290
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,	(281)
And ship and man under the water wente	
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,	
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.	
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,	4295
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,	
That no man sholde been to recchelees	
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,	
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.	
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,	4300
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king	(291)
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing ;	
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,	
His mordre in his avisioun he say.	
His norice him expounded every del	4305
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel	
For traisoun ; but he nas but seven yeer old,	
And therefore litel tale hath he told	
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.	
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte	4310
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.	(301)
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,	
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun	
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,	
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been	4315
Warning of thinges that men after seen.	
And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel	
In the olde testament, of Daniel,	
If he held dremes any vanitee.	
Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye see	4320
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)	(311)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.	
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,	
His bakere and his boteler also,	
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.	4325

4293. it] Cp. Pt. him ; Ln. hem ; Hl. ther. 4296. E. *ins.* yet *after* olde.  
 4309. E. is ; *rest* was. 4313. Cm. thausioun. 4319. E. Hn. Cp. heeld.  
 4324. Cm. Ln. boteler ; Pt. botelere ; E. Hn. butiller.

Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,  
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.  
 Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,  
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,  
 Which signified he sholde anhangd be? 4330  
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf, (321)  
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,  
 She dremed on the same night biforn,  
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,  
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille; 4335  
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;  
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,  
 But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.  
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,  
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle. 4340  
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun, (331)  
 That I shal han of this avisioun  
 Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,  
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,  
 For they ben venimous, I woot it wel; 4345  
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.  
 Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al 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, 4350  
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën, (341)  
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen;  
 For, also siker as *In principio*,  
*Mulier est hominis confusio*;  
 Madame, the sentence of this Latin is— 4355  
 Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis.  
 For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,  
 Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,  
 For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!  
 I am so ful of Ioye and of solas 4360  
 That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.' (351)

---

4331. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Adromacha. 4338. Hn. And (*for* But). 4345.  
 E. Hn. Cm. venymes. it] Cp. Pt. Ln. right. 4346, 4361. E. Cp. diffye.



And with that word he fley doun fro the beam,  
 For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;  
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,  
 For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd. 4365  
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd;  
 He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,  
 And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.  
 He loketh as it were a grim leoun;  
 And on his toos he rometh up and doun, 4370  
 Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde. (361)  
 He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,  
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.  
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,  
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture; 4375  
 And after wol I telle his aventure.  
 Whan that the month in which the world bigan,  
 That highte March, whan god first maked man,  
 Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,  
 Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two, 4380  
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde, (371)  
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,  
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,  
 That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne  
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more; 4385  
 And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,  
 That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.  
 'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene  
 Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.  
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, 4390  
 Herkneþ these blisful briddes how they singe, (381)  
 And see the fresshe floures how they springe;  
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'  
 But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;  
 For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo. 4395

4362. Hn. Cm. fley; E. fly; Hl. Cp. fleigh. 4365. E. Hn. Cm. hadde.  
 4366. Cm. Ln. Royal; rest Real; but see l. 4374. 4367. He] E. And.  
 4368. Hl. that; rest om. Cp. Pt. Ln. were. Hl. er that it was prime. 4370.  
 Hl. toon. 4371. Cm. deynyth. 4374. his] E. Cm. an. 4379. All passed.  
 4380. Hl. tway monthes and dayes tuo. 4386. And] Cp. Pt. Ln. He.

God woot that worldly Ioye is sone ago ;  
 And if a rethor coude faire endyte,  
 He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,  
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee.  
 Now every wys man, lat him herkne me ; 4400  
 This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake, (391)  
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,  
 That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.  
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.  
 A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee, 4405  
 That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,  
 By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,  
 The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast  
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire  
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire ; 4410  
 And in a bed of wortes stille he lay, (401)  
 Til it was passed undern of the day,  
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,  
 As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,  
 That in awayt liggien to mordre men. 4415  
 O false mordrer, lurking in thy den !  
 O newe Scariot, newe Genilon !  
 False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,  
 That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe !  
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe, 4420  
 That thou into that yerd flogh fro the bemes ! (411)  
 Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,  
 That thilke day was perilous to thee.  
 But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,  
 After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis. 4425  
 Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,  
 That in scole is gret altercacioun  
 In this matere, and greet disputisoun,  
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.  
 But I ne can not bulte it to the bren, 4430  
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn, (421)  
 Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,

---

4398. Hl. Cp. cronique; rest cronicle. 4404. torne] E. come. 4412.  
 E. Hn. Pt. vndren. 4421. E. Hn. flaugh; Cm. flaw; Cp. fleyse; Hl. flogh.

Whether that goddes worthy forwiting  
 Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,  
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee); 4435  
 Or elles, if free choys be graunted me  
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,  
 Though god forwoot it, er that it was wrought;  
 Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del  
 But by necessitee condicionel. 4440  
 I wol not han to do of swich matere; (431)  
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,  
 That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,  
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe  
 That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde. 4445  
 Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;  
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,  
 And made Adam fro paradys to go,  
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.  
 But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese, 4450  
 If I counseil of wommen wolde blame, (441)  
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.  
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,  
 And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.  
 Thisse been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne; 4455  
 I can noon harm of no womman divyne.  
 Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,  
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,  
 Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free  
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see; 4460  
 For Phisiologus seith sikerly, (451)  
 How that they singen wel and merily.  
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,  
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,  
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe. 4465  
 No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,  
 But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,  
 As man that was affrayed in his herte.

---

4433. E. Wheither. 4434. E. nedefully to doon. 4442. may] Hl. Cp. Pt.  
 schal (schuln). 4445. yow] E. of. 4448. E. out of (*for* fro. 4452.  
 seyde] E. seye. 4460. E. murier. 4462. E. myrily.

For naturelly a beest desyreth flee  
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 4470  
 Though he never erst had seyn it with his yē. (461)  
 This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,  
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon  
 Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas ! wher wol ye gon ?  
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend ? 4475  
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,  
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.  
 I am nat come your counseil for tespye ;  
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge  
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe. 4480  
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene (471)  
 As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene ;  
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge  
 Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.  
 My lord your fader (god his soule blesse !) 4485  
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,  
 Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese ;  
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.  
 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,  
 So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye, 4490  
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe, (481)  
 As dide your fader in the morweninge ;  
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.  
 And for to make his voys the more strong,  
 He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yēn 4495  
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,  
 And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,  
 And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.  
 And eek he was of swich discrecioun,  
 That ther nas no man in no regioun 4500  
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe. (491)  
 I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,  
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,  
 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knock  
 Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce, 4505  
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.

4482. E. *om.* hath.  
 wol.

4484. Hl. Pt. had.  
 4491. E. herde I ; yet (*for so*).

4489. E. *ins.* yow *after*

But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun  
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun  
 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.  
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee, 4510  
 Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete? ' (501)  
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,  
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,  
 So was he ravished with his flaterye.  
 Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour 4515  
 Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,  
 That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,  
 Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.  
 Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;  
 Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. 4520  
 This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos, (511)  
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,  
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones;  
 And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,  
 And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer, 4525  
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer,  
 For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.  
 O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!  
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!  
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes! 4530  
 And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce. (521)  
 O Venus, that art goddessse of plesaunce,  
 Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,  
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,  
 More for delyt, than world to multiplie, 4535  
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?  
 O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,  
 That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn  
 With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,  
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore, 4540  
 The Friday for to chide, as diden ye? (531)  
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)  
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne

---

4508. E. Cm. Cp. Bitwixe.      4524. E. Hn. Cm. stirte.      4525. E. Hn.  
 gargat; Cm. Hl. garget; Ln. gorge.      4531. E. Hn. Cm. fil; rest fel.

For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun 4545

Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun

Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,

Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,

And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),

As maden alle the hennes in the clos, 4550

Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte. (541)

But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighthe,

Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,

Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,

And that the Romainys hadde brend Cartage; 4555

She was so ful of torment and of rage,

That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,

And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.

O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,

As, whan that Nero brende the citee 4560

Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves, (551)

For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;

Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.

Now wol I torne to my tale agayn:—

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two, 4565

Herden these hennes crye and maken wo,

And out at dores sterten they anoon,

And syen the fox toward the grove goon,

And bar upon his bak the cok away;

And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weylaway! 4570

Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran, (561)

And eek with staves many another man;

Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,

And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;

Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges 4575

So were they fered for berking of the dogges

And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,

They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;

---

4552. E. sodeynly (*for* sovereynly). 4554. Hn. Cm. y-lost. 4564. E.  
 Now turne I wole. 4567. E. Hn. Cm. stirten. 4570. Pt. They. 4575.  
 E. Hl. *om.* eek. 4576. Hl. were they; *rest om.* 4579. E. yolleden.

The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle; 4585  
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees; (571)  
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;  
 So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*  
 Certes, he Iakke Straw, and his meynee,  
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille, 4585  
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,  
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.  
 Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,  
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,  
 And therwithal thay shryked and they houped; 4590  
 It semed as that heven sholde falle. (581)  
 Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!  
 Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly  
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!  
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak, 4595  
 In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,  
 And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,  
 Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),  
 Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!  
 A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 4600  
 Now am I come un-to this wodes syde, (591)  
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;  
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.'—  
 The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be don,'—  
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly 4605  
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,  
 And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.  
 And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,  
 'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!  
 I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespas, 4610  
 In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd, (601)  
 Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;  
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;  
 Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente.  
 I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so.' 4615

---

4585. E. Ln. shille. 4590. E. Hn. skriked. 4594. E. om. eek. 4598.  
 E. wolde (*for* sholde). 4601. E. the (*for* this). 4608. Hl. i-goon; *rest*  
 gon, goon. 4612. E. Hn. into this (*for* out of the). 4613. E. of (*for* in).

'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe two,  
 And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,  
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.  
 Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,  
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yë. 4620  
 For he that winketh, whan he sholde see, (611)  
 Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!  
 'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him meschaunce,  
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,  
 That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.' 4625  
 Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,  
 And necligent, and truste on flaterye.  
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,  
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,  
 Taketh the moralitee, good men. 4630  
 For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is, (621)  
 To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.  
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.  
 Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,  
 As seith my lord, so make us alle good men; 4635  
 And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

**Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.**

4618. E. Hn. Hl. *ins.* any *before* ofter. 4630. Pt. good; *rest* goode.  
 4635. Hl. Pt. Ln. good; *rest* goode. COLOPHON. Cp. Nonne; E. Hn.  
 Nonnes. Hl. Here endeth the tale of Chaunteclere and *per*telote.



## EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

‘SIR Nonnes Preest,’ our hoste seyde anoon,  
 ‘Y-blessed be thy breche, and every stoon!  
 This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.  
 But, by my trouthe, if thou were seculer, 4640  
 Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right.  
 For, if thou have corage as thou hast might,  
 Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,  
 Ya, mo than seven tymes seventene.  
 See, whiche braunes hath this gentil Preest, 4645  
 So greet a nekke, and swich a large breest! (10)  
 He loketh as a sperhauk with his yën;  
 Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen  
 With brasil, ne with greyn of Portingale.  
 Now sire, faire falle yow for youre tale!’ 4650  
 And after that he, with ful mery chere,  
 Seide to another, as ye shullen here.

---

*These genuine lines only occur in Dd., in MS. Reg. 17 D. xv, and in MS. Addit. 5140 (B. M.). The text is founded on Dd. 4637. Dd. oure hoost. 4639. Dd. murie; Reg. Add. mery. 4641. Dd. ben. Dd. tredfoul; Reg. Add. trede foule. 4645. Dd. which; Reg. whiche; Add. suche. 4646. Dd. gret. 4647. Dd. sperhauke; eyen. 4648. Dd. dyghen; Reg. Add. dyen. 4650-2. I suspect these three lines to be spurious. 4650. Reg. youre mery tale. 4652. to] all un-to. another] Add. the Nonne.*

NOTE. *Three varieties of a Doctour's Prologue are given, respectively, by Tyrwhitt, Wright, and Morris; but are all spurious. Perhaps the best is the very short one in Tyrwhitt, as follows:—*

‘Ye, let that passen,’ quod our Hoste, ‘as now.  
 Sire Doctour of Phisyk, I preye yow,  
 Telle us a tale of som honest matere.’  
 ‘It shal be doon, if that ye wol it here,’  
 Seyde this Doctour, and his tale bigan anon.  
 ‘Now, good men,’ quod he, ‘herkneht everichon.’

GROUP C.

THE PHISICIENS TALE.

(T. 11935-11957.)

—♦♦—  
\* \* *For a spurious Prologue, see p. 289.*

Here folweth the Phisiciens Tale.

THER was, as telleth Titus Livius,  
A knight that called was Virginius,  
Fulfilde of honour and of worthinesse,  
And strong of freendes and of greet richesse.  
This knight a doghter hadde by his wyf, 5  
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.  
Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee  
Aboven every wight that man may see;  
For nature hath with sovereyn diligence  
Y-formed hir in so greet excellence, 10  
As though she wolde seyn, 'lo! I, Nature,  
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,  
Whan that me list; who can me countrefete?  
Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,  
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn, 15  
Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,  
Outher to grave or peynte or forge or bete,  
If they presumed me to countrefete.  
For he that is the former principal  
Hath maked me his vicaire general, 20  
To forme and peynten erthely creaturis  
Right as me list, and ech thing in my cure is  
Under the mone, that may wane and waxe,

---

2. Hn. called was; E. was called; *rest* cleped was. 16. E. Hn. Apelles;  
Hn. Apollus; *rest* Apollus. E. Hn. Zanzis; *rest* zephirus (!).

And for my werk right no-thing wol I axe ;  
 My lord and I ben ful of oon accord ; 25  
 I made hir to the worship of my lord.  
 So do I alle myne othere creatures,  
 What colour that they han, or what figures.'—  
 Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.  
 This mayde of age twelf yeer was and tweye, 30  
 In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.  
 For right as she can peynte a lillie whyt  
 And reed a rose, right with swich peynture  
 She peynted hath this noble creature  
 Er she were born, up-on hir limes free, 35  
 Wher-as by right swiche colours sholde be ;  
 And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete  
 Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.  
 And if that excellent was hir beautee,  
 A thousand-fold more vertuuous was she. 40  
 In hir ne lakked no condicioun,  
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.  
 As wel in goost as body chast was she ;  
 For which she floured in virginitee  
 With alle humilitee and abstinence, 45  
 With alle attemperaunce and pacience,  
 With mesure eek of bering and array.  
 Discreet she was in answering alway ;  
 Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I seyn,  
 Hir facound eek ful wommanly and pleyn, 50  
 No countrefeted termes hadde she  
 To seme wys ; but after hir degree  
 She spak, and alle hir wordes more and lesse  
 Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.  
 Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse, 55  
 Constant in herte, and ever in bisnesse  
 To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.  
 Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrye ;  
 For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,

25. E. Hn. ful of oon; *rest* fully at. 49. Cp. Pt. Ln. as; *rest om.* 50.  
 E. a (*for* and). 55. E. Shamefast. E. *om.* in. 59. E. Hn. dooth; *rest*  
 doon. E. Hn. encesse.

As men in fyr wol casten oile or grece. 60  
 And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,  
 She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,  
 For that she wolde fleen the companye  
 Wher lykly was to treten of folye,  
 As is at festes, revels, and at daunces, 65  
 That been occasions of daliaunces.  
 Swich thinges maken children for to be  
 To sone rype and bold, as men may see,  
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.  
 For al to sone may she lerne lore 70  
 Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.  
 And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,  
 That lordes doghtres han in governaunce,  
 Ne taketh of my wordes no displesaunce ;  
 Thenketh that ye ben set in governinges 75  
 Of lordes doghtres, only for two thinges ;  
 Outher for ye han kept your honestee,  
 Or elles ye han falle in freletee,  
 And knowen wel y-nough the olde daunce,  
 And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce 80  
 For evermo ; therefore, for Cristes sake,  
 To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne slake.  
 A thief of venisoun, that hath forlaft  
 His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,  
 Can kepe a forest best of any man. 85  
 Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye can ;  
 Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente,  
 Lest ye be dampned for your wikke entente ;  
 For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn.  
 And taketh kepe of that that I shal seyn ; 90  
 Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence  
 Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.  
 Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,  
 Though ye han children, be it oon or two,

60. E. man ; *rest* men. E. wasten ; *rest* casten. E. oille ; greesse. 67. E. Hn. thyng ; *rest* thinges. 70. E. Hn. they ; *rest* she. 80. E. Hn. han ; *rest* conne. 82. *So* E. Hn. ; *rest* Kepeth wel tho that ye undertake. 84. E. Hn. olde ; *rest* theves. 86. *Read* kep'th ; E. Hn. *om.* hem ; Hl. hir (!). E. wolde ; *rest* wole (wil). 92. E. Hn. bitrayseth ; *rest* betrayeth.

Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce, 95  
 Whyl that they been under your governaunce.  
 Beth war that by ensample of your livinge,  
 Or by your necligence in chastisinge,  
 That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,  
 If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye. 100  
 Under a shepherde softe and necligent  
 The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent.  
 Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,  
 For I mot turne agayn to my matere.  
 This mayde, of which I wol this tale expresse, 105  
 So kepte hir-self, hir neded no maistresse;  
 For in hir living maydens mighten rede,  
 As in a book, every good word or dede,  
 That longeth to a mayden vertuous;  
 She was so prudent and so bountevous. 110  
 For which the fame out-sprong on every syde  
 Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde;  
 That thurgh that land they preyed hir echone,  
 That loved vertu, save envye allone,  
 That sory is of other mennes wele, 115  
 And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele;  
 (The doctour maketh this descripcioun).  
 This mayde up-on a day wente in the toun  
 Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,  
 As is of yonge maydens the manere. 120  
 Now was ther thanne a Iustice in that toun,  
 That governour was of that regioun.  
 And so bifel, this Iuge his eyen caste  
 Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful faste,  
 As she cam forby ther this Iuge stood. 125  
 Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,  
 So was he caught with beautee of this mayde;  
 And to him-self ful prively he sayde,  
 'This mayde shal be myn, for any man.'

---

95. E. Hn. surveiaunce; *rest* sufferance (suffraunce). 97. E. Hn. if; *rest*  
 that. 99. E. Hn. *om.* ne. 103, 4. E. *om.* both lines; *I follow* Hn. *and*  
*the rest.* 105. E. Hn. I wol this; *rest* I telle my. 119. E. Hn. a; *rest*  
 the. 125. E. Hn. ther as; *rest om.* as.

Anon the feend in-to his herte ran, 130  
 And taughte him sodeynly, that he by slighte  
 The mayden to his purpos winne mighte.  
 For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,  
 Him thoughte, he was nat able for to spede ;  
 For she was strong of freendes, and eek she 135  
 Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,  
 That wel he wiste he mighte hir never winne  
 As for to make hir with hir body sinne.  
 For which, by greet deliberacioun,  
 He sente after a cherl, was in the toun, 140  
 Which that he knew for subtil and for bold.  
 This Iuge un-to this cherl his tale hath told  
 In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,  
 He sholde telle it to no creature,  
 And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed. 145  
 Whan that assented was this cursed reed,  
 Glad was this Iuge and maked him greet chere,  
 And yaf hym yiftes precieuse and dere.  
 Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye  
 Fro point to point, how that his lecherye 150  
 Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly,  
 As ye shul here it after openly,  
 Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Claudius.  
 This false Iuge that highte Apius,  
 So was his name, (for this is no fable, 155  
 But knowen for historial thing notable,  
 The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute),  
 This false Iuge gooth now faste aboute  
 To hasten his delyt al that he may.  
 And so bifel sone after, on a day, 160  
 This false Iuge, as telleth us the storie,  
 As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,  
 And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.  
 This false cherl cam forth a ful greet pas,  
 And seyde, 'lord, if that it be your wille, 165  
 As dooth me right up-on this pitous bille,

138. E. maken; *rest* make. 140, 142, 153, 164. E. Hn. cherl; *rest* clerk.  
 147. E. Hn. this; *rest* the. 149. E. Hn. hir; *rest* this. 155. E. Hn. this; *rest* it.

In which I pleyne up-on Virginius,  
 And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,  
 I wol it preve, and finde good wisse,  
 That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.' 170

The Iuge answerde, 'of this, in his absence,  
 I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence.  
 Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here ;  
 Thou shalt have al right, and no wrong here.'

Virginius cam, to wite the Iuges wille, 175  
 And right anon was rad this cursed bille ;  
 The sentence of it was as ye shul here.

'To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,  
 Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,  
 How that a knight, called Virginius, 180  
 Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,  
 Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,  
 My servant, which that is my thral by right,  
 Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a night,  
 Whyl that she was ful yong ; this wol I preve 185  
 By wisse, lord, so that it nat yow greve.  
 She nis his doghter nat, what so he seye ;  
 Wherefore to yow, my lord the Iuge, I preye,  
 Yeld me my thral, if that it be your wille.'  
 Lo ! this was al the sentence of his bille. 190

Virginius gan up-on the cherl biholde,  
 But hastily, er he his tale tolde,  
 And wolde have preved it, as sholde a knight,  
 And eek by witnessing of many a wight,  
 That it was fals that seyde his adversarie, 195  
 This cursed Iuge wolde no-thing tarie,  
 Ne here a word more of Virginius,  
 But yaf his Iugement, and seyde thus :—

'I deme anon this cherl his servant have ;  
 Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir save. 200  
 Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our warde,  
 The cherl shal have his thral, this I awarde.'

---

172. E. diffynyue ; rest diffinitif. 173, 174. E. heere, glossed audire ; and  
 heere, glossed hic. 191, 199, 202. E. Hn. Cm. cherl ; rest clerk. 202. E.  
 Hn. Cm. this ; rest thus.

And whan this worthy knight Virginius,  
 Thurgh sentence of this Iustice Apius,  
 Moste by force his dere doghter yiven 205  
 Un-to the Iuge, in lecherye to liven,  
 He gooth him hoom, and sette him in his halle,  
 And leet anon his dere doghter calle,  
 And, with a face deed as asshen colde,  
 Upon hir humble face he gan biholde, 210  
 With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his herte,  
 Al wolde he from his purpos nat converte.

‘Doghter,’ quod he, ‘Virginia, by thy name,  
 Ther been two weyes, outhr deeth or shame,  
 That thou most suffre; allas! that I was bore! 215  
 For never thou deservedest wherfore  
 To dyen with a swerd or with a knyf.

O dere doghter, ender of my lyf,  
 Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce,  
 That thou were never out of my remembraunce! 220

O doghter, which that art my laste wo,  
 And in my lyf my laste Ioye also,  
 O gemme of chastitee, in pacience  
 Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.  
 For love and nat for hate, thou most be deed; 225  
 My pitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.

Allas! that ever Apius thee say!  
 Thus hath he falsly Iuged thee to-day’—  
 And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore  
 Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it more. 230

‘O mercy, dere fader,’ quod this mayde,  
 And with that word she both hir armes layde  
 About his nekke, as she was wont to do:  
 The teres broste out of hir eyen two,  
 And seyde, ‘gode fader, shal I dye? 235  
 Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?’

‘No, certes, dere doghter myn,’ quod he.

‘Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,’ quod she,  
 ‘My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;

---

205. Hl. Cp. yiuen; rest yeuen. 223. E. o; rest of. 234. E. Hn. teeris.  
 E. bruste; Cm. broste; Pt. brosten; Hn. borste; Cp. Ln. barsten; Hl. brast.



For pardee, Iepte yaf his doghter grace 240  
 For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas !  
 And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,  
 But for she ran hir fader first to see,  
 To welcome him with greet solempnitee.  
 And with that word she fil aswowne anon, 245  
 And after, whan hir swowning is agon,  
 She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,  
 'Blessed be god, that I shal dye a mayde.  
 Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame ;  
 Doth with your child your wil, a goddes name !' 250  
 And with that word she preyed him ful ofte,  
 That with his swerd he wolde smyte softe,  
 And with that word aswowne doun she fil.  
 Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,  
 Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente, 255  
 And to the Iuge he gan it to presente,  
 As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.  
 And whan the Iuge it saugh, as seith the storie,  
 He bad to take him and anchange him faste.  
 But right anon a thousand peple in thraste, 260  
 To save the knight, for routhe and for pitee,  
 For knowen was the false iniquitee.  
 The peple anon hath suspect of this thing,  
 By manere of the cherles chalanging,  
 That it was by the assent of Apius ; 265  
 They wisten wel that he was lecherous.  
 For which un-to this Apius they gon,  
 And caste him in a prison right anon,  
 Wher-as he slow him-self ; and Claudius,  
 That servant was un-to this Apius, 270  
 Was demed for to hange upon a tree ;  
 But that Virginius, of his pitee,  
 So preyde for him that he was exyled ;  
 And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.

243. E. Hn. for ; *rest* first. 248. E. Ln. Blissed ; *rest* Blessed. 252.  
*All but* E. Hn. *ins.* hir *before* softe. 259. E. Hn. anchange ; *rest* honge.  
 260. E. Hn. a thousand ; *rest* al the. 263. E. of ; *rest* in. 264. E. Hn.  
 the cherles ; *rest* this clerkes. 269. E. Hn. Ther ; *rest* Wher. 271. E.  
 And ; *rest* Was.

The remenant were anhanged, more and lesse, 275  
 That were consentant of this cursednesse.---

Heer men may seen how sinne hath his meryte!  
 Beth war, for no man woot whom god wol smyte  
 In no degree, ne in which maner wyse  
 The worm of conscience may agryse 280  
 Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,  
 That no man woot ther-of but god and he.  
 For be he lewed man, or elles lered,  
 He noot how sone that he shal been afered.  
 Therefore I rede yow this conseil take, 285  
 Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

**Here endeth the Phisiciens tale.**

275. E. Hn. Hl. anhanged; *rest* honged. 278. E. Hn. whom; *rest* how.  
 280. E. Hn. may agryse; *rest* wol (wil) arise. 283. E. ellis. Cp. Ln.  
 Whether he be lewed man or lered; so Pt. (*with* Where *for* Whether); so Hl.  
 (*with* Wher that *for* Whether). COLOPHON. So E. Hn.; Sloane *has* Here  
 endethe the tale of the Mayster of phisyk; Hl. Here endeth the Doctor of  
 phisque his tale.

## WORDS OF THE HOST.

(T. 12221-12239.)



### The wordes of the Host to the Phisicien and the Pardoner.

OUR Hoste gan to swere as he were wood,  
 'Harrow!' quod he, 'by nayles and by blood!  
 This was a fals cherl and a fals Iustyse!  
 As shamful deeth as herte may devyse 290  
 Come to thise Iuges and hir advocats!  
 Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!  
 Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!  
 Wherefore I seye al day, as men may see,  
 That yiftes of fortune or of nature 295  
 Ben cause of deeth to many a creature. (10)  
 Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;  
 Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!  
 Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now  
 Men han ful ofte more harm than prow. 300  
 But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,  
 This is a pitous tale for to here.  
 But natheles, passe over, is no fors;  
 I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,  
 And eek thyne urinals and thy Iordanes, 305

HEADING. So E. E. Hoost. 287. Ln. oste; rest hoost, ost. 290.  
 E. shameful. 291, 292. So E. Hn. Pt.; but Cp. has—So falle vpon his body  
 and his bones The deuy! I bekenne him al at ones; so also Ln. Hl. 291. E.  
 (alone) ins. false before Iuges. E. Hn. Aduocat; Pt. aduocas. 295. E.  
 Hn. and; rest or. 296. E. Hn. to; rest of. 297, 298. So Cp. Ln. Hl.;  
 rest omit these lines. 300. E. Hn. for harm; rest om. for. 303. Hl. this  
 is; the rest omit this. 305. Ln. Iordanes; Cp. Iurdanes; E. Hn. Iurdones.

Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes, (20)  
 And every boist ful of thy letuarie ;  
 God blesse hem, and our lady seinte Marie !  
 So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,  
 And lyk a prelat, by saint Ronyan ! 310  
 Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in terme ;  
 But wel I woot, thou doost my herte to erme,  
 That I almost have caught a cardiacle.  
 By corpus bones ! but I have triacle,  
 Or elles a draught of moyste and corny ale, 315  
 Or but I here anon a mery tale, (30)  
 Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.  
 Thou bel amy, thou Pardoner,' he seyde,  
 'Tel us som mirthe or Iapes right anon.'  
 'It shall be doon,' quod he, 'by saint Ronyon ! 320  
 But first,' quod he, 'heer at this ale-stake  
 I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake.'  
 But right anon these gentils gonne to crye,  
 'Nay ! lat him telle us of no ribaudye ;  
 Tel us som moral thing, that we may lere 325  
 Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here.' (40)  
 'I graunte, y-wis,' quod he, 'but I mot thinke  
 Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I drinke.

---

306. Cp. Galianes ; E. Hn. Galiones. 307. Hl. boist ; E. Hn. boyste ;  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. box. 313. E. Hn. cardynacle (!). 322. eten of] Hl. byt on.  
 323. E. Hn. And ; *the rest* But. 324. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. ribaudye ; Ln. rebaudie ;  
 Pt. rybaudrye. 327. *For ll.* 326, 327, Hl. *has*—Gladly, quod he, and  
 sayde as ye schal heere : But in the cuppe wil I me bethinke.

THE  
PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

(T. 12263-12288).



Here folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale.

*Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.*

**L** ORDINGS,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,  
 I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche, 330  
 And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,  
 For I can al by rote that I telle.  
 My theme is alwey oon, and ever was—  
 "*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*"  
 First I pronounce whennes that I come, 335  
 And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.  
 Our lige lordes seel on my patente,  
 That shewe I first, my body to warente, (10)  
 That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,  
 Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk; 340  
 And after that than telle I forth my tales,  
 Bulles of popes and of cardinales,  
 Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;  
 And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,  
 To saffron with my predicacioun, 345  
 And for to stire men to devocioun.  
 Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,  
 Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones; (20)  
 Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.  
 Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon 350  
 Which that was of an holy Iewes shepe.  
 "Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes kepe;  
 If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,  
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle

---

346. E. Hn. Hl. hem; rest men. 350. E. omits I by accident. 352. E.  
 Hl. Pt. Ln. Good; E. Hn. Cp. Goode. Hn. I seye; rest say I, saie I.

That any worm hath etc, or worm y-stonge, 355  
 Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,  
 And it is hool anon ; and forthermore,  
 Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore (30)  
 Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle  
 Drinketh a draughte ; tak kepe eek what I telle. 360  
 If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,  
 Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,  
 Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,  
 As thilke holy Iewe our eldres taughte,  
 His bestes and his stoor shal multiplie. 365  
 And, sirs, also it heleth Ialousye ;  
 For, though a man be falle in Ialous rage,  
 Let maken with this water his potage, (40)  
 And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,  
 Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste ; 370  
 Al had she taken preestes two or three.  
 Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.  
 He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,  
 He shal have multiplying of his greyn,  
 Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes, 375  
 So that he offre pens, or elles grotos.  
 Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,  
 If any wight be in this chirche now, (50)  
 That hath doon sinne horrible, that he  
 Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be, 380  
 Or any womman, be she yong or old,  
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,  
 Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace  
 To offren to my reliks in this place.  
 And who-so findeth him out of swich blame, 385  
 He wol com up and offre in goddes name,  
 And I assoille him by the auctoritee  
 Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me." (60)  
 By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,  
 An hundred mark sith I was Pardonere. 390

366. E. Hn. sire ; *rest* sires, sirs. 377. E. Hn. Goode ; *rest* And. 382.  
 Cp. Ln. Hl. ymaad ; Pt. made ; E. Hn. ymaked. 385. E. fame ; *rest* blame.  
 386. Hn. He ; *rest* They. E. on ; Hn. a ; *rest* in. 387. E. Hl. hem ; *rest*  
 him *or* hym.

I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,  
 And whan the lewed peple is down y-set,  
 I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,  
 And telle an hundred false Iapes more.  
 Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke, 395  
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,  
 As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.  
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne, (70)  
 That it is Ioye to see my businesse.  
 Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse 400  
 Is al my preching, for to make hem free  
 To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.  
 For my entente is nat but for to winne,  
 And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.  
 I rekke never, whan that they ben beried, 405  
 Though that her soules goon a-blakeberied!  
 For certes, many a predicacioun  
 Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun ; (80)  
 Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,  
 To been avaunced by ipocrisy, 410  
 And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.  
 For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,  
 Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte  
 In preching, so that he shal nat asterte  
 To been defamed falsly, if that he 415  
 Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.  
 For, though I telle noght his propre name,  
 Men shal wel knowe that it is the same (90)  
 By signes and by othere circumstances.  
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances : 420  
 Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe  
 Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.  
 But shortly myn entente I wol devyse ;  
 I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.  
 Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was— 425  
 “*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*”  
 Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce

395. the] Cm. myn ; Cp. Ln. Hl. my. 405. E. Hl. omit that. 425. E. Hn. theme ; rest teme (teem).

Which that I use, and that is avaryce. (100)  
 But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne,  
 Yet can I maken other folk to twinne 430  
 From avaryce, and sore to repente.  
 But that is nat my principal entente.  
 I preche no-thing but for coveityse ;  
 Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.  
 Than telle I hem ensamples many oon 435  
 Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon :  
 For lewed peple loven tales olde ;  
 Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde. (110)  
 What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,  
 And winne gold and silver for I teche, 440  
 That I wol live in povert wilfully?  
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely !  
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes ;  
 I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,  
 Ne make baskettes, and live therby, 445  
 Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.  
 I wol non of the apostles counterfete ;  
 I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete, (120)  
 Al were it yeven of the povrest page,  
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village, 450  
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.  
 Nay ! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,  
 And have a Ioly wenche in every toun.  
 But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun ;  
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale. 455  
 Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,  
 By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing  
 That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking. (130)  
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,  
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can, 460  
 Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.  
 Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne.

439. E. Pt. the whiles ; Cm. that whilis that ; Cp. Ln. whiles that ; Hl. whiles ; Hn. that whiles. 449. Hl. prestes (*for* povrest).



## THE PARDONERS TALE.

*(Numbered in continuation of the preceding.)*

## Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale.

**I**N Flaundes whylom was a companye  
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,  
 As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes, 465  
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,  
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night,  
 And ete also and drinken over hir might, (140)  
 Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrificyse  
 With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse, 470  
 By superfluitee abhominable ;  
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,  
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere ;  
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere ;  
 Hem thoughte Iewes rente him noght y-nough ; 475  
 And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.  
 And right anon than comen tombesteres  
 Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres, (150)  
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,  
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres 480  
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,  
 That is annexed un-to glotonye ;  
 The holy writ take I to my witsesse,  
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.  
 Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely, 485  
 Lay by his doghtres two, unwitingly ;  
 So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte.  
 Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte), (160)

HEADING ; from E. Hn. 465. E. Hl. stywes. 475. So Cp. Ln. Hl. ; E.  
 Hn. Cm. that Iewes ; Pt. þe Iwes. 478, 479. Hl. omits. 488. E. Hn.  
 Cm. P. Hl. agree here ; Cp. Ln. have two additional (*spurious*) lines ; see note.

Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,  
 Right at his owene table he yaf his heste 490  
 To sleen the Baptist Iohn ful giltelees.

Senek seith eek a good word doutelees ;  
 He seith, he can no difference finde  
 Bitwix a man that is out of his minde  
 And a man which that is dronkelewe, 495

But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,  
 Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.  
 O glotonye, ful of cursednesse, (170)

O cause first of our confusioun,  
 O original of our dampnacioun, 500  
 Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn !

Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,  
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye ;  
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye !

Adam our fader, and his wyf also, 505  
 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo  
 Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede ;

For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede, (180)  
 He was in Paradys ; and whan that he  
 Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree, 510

Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.  
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne !  
 O, wiste a man how many maladyes

Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,  
 He wolde been the more mesurable 515  
 Of his diete, sittinge at his table.

Allas ! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,  
 Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South, (190)  
 In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke

To gete a gloutoun deyntee mete and drinke ! 520  
 Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,  
 'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to mete,

Shal god destroyen bothe,' as Paulus seith.  
 Allas ! a foul thing is it, by my feith,  
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede, 525

---

492. Hl. Seneca (*for* Senek). Cp. Ln. eek ; *rest omit.* 495. which that  
 Hl. the which ; Cp. Pt. Ln. *om.* which. 496. E. Hl. fallen ; Hn. Cm. y-fallen.  
 519. E. Hl. man ; *rest* men.

Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,  
 That of his throte he maketh his privee,  
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee. (200)

The apostel weping seith ful pitously,  
 ‘Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I, 530  
 I seye it now weping with pitous voys,  
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,  
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god.’

O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,  
 Fulfld of donge and of corrupcioun! 535  
 At either ende of thee foul is the soun.

How greet labour and cost is thee to finde!  
 Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde, (210)  
 And turnen substaunce in-to accident,  
 To fulfille al thy likerous talent! 540

Out of the harde bones knocke they  
 The mary, for they caste nought a-wey  
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;  
 Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote  
 Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt, 545  
 To make him yet a newer appetyt.

But certes, he that haunteth swich delycles  
 Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces. (220)

A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse  
 Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse. 550  
 O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,

Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,  
 And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun  
 As though thou seydest ay ‘Sampsoun, Sampsoun’;  
 And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn. 555

Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;  
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;  
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture (230)  
 Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.

In whom that drinke hath dominacioun, 560  
 He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.  
 Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,

---

532. That they *is* Tyrwhitt's reading; Hl. Thay; *but the rest have* Ther, probably repeated by mistake from l. 530. 534. Hl. o stynking is thi cod.

And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,  
 That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.  
 This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly 565  
 In othere wynes, growing faste by,  
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,  
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three, (240)  
 And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,  
 He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe, 570  
 Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;  
 And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun.'  
 But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,  
 That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,  
 Of victories in the olde testament, 575  
 Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,  
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;  
 Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere. (250)  
 Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,  
 Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour, 580  
 Bleding ay at his nose in dronkenesse;  
 A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.  
 And over al this, avyseth yow right wel  
 What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—  
 Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I— 585  
 Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly  
 Of wyn-yeving to hem that han Iustyse.  
 Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse. (260)  
 And now that I have spoke of glotonye,  
 Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye. 590  
 Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,  
 And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,  
 Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also  
 Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,  
 It is repreve and contrarie of honour 595  
 For to ben holde a commune hasardour.  
 And ever the hyër he is of estaat,  
 The more is he holden desolaat. (270)  
 If that a prince useth hasardrye,

573. E. lordes; *rest* lordinges, lordynges, lordyngs. 589. E. Hl. *omit* that.  
 593. E. Blasphemynng; *rest* Blaspheme.

In alle governaunce and policye 600  
 He is, as by commune opinioun,  
 Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,  
 Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,  
 Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce. 605

And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,  
 That alle the grettest that were of that lond,  
 Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond. (280)

For which, as sone as it mighte be,  
 He stal him hoom agayn to his contree, 610

And seyde, 'ther wol I nat lese my name;  
 Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,  
 Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.

Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;  
 For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye, 615

Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.  
 For ye that been so glorious in honours  
 Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours (290)

As by my wil, ne as by my trette.'  
 This wyse philosophre thus seyde he. 620

Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius  
 The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,  
 Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,

For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;  
 For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun 625

At no value or reputacioun.  
 Lordes may finden other maner pley

Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away. (300)

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete  
 A word or two, as olde bokes trete. 630

Gret swering is a thing abhominable,  
 And false swering is yet more reprevable.

The heighe god forbad swering at al,  
 Witnesse on Mathew; but in special

Of swering seith the holy Ieremye, 635

606. Cm. Cp. Hl. happede; *rest* happed. 612. Hn. Ny; Cm. Nay (*both put for Ne I*) which shews the scansion. Hl. I nyl not. 614. *So all.* 621. E. Ln. Hl. omit to. 632. Cp. Ln. Hl. om. yet.

'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,  
 And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse ;'  
 But ydel swering is a cursednesse. (310)  
 Bihold and see, that in the firste table  
 Of heighe goddes hestes honorable, 640  
 How that the seconde heste of him is this—  
 'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.'  
 Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering  
 Than homicyde or many a cursed thing ;  
 I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondesth ; 645  
 This knowen, that his hestes understondesth,  
 How that the second heste of god is that.  
 And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat, (320)  
 That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,  
 That of his othes is to outrageous. 650  
 'By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,  
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles,  
 Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye ;  
 By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,  
 This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go'— 655  
 This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,  
 Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.  
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde, (330)  
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale ;  
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale. 660

**T**HISE rytoutours three, of whiche I telle,  
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,  
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke ;  
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke  
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave ; 665  
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,  
 'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily,  
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby ; (340)  
 And look that thou reporte his name wel.'  
 'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-a-del. 670  
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres ;

644. Hn. Cm. Hl. many a ; E. any ; Cp. Pt. Ln. eny other. 656. Hl.  
 bicchid ; Ln. becched ; Hn. Cm. bicche ; Pt. thilk. 659. E. Hn. Lete ; rest  
 Leueth. 661. E. Hn. Pt. Hl. riotours. 663. Cp. Pt. Hl. for ; rest om.

He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres ;  
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,  
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright ;  
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth, 675  
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,  
 And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,  
 And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo. (350)  
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:  
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence, 680  
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie  
 For to be war of swich an adversarie :  
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.  
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.'  
 'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner, 685  
 'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,  
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,  
 Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page. (360)  
 I trowe his habitacioun be there ;  
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were, 690  
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'  
 'Ye, goddes armes,' quod this rytour,  
 'Is it swich peril with him for to mete ?  
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,  
 I make avow to goddes digne bones ! 695  
 Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones ;  
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other, (370)  
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,  
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth ;  
 He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth, 700  
 By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'  
 Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,  
 To live and dyen ech of hem for other,  
 As though he were his owene y-boren brother.  
 And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage, 705  
 And forth they goon towards that village,  
 Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,  
 And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn, (380)

704. E. yborn ; Hn. ybore ; Cm. bore ; Pt. born ; Cp. Ln. III. sworne. 705.  
 E. Hn. stirte. Hn. Cp. Ln. III. al ; E. Cm. Pt. and.

And Cristes blessed body they to-rente—  
 ‘Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente.’ 710

Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,  
 Right as they wolde han troden over a style,  
 An old man and a povre with hem mette.  
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette,  
 And seyde thus, ‘now, lordes, god yow see!’ 715

The proudest of thise ryotoures three  
 Answerde agayn, ‘what? carl, with sory grace,  
 Why artow al forwrapped save thy face? (390)  
 Why livestow so longe in so greet age?’

This olde man gan loke in his visage, 720  
 And seyde thus, ‘for I ne can nat finde  
 A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,  
 Neither in citee nor in no village,  
 That wolde change his youthe for myn age;  
 And therefore moot I han myn age stille, 725  
 As longe time as it is goddes wille.

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;  
 Thus walke I, lyk a resteles caityf, (400)  
 And on the ground, which is my modres gate,  
 I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late, 730  
 And seye, “leve moder, leet me in!

Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!  
 Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?  
 Moder, with yow wolde I change my cheste,  
 That in my chambre longe tyme hath be, 735  
 Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!”

But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,  
 For which ful pale and welked is my face. (410)

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye  
 To speken to an old man vileinye, 740  
 But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.  
 In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,  
 “Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,  
 Ye sholde aryse;” wherfor I yeve yow reed,  
 Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now, 745  
 Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow



In age, if that ye so longe abyde ;  
 And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde. (420)  
 I moot go thider as I have to go.'

'Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,' 750  
 Seyde this other hasardour anon ;

'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint Iohn!  
 Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,  
 That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.

Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspyce, 755  
 Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyce,

By god, and by the holy sacrament!  
 For soothly thou art oon of his assent, (430)  
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'

'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be so leef 760  
 To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,

For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,  
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde ;

Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.  
 See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him finde. 765

God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,  
 And yow amende!'—thus seyde this olde man.

And everich of these ryoutoures ran, (440)  
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde

Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde 770  
 Wel ny an eighte bussshels, as hem thoughte.

No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,  
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,

For that the florins been so faire and brighte,  
 That doun they sette hem by this precious hord. 775

The worste of hem he spake the firste word.

'Brethren,' quod he, 'tak kepe what I seye ;  
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye. (450)

This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,  
 In mirthe and Iolitee our lyf to liven, 780

And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.  
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende

'To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?  
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this place

---

760. E. Cm. ye; Hn. Hl. yow. 779. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. yeuen. 780. E. Ioliftee.

Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres— 785  
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—  
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.  
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be; (460)  
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,  
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge. 790  
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte  
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.  
 Wherefore I rede that cut among us alle  
 Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;  
 And he that hath the cut with herte blythe 795  
 Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,  
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.  
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly (470)  
 This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,  
 Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie 800  
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.  
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,  
 And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;  
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;  
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon. 805  
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,  
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,  
 ‘Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother, (480)  
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.  
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon; 810  
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,  
 That shal departed been among us three.  
 But natheles, if I can shape it so  
 That it departed were among us two,  
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?’ 815  
 That other answerde, ‘I noot how that may be;  
 He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,  
 What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?’ (490)  
 ‘Shal it be conseil?’ seyde the firste shrewe,  
 ‘And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe, 820

796. Hl. Ln. the; *rest omit.* 803. E. hym; *rest hem.* E. Hn. Cp. wol;  
 Hl. wil; Cm. Pt. Ln. wolde. 807. E. *omits* of hem. 808. E. Hn. Pt. sworn;  
 Cm. swore: Cp. Ln. Hl. sworne. 820. Hl. the (=thee); *rest omit.* E. Hn.  
 Cm. in a; *rest omit* a.

What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'

'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of doute,  
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biweye.'

'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,  
And two of us shul strengre be than oon. 825

Look whan that he is set, and right anoon  
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;  
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye (500)

Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,  
And with thy dagger look thou do the same; 830

And than shal al this gold departed be,  
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;  
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,  
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille.'

And thus acorded been these shrewes tweye 835  
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,  
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun (510)

The beautee of these florins newe and brighte.  
'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I mighte 840

Have al this tresor to my-self allone,  
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone  
Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!'

And atte laste the feend, our enemy,  
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye, 845

With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;  
For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,  
That he had leve him to sorwe bringe, (520)

For this was outrely his fulle entente  
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente. 850

And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,  
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,

And preyed him, that he him wolde selle  
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle;

And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe, 855  
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,

---

823. E. shal; *rest* wol (wil, wyl). 826. E. Hn. Cm. that right; Cp. and thanne; Pt. Ln. Hl. and that. *I take* and *from* Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl., and right *from* E. Hn. Cm. 847. E. Hn. foond. 848. E. Cm. hem; *rest* hym or him. 853. Hn. preyed; Cm. preyede; *rest* preyde.

And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,  
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte. (530)

The pothecarie answerde, 'and thou shalt have  
A thing that, al-so god my soule save, 860  
In al this world ther nis no creature,  
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture  
Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,  
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete ;  
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle 865  
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle ;  
This poyson is so strong and violent.'

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent (540)  
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran  
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man, 870  
And borwed [of] him large botels three ;  
And in the two his poyson poured he ;  
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.  
For al the night he shoop him for to swinke  
In carynge of the gold out of that place. 875  
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,  
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,  
To his felawes agayn repaireth he. (550)

What nedeth it to sermone of it more ?  
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore, 880  
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.  
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,  
'Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,  
And afterward we wol his body berie.'  
And with that word it happed him, par cas, 885  
To take the botel ther the poyson was,  
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,  
For which anon they storven bothe two. (560)

But, certes, I suppose that Avicen  
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen, 890  
Mo wonder signes of empoisoning  
Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir ending.

---

861. E. Hn. Cm. is ; *rest nys or nis.* 871. *All omit of.* 873. E. his  
owene ; *rest omit owene.* 880. E. so as ; *rest omit so.* 891. E. Hn. Cm.  
signes ; Cp. Ln. Hl. sorwes ; Pt. sorowes.

Thus ended been thise homicydes two,  
And eek the false empoysoner also.

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse ! 895  
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse !  
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye !  
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye (570)  
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde !  
Allas ! mankinde, how may it bityde, 900  
That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,  
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,  
Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas !

Now, goode men, god forgeve yow your trespas,  
And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce. 905  
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,  
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,  
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes. (580)  
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle !  
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle ! 910  
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon ;  
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon ;  
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,  
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer  
As ye were born ; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche. 915  
And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,  
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve ;  
For that is best ; I wol yow nat deceyve. (590)

But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,  
I have relikes and pardon in my male, 920  
As faire as any man in Engelond,  
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.  
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,  
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,  
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun, 925  
And mekely receyveth my pardoun :  
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,

---

895. E. Hn. Cm. of alle ; Cp. Ln. Hl. ful of ; Pt. ful of al. 910. E.  
Com ; *rest* Cometh, Comyth. 911. E. Hl. names ; *rest* name. 925. E.  
Hn. Com ; *rest* Cometh, Comyth.

Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende, (600)  
 So that ye offren alwey newe and newe  
 Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe. 930  
 It is an honour to everich that is heer,  
 That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer  
 Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,  
 For aventures which that may bityde.  
 Peraventure ther may falle oon or two 935  
 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.  
 Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle  
 That I am in your felawship y-falle, (610)  
 That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,  
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe. 940  
 I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,  
 For he is most envoluped in sinne.  
 Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,  
 And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,  
 Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.' 945  
 'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I Cristes curs!  
 Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so theech!  
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech, (620)  
 And swere it were a relik of a seint,  
 Thogh it were with thy fundement depeint! 950  
 But by the croys which that seint Eleyne fond,  
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond  
 In stede of relikes or of seintuarie;  
 Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;  
 Thay shul be shryned in an hogges tord.' 955  
 This pardoner answerde nat a word;  
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.  
 'Now,' quod our host, 'I wol no lenger pleye (630)  
 With thee, ne with noon other angry man.'  
 But right anon the worthy knight bigan, 960  
 Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,  
 'Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;  
 Sir pardoner, be glad and mery of chere;

---

928. E. Hn. Cm. myles; *rest* tounes. 930. E. Hn. or; *rest* and. 935.  
 E. fallen. 941. E. Cm. heere; *rest om.* 944. E. my; Cm. myne; *rest*  
 the. 947. Hn. thee ich; *rest* theech. 954. Cp. Ln. the helpe; Pt. Hl.  
 helpe; E. with thee; Cm. from the; Hn. thee.

And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,  
I prey yow that ye kisse the pardoner. 965  
And pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,  
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.' (639)  
Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye. [T. 12902.

**Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.**

(For T. 12903, see p. 165).

---

COLOPHON. From E. Hn.; Hl. Here endeth the pardoneres tale.

GROUP D.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 5583-5602; for T. 5582, see p. 164.)



The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

‘E<sup>X</sup>PERIENCE, though noon auctoritee  
 Were in this world, were right y-nough to me  
 To speke of wo that is in mariage;  
 For, lordinges, sith I twelf yeer was of age,  
 Thonked be god that is eterne on lyve, 5  
 Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had fyve;  
 For I so ofte have y-wedded be;  
 And alle were worthy men in hir degree.  
 But me was told certeyn, nat longe agon is,  
 That sith that Crist ne wente never but onis 10  
 To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,  
 That by the same ensample taughte he me  
 That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.  
 Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for the nones  
 Besyde a welle Iesus, god and man, 15  
 Spak in repreve of the Samaritan:  
 “Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes,” quod he,  
 “And thilke man, the which that hath now thee,  
 Is noght thyn housbond;” thus seyde he certeyn;  
 What that he mente ther-by, I can nat seyn; 20

---

HEADING. *So E.*; Hn. Here bigynneth the prologe of the tale of the Wyf of Bathe; Hl. Here bygynneth the prologe of the wyf of Bathe. 5. Hn. Pt. Ln. Thonked; E. Ythonked. 7. *So E.*; *rest* If (Hl. For) I so ofte myghte haue wedded be. 12. *E. om.* That. E. thoughte; *rest* taughte he. 14. E. Herkne; Hl. Herken; *rest* Herke (Herk). E. Hl. *om.* lo. 18. E. And that; *rest* And that ilke (*read* thilke).



But that I axe, why that the fifthe man  
 Was noon housbond to the Samaritan?  
 How manye mighte she have in mariage?  
 Yet herde I never tellen in myn age  
 Upon this nombre diffinicioun; 25  
 Men may devyne and glosen up and down.  
 But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,  
 God bad us for to wexe and multiplie;  
 That gentil text can I wel understonde.  
 Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn housbonde 30  
 Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;  
 But of no nombre mencion made he,  
 Of bigamye or of octogamye;  
 Why sholde men speke of it vileinye?  
 Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salomon; 35  
 I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;  
 As, wolde god, it leveful were to me  
 To be refresshed half so ofte as he!  
 Which yifte of god hadde he for alle his wyvis!  
 No man hath swich, that in this world alyve is. 40  
 God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,  
 The firste night had many a mery fit  
 With ech of hem, so wel was him on lyve!  
 Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve!  
 Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he shal. 45  
 For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chast in al;  
 Whan myn housbond is fro the world y-gon,  
 Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon;  
 For thanne thapostle seith, that I am free  
 To wedde, a goddes half, wher it lyketh me. 50  
 He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;  
 Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.  
 What rekketh me, thogh folk seye vileinye  
 Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?

29. E. *om.* wel. 31. E. take; Hl. folwe; *rest* take to. 37. *So all but*  
 E., *which has* it were leueful vn-to me. 42. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 44.  
 E. Hl. Yblessed; *rest* Blessed (Blissed). 46. E. chaast. 49. E. *om.* that.  
 50. Hl. wher so it be; *rest* wher it liketh me (*correctly; for a goddes half*  
 = a god's half). 51. E. *om.* that. 52. E. Hn. Hl. Bet; *rest* Better  
 54. E. Hl. of; *rest* his.

I woot wel Abraham was an holy man, 55  
 And Iacob eek, as ferforth as I can;  
 And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two;  
 And many another holy man also.  
 Whan saugh ye ever, in any maner age,  
 That hye god defended mariage 60  
 By expres word? I pray you, telleth me;  
 Or wher comanded he virginitee?  
 I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,  
 Thapostel, whan he speketh of maydenhede;  
 He seyde, that precept ther-of hadde he noon. 65  
 Men may conseille a womman to been oon,  
 But conseilling is no comandement;  
 He putte it in our owene Iugement.  
 For hadde god comanded maydenhede,  
 Thanne hadde he dampned wedding with the dede; 70  
 And certes, if ther were no seed y-sowe,  
 Virginitee, wher-of than sholde it growe?  
 Poul dorste nat comanden atte leste  
 A thing of which his maister yaf noon heste.  
 The dart is set up for virginitee; 75  
 Cacche who so may, who renneth best lat see.  
 But this word is nat take of every wight,  
 But ther as god list give it of his might.  
 I woot wel, that thapostel was a mayde;  
 But natheless, thogh that he wroot and sayde, 80  
 He wolde that every wight were swich as he,  
 Al nis but conseil to virginitee;  
 And for to been a wyf, he yaf me leve  
 Of indulgence; so it is no repreve  
 To wedde me, if that my make dye, 85  
 With-oute excepcioun of bigamye.  
 Al were it good no womman for to touche,  
 He mente as in his bed or in his couche;  
 For peril is bothe fyr and tow tasseble;  
 Ye knowe what this ensample may resemble. 90

58. E. *om.* holy.      59. Hl. Whan; E. Whanne; *rest* Where (Wher). E.  
*om.* any.      64. E. Whan thapostel speketh.      67. E. nat; *rest* no (non).  
 71. E. certein.      73. E. Hl. *ins.* ne *after* Poul.      75. E. of; Cp. fro; Hl.  
 on; *rest* for.      77. E. Hl. taken.      78. E. Cm. lust; Hn. Hl. list.      79.  
 E. *om.* that.      85. E. Cm. *om.* that.      89. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. to assemble.

This is al and som, he heeld virginitee  
 More parfit than wedding in freletee.  
 Freeltee clepe I, but-if that he and she  
 Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.

I graunte it wel, I have noon envye, 95  
 Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamy; ;  
 Hem lyketh to be clene, body and goost,  
 Of myn estaat I nil nat make no boost.  
 For wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold,  
 He hath nat every vessel al of gold; 100  
 Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse.  
 God clepeth folk to him in sondry wyse,  
 And everich hath of god a propre yifte,  
 Som this, som that,—as him lyketh shifte.

Virginitee is greet perfeccioun, 105  
 And continence eek with devocioun.  
 But Crist, that of perfeccioun is welle,  
 Bad nat every wight he sholde go selle  
 All that he hadde, and give it to the pore,  
 And in swich wyse folwe him and his fore. 110  
 He spak to hem that wolde live parfitly;  
 And lordinges, by your leve, that am nat I.  
 I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age  
 In the actes and in fruit of mariage.

Telle me also, to what conclusioun 115  
 Were membres maad of generacioun,  
 And for what profit was a wight y-wrought?  
 Trusteth right wel, they wer nat maad for noght.  
 Glose who-so wole, and seye bothe up and doun,  
 That they were maked for purgacioun 120  
 Of urine, and our bothe thinges smale  
 Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,  
 And for noon other cause: sey ye no?  
 The experience woot wel it is noht so;

91. E. Cm. that; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. he heeld; Hl. he holdith. 92. E. Cm. profiteth; rest parfit. 94. Hn. Hl. leden; rest lede. 104. *So all but Hl. Ln., which have to schifte. Perhaps read right as him.* 108. E. Cm. Hl. om. he. 109, 110. E. poore, foore; and foore is glossed by steppes. 113. E. Hl. om. al. 116. E. ymaad. 120. Cm. makyd; rest maad; see l. 126. 121. *So Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln;* E. vryne bothe and thynges. 122. E. Cm. And; Hn. Hl. Was; rest Were.

So that the clerkes be nat with me wrothe, 125  
 I sey this, that they maked been for bothe,  
 This is to seye, for office, and for ese  
 Of engendrure, ther we nat god displese.  
 Why sholde men elles in hir bokes sette,  
 That man shal yelde to his wyf hir dette? 130  
 Now wher-with sholde he make his payement,  
 If he ne used his sely instrument?  
 Than were they maad up-on a creature,  
 To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.  
 But I seye noght that every wight is holde, 135  
 That hath swich harneys as I to yow tolde,  
 To goon and usen hem in engendrure;  
 Than sholde men take of chastitee no cure.  
 Crist was a mayde, and shapen as a man,  
 And many a seint, sith that the world bigan, 140  
 Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.  
 I nil envye no virginitee;  
 Lat hem be breed of pured whete-seed,  
 And lat us wyves hoten barly-breed;  
 And yet with barly-breed, Mark telle can, 145  
 Our lord Iesu refreshed many a man.  
 In swich estaat as god hath cleped us  
 I wol persevere, I nam nat precious.  
 In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument  
 As frely as my maker hath it sent. 150  
 If I be daungerous, god yeve me sorwe!  
 Myn housbond shal it have bothe eve and morwe,  
 Whan that him list com forth and paye his dette.  
 An housbonde I wol have, I nil nat lette,  
 Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral, 155  
 And have his tribulacioun with-al  
 Up-on his flessh, whyl that I am his wyf.  
 I have the power duringe al my lyf  
 Up-on his propre body, and noght he.

126. this] E. yis. E. Cm. beth maked. 130. E. Cm. a man. 133. E. Thanne.  
 134. E. Cm. om. eek. 136. Hn. Hl. to yow; E. Cm. of. 138. E. Cm.  
 They shul nat; rest Than sholde men. 140. E. Cm. om. that (*perhaps read*  
*sē-int*). 142. E. Cm. nil nat. 144. E. hoten; Hn. Cm. hote; Cp. Pt.  
 Ln. ete (!; Hl. eten (!). 146. E. Cm. Hl. om. Iesu. 148. E. Hn. precious.

Right thus the apostel tolde it un-to me; 160  
 And bad our housbondes for to love us weel.

Al this sentence me lyketh every-deel'—

UP sterte the Pardoner, and that anon,  
 'Now dame,' quod he, 'by god and by seint Iohn,  
 Ye been a noble prechour in this cas! 165

I was aboute to wedde a wyf; allas!

What sholde I bye it on my flesh so dere?

Yet hadde I lever wedde no wyf to-yere!'

'Abyde!' quod she, 'my tale is nat bigonne;  
 Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne 170

Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale.

And whan that I have told thee forth my tale

Of tribulacioun in mariage,

Of which I am expert in al myn age,

This to seyn, my-self have been the whippe;— 175

Than maystow chese whether thou wolt sippe

Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.

Be war of it, er thou to ny approche;

For I shal telle ensamples mo than ten.

Who-so that nil be war by othere men, 180

By him shul othere men corrected be.

The same wordes wryteth Ptholomee;

Rede in his Almageste, and take it there.'

'Dame, I wolde praye yow, if your wil it were,'  
 Seyde this Pardoner, 'as ye bigan, 185

Telle forth your tale, spareth for no man,

And teche us yonge men of your praktike.'

'Gladly,' quod she, 'sith it may yow lyke.

But yet I praye to al this companye,  
 If that I speke after my fantasye, 190

As taketh not a-grief of that I seye;

For myn entente nis but for to pleye.

Now sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.—

As ever mote I drinken wyn or ale,

163. E. Hn. stirte. 172. Hn. 111. thee; *rest om.* 173. E. Cm. that is  
 in (*for* in). 176. E. wheither. 177. E. Cm. that; *rest* thilke. 180.  
 Hn. nyle; Hl. nyl; *rest* wol nat. 182. Ln. tholome; Pt. ptholome; Hl.  
 protholome; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. Protholome (!). 183. E. Cm. Rede it in.  
 184. E. Cm. *om.* yow. 188. E. sires; Cm. sire; *rest* quod she. 191. E.  
 Cm. *om.* of. 192. Hn. nis; E. Cm. is; *rest* is not. 193. E. Hn. Cm. sire.

I shal seye sooth, tho housbondes that I hadde, 195  
 As three of hem were gode and two were badde.  
 The three men were gode, and riche, and olde ;  
 Unnethe mighte they the statut holde  
 In which that they were bounden un-to me.  
 Ye woot wel what I mene of this, pardee ! 200  
 As help me god, I laughe whan I thinke  
 How pitously a-night I made hem swinke ;  
 And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.  
 They had me yeven hir gold and hir tresoor ;  
 Me neded nat do lenger diligence 205  
 To winne hir love, or doon hem reverence.  
 They loved me so wel, by god above,  
 That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love !  
 A wys womman wol sette hir ever in oon  
 To gete hir love, ther as she hath noon. 210  
 But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn hond,  
 And sith they hadde me yeven all hir lond,  
 What sholde I taken hede hem for to please,  
 But it were for my profit and myn ese ?  
 I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey, 215  
 That many a night they songen "weilawey !"  
 The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,  
 That som men han in Essex at Dunmowe.  
 I governed hem so wel, after my lawe,  
 That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe 220  
 To bringe me gaye thinges fro the fayre.  
 They were ful glad whan I spak to hem fayre ;  
 For god it woot, I chidde hem spitously.  
 Now herkneth, how I bar me proprely,  
 Ye wyse wyves, that can understonde. 225  
 Thus shul ye speke and bere hem wrong on honde ;  
 For half so boldely can ther no man  
 Swere and lyen as a womman can.  
 I sey nat this by wyves that ben wyse,

195. E. of tho; Hl. Cm. of; Hn. Cp. Pt. tho; Ln. the. 197. Cp. Pt. Ln.  
 men; *rest om.* 210. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. ye ther; *but read lov-ë.* 215. E.  
 Hn. a-werk; *rest a-werke.* 220. E. was ful blisful; Cm. was blyful and ful.  
 224. E. baar. 226. E. beren: *om. wrong.* 228. MSS. lye; *read lyen.*  
 Hn. Ln. a womman kan; Pt. womman can; *rest kan a womman.*

But-if it be whan they hem misavyse. 230  
 A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,  
 Shal beren him on hond the cow is wood,  
 And take witesse of hir owene mayde  
 Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde.  
 'Sir olde kaynard, is this thyn array? 235  
 Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?  
 She is honoured over-al ther she goth;  
 I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty cloth.  
 What dostow at my neighebores hous?  
 Is she so fair? artow so amorous? 240  
 What rowne ye with our mayde? *benedicite*!  
 Sir olde lechour, lat thy Iapes be!  
 And if I have a gossib or a freend,  
 With-uten gilt, thou chydest as a feend,  
 If that I walke or pleye un-to his hous! 245  
 Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,  
 And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef!  
 Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief  
 To wedde a povre womman, for costage;  
 And if that she be riche, of heigh parage, 250  
 Than seistow that it is a tormentrye  
 To suffre hir pryde and hir malencolye.  
 And if that she be fair, thou verray knave,  
 Thou seyst that every holour wol hir have;  
 She may no whyle in chastitee abyde, 255  
 That is assailed up-on ech a syde.  
 Thou seyst, som folk desyre us for richesse,  
 Somme for our shap, and somme for our fairnesse;  
 And som, for she can outhur singe or daunce,  
 And som, for gentillesse and daliaunce; 260  
 Som, for hir handes and hir armes smale;  
 Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale.  
 Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel-wal;

231. E. Hn. Cm. A wys; Hl. I-wis a; *rest* wise. *Read* wys-e? 232. Hl.  
 beren; *rest* bere. Cm. cou; Pt. Ln. cowe. 242. E. Pt. Hl. lecchour. 250.  
 E. Cm. *om.* that. E. Cm. Hl. and of; *rest* of. 251. E. Cm. Hl. *om.* that.  
 252. E. soffren. 257. E. Cm. that som. E. Hn. Cm. desiren. 258. E.  
 Cm. *om.* and. 259. E. Cm. Hl. *om.* outhur. E. Cm. Hl. and (*for* or).  
 260. and] E. Cm. and som for; Hl. or.

It may so longe assailed been over-al.

And if that she be foul, thou seist that she 265

Coveiteth every man that she may se ;

For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe,

Til that she finde som man hir to chepe ;

Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the lake,

As, seistow, that wol been with-oute make. 270

And seyst, it is an hard thing for to welde

A thing that no man wol, his thankes, helde.

Thus seistow, lorel, whan thow goost to bedde ;

And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,

Ne no man that entendeth un-to hevене. 275

With wilde thonder-dint and firy leveve

Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke !

Thow seyst that dropping houses, and eek smoke,

And chyding wyves, maken men to flee

Out of hir owene hous ; a ! *benedicite* ! 280

What eyleth swich an old man for to chyde ?

Thow seyst, we wyves wol our vyces hyde

Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe ;

Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe !

Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes, 285

They been assayed at diverse stoundes ;

Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,

Spones and stoles, and al swich housbondrye,

And so been pottes, clothes, and array ;

But folk of wyves maken noon assay 290

Til they be wedded ; olde dotard shrewe !

And than, seistow, we wol oure vices shewe.

Thou seist also, that it displeth me

But-if that thou wolt preyse my beautee,

And but thou poure alwey up-on my face, 295

And clepe me "faire dame" in every place ;

And but thou make a feste on thilke day

That I was born, and make me fresh and gay,

---

269. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. ther; *rest om.* 270. Cp. Pt. Ln. that; *rest om.*  
 271, 272. Hn. Hl. wolde, holde. 277. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. welked; Cm. wekede;  
 Cp. Hl. wicked. 280. E. Hn. Cp. houses. 282. E. Cm. that we. 286.  
 E. assayd; Pt. Ln. assaide; *rest* assayed. 292. Hn. Hl. *supply* And. 295.  
 Hl. pore; *rest* poure.



And but thou do to my norice honour,  
 And to my chamberere with-inne my bour, 300  
 And to my fadres folk and his allyes;—  
 Thus seistow, olde barel ful of lyes!

And yet of our apprentice Ianekyn,  
 For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyn,  
 And for he squiereth me bothe up and doun, 305  
 Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun;  
 I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed to-morwe.

But tel me this, why hydestow, with sorwe,  
 The keyes of thy cheste away fro me?  
 It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee. 310

What wenestow make an idiot of our dame?  
 Now by that lord, that called is seint Iame,  
 Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou were wood,  
 Be maister of my body and of my good;  
 That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne yën; 315  
 What nedeth thee of me to enquere or spyën?

I trowe, thou woldest loke me in thy chiste!  
 Thou sholdest seye, "wyf, go wher thee liste,  
 Tak your disport, I wol nat leve no talis;  
 I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame Alis." 320  
 We love no man that taketh kepe or charge  
 Wher that we goon, we wol ben at our large.

Of alle men y-blessed moot he be,  
 The wyse astrologien Dan Ptholome,  
 That seith this proverbe in his Almageste, 325

"Of alle men his wisdom is the hyeste,  
 That rekketh never who hath the world in honde."  
 By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,  
 Have thou y-nogh, what thar thee recche or care  
 How merily that othere folkes fare? 330  
 For certeyn, olde dotard, by your leve,

---

300. Cm. chamberere; Hl. chamberer; E. Hn. chambrere. 303. E. Ianekyn; *rest* Iankyn. 308. E. Cm. Hl. *om.* this. 309. thy] E. Cm. my. 311. E. Cm. to make; *rest om.* to. 313. Hn. Ln. that; *rest om.* 315. Hl. yen; E. eyen. 316. E. nedeth thee; *rest* helpeth it. Hn. Cp. Ln. *om.* to. Hl. tenqueren; *read* t'enquere. 319. *All but* Cp. Ln. *om.* not (nat). 320. E. Pt. Alys; Ln. Ales. 323. Hn. Hl. yblessed; *rest* blessed. 324. MSS. Daun. E. Protholome; Hn. Cm. Hl. *Protholome.* 326. E. Cm. *ins.* the *before* hyeste; (*read* th' hy-ést-e). 328. Cp. Pt. Ln. shal wel. 330. E. myrily.

Ye shul have queynte right y-nough at eve.  
 He is to greet a nigard that wol werne  
 A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne ;  
 He shal have never the lasse light, pardee ; 335  
 Have thou y-nough, thee thar nat pleyne thee.

Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay  
 With clothing and with precious array,  
 That it is peril of our chastitee ;  
 And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce thee, 340  
 And seye these wordes in the apostles name,  
 "In habit, maad with chastitee and shame,  
 Ye wommen shul apparaille yow," quod he,  
 "And noght in tressed heer and gay perree,  
 As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche ;" 345

After thy text, ne after thy rubriche  
 I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.  
 Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat ;  
 For who-so wolde senge a cattes skin,  
 Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in ; 350  
 And if the cattes skin be slyk and gay,  
 She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,  
 But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,  
 To shewe hir skin, and goon a-caterwawed ;  
 This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewe, 355  
 I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.

Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyen ?  
 Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hundred yën,  
 To be my warde-cors, as he can best,  
 In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me lest ; 360  
 Yet coude I make his berd, so moot I thee.

Thou seydest eek, that ther ben thinges three,  
 The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,  
 And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe ;  
 O leve sir shrewe, Iesu shorte thy lyf ! 365  
 Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf  
 Y-rekened is for oon of these meschances.

---

333. E. Cm. wolde. 348. Hl. thus ; Cp. Pt. Ln. als ; *rest* this. 350. *All*  
 his. 358. Hl. yen ; E. eyen. 359. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. -corps. 360. E.  
*om.* 2nd me. 364. *All but* Pt. Ln. *om.* ne. 366. E. and (*for an*).

Been ther none othere maner resemblances  
 That ye may lykne your parables to,  
 But-if a sely wyf be oon of tho? 370

Thou lykenest wommanes love to helle,  
 To bareyne lond, ther water may not dwelle.  
 Thou lyknest it also to wilde fyr;  
 The more it brenneth, the more it hath desyr  
 To consume every thing that brent wol be. 375  
 Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende a tree,  
 Right so a wyf destroyeth hir housbonde;  
 This knowe they that been to wyves bonde.'

Lordinges, right thus, as ye have understonde,  
 Bar I stifly myne olde housbondes on honde, 380  
 That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse;  
 And al was fals, but that I took wisse  
 On Ianekin and on my nece also.

O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo,  
 Ful giltelees, by goddes swete pyne! 385

For as an hors I coude byte and whyne.  
 I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,  
 Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt.  
 Who-so that first to mille comth, first grint;  
 I pleynd first, so was our werre y-stint. 390  
 They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve  
 Of thing of which they never agilde hir lyve.

Of wenches wolde I beren him on honde,  
 Whan that for syk unnethes mighte he stonde.  
 Yet tikled it his herte, for that he 395  
 Wende that I hadde of him so greet chiertee.

I swoor that al my walkinge out by nighte  
 Was for tespye wenches that he dighte;  
 Under that colour hadde I many a mirthe.  
 For al swich wit is yeven us in our birthe; 400

---

368. Cp. Pt. Ln. maner; Cm. of these; Hl. of thy; E. *om.* 371. Cp. Ln. Hl. likenest; Cm. likkenyst; E. Hn. Pt. liknest. E. wommenes. 375. E. Hn. consumen. 376. Cp. Pt. that; *rest om.* Hn. Cp. Pt. shende; E. Pt. shendeth. 383. Hl. vpon. 385. E. Hn. giltelees. 389. *So* Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln.; E. Who so comth first to mille; Hl. Who-so first cometh to the mylle. 391. E. Cm. *om.* 2nd ful. 393. E. hym; *rest hem; but see* 394. 395. E. it; *rest* I. 400. E. thyng was; *rest* wit is.

Deceite, weping, spinning god hath yive  
 To wommen kindly, whyl they may live.  
 And thus of o thing I avaunte me,  
 Atte ende I hadde the better in ech degree,  
 By sleighte, or force, or by som maner thing, 405  
 As by continuel murmur or grucching;  
 Namely a-bedde hadden they meschaunce,  
 Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no plesaunce;  
 I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,  
 If that I felte his arm over my syde, 410  
 Til he had maad his raunson un-to me;  
 Than wolde I suffre him do his nycetee.  
 And ther-fore every man this tale I telle,  
 Winne who-so may, for al is for to selle.  
 With empty hand men may none haukes lure;  
 For winning wolde I al his lust endure, 415  
 And make me a feyned appetyt;  
 And yet in bacon hadde I never delyt;  
 That made me that ever I wolde hem chyde.  
 For thogh the pope had seten hem biside, 420  
 I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord.  
 For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for word.  
 As help me verray god omnipotent,  
 Thogh I right now sholde make my testament,  
 I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit. 425  
 I broghte it so aboute by my wit,  
 That they moste yeve it up, as for the beste;  
 Or elles hadde we never been in reste.  
 For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,  
 Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun. 430  
 Thanne wolde I seye, 'gode lief, tak keep  
 How mckely loketh Wilkinoure sheep;  
 Com neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy cheke!  
 Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,  
 And han a swete spyced conscience, 435  
 Sith ye so preche of Iobes pacience.  
 Suffreth alwey, sin ye so wel can preche;

401. E. yeue. 402. *All but* Hn. Hl. *ins.* that *before* they. 406. E. con-  
 tinueel. 428. E. rest. 431. Cp. Pt. Hl. *ins.* now *before* goode.

And but ye do, certein we shal yow teche  
 That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.  
 Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees ; 440  
 And sith a man is more resonable  
 Than womman is, ye moste been suffrable.  
 What eyleth yow to grucche thus and grone?  
 Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?  
 Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel ; 445  
 Peter ! I shrewe yow but ye love it weel !  
 For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,  
 I coude walke as fresh as is a rose ;  
 But I wol kepe it for your owene tooth.  
 Ye be to blame, by god, I sey yow sooth.' 450  
 Swiche maner wordes hadde we on honde.  
 Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.  
 My fourthe housbonde was a revelour,  
 This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour ;  
 And I was yong and ful of ragerye, 455  
 Stiborn and strong, and Ioly as a pye.  
 Wel coude I daunce to an harpe smale,  
 And singe, y-wis, as any nightingale,  
 Whan I had dronke a draughte of swete wyn.  
 Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn, 460  
 That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf,  
 For she drank wyn, thogh I hadde been his wyf,  
 He sholde nat han daunted me fro drinke ;  
 And, after wyn, on Venus moste I thinke :  
 For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl, 465  
 A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.  
 In womman vinolent is no defence,  
 This knowen lechours by experience.  
 But, lord Crist ! whan that it remembreth me  
 Up-on my yowthe, and on my Iolitee, 470  
 It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote.  
 Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote  
 That I have had my world as in my tyme.  
 But age, allas ! that al wol envenyme,

---

445. E Hn. Pt. Wy.      456. Cm. Cp. Ln. Styborne; Pt. Hl. Stiborn; E.  
 Hn. Stibourne.      464. Cm. muste; Ln. must.      467. E. Hl. wommen.

Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith ; 475  
 Lat go, fare-wel, the devel go therwith !  
 The flour is goon, ther is na-more to telle,  
 The bren, as I best can, now moste I selle ;  
 But yet to be right mery wol I fonde.  
 Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde. 480  
 I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt  
 That he of any other had delyt.  
 But he was quit, by god and by seint Ioce !  
 I made him of the same wode a croce ;  
 Nat of my body in no foul manere, 485  
 But certainly, I made folk swich chere,  
 That in his owene grece I made him frye  
 For angre, and for verray Ialousye.  
 By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,  
 For which I hope his soule be in glorie. 490  
 For god it woot, he sat ful ofte and song  
 Whan that his shoo ful bitterly him wrong.  
 Ther was no wight, save god and he, that wiste,  
 In many wyse, how sore I him twiste.  
 He deyde whan I cam fro Ierusalem, 495  
 And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,  
 Al is his tombe noght so curious  
 As was the sepulcre of him, Darius,  
 Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly ;  
 It nis but wast to burie him preciously. 500  
 Lat him fare-wel, god yeve his soule reste,  
 He is now in the grave and in his cheste.  
 Now of my fifthe housbond wol I telle.  
 God lete his soule never come in helle !  
 And yet was he to me the moste shrewe ; 505  
 That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe,  
 And ever shal, un-to myn ending-day.  
 But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,  
 And ther-with-al so wel coude he me glose,  
 Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose*, 510  
 That thogh he hadde me bet on every boon,

479. E. myrie ; Hn. murye.

486. E. certein.

497. E. Hn. curyus.

508. E. ful ; rest so.

511. Cp. Hl. boon ; rest bon.

He coude winne agayn my love anon.  
 I trowe I loved him beste, for that he  
 Was of his love daungerous to me.  
 We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye, 515  
 In this matere a queynte fantasye;  
 Wayte what thing we may nat lightly have,  
 Ther-after wol we crye al-day and crave.  
 Forbede us thing, and that desyren we;  
 Prees on us faste, and thanne wol we flee. 520  
 With daunger oute we al our chaffare;  
 Greet prees at market maketh dere ware,  
 And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys;  
 This knoweth every womman that is wys.  
 My fifthe housbonde, god his soule blesse! 525  
 Which that I took for love and no richesse,  
 He som-tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,  
 And had left scole, and wente at hoom to bord  
 With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,  
 God have hir soule! hir name was Alisoun. 530  
 She knew myn herte and eek my privetee  
 Bet than our parisshe-preest, so moot I thee!  
 To hir biwreyed I my conseil al.  
 For had myn housbonde pissed on a wal,  
 Or doon a thing that sholde han cost his lyf, 535  
 To hir, and to another worthy wyf,  
 And to my nece, which that I loved weel,  
 I wolde han told his conseil every-deel.  
 And so I dide ful often, god it woot,  
 That made his face ful often reed and hoot 540  
 For verray shame, and blamed him-self for he  
 Had told to me so greet a privetee.  
 And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,  
 (So often tymes I to my gossib wente,  
 For ever yet I lovede to be gay, 545  
 And for to walke, in March, Averille, and May,  
 Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis),

513. Cm. Hl. beste; E. Hn. best; Cp. Pt. the bet; Ln. bette. 520. E.  
 Hn. Presse; Cm Presse. 521. E. Hn. Cm. oute; Cp. Ln. Hl. outen; Pt.  
 outer. 528. E. hadde; hom. 532. E. Hn. as; rest so. 534. E. Hn.  
 Cm. Cp. hadde. 545. Hn. Cm. louede; E. Hl. loued.

That Iankin clerk, and my gossib dame Alis,  
 And I my-self, in-to the felde wente.  
 Myn housbond was at London al that Lente ; 550  
 I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,  
 And for to see, and eek for to be seye  
 Of lusty folk ; what wiste I wher my grace  
 Was shapen for to be, or in what place ?  
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns, 555  
 To vigilies and to processiouns,  
 To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,  
 To pleyes of miracles and mariages,  
 And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.  
 Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes, 560  
 Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel ;  
 And wostow why ? for they were used weel.

Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.  
 I seye, that in the feeldes walked we,  
 Til trewely we hadde swich daliance, 565  
 This clerk and I, that of my purveyance  
 I spak to him, and seyde him, how that he,  
 If I were widwe, sholde wedde me.  
 For certainly, I sey for no bobance,  
 Yet was I never with-uten purveyance 570  
 Of mariage, nof othere thinges eek.  
 I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek,  
 That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,  
 And if that faille, thanne is al y-do.

I bar him on honde, he hadde enchanted me ; 575  
 My dame taughte me that soutiltee.  
 And eek I seyde, I mette of him al night ;  
 He wolde han slayn me as I lay up-right,  
 And al my bed was ful of verray blood,  
 But yet I hope that he shal do me good ; 580  
 For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.  
 And al was fals, I dremed of it right naught,

---

550. E. the ; *rest* that. 558. E. Hn. and to ; Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. and of ; Hl. om. to (*or of*). 561. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. peril (*correctly*) ; Pt. perile ; Ln. Hl. perel. 571. E. Hn. nof ; Cm. and more ; *rest* ne of. 572. herte] Cp. Pt. Ln. witte. 575-584. *All but E. Cm. omit these lines ; (Dd. has them).*



But as I folwed ay my dames lore,  
As wel of this as of other thinges more.

But now sir, lat me see, what I shal seyn? 585  
A! ha! by god, I have my tale ageyn.

Whan that my fourthe housbond was on bere,  
I weep algate, and made sory chere,  
As wyves moten, for it is usage,  
And with my coverchief covered my visage; 590  
But for that I was purveyed of a make,  
I weep but smal, and that I undertake.

To chirche was myn housbond born a-morwe  
With neighebores, that for him maden sorwe;  
And Iankin oure clerk was oon of tho. 595

As help me god, whan that I saugh him go  
After the bere, me thoughte he hadde a paire  
Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,  
That al myn herte I yaf un-to his hold.

He was, I trowe, a twenty winter old, 600  
And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth;  
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.

Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel;  
I hadde the prente of sēynt Venus seel. 605  
As help me god, I was a lusty oon,

And faire and riche, and yong, and wel bigoon;  
And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde me,  
I had the beste *quoniam* mighte be.

For certes, I am al Venerien  
In feling, and myn herte is Marcien. 610

Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,  
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.  
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars ther-inne.  
Allas! allas! that ever love was sinne!

I folwed ay myn inclinacioun 615  
By vertu of my constellacioun;  
That made me I coude noght withdrawe

583. E. Cm. *om.* as; *but it occurs in* MSS. Camb. Dd. 4. 24, Ii. 1. 36, &c.  
592. E. wepte; *but see* 588. 595. *Or* Iankin, *see* 383; MSS. Iankyn.  
603. Ln. Gate-tofede. 605-612. Hl. *omits.* 608. E. hadde. E. Hn.  
quonyam; Cm. Pt. Ln. quoniam; Cp. queynte. 609-612. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln.  
*omit.*

My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.  
 Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,  
 And also in another privee place. 620  
 For, god so wis be my savacioun,  
 I ne loved never by no discrecioun,  
 But ever folwede myn appetyt,  
 Al were he short or long, or blak or whyt ;  
 I took no kepe, so that he lyked me, 625  
 How pore he was, ne eek of what degree.  
 What sholde I seye, but, at the monthes ende,  
 This Ioly clerk Iankin, that was so hende,  
 Hath wedded me with greet solempnitee,  
 And to him yaf I al the lond and fee 630  
 That ever was me yeven ther-bifore ;  
 But afterward repented me ful sore.  
 He nolde suffre nothing of my list.  
 By god, he smoot me ones on the list,  
 For that I rente out of his book a leef, 635  
 That of the strook myn ere wex al deaf.  
 Stiborn I was as is a leonesse,  
 And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse,  
 And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,  
 From hous to hous, al-though he had it sworn. 640  
 For which he often tymes wolde preche,  
 And me of olde Romayn gestes teche,  
 How he, Simplicius Gallus, lefte his wyf,  
 And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,  
 Noght but for open-headed he hir say 645  
 Lokinge out at his dore upon a day.  
 Another Romayn tolde he me by name,  
 That, for his wyf was at a someres game  
 With-oute his witing, he forsook hir eke.  
 And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke 650  
 That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,  
 Wher he comandeth and forbedeth faste,  
 Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute ;

619-626. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. *omit.* 623. Cm. folwede ; E. folwed. 626.  
 Cm. pore ; E. poore. 634. E. Hn. on the lyst ; (Ln. luste ; Cp. Pt. lest) ;  
 Hl. Cm. with his fist. 636. E. Hl. wax. 637. E. Hn. Stibourne. 645. E.  
 Hn. -headed ; Hl. heedid. 649. E. Hn. Cm. With-ouen. 650. E. thanne.

Than wolde he seye right thus, with-outen doute,  
 "Who-so that buildeth his hous al of salwes, 655  
 And priketh his blinde hors over the falwes,  
 And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,  
 Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes!"  
 But al for noght, I sette noght an hawe  
 Of his proverbes nof his olde sawe, 660  
 Ne I wolde nat of him corrected be.  
 I hate him that my vices telleth me,  
 And so do mo, god woot! of us than I.  
 This made him with me wood al outrelly;  
 I nolde noght forbere him in no cas. 665  
 Now wol I seye yow sooth, by seint Thomas,  
 Why that I rente out of his book a leef,  
 For which he smoot me so that I was deef.  
 He hadde a book that gladly, night and day,  
 For his desport he wolde rede alway. 670  
 He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste,  
 At whiche book he lough alwey ful faste.  
 And eek ther was som-tyme a clerk at Rome,  
 A cardinal, that highte Seint Ierome,  
 That made a book agayn Iovinian; 675  
 In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,  
 Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,  
 That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys;  
 And eek the Parables of Salomon,  
 Ovydes Art, and bokes many on, 680  
 And alle these wer bounden in o volume.  
 And every night and day was his custume,  
 Whan he had leyser and vacacioun  
 From other worldly occupacioun,  
 To reden on this book of wikked wyves. 685  
 He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves  
 Than been of gode wyves in the Bible.  
 For trusteth wel, it is an impossible  
 That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,

654. E. Thanne.      660. E. Hn. nof; *rest* ne of. E. awe; Hn. Cm. Hl.  
 sawe; Cp. Pt. Ln. lawe.      676. Cm. Ln. whiche; *rest* which. Cp. Pt. Hl.  
 Terculan.      680. Hl. bourdes; *rest* bookes (bokes).      683. E. hadde.

But-if it be of holy seintes lyves, 690  
 Ne of noon other womman never the mo.  
 Who peyntede the leoun, tel me who?  
 By god, if wommen hadde writen stories,  
 As clerkes han with-inne hir oratories,  
 They wolde han writen of men more wikkednesse 695  
 Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.  
 The children of Mercurie and of Venus  
 Been in hir wirking ful contrarius;  
 Mercurie loveth wisdom and science,  
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispenche. 700  
 And, for hir diverse disposicioun,  
 Ech falleth in otheres exaltacioun;  
 And thus, god woot! Mercurie is desolat  
 In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;  
 And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed; 705  
 Therefore no womman of no clerk is preysed.  
 The clerk, whan he is old, and may noght do  
 Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,  
 Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage  
 That wommen can nat kepe hir mariage! 710  
 But now to purpos, why I tolde thee  
 That I was beten for a book, pardee.  
 Up-on a night Iankin, that was our syre,  
 Redde on his book, as he sat by the fyre,  
 Of Eva first, that, for hir wikkednesse, 715  
 Was al mankinde broght to wrecchednesse,  
 For which that Iesu Crist him-self was slayn,  
 That boghte us with his herte-blood agayn.  
 Lo, here expres of womman may ye finde,  
 That womman was the los of al mankinde. 720  
 Tho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres,  
 Slepinge, his lemman kitte hem with hir sheres;  
 Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe his yën.

691. E. Ne; Hn. Nof; *rest* Ne of. 692. Cm. peyntede; *rest* peynted. 697.  
 Cm. Hl. and of; *rest om.* of. 698. E. Hn. Ln. Hl. contrarius. 699. E. wys-  
 dam. 705. *Over* is reysed E. *has* i. in Virgine. 709. E. Thanne. 717-720.  
 Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. *omit.* 717. E. *om.* that Iesu; *which occurs in MS.*  
 Bibl. Reg. 17. D. xv. *and in* Dd. 721, 723. E. hise. 722. Cm. hem; *rest*  
 it (*badly*). 723. Pt. Ln. whiche; *rest* which (*badly*). E. eyen.

Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,  
 Of Hercules and of his Dianyre, 725  
 That caused him to sette himself a-fyre.

No-thing forgat he the penaunce and wo  
 That Socrates had with hise wyves two ;  
 How Xantippa caste pisse up-on his heed ;  
 This sely man sat stille, as he were deed ; 730  
 He wyped his heed, namore dorste he seyn  
 But "er that thonder stinte, comth a reyn."

Of Phasipha, that was the quene of Crete,  
 For sbrewednesse, him thoughte the tale swete ;  
 Fy! spek na-more—it is a grisly thing— 735  
 Of hir horrible lust and hir lyking.

Of Clitemistra, for hir lecherye,  
 That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,  
 He redde it with ful good devocioun.

He tolde me eek for what occasioun 740  
 Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf ;  
 Myn housbond hadde a legende of his wyf,  
 Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold  
 Hath prively un-to the Grekes tld  
 Wher that hir housbonde hidde him in a place, 745  
 For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.

Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye,  
 They bothe made hir housbondes for to dye ;  
 That oon for love, that other was for hate ;  
 Lyma hir housbond, on an even late, 750  
 Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo.  
 Lucy, likerous, loved hir housbond so,  
 That, for he sholde alwey up-on hir thinke,  
 She yaf him swich a maner love-drinke,  
 That he was deed, er it were by the morwe ; 755  
 And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.

Than tolde he me, how oon Latumius  
 Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,

---

727. Cp. Pt. Ln. penaunce ; E. Hn. sorwe ; Cm. Hl. care. 728. E. hadde.  
 733. E. Hn. Phasifpha ; Cm. Phasippa ; *rest* Phasipha. 735. E. speke ; Hn.  
 Cm. Cp. Hl. spek. 737. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Clitermystra ; Cm. Clitemysta ;  
 Hl. Clydemystra. 750. E. vpon ; *rest* on. 757. E. Thanne. E. Hn. how  
 that oon. Cm. Latymyus ; *rest* Latumyus. 758. E. Hn. Hl. vnto ; *rest* to.

That in his gardin growed swich a tree,  
 On which, he seyde, how that his wyves three 760  
 Hanged hem-self for herte despitous.  
 "O leve brother," quod this Arrius,  
 "Yif me a plante of thilke blissed trec,  
 And in my gardin planted shal it be!"  
 Of latter date, of wyves hath he red, 765  
 That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,  
 And lete hir lechour dighte hir al the night  
 Whyl that the corps lay in the floor up-right.  
 And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn  
 Whyl that they slepte, and thus they han hem slayn. 770  
 Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir drinke.  
 He spak more harm than herte may bithinke.  
 And ther-with-al, he knew of mo proverbes  
 Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.  
 "Bet is," quod he, "thyn habitacioun 775  
 Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,  
 Than with a womman usinge for to chyde.  
 Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde  
 Than with an angry wyf down in the hous;  
 They been so wikked and contrarious; 780  
 They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay."  
 He seyde, "a womman cast hir shame away,  
 Whan she cast of hir smok;" and forther-mo,  
 "A fair womman, but she be chaast also,  
 Is lyk a gold ring in a sowes nose." 785  
 Who wolde wenen, or who wolde suppose  
 The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?  
 And whan I saugh he wolde never fync  
 To reden on this cursed book al night,  
 Al sodeynly three leves have I plight 790  
 Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke,  
 I with my fist so took him on the cheke,  
 That in our fyr he fil bakward adoun.  
 And he up-stirte as dooth a wood leoun,

764. E. Ln. it shal; Pt. shal he; *rest* shal it.  
 Cm. Whils; Hl. Whil; *rest* Whan; *see* 770.  
*but read* wenen. 792. E. Cp. fest; *rest* fist.

767. E. lecchour. 768.  
 786. E. leeue; *rest* wene;

And with his fist he smoot me on the heed, 795  
That in the floor I lay as I were deed.

And when he saugh how stille that I lay,  
He was agast, and wolde han fled his way,  
Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde :  
"O! hastow slayn me, false thief?" I seyde, 800  
"And for my land thus hastow mordred me?  
Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee."

And neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun,  
And seyde, "dere suster Alisoun,  
As help me god, I shal thee never smyte ; 805  
That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte.  
Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke"—

And yet eft-sones I hitte him on the cheke,  
And seyde, "theef, thus muchel am I wreke ;  
Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke." 810

But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,  
We fille acorded, by us selven two.

He yaf me al the brydel in myn hond  
To han the governance of hous and lond,  
And of his tonge and of his hond also, 815  
And made him brenne his book anon right tho.

And whan that I hadde geten un-to me,  
By maistrie, al the soveraynetee,  
And that he seyde, "myn owene trewe wyf,  
Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf, 820  
Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat"—

After that day we hadden never debaat.  
God help me so, I was to him as kinde  
As any wyf from Denmark un-to Inde,  
And also trewe, and so was he to me. 825

I prey to god that sit in magestee,  
So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere !  
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here.'

795. E. Hn. Cp. fest ; rest fist. 812. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. vs ; Cm. Ln. Hl.  
oure. 815. E. Hn. Pt. om. 2nd of. 820. E. to ; Cm. for ; Hl. in ; rest  
the (before terme). 822. Hl. neuer had.

**Biholde the wordes between the Somonour and  
the Frere.**

THE Frere lough, whan he hadde herd al this,  
 'Now, dame,' quod he, 'so have I Ioye or blis, 830  
 This is a long preamble of a tale!'  
 And whan the Somnour herde the Frere gale,  
 'Lo!' quod the Somnour, 'goddess armes two!  
 A frere wol entremette him ever-mo.  
 Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere 835  
 Wol falle in every dish and eek matere.  
 What spekestow of preambulacioun?  
 What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit down;  
 Thou lettest our disport in this manere.'  
 'Ye, woltow so, sir Somnour?' quod the Frere, 840  
 'Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,  
 Telle of a Somnour swich a tale or two,  
 That alle the folk shal laughen in this place.'  
 'Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy face,'  
 Quod this Somnour, 'and I bishrewe me, 845  
 But if I telle tales two or thre  
 Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,  
 That I shal make thyn herte for to morne;  
 For wel I woot thy pacience is goon.'  
 Our hoste cryde 'pees! and that anoon!' 850  
 And seyde, 'lat the womman telle hir tale.  
 Ye fare as folk that dronken been of ale.  
 Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is best.'  
 'Al redy, sir,' quod she, 'right as yow lest,  
 If I have licence of this worthy Frere.' 855  
 'Yis, dame,' quod he, 'tel forth, and I wol here.'

**Here endeth the Wyf of Bathe hir Prologe.**

---

832. E. Somonour; Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. somnour. 836. Cp. Pt. Ln. eek;  
*rest om.* 850. Cp. Hl. hoste; Ln. oste; E. Hn. hoost. 852. E. Cm.  
 were; *rest ben.* 853. E. telle (*but tel in 856*). COLOPHON. Hn. Here  
 endeth the prologe of the Wyf of Bathe. E. *adds* and bigynneth hir tale.



## THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

## Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe.

**I**N tholde dayes of the king Arthour,  
 Of which that Britons speken greet honour,  
 All was this land fulfild of fayerye.  
 The elf-queen, with hir Ioly companye, 860  
 Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede ;  
 This was the olde opinion, as I rede.  
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago ;  
 But now can no man see none elves mo.  
 For now the grete charitee and prayeres 865  
 Of limitours and othere holy freres, (10)  
 That serchen every lond and every stream,  
 As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,  
 Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,  
 Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures, 870  
 Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes,  
 This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.  
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,  
 Ther walketh now the limitour him-self  
 In undermeles and in morweninges, 875  
 And seyth his matins and his holy thinges (20)  
 As he goth in his limitacioun.  
 Wommen may go saufly up and down,  
 In every bush, or under every tree ;  
 Ther is noon other incubus but he, 880  
 And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.

HEADING. *From* Hn. 857. E. Cm. *om* the. 859. Cp. *fayerie* ; *rest*  
*fayrce.* 872. Cp. *fayeries* ; E. Hn. *fairyes.* 880. Hl. *incumbent* (!).  
 881. Cm. *non* ; *rest* but. Hl. *ne wol but doon hem.*

And so bifel it, that this king Arthour  
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bacheler,  
 That on a day cam rydinge fro river ;  
 And happed that, allone as she was born, 885  
 He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn, (30)  
 Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,  
 By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed ;  
 For which oppressioun was swich clamour  
 And swich pursute un-to the king Arthour, 890  
 That dampned was this knight for to be deed  
 By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed  
 Paraventure, swich was the statut tho ;  
 But that the quene and othere ladies mo  
 So longe preyeden the king of grace, 895  
 Til he his lyf him graunted in the place, (40)  
 And yaf him to the quene al at hir wille,  
 To chese, whether she wolde him save or spille.

The quene thanketh the king with al hir might,  
 And after this thus spak she to the knight, 900  
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a day :  
 'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich array,  
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.  
 I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me  
 What thing is it that wommen most desyren? 905  
 Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from yren. (50)  
 And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,  
 Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon  
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and lere  
 An answeere suffisant in this matere. 910  
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,  
 Thy body for to yelden in this place.'

Wo was this knight and sorwefully he syketh ;  
 But what ! he may nat do al as him lyketh.  
 And at the laste, he chees him for to wende, 915  
 And come agayn, right at the yeres ende, (60)

882. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* it. 883. E. *om.* his. 885. E. Hn. he (!). 887.  
 Cm. Ln. whiche ; *rest* which. 888. E. Cm. Hl. birafte ; *rest* he rafte (*refte*).  
 895. Hl. Cm. preyeden ; E. Hn. preyden. 898. E. wheither. 907. E. Hl.  
 tellen it ; Hn. tellen me ; Cm. telle me ; *rest* telle it me. 908. E. shal (*for*  
 wol). 914. Cm. 3it (*for* what) ; E. *om.*

With swich answeere as god wolde him purveye;  
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.

He seketh every hous and every place,  
Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace, 920  
To lerne, what thing wommen loven most;  
But he ne coude arryven in no cost,  
Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere  
Two creatures accordinge in-fere.

Somme seyde, wommen loven best richesse, 925  
Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde, Iolynesse; (70)  
Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust abedde,  
And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.

Somme seyde, that our hertes been most esed,  
Whan that we been y-flatered and y-pled. 930  
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;  
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;  
And with attendance, and with bisnesse,  
Been we y-lymed, bothe more and lesse.

And somme seyn, how that we loven best 935  
For to be free, and do right as us lest, (80)  
And that no man repreve us of our vyce,  
But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing nyce.  
For trewely, ther is noon of us alle,  
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle, 940  
That we nil kike, for he seith us sooth;  
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.  
For be we never so vicious with-inne,  
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of sinne.

And somme seyn, that greet delyt han we 945  
For to ben holden stable and eek secree, (90)  
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,  
And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.  
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;  
Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing hele; 950  
Witnesse on Myda; wol ye here the tale?

Ovyde, amonges othere thinges smale,  
Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe heres,  
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,

The which vyce he hidde, as he best mighte, 955  
 Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte, (100)  
 That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it na-mo.  
 He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;  
 He preyede hir, that to no creature  
 She sholde tellen of his disfigure. 960

She swoor him 'nay, for al this world to winne,  
 She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,  
 To make hir housbond han so foul a name;  
 She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.'  
 But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dyde, 965  
 That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde; (110)  
 Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir herte,  
 That nedely som word hir moste asterte;  
 And sith she dorste telle it to no man,  
 Doun to a mareys faste by she ran; 970  
 Til she came there, hir herte was a-fyre,  
 And, as a bitore bombleth in the myre,  
 She leyde hir mouth un-to the water doun:  
 'Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,'  
 Quod she, 'to thee I telle it, and namo; 975  
 Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two! (120)  
 Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;  
 I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'  
 Heer may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,  
 Yet out it moot, we can no conseil hyde; 980  
 The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,  
 Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.

This knight, of which my tale is specially,  
 Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come therby,  
 This is to seye, what wommen loven moost, 985  
 With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost; (130)  
 But hoom he gooth, he mighte nat sojourne.  
 The day was come, that hoomward moste he tourne,  
 And in his wey it happed him to ryde,  
 In al this care, under a forest-syde, 990

---

958. Hn. Cp. Hl. trusted; Cm. trostid; E. triste. 959. Cm. preyede;  
 Hl. prayed; Hn. preyed; E. preyde. 972. Cm. bumbith; Cp. Pt. bumliith;  
 Hl. bumblith. 985. E. loue. 990. E. Hn. this; rest his.

Wher-as he saugh up-on a daunce go  
 Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo ;  
 Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,  
 In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne.  
 But certainly, er he came fully there, 995  
 Vanished was this daunce, he niste where. (140)  
 No creature saugh he that bar lyf,  
 Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a wyf ;  
 A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.  
 Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan ryse, 1000  
 And seyde, 'sir knight, heer-forth ne lyth no wey.  
 Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey ?  
 Paraventure it may the bettre be ;  
 Thise olde folk can muchel thing,' quod she.  
 'My leve mooder,' quod this knight certeyn, 1005  
 'I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn (150)  
 What thing it is that wommen most desyre ;  
 Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte your hyre.'  
 'Plighte me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand,' quod she,  
 'The nexte thing that I requere thee, 1010  
 Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might ;  
 And I wol telle it yow er it be night.'  
 'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knight, 'I grante.'  
 'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel avante,  
 Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby, 1015  
 Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I. (160)  
 Lat see which is the proudeste of hem alle,  
 That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,  
 That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee teche ;  
 Lat us go forth with-uten lenger speche.' 1020  
 Tho rouned she a pistel in his ere,  
 And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.  
 Whan they be comen to the court, this knight  
 Seyde, 'he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,  
 And redy was his answe,' as he sayde. 1025  
 Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde, (170)  
 And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse,

The quene hir-self sittinge as a lustyse,  
 Assembled been, his answeere for to here;  
 And afterward this knight was bode appere. 1030

To every wight comanded was silence,  
 And that the knight sholde telle in audience,  
 What thing that worldly wommen loven best.  
 This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,  
 But to his questioun anon answerde 1035  
 With manly voys, that al the court it herde: (180)

'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,  
 'Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee  
 As wel over hir housbond as hir love,  
 And for to been in maistrie him above; 1040  
 This is your moste desyr, thogh ye me kille,  
 Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.'

In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,  
 Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,  
 But seyden, 'he was worthy han his lyf.' 1045

And with that word up stirte the olde wyf,  
 Which that the knight saugh sittinge in the grene:  
 'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady quene!  
 Er that your court departe, do me right.

I taughte this answeere un-to the knight; 1050  
 For which he plighte me his trouthe there,  
 The firste thing I wolde of him requere,  
 He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.

Bifore the court than preye I thee, sir knight,'  
 Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy wyf; 1055  
 For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf. (200)  
 If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!'

This knight answerde, 'allas! and weylaway!  
 I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.  
 For goddes love, as chees a newe requeste; 1060  
 Tak al my good, and lat my body go.'

'Nay than,' quod she, 'I shrewe us bothe two!  
 For thogh that I be foul, and old, and pore,

1028. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. om. a. 1038. E. om. to. 1042. E. om. heer;  
 Cm. al. 1052. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. om. of. 1054. E. thanne. 1061. E.  
 Hn. Taak. 1062. E. thanne. 1063. All but Cp. Pt. om. 1st and. E.  
 oold; poore.

I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,  
 That under erthe is grave, or lyth above, 1065  
 But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.' (210)

'My love?' quod he; 'nay, my dampnacioun!

Allas! that any of my nacioun

Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!'

But al for noght, the ende is this, that he 1070

Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir wedde;

And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde.

Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,

That, for my necligence, I do no cure

To tellen yow the Ioye and al tharray 1075

That at the feste was that ilke day. (220)

To whiche thing shortly answe're I shal;

I seye, ther nas no Ioye ne feste at al,

Ther nas but hevinessse and mucche sorwe;

For prively he wedded hir on a morwe, 1080

And al day after hidde him as an oule;

So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.

Greet was the wo the knight hadde in his thought,

Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde y-brought;

He walweth, and he turneth to and fro. 1085

His olde wyf lay smylyng evermo, (230)

And seyde, 'o dere housbond, *benedicite!*

Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as ye?

Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?

Is every knight of his so dangerous? 1090

I am your owene love and eek your wyf;

I am she, which that saved hath your lyf;

And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;

Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?

Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit; 1095

What is my gilt? for goddes love, tel me it, (240)

And it shal been amended, if I may.'

'Amended?' quod this knight, 'allas! nay, nay!

It wol nat been amended never mo!

Thou art so loothly, and so old also, 1100

1064. Hl. the oure; E. Hn. oore; Cm. Pt. ore; Cp. oure; Ln. oer. 1070.  
 E. Hn. thende. 1091. Cp. Pt. Ln. eek; *rest om.* 1093. E. Hn. yet ne  
 dide. 1096. Cm. Hl. me; *rest om.* (*Read goddes as god's*).

And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,  
That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and winde.  
So wolde god myn herte wolde breste !'

'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your unreste?'

'Ye, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder is.' 1105

'Now, sire,' quod she, 'I coude amende al this, (250)

If that me liste, er it were dayes three,  
So wel ye mighte bere yow un-to me.

But for ye speken of swich gentillesse  
As is descended out of old richesse, 1110

That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,  
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.

Loke who that is most vertuouse alway,  
Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay

To do the gentil dedes that he can, 1115

And tak him for the grettest gentil man. (260)

Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,  
Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.

For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,  
For which we clayme to been of heigh parage, 1120

Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,  
To noon of us hir vertuouse living,

That made hem gentil men y-called be;  
And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

Wel can the wyse poete of Florence, 1125  
That highte Dant, speken in this sentence ; (270)

Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale :

" Ful selde up ryseth by his branches smale  
Prowesse of man, for god, of his goodnesse,

Wol that of him we clayme our gentillesse ;" 1130

For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme  
But temporel thing, that man may hurte and mayme.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,

If gentillesse were planted naturelly

Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne, 1135

Privee ne apert, than wolde they never fyne (280)

---

1101. E. lough. 1102. Pt. no (*for* litel). *Read* wonder's. 1112. Cp.  
Pt. nys (*for* is). 1116. Cp. Pt. Ln. And take ; *rest om.* And. 1126. Hl. of  
(*for* in). Cm. declare (*for* speken in). 1129. E. goodnesse ; *rest* prowesse.  
1134. E. naturelly. 1136. E. Cm. nor ; Hl. ne ; *rest* and. E. thanne.



To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce ;  
They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.

Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous  
Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus, 1140

And lat men shette the dores and go thenne ;  
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,  
As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde ;  
His office naturel ay wol it holde,  
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye. 1145

Heer may ye see wel, how that gentrye  
(290)

Is nat annexed to possessioun,  
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun  
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo ! in his kinde.  
For, god it woot, men may wel often finde 1150

A lordes sone do shame and vileinye ;

And he that wol han prys of his gentrye  
For he was boren of a gentil hous,

And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuouus,  
And nil him-selven do no gentil dedis, 1155

Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is,  
(300)

He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl ;

For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.  
For gentillesse nis but renomee 1160

Of thyne auncestres, for hir heigh bountee,  
Which is a strange thing to thy persone.

Thy gentillesse cometh fro god allone ;  
Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace,

It was no-thing biquethe us with our place.  
Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius, 1165

Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,  
(310)

That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.  
Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,

Ther shul ye seen expres that it no drede is,  
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis ; 1170

And therefore, leve housbond, I thus conclude,

---

1139. E. Taak. 1140. E. Kaukasous. 1144. E. natureel. 1153. Cp. Hl. boren ; Cm. bore ; rest born. 1155. E. nel ; rest nyl. 1156. E. Hn. folwen. 1162. Read comth ; see 1163. 1163. E. Thanne. 1166. E. Hn. Hostilius. 1167. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. pouert ; rest pouerte. 1168. E. Reed ; rest Redeth. 1169. Cp. Pt. Ln. it ; rest om.

Al were it that myne auncestres were rude,  
 Yet may the hye god, and so hope I,  
 Grante me grace to liven vertuously.  
 Thanne am I gentil, whan that I biginne 1175  
 To liven vertuously and weyve sinne. (320)

And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,  
 The hye god, on whom that we bileve,  
 In wilful povert chees to live his lyf.  
 And certes every man, mayden, or wyf, 1180  
 May understonde that Iesus, hevne king,  
 Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.  
 Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn ;  
 This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.  
 Who-so that halt him payd of his poverte, 1185  
 I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte. (330)

He that coveyteth is a povre wight,  
 For he wolde han that is nat in his might.  
 But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth have,  
 Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a knave. 1190

Verray povert, it singeth proprely ;  
 Juvenal seith of povert merily :  
 "The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,  
 Bifore the theves he may singe and pleye."  
 Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse, 1195  
 A ful greet bringer out of businesse ; (340)

A greet amender eek of sapience  
 To him that taketh it in pacience.  
 Povert is this, al-though it seme elenge :  
 Possessioun, that no wight wol challenge. 1200

Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,  
 Maketh his god and eek him-self to knowe.  
 Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,  
 Thurgh which he may his verray frendes see.  
 And therefore, sire, sin that I noght yow greve, 1205  
 Of my povert na-more ye me repreve. (350)

1172. E. Hn. weren (2nd). 1176. Cm. leuyn ; Pt. leuen ; rest weyue (weyuen).  
 1177. E. Hn. pouerte ; rest pouert. 1179. E. Hn. Pt. ponerte ; rest pouert ;  
 so in 1183, 1191. 1182. E. chesen ; E. om. a. 1183. E. Hn. honeste ;  
 Cm. oneste. 1191. E. Cm. it syngeth ; rest is sinne (!). 1192. E. Hn.  
 Cp. myrily. 1195. Cp. Pt. Ln. hatel. 1199. Hn. Hl. elenge ; Ln. alinge ;  
 rest alenge. 1205. E. hise.

Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me ;  
 And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee  
 Were in no book, ye gentils of honour  
 Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon favour, 1210  
 And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse ;  
 And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.

Now ther ye seye, that I am foul and old,  
 Than drede you nought to been a cokewold ;  
 For filthe and elde, al-so moot I thee, 1215  
 Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee. (360)  
 But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,  
 I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.

Chese now,' quod she, 'oon of these thinges tweye,  
 To han me foul and old til that I deye, 1220  
 And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,  
 And never yow displese in al my lyf,  
 Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,  
 And take your aventure of the repair  
 That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me, 1225  
 Or in som other place, may wel be. (370)  
 Now chese your-selven, whether that yow lyketh.'

This knight avyseth him and sore syketh,  
 But atte laste he seyde in this manere,  
 'My lady and my love, and wyf so dere, 1230  
 I put me in your wyse governance ;  
 Cheseth your-self, which may be most plesance,  
 And most honour to yow and me also.  
 I do no fors the whether of the two ;  
 For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.' 1235

'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,' quod she, (380)  
 'Sin I may chese, and governe as me lest?'

'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it best.'

'Kis me,' quod she, 'we be no lenger wrothe ;  
 For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe, 1240  
 This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.  
 I prey to god that I mot sterven wood,  
 But I to yow be al-so good and trewe  
 As ever was wyf, sin that the world was newe.

1227, 1234. E. wheither.

1236. of—maistrye] Cm. the maysterye.

And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene 1245  
 As any lady, emperyce, or quene, (390)  
 That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,  
 Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow lest.  
 Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.'

And whan the knight saugh verrailly al this, 1250  
 That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,  
 For Ioye he hente hir in his armes two,  
 His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;  
 A thousand tyme a-rewe he gan hir kisse.  
 And she obeyed him in every thing 1255  
 That mighte doon him plesance or lyking. (400)

And thus they live, un-to hir lyves ende,  
 In parfit Ioye; and Iesu Crist us sende  
 Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe a-bedde,  
 And grace toverbyde hem that we wedde. 1260  
 And eek I preye Iesu shorte hir lyves  
 That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;  
 And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,  
 God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

**Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.**

---

1254. E. Hn. Ln. a rewe; Hl. on rowe; *rest* a rowe. 1259. E. *om.* and.  
 Ln. fresshe; E. fressh. 1260. E. Hn. touerbyde; Cm. Hl. to ouerbyde;  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. to ouerlede (!). 1261. Cm. preye; Hn. praye; E. pray.  
 1262. E. Hn. nat wol; *rest transpose.* COLOPHON. *So* E. Hn.



And curteys, as a man of your estaat ;

In companye we wol have no debaat.

Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be.'

'Nay,' quod the Somnour, 'lat him seye to me 1290

What so him list ; whan it comth to my lot,

By god, I shal him quyten every grot.

I shal him tellen which a greet honour (29)

It is to be a flateringe limitour ; [T. 6876

And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis.' [T. 6879

Our host answerde, 'pees, na-more of this.' 1296

And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,

'Tel forth your tale, leve maister deere.'

**Here endeth the Prologe of the Frere.**

---

*After l. 1294 all but Hl. wrongly insert ll. 1307 and 1308 ; which see. Tyr-whitt also inserts them. 1298. E. Hn. leue ; Hl. my ; Cp. Ln. my leue ; Pt. my owen. COLOPHON. From Hn. ; so Pt. (with Thus for Here).*

## THE FRERES TALE.

— •• —

Here biginneth the Freres tale.

**W**HILOM ther was dwellinge in my contree  
 An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree, 1300  
 That boldely dide execucioun  
 In punisshinge of fornicacioun,  
 Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderye,  
 Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,  
 Of chirche-reves, and of testaments, 1305  
 Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,  
 And eek of many another maner cryme [T. om.  
 Which nedeth nat rehercen at this tyme ; [T. om.  
 Of usure, and of symonye also. (11)  
 But certes, lechours dide he grettest wo ; 1310  
 They sholde singen, if that they were hent ;  
 And smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.  
 If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne,  
 Ther mighte asterte him no pecunial peyne.  
 For smale tythes and for smal offringe, 1315  
 He made the peple pitously to singe.  
 For er the bisshop caughte hem with his hook,  
 They weren in the erchedeknes book. (20)  
 Thanne hadde he, thurgh his Iurisdiccioun,  
 Power to doon on hem correccioun. 1320

---

HEADING. So E. Pt. 1306. E. Hn. and eek ; rest and. 1307, 1308.  
*Wrongly inserted after l. 1294 in all but Hl.* 1307. E. Hn. Ln. om. eek.  
 1308. E. Hn. for ; rest at. 1310. Ln. lychoures ; rest lechours. 1315.  
 Hn. Hl. for ; Cp. eek for ; Pt. Ln. eek ; E. om. 1317. E. Hl. him.  
 1318. Cp. Pt. Hl. weren ; rest were. 1319. Hl. And ; rest And thanne ;  
*read* Thanne.

He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,  
 A slyer boy was noon in Engelond ;  
 For subtilly he hadde his espiaille,  
 That taughte him, wher that him mighte availle.  
 He coude spare of lechours oon or two, 1325  
 To techen him to foure and twenty mo.  
 For thogh this Somnour wood were as an hare,  
 To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare ; (30)  
 For we been out of his correccioun ;  
 They han of us no Iuridiccioun, 1330  
 Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.  
 'Peter! so been the wommen of the styves,'  
 Quod the Somnour, 'y-put out of my cure!'  
 'Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,'  
 Thus seyde our host, 'and lat him telle his tale. 1335  
 Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somnour gale,  
 Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister dere.'  
 This false thief, this Somnour, quod the Frere, (40)  
 Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,  
 As any hauk to lure in Engelond, 1340  
 That tolde him al the secree that they knewe ;  
 For hir acqueyntance was nat come of-newe.  
 They weren hise approuours prively ;  
 He took him-self a greet profit therby ;  
 His maister knew nat alwey what he wan. 1345  
 With-outen mandement, a lewed man  
 He coude somne, on peyne of Cristes curs,  
 And they were gladde for to fille his purs, (50)  
 And make him grete festes atte nale.  
 And right as Iudas hadde purses smale, 1350  
 And was a thief, right swich a thief was he ;  
 His maister hadde but half his duëtee.  
 He was, if I shal yeven him his laude,  
 A thief, and eek a Somnour, and a baude.  
 He hadde eek wenches at his retenue, 1355

1321. E. Somonour; Hl. Sompnour; *rest* Somnour. 1322. E. Pt. Ln. boye.  
 1324. *Read* taughten (?), or taught-e. Cp. Pt. that; *rest om.* 1325. E. lec-  
 chours. 1327. E. was; *rest* were. 1331. E. Hn. *om.* alle. 1332. E.  
 Cm. *om.* 1st the. 1343. Ln. appowers; Cm. apprououris; Pt. aprouers;  
*rest* approuours. 1348. Cp. gladde; E. Hn. glade. 1349. Cm. at the  
 nale; (atte nale = atten ale). 1352. Hl. not (*for* but). Cp. dewete.



That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,  
 Or Iakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,  
 That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere ; (60)  
 Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.  
 And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement, 1360  
 And somne hem to the chapitre bothe two,  
 And pile the man, and lete the wenche go.  
 Thanne wolde he seye, 'frend, I shal for thy sake  
 Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake ;  
 Thee thar na-more as in this cas travaille ; 1365  
 I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle.'  
 Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo  
 Than possible is to telle in yeres two. (70)  
 For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,  
 That can an hurt deer from an hool y-knowe, 1370  
 Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,  
 Or an avouter, or a paramour.  
 And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,  
 Therfore on it he sette al his entente.  
 And so bifel, that ones on a day 1375  
 This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,  
 Rood for to somne a widwe, an old ribybe,  
 Feynyng a cause, for he wolde brybe. (80)  
 And happed that he saugh bifore him ryde  
 A gay yeman, under a forest-syde. 1380  
 A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene ;  
 He hadde up-on a courtepy of grene ;  
 An hat up-on his heed with frenges blake.  
 'Sir,' quod this Somnour, 'hayl! and wel a-take!'  
 'Wel-come,' quod he, 'and every good felawe! 1385  
 Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?'  
 Seyde this yeman, 'wiltow fer to day?'  
 This Somnour him answerde, and seyde, 'nay ; (90)  
 Heer faste by,' quod he, 'is myn entente

---

1356. E. wheither.      1364. E. Hn. hir; *rest* þe.      1367. E. bribryes.  
 1370. Hl. y-knowe; *rest* knowe (*perhaps read hole knowe*).      1371. Cm.  
 lechour; E. Hn. lecchour.      1372. Hn. Cp. Pt. auouter; E. Hl. auowtier.  
 1377. Hl. Rod; Cp. Pt. Ln. Rode; Cm. Went; E. Hn. *om.* Cm. a wedewe  
 an old; Hl. a widew and (!) old; E. Hn. an old wydwe a.      1379. E. Hn.  
*om.* And.      1386. E. Cm. Pt. Ln. grene wode shawe (*too long*).

To ryden, for to reysen up a rente 1390  
That longeth to my lordes duëtee.

‘Artow thanne a bailly?’ ‘Ye!’ quod he.  
He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,  
Seye that he was a somnour, for the name.

‘*Depardieux*,’ quod this yeman, ‘dere brother, 1395  
Thou art a bailly, and I am another.

I am unknowen as in this contree;  
Of thyn aqueyntance I wolde praye thee, (100)  
And eek of brotherhede, if that yow leste.

I have gold and silver in my cheste; 1400  
If that thee happe to comen in our shyre,  
Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desyre.’

‘Grantmercy,’ quod this Somnour, ‘by my feith!’  
Everich in otheres hand his trouthe leith,  
For to be sworne bretheren til they deye. 1405  
In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.

This Somnour, which that was as ful of Iangles,  
As ful of venim been thise wariangles, (110)  
And ever enquering up-on every thing,

‘Brother,’ quod he, ‘where is now your dwelling, 1410  
Another day if that I sholde yow seche?’

This yeman him answerde in softe speche,  
‘Brother,’ quod he, ‘fer in the north contree,  
Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee see.  
Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse, 1415  
That of myn hous ne shaltow never misse.’

‘Now, brother,’ quod this Somnour, ‘I yow preye,  
Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the weye, (120)  
Sin that ye been a baillif as am I,

Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully 1420  
In myn offyce how I may most winne;  
And spareth nat for conscience ne sinne,  
But as my brother tel me, how do ye?’

‘Now, by my trouthe, brother dere,’ seyde he,  
‘As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale, 1425

1391. Cp. dewete. 1395. Cm. leue; Hl. lieue; *rest* dere (deere). 1399.  
Cm. brotherhode; Hl. brotherheed; *rest* brether-. 1405. Hl. sworne; E.  
Hn. sworn; *rest* swore. 1407. E. Cm. *om.* which. 1421. Cp. Pt. Ln.  
Hl. how that I.

My wages been ful streite and ful smale.  
 My lord is hard to me and daungerous,  
 And myn offyce is ful laborous; (130)  
 And therefore by extorcions I live.  
 For sothe, I take al that men wol me yive; 1430  
 Algate, by sleyghte or by violence,  
 Fro yeer to yeer I winne al my dispence.  
 I can no bettre telle feithfully.  
 'Now, certes,' quod this Somnour, 'so fare I;  
 I spare nat to taken, god it woot, 1435  
 But if it be to hevy or to hoot.  
 What I may gete in conseil prively,  
 No maner conscience of that have I; (140)  
 Nere myn extorcioun, I mighte nat liven,  
 Ne of swiche Iapes wol I nat be shriven. 1440  
 Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;  
 I shrewe these shrifte-fadres everichoon.  
 Wel be we met, by god and by seint Iame!  
 But, leve brother, tel me than thy name,  
 Quod this Somnour; and in this mene-whyle, 1445  
 This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.  
 'Brother,' quod he, 'wiltow that I thee telle?  
 I am a feend, my dwelling is in helle. (150)  
 And here I ryde about my purchasing,  
 To wite wher men wolde yeve me any thing. 1450  
 My purchas is theeffect of al my rente.  
 Loke how thou rydest for the same entente,  
 To winne good, thou rekkest never how;  
 Right so fare I, for ryde wolde I now  
 Un-to the worldes ende for a preye.' 1455  
 'A,' quod this Somnour, '*benedicite*, what sey ye?  
 I wende ye were a yeman trewely.  
 Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I; (160)  
 Han ye figure than determinat  
 In helle, ther ye been in your estat?' 1460  
 'Nay, certainly,' quod he, 'ther have we noon;

1426. Hl. and eek (*but read streit-e*). 1428. Cp. laborious; *rest* laborous.  
 1430. E. yeue. 1440. E. Nor; Hn. Cm. Hl. Ne. 1444. E. thanne. 1445.  
 Cm. and; *rest om.* 1450. E. me yeuen; *rest* yeue (yiue) me. 1454. E. I  
 wolde right; Hl. I wolde; *rest* wolde I. 1459. E. thanne.

But whan us lyketh, we can take us oon,  
 Or elles make yow seme we ben shape  
 Som-tyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape ;  
 Or lyk an angel can I ryde or go. 1465  
 It is no wonder thing thogh it be so ;  
 A lousy Iogelour can deceyve thee,  
 And pardee, yet can I more craft than he.' (170)  
 'Why,' quod the Somnour, 'ryde ye thanne or goon  
 In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?' 1470  
 'For we,' quod he, 'wol us swich formes make  
 As most able is our preyes for to take.'  
 'What maketh yow to han al this labour?'  
 'Ful many a cause, leve sir Somnour,'  
 Seyde this feend, 'but alle thing hath tyme. 1475  
 The day is short, and it is passed pryme,  
 And yet ne wan I no-thing in this day.  
 I wol entende to winnen, if I may, (180)  
 And nat entende our wittes to declare.  
 For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare 1480  
 To understonde, al-thogh I tolde hem thee.  
 But, for thou axest why labouren we ;  
 For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instruments,  
 And menes to don his comandements,  
 Whan that him list, up-on his creatures, 1485  
 In divers art and in divers figures.  
 With-uten him we have no might, certayn,  
 If that him list to stonden ther-agayn. (190)  
 And som-tyme, at our prayere, han we leve  
 Only the body and nat the soule greve ; 1490  
 Witnesse on Iob, whom that we diden wo.  
 And som-tyme han we might of bothe two,  
 This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.  
 And somtyme be we suffred for to seke  
 Up-on a man, and doon his soule unreste, 1495  
 And nat his body, and al is for the beste.  
 Whan he withstandeth our temptacioun,  
 It is a cause of his savacioun ; (200)

1471. E. Hn. swiche ; Cm. Cp. swich. 1479. E. hir ; rest oure. Cm.  
 wordis ; Hl. thinges ; rest wittes. 1486. E. Hn. Cm. diuerse (2nd time).  
 1496. body] E. soule (!). 1498. E. om. a ; Cm. the.

Al-be-it that it was nat our entente  
 He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde him hente. 1500  
 And som-tyme be we servant un-to man,  
 As to the erchebissshop Seint Dunstan,  
 And to the apostles servant eek was I.  
 'Yet tel me,' quod the Somnour, 'feithfully,  
 Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway 1505  
 Of elements?' the feend answerde, 'nay;  
 Som-tyme we feyne, and som-tyme we aryse  
 With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse, (210)  
 And speke as renably and faire and wel  
 As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel. 1510  
 And yet wol som men seye it was nat he;  
 I do no fors of your divinitee.  
 But o thing warne I thee, I wol nat Iape,  
 Thou wolt algates wite how we ben shape;  
 Thou shalt her-afterward, my brother dere, 1515  
 Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere.  
 For thou shalt by thyn owene experience  
 Conne in a chayer rede of this sentence (220)  
 Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,  
 Or Dant also; now lat us ryde blyve. 1520  
 For I wol holde companye with thee  
 Til it be so, that thou forsake me.'  
 'Nay,' quod this Somnour, 'that shal nat bityde;  
 I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde;  
 My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas. 1525  
 For though thou were the devel Sathanas,  
 My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,  
 As I am sworn, and ech of us til other (230)  
 For to be trewe brother in this cas;  
 And bothe we goon abouten our purchas. 1530  
 Tak thou thy part, what that men wol thee yive,  
 And I shal myn; thus may we bothe live.  
 And if that any of us have more than other,  
 Lat him be trewe, and parte it with his brother.'  
 'I graunte,' quod the devel, 'by my fey.' 1535  
 And with that word they ryden forth hir wey.

1502. E. bisshop (!).      1515. E. Hn. -wardes; *rest* -ward.      1531. E.  
 Taak; yeue.      1528, 1533. E. oother.

And right at the entring of the tounes ende,  
 To which this Somnour shoop him for to wende, (240)  
 They saugh a cart, that charged was with hey,  
 Which that a carter droof forth in his wey. 1540  
 Deep was the wey, for which the carte stood.  
 The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were wood,  
 'Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye for the stones?  
 The feend,' quod he, 'yow fecche body and bones,  
 As ferforthly as ever were ye foled! 1545  
 So muche wo as I have with yow tholed!  
 The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey!'  
 This Somnour seyde, 'heer shal we have a pley;' (250)  
 And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne were,  
 Ful prively, and rouned in his ere: 1550  
 'Herkne, my brother, herkne, by thy feith;  
 Herestow nat how that the carter seith?  
 Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,  
 Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples three.'  
 'Nay,' quod the devel, 'god wot, never a deel; 1555  
 It is nat his entente, trust me weel.  
 Axe him thy-self, if thou nat trowest me,  
 Or elles stint a while, and thou shalt see.' (260)  
 This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,  
 And they bigonne drawn and to-stoupe; 1560  
 'Heyt, now!' quod he, 'ther Iesu Crist yow blesse,  
 And al his handwerk, bothe more and lesse!  
 That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy!  
 I pray god save thee and sēynt Loy!  
 Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!' 1565  
 'Lo! brother,' quod the feend, 'what tolde I thee?  
 Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,  
 The carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte another. (270)  
 Lat us go forth abouten our viage;  
 Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage.' 1570  
 Whan that they comen som-what out of tounne,

1556. E. Hn. trust thou; *rest om.* thou. 1559. Cm. thakkyth; Hl. thak-  
 keth; Ln. thakkes; Cp. Pt. thakked; E. Hn. taketh. Hn. Cm. Hl. upon; *rest*  
*om.* 1562. Cp. honywerk; Hn. handes werk. 1564. E. to god; *rest*  
*om.* to. 1565. Cp. slough; Pt. schlough; Ln. slouhe; Hl. sloo. 1568.  
 E. Hl. oon; Cm. on; *rest o* (oo). E. *om.* thing. 1571. E. coomen.

This Somnour to his brother gan to rounne,  
 'Brother,' quod he, 'heer woneth an old rebekke,  
 That hadde almost as lief to lese hir nekke  
 As for to yeve a peny of hir good. 1575  
 I wol han twelf pens, though that she be wood,  
 Or I wol sompne hir un-to our offyce;  
 And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no vyce. (280)  
 But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,  
 Winne thy cost, tak heer ensample of me.' 1580  
 This Somnour clappeth at the widwes gate.  
 'Com out,' quod he, 'thou olde viritrate!  
 I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee!  
 'Who clappeth?' seyde this widwe, '*benedicit!*  
 God save you, sire, what is your swete wille?' 1585  
 'I have,' quod he, 'of somonce here a bille;  
 Up peyne of cursing, loke that thou be  
 To-morn bifore the erchedeknes knee (290)  
 Tanswere to the court of certeyn thinges.'  
 'Now, lord,' quod she, 'Crist Iesu, king of kinges, 1590  
 So wisly helpe me, as I ne may.  
 I have been syk, and that ful many a day.  
 I may nat go so fer,' quod she, 'ne ryde,  
 But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.  
 May I nat axe a libel, sir Somnour, 1595  
 And answeere there, by my procutour,  
 To swich thing as men wol opposen me?'  
 'Yis,' quod this Somnour, 'pay anon, lat se, (300)  
 Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acyute.  
 I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte; 1600  
 My maister hath the profit, and nat I.  
 Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;  
 Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie.'  
 'Twelf pens,' quod she, 'now lady Seinte Marie  
 So wisly help me out of care and sinne, 1605

1582. Hn. Cp. Hl. viritrate; E. virytrate; Cm. verve crate; Pt. viritate; Ln. veritate. 1584. Cm. widew; Hl. widow; *rest wyf (but read ben'cite)*. 1586. Cp. Pt. Ln. here; *rest om.* 1587. E. Vp-on; *rest Vp.* 1589. E. Hn. Tanswere; *rest To answeere (answer)*. 1596. Hl. ther; Ln. the; *rest there*. Hl. procuratour; Cm. Ln. procatour; *rest procutour*. 1605. E. Hn. me god; *rest om.* god.

This wyde world thogh that I sholde winne,  
 Ne have I nat twelf pens with-inne myn hold.  
 Ye knowen wel that I am povre and old ; (310)  
 Kythe your almesse on me povre wrecche.  
 ‘Nay than,’ quod he, ‘the foule feend me fecche 1610  
 If I thexcuse, though thou shul be spilt!’  
 ‘Alas,’ quod she, ‘god woot, I have no gilt.’  
 ‘Pay me,’ quod he, ‘or by the swete seinte Anne,  
 As I wol bere away thy newe panne  
 For dette, which that thou owest me of old, 1615  
 Whan that thou madest thyn housbond cokewold,  
 I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.’  
 ‘Thou lixt,’ quod she, ‘by my savacioun!’ (320)  
 Ne was I never er now, widwe ne wyf,  
 Somoned un-to your court in al my lyf ; 1620  
 Ne never I nas but of my body trewe!  
 Un-to the devel blak and rough of hewe  
 Yeve I thy body and my panne also!’  
 And whan the devel herde hir cursen so  
 Up-on hir knees, he seyde in this manere, 1625  
 ‘Now Mabely, myn owene moder dere,  
 Is this your wil in ernest, that ye seye?’  
 ‘The devel,’ quod she, ‘so fecche him er he deye, (330)  
 And panne and al, but he wol him repente!’  
 ‘Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn entente,’ 1630  
 Quod this Somnour, ‘for to repente me,  
 For any thing that I have had of thee ;  
 I wolde I hadde thy smok and every clooth!’  
 ‘Now, brother,’ quod the devel, ‘be nat wrooth ;  
 Thy body and this panne ben myne by right. 1635  
 Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,  
 Where thou shalt knowen of our privetee  
 More than a maister of divinitee.’ (340)  
 And with that word this foule feend him hente ;  
 Body and soule, he with the devel wente 1640  
 Wher-as that somnours han hir heritage.  
 And god, that maked after his image  
 Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and some ;



And leve this Somnour good man to bicomē !  
 Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod this Frere, 1645  
 Hadde I had leyser for this Somnour here,  
 After the text of Crist [and] Poul and Iohn,  
 And of our othere doctours many oon, (350)  
 Swiche peynes, that your hertes mighte agryse,  
 Al-be-it so, no tonge may devyse, 1650  
 Thogh that I mighte a thousand winter telle,  
 The peyne of thilke cursed hous of helle.  
 But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place,  
 Waketh, and preyeth Iesu for his grace  
 So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas. 1655  
 Herketh this word, beth war as in this cas ;  
 The leoun sit in his await alway  
 To slee the innocent, if that he may. (360)  
 Disposeth ay your hertes to withstonde  
 The feend, that yow wolde make thral and bonde. 1660  
 He may nat tempten yow over your might ;  
 For Crist wol be your champion and knight.  
 And prayeth that thise Somnours hem repente  
 Of hir misdedes, er that the feend hem hente.

**Here endeth the Freres tale.**

---

1644. E. Hn. this Somonours goode men bicomē. 1647. *I supply* and.  
 1649. E. Ln. Hl. herte (*see* l. 1659). 1650. E. Hn. may it ; *rest om. it.*  
 1652. E. Hn. Pt. peynes ; *rest* peyne. 1661. E. Hn. Hl. tempte ; *rest*  
 tempten. 1663. *So* E. Hn. ; Cp. Pt. Ln. this somnour him ; Hl. oure somp-  
 nour him. 1664. *So* E. Hn. ; *rest* his mysdede . . him. Cm. *om.* that  
 (*perhaps rightly*). COLOPHON. *So* E. Hn. Cm. ; Cp. Hl. Her endeth the  
 Frere his tale.

## THE SOMNOUR'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 7247-7270.)

### The prologe of the Somnours Tale.

**T**HIS Somnour in his stiropes hye stood ; 1665  
 Up-on this Frere his herte was so wood,  
 That lyk an aspen leef he quook for yre.  
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'but o thing I desyre ;  
 I yow biseke that, of your curteisye,  
 Sin ye han herd this false Frere lye, 1670  
 As suffereth me I may my tale telle !  
 This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,  
 And god it woot, that it is litel wonder ;  
 Freres and feendes been but lyte a-sonder. (10)  
 For pardee, ye han ofte tyme herd telle, 1675  
 How that a frere ravished was to helle  
 In spirit ones by a visiou ;  
 And as an angel ladde him up and doun,  
 To shewen him the peynes that ther were,  
 In al the place saugh he nat a frere ; 1680  
 Of other folk he saugh y-nowe in wo.  
 Un-to this angel spak the frere tho :  
 "Now, sir," quod he, "han freres swich a grace  
 That noon of hem shal come to this place ?" (20)  
 "Yis," quod this angel, "many a millioun !" 1685  
 And un-to Sathanas he ladde him doun.  
 "And now hath Sathanas," seith he, "a tayl  
 Brodder than of a carrik is the sayl.

---

HEADING. *Sø* E. Hn. ; E. Somonours. 1665. E. Somonour ; Hl. somp-  
 nour ; *rest* Somnour. 1676. E. vanysshed (!) ; *rest* rauysshed.

Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas!" quod he,  
 "Shewe forth thyn ers, and lat the frere see 1690  
 Wher is the nest of freres in this place!"  
 And, er that half a furlong-wey of space,  
 Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve,  
 Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve (30)  
 Twenty thousand freres in a route, 1695  
 And thurgh-out helle swarmeden aboute ;  
 And comen agayn, as faste as they may gon,  
 And in his ers they crepten everichon.  
 He clapte his tayl agayn, and lay ful stille.  
 This frere, whan he loked hadde his fille 1700  
 Upon the torments of this sory place,  
 His spirit god restored of his grace  
 Un-to his body agayn, and he awook ;  
 But natheles, for fere yet he quook, (40)  
 So was the develes ers ay in his minde, 1705  
 That is his heritage of verray kinde.  
 God save yow alle, save this cursed Frere ;  
 My prologe wol I ende in this manere.'

**Here endeth the Prologe of the Somnours Tale.**

---

1692. Pt. Hl. than; *rest* that. 1693. E. Hn. swarmeden; Hl. swarmed al.  
 1700. Cp. Hn. loked hadde; Pt. Ln. Hl. loked had; E. hadde looke al (*sic*).  
 COLOPHON. *From* Hn.

## THE SOMNOURS TALE.

## Here biginneth the Somonour his Tale.

**L** ORDINGES, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,  
 A mersshy contree called Holdernesse, 1710  
 In which ther wente a limitour aboute,  
 To preche, and eek to begge, it is no doute.  
 And so bifel, that on a day this frere  
 Had preched at a chirche in his manere,  
 And specially, aboven every thing, 1715  
 Excited he the peple in his preching,  
 To trentals, and to yeve, for goddes sake,  
 Wher-with men mighten holy houses make, (10)  
 Ther as divyne service is honoured,  
 Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured, 1720  
 Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yive,  
 As to possessioners, that mowen live,  
 Thanked be god, in wele and habundaunce.  
 'Trentals,' seyde he, 'deliveren fro penaunce  
 Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge, 1725  
 Ye, whan that they been hastily y-songe ;  
 Nat for to holde a preest Ioly and gay,  
 He singeth nat but o masse in a day ; (20)  
 Delivereth out,' quod he, 'anon the soules ;  
 Ful hard it is with fleshhook or with oules 1730  
 To been y-clawed, or to brenne or bake ;  
 Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake.'

---

HEADING. *So* E. ; *Il*n. Somnours (*for* Somonour his). 1710. Cp. Pt. In. mersshy ; *Hl*. mersschly ; E. *Hn*. merssh. 1718. Cp. *Hl*. mighten ; E. *Hn*. myghte. 1721. Cp. *Hl*. yiue ; *rest* yeue.

And whan this frere had seyde al his entente,  
With *qui cum patre* forth his wey he wente.

Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem leste, 1735

He wente his wey, no lenger wolde he reste,  
With scrippe and tipped staf, y-tukked hye;

In every hous he gan to poure and pryde, (30)

And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles corn.

His felawe hadde a staf tipped with horn, 1740

A peyre of tables al of yvory,

And a poyntel polished fetisly,

And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,

Of alle folk that yaf him any good,

Ascaunces that he wolde for hem preyde. 1745

'Yeve us a busschel whete, malt, or reye,

A goddes kechil, or a trip of chese,

Or elles what yow list, we may nat chese; (40)

A goddes halfpeny or a masse-peny,

Or yeve us of your brawn, if ye have eny; 1750

A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,

Our suster dere, lo! here I write your name;

Bacon or beef, or swich thing as ye finde.'

A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihinde,

That was hir hostes man, and bar a sak, 1755

And what men yaf hem, leyde it on his bak.

And whan that he was out at dore anon,

He planed away the names everichon (50)

That he biforn had writen in his tables;

He served hem with nyfles and with fables. 1760

'Nay, ther thou list, thou Somnour,' quod the Frere.

'Pees,' quod our Host, 'for Cristes moder dere;

Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at al.'

So thryve I, quod this Somnour, so I shal.—

So longe he wente hous by hous, til he 1765

Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be

Refreshed more than in an hundred placis.

---

1735. E. lest. 1736. E. Pt. Ln. Hl. went. 1738. E. Hn. Ln. poure; rest pore.  
1743. E. wroote. 1745. Hn. Ascaunces; E. Asaunces; Hl. Pt. Ln. As-  
caunce; Cp. Ascance. E. prey. 1746. Ln. Yeue; Cp. Yiue; rest Yif (see  
1750). E. him; rest vs. 1747. Ln. kechel; Hl. kichil. Cp. Pt. trippe; Ln.  
trep. 1750. E. Hn. Hl. yif; rest yeue (yiue). 1751. Cn. Cp. Hl. dagoun.

Sik lay the gode man, whos that the place is; (70)  
 Bedrede up-on a couche lowe he lay.  
 'Deus hic,' quod he, 'O Thomas, freend, good day,' 1770  
 Seyde this frere curteisly and softe.  
 'Thomas,' quod he, 'god yelde yow! ful ofte  
 Have I up-on this bench faren ful weel.  
 Here have I eten many a mery meel';  
 And fro the bench he droof away the cat, 1775  
 And leyde adoun his potente and his hat,  
 And eek his scrippe, and sette him softe adoun.  
 His felawe was go walked in-to toun, (70)  
 Forth with his knave, in-to that hostelrye  
 Wher-as he shoop him thilke night to lye. 1780  
 'O dere maister,' quod this syke man,  
 'How han ye fare sith that March bigan?  
 I saugh yow noght this fourtenight or more.'  
 'God woot,' quod he, 'laboured have I ful sore;  
 And specially, for thy savacioun 1785  
 Have I seyd many a precious orisoun,  
 And for our othere frendes, god hem blesse!  
 I have to-day been at your chirche at messe, (80)  
 And seyd a sermon after my simple wit,  
 Nat al after the text of holy writ; 1790  
 For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,  
 And therefore wol I teche yow al the glose.  
 Glosinge is a glorious thing, certeyn,  
 For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn.  
 Ther have I taught hem to be charitable, 1795  
 And spende hir good ther it is resonable,  
 And ther I saugh our dame; a! wher is she?'  
 'Yond in the yerd I trowe that she be,' (90)  
 Seyde this man, 'and she wol come anon.'  
 'Ey, maister! wel-come be ye, by saint Iohn!'  
 Seyde this wyf, 'how fare ye hertely?' 1800  
 The frere aryseth up ful curteisly,  
 And hir embraceth in his armes narwe,

1768. Hl. that; *rest om.* 1769. Pt. Hl. Bedred. 1772. Hl. yeld it.  
 1774. E. myrie; Hn. Cm. murye; *rest mery.* 1783. E. Hn. fourtynight;  
*rest fourtenight.* 1784. E. Hn. I haue; *rest haue l.* 1792. Hl. ay (*for*  
 al). 1793. Hl. a ful glorious. 1794. E. thise; Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. we.

And kiste hir swete, and chirketh as a sparwe  
 With his lippes: 'dame,' quod he, 'right weel, 1805  
 As he that is your servant every deel.  
 Thanked be god, that yow yaf soule and lyf,  
 Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf (100)  
 In al the chirche, god so save me!'

'Ye, god amende defautes, sir,' quod she, 1810  
 'Algates wel-come be ye, by my fey!'  
 'Graunt mercy, dame, this have I founde alwey.  
 But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,  
 I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow greve,  
 I wol with Thomas speke a litel throwe. 1815  
 These curats been ful necligent and slowe  
 To grope tendrely a conscience.  
 In shrift, in preching is my diligence, (110)  
 And studie in Petres wordes, and in Poules.  
 I walke, and fische Cristen mennes soules, 1820  
 To yelden Iesu Crist his propre rente;  
 To sprede his word is set al myn entente.'

'Now, by your leve, o dere sir,' quod she,  
 'Chydeth him weel, for seinte Trinitee.  
 He is as angry as a pissemyre, 1825  
 Though that he have al that he can desyre.  
 Though I him wrye a-night and make him warm,  
 And on hym leye my leg outhur myn arm, (120)  
 He groneth lyk our boor, lyth in our sty.  
 Other desport right noon of him have I;  
 I may nat plesse him in no maner cas.' 1830

'O Thomas! *Ie vous dy*, Thomas! Thomas!  
 This maketh the feend, this moste ben amended.  
 Ire is a thing that hye god defended,  
 And ther-of wol I speke a word or two.' 1835

'Now maister,' quod the wyf, 'er that I go,  
 What wol ye dyne? I wol go ther-aboute.'

'Now dame,' quod he, '*Ie vous dy sanz doute*, (130)  
 Have I nat of a capon but the livere,  
 And of your softe breed nat but a shivere, 1840

And after that a rosted pigges heed,  
 (But that I nolde no beest for me were deed),  
 Thanne hadde I with yow hoomly suffisaunce.  
 I am a man of litel sustenaunce.  
 My spirit hath his fostring in the Bible. 1845  
 The body is ay so redy and penyble  
 To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.  
 I prey yow, dame, ye be nat anoyed, (140)  
 Though I so frendly yow my conseil shewe;  
 By god, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe.' 1850  
 'Now, sir,' quod she, 'but o word er I go;  
 My child is deed with-inne thise wykes two,  
 Sone after that ye wente out of this toun.'  
 'His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,'  
 Seith this frere, 'at hoom in our dortour. 1855  
 I dar wel seyn that, er that half an hour  
 After his deeth, I saugh him born to blisse  
 In myn avisioun, so god me wisse! (150)  
 So dide our sexteyn and our fermerer,  
 That han been trewe freres fifty yeer; 1860  
 They may now, god be thanked of his lone,  
 Maken hir Iubilee and walke allone.  
 And up I roos, and al our covent eke,  
 With many a tere triking on my cheke,  
 Withouten noyse or clateringe of belles; 1865  
*Te deum* was our song and no-thing elles,  
 Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,  
 Thankinge him of his revelacioun. (160)  
 For sir and dame, trusteth me right weel,  
 Our orisons been more effectueel, 1870  
 And more we seen of Cristes secree thinges  
 Than burel folk, al-though they weren kinges.  
 We live in povert and in abstinence,  
 And burel folk in richesse and despence  
 Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul delyt. 1875  
 We han this worldes lust al in despyt.  
 Lazar and Dives liveden diversly,

1856. Ln. than; *rest* that. 1870. E. Hn. wel moore; *rest om.* wel. 1872.  
 Hl. borel. 1873. Cn. Hl. pouert; *rest* pouerte. 1872, 4. Hl. borel.



T. 7460-7496.] D. THE SOMNOURS TALE.	377
And diverse guerdon hadden they ther-by.	(170)
Who-so wol preye, he moot faste and be clene,	
And fatte his soule and make his body lene.	1880
We fare as seith thapostle; cloth and fode	
Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode.	
The clennesses and the fastinge of us freres	
Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyeres.	
Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty night	1885
Fasted, er that the heighe god of might	
Spak with him in the mountain of Sinay.	
With empty wombe, fastinge many a day,	(180)
Receyved he the lawe that was writen	
With goddes finger; and Elie, wel ye witen,	1890
In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche	
With hye god, that is our lyves leche,	
He fasted longe and was in contemplanche.	
Aaron, that hadde the temple in governaunce,	
And eek the othere preestes everichon,	1895
In-to the temple whan they sholde gon	
To preye for the peple, and do servyse,	
They nolden drinken, in no maner wyse,	(190)
No drinke, which that mighte hem dronke make,	
But there in abstinence preye and wake,	1900
Lest that they deyden; tak heed what I seye.	
But they be sobre that for the peple preye,	
War that I seye,—namore! for it suffyseth.	
Our lord Iesu, as holy writ devyseth,	
Yaf us ensample of fastinge and preyeres.	1905
Therfor we mendinants, we sely freres,	
Been wedded to poverte and continence,	
To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,	(200)
To persecucion for rightwisnesse,	
To wepinge, misericorde, and clennesses.	1910
And therfor may ye see that our preyeres—	
I speke of us, we mendinants, we freres—	
Ben to the hye god more acceptable	
Than youres, with your festes at the table.	

---

1878. E. Hn. gerdon; Cm. gerdoun; Pt. guardon. 1887. Hn. mountayne;  
 Ln. Dd. mounte; rest mount. 1895. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. that; Cm. Hl. Pt. the.  
 1901. E. taak heede. 1906, 12. E. mendynantz.

- Fro Paradys first, if I shal nat lye, 1915  
 Was man out chaced for his glotonye;  
 And chaast was man in Paradys, certeyn.
- But herkne now, Thomas, what I shal seyn. (210)  
 I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,  
 But I shall finde it in a maner glose, 1920  
 That specially our swete lord Iesus  
 Spak this by freres, whan he seyde thus:  
 "Blessed be they that povre in spirit been."  
 And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,  
 Wher it be lyker our professioun, 1925  
 Or hirs that swimmen in possessioun.  
 Fy on hir pompe and on hir glotonye!  
 And for hir lewednesse I hem diffye. (220)
- Me thinketh they ben lyk Iovinian,  
 Fat as a whale, and walkinge as a swan; 1930  
 Al vinolent as botel in the spence.  
 Hir preyer is of ful gret reverence;  
 Whan they for soules seye the psalm of Davit,  
 Lo, "buf!" they seye, "*cor mecum eructavit!*"  
 Who folweth Cristes gospel and his fore, 1935  
 But we that humble been and chast and pore,  
 Werkers of goddes word, not auditours?  
 Therefore, right as an hauk up, at a sours, (230)  
 Up springeth in-to their, right so prayeres  
 Of charitable and chaste bisy freres 1940  
 Maken hir sours to goddes eres two.  
 Thomas! Thomas! so mote I ryde or go,  
 And by that lord that clepid is seint Yve,  
 Nere thou our brother, sholdestou nat thryve!  
 In our chapitre praye we day and night 1945  
 To Crist, that he thee sende hele and might,  
 Thy body for to welden hastily.'
- 'God woot,' quod he, 'no-thing ther-of fele I; (240)

---

1918. Cm. Pt. Hl. now; *rest om.* 1923. E. pouere; Hn. poure; Ln. Hl. pouer; Cm. poore; Cp. pore. 1925. E. Hn. likker; Cm. lykere. 1927. E. Hn. *om.* 2nd on. 1934. buf] E. but; Hl. boef. 1935. E. Hn. foore; Cm. Hl. fore; *rest* lore. 1937. E. Cm. Werkeris. 1938. up at] Hl. vpon. 1939. Hl. thaer; Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. the eyre (ayre). 1947. E. weelden.

As help me Crist, as I, in fewe yeres,  
 Han spended, up-on dyvers maner freres, 1950  
 Ful many a pound; yet fare I never the bet.  
 Certeyn, my good have I almost biset.  
 Farwel, my gold! for it is al ago!’  
 The frere answerde, ‘O Thomas, dostow so?  
 What nedeth yow diverse freres seche? 1955  
 What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche  
 To sechen othere leches in the toun?  
 Your inconstance is your confusioun. (250)  
 Holde ye than me, or elles our covent,  
 To praye for yow ben insufficient? 1960  
 Thomas, that Iape nis nat worth a myte;  
 Your maladye is for we han to lyte.  
 “A! yif that covent half a quarter otes!”  
 “A! yif that covent four and twenty grotes!”  
 “A! yif that frere a peny, and lat him go!” 1965  
 Nay, nay, Thomas! it may no-thing be so.  
 What is a ferthing worth parted in twelve?  
 Lo, ech thing that is oned in him-selve (260)  
 Is more strong than whan it is to-scatered.  
 Thomas, of me thou shalt nat been y-flatered; 1970  
 Thou woldest han our labour al for noght.  
 The hye god, that al this world hath wrought,  
 Seith that the werkman worthy is his hyre.  
 Thomas! noght of your tresor I desyre  
 As for my-self, but that al our covent 1975  
 To preye for yow is ay so diligent,  
 And for to builden Cristes owene chirche.  
 Thomas! if ye wol lernen for to wirche, (270)  
 Of buildinge up of chirches may ye finde  
 If it be good, in Thomas lyf of Inde. 1980  
 Ye lye heer, ful of anger and of yre,  
 With which the devel set your herte a-fyre,  
 And chyden heer this sely innocent,

1949. Hn. Hl. I in; E. Cm. in a; Pt. I haue in. 1950. Hn. Hl. Haue  
 spended; E. I han spent. 1952. E. I haue. 1959. E. thanne. 1968.  
 E. it-; *rest* him-. 1977. E. Hn. Hl. buylden; Cm. bildyn; Cp. bulden;  
 Pt. beelden; Ln. bilden. 1981. E. *om.* and. 1983. E. Hn. Hl. the; *rest*  
 this.

Your wyf, that is so meke and pacient.  
 And therfor, Thomas, trowe me if thee leste, 1985  
 Ne stryve nat with thy wyf, as for thy beste ;  
 And ber this word away now, by thy feith,  
 Touchinge this thing, lo, what the wyse seith : (280)  
 "With-in thyn hous ne be thou no leoun ;  
 To thy subgits do noon oppressioun ; 1990  
 Ne make thyne aqueyntances nat to flee."  
 And Thomas, yet eft-sones I charge thee,  
 Be war from hir that in thy bosom slepeth ;  
 War fro the serpent that so slyly crepeth  
 Under the gras, and stingeth subtilly. 1995  
 Be war, my sone, and herkne patiently,  
 That twenty thousand men han lost hir lyves,  
 For stryving with hir lemmans and hir wyves. (290)  
 Now sith ye han so holy and meke a wyf,  
 What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken stryf? 2000  
 Ther nis, y-wis, no serpent so cruel,  
 Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so fel,  
 As womman is, whan she hath caught an ire ;  
 Vengeance is thanne al that they desyre.  
 Ire is a sinne, oon of the grete of sevene, 2005  
 Abhominable un-to the god of hevене ;  
 And to him-self it is destruccion.  
 This every lewed viker or person (300)  
 Can seye, how Ire engendreth homicyde.  
 Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde. 2010  
 I coude of Ire seye so muche sorwe,  
 My tale sholde laste til to-morwe.  
 And therfor preye I god bothe day and night,  
 An irous man, god sende him litel might !  
 It is greet harm and, certes, gret pitee, 2015

1988. E. this; *rest* swich (such). 1989. *All* With-inne. 1991. E. Hn. Cm. aqueyntances; Hl. acqueyntis; *rest* aqueintance. Cm. not to; Pt. for to; Hl. fro thee; *rest* nat for to. 1993. Pt. yre (*for* hir). 1994. Hn. War fro; Hl. War for; Pt. Ware the for; Cm. By-war from; E. Be war fro; Cp. Ln. Be war of. 1999. Hl. and meke; Cp. Ln. and so meke; *rest* meke. 2002. E. What (*for* Whan). E. Hn. man tret; Cm. man trat; *rest* men trede. After 2004 Hl. *ins.* 2 *spurious lines*: Schortly may no man by rym and vers Tellen her thoughtes, thay ben so diuers. After 2012 Hl. *ins.* 2 *spurious lines*: Ire is the grate of synne as saith the wise To fle ther-fro ech man schuld him deuyse. 2015. Hn. Cp. Ln. certes; Hl. also; *rest* eke (cek).

To sette an irous man in heigh degree.

Whilom ther was an irous potestat,  
As seith Senek, that, duringe his estaat, (310)

Up-on a day out riden knightes two,  
And as fortune wolde that it were so, 2020

That oon of hem cam hoom, that other noght.

Anon the knight bifore the Iuge is broght,  
That seyde thus, 'thou hast thy felawe slayn,  
For which I deme thee to the deeth, certayn.'

And to another knight comanded he, 2025  
'Go lede him to the deeth, I charge thee.'

And happed, as they wente by the weye  
Toward the place ther he sholde deye, (320)

The knight cam, which men wenden had be deed.  
Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste reed, 2030

To lede hem bothe to the Iuge agayn.  
They seiden, 'lord, the knight ne hath nat slayn  
His felawe; here he standeth hool alyve.'

'Ye shul be deed,' quod he, 'so moot I thryve!  
That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and three!' 2035

And to the firste knight right thus spak he,  
'I dampned thee, thou most algate be deed.

And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed, (330)  
For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth.'

And to the thridde knight right thus he seyth, 2040  
'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee.'

And thus he dide don sleen hem alle three.

Irous Cambyses was eek dronkelewe,  
And ay delyted him to been a shrewe.

And so bifel, a lord of his meynee, 2045  
That lovede vertuous moralitee,

Seyde on a day bitwix hem two right thus:

'A lord is lost, if he be vicious; (34c)

And dronkenesse is eek a foul record

Of any man, and namely in a lord. 2050

2037. *Here* Hl. adds two spurious lines: Than thoughte thay it were the beste rede To lede him forth into a fair mede. 2046. Hn. Cm. louede (= lov'de); E. loued. 2047. E. bitwene. 2048. *Here* Hl. adds two spurious lines: An irous man is lik a frentik best In which ther is of wisdom noon arrest. 2048. E. Pt. vicius. 2050. Hl. of (*for in*).

Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere  
 Awaiting on a lord, and he noot where.  
 For goddes love, drink more attemprely;  
 Wyn maketh man to lesen wrecchedly  
 His minde, and eek his limes everichon. 2055  
 ‘The revers shaltou se,’ quod he, ‘anon;  
 And preve it, by thyn owene experience,  
 That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich offence. (350)  
 Ther is no wyn bireveth me my might  
 Of hand ne foot, ne of myn eyen sight’— 2060  
 And, for despyt, he drank ful muchel more  
 An hondred part than he had doon bifore;  
 And right anon, this irous cursed wrecche  
 Leet this knightes sone bifore him fecche,  
 Comandinge him he sholde bifore him stonde. 2065  
 And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde,  
 And up the streng he pulled to his ere,  
 And with an arwe he slow the child right there: (360)  
 ‘Now whether have I a siker hand or noon?’  
 Quod he, ‘is al my might and minde agoon? 2070  
 Hath wyn bireved me myn eyen sight?’  
 What sholde I telle thanswere of the knight?  
 His sone was slayn, ther is na-more to seye.  
 Beth war therfor with lordes how ye pleye.  
 Singeth *Placebo*, and I shal, if I can, 2075  
 But if it be un-to a povre man.  
 To a povre man men sholde hise vyces telle,  
 But nat to a lord, thogh he sholde go to helle. (370)  
 Lo irous Cirus, thilke Percien,  
 How he destroyed the river of Gysen, 2080  
 For that an hors of his was dreynt ther-inne,  
 Whan that he wente Babiloigne to winne.  
 He made that the river was so smal,  
 That wommen mighte wade it over al.  
 Lo, what seyde he, that so wel teche can? 2085  
 ‘Ne be no felawe to an irous man,  
 Ne with no wood man walke by the weye,

2055. Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. eek; *rest om.* 2062. E. *om.* doon. 2064. Hl.  
 sone anon; *rest sone.* 2069. E. wheither. 2071. E. bireft; *rest byreued.*

Lest thee repente ;" ther is na-more to seye. (380)

Now Thomas, leve brother, lef thyn ire ;  
Thou shalt me finde as Iust as is a squire. 2090

Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn herte ;

Thyn angre dooth thee al to sore smerte ;

But shewe to me al thy confessioun.'

'Nay,' quod the syke man, 'by Seint Simoun !

I have be shriven this day at my curat ; 2095

I have him told al hoolly myn estat ;

Nedeth na-more to speke of it,' seith he,

'But if me list of myn humilitee.' (390)

'Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make our cloistre,'

Quod he, 'for many a muscle and many an oistre, 2100

Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse,

Hath been our fode, our cloistre for to reyse.

And yet, god woot, unnethe the fundement

Parfourned is, ne of our pavement

Nis nat a tyle yet with-inne our wones ; 2105

By god, we owen fourty pound for stones !

Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed helle !

For elles moste we our bokes selle. (400)

And if ye lakke our predicacioun,

Than gooth the world al to destruccioun. 2110

For who-so wolde us fro this world bireve,

So god me save, Thomas, by your leve,

He wolde bireve out of this world the sonne.

For who can teche and werchen as we conne ?

And that is nat of litel tyme,' quod he ; 2115

'But sith that Elie was, or Elisee,

Han freres been, that finde I of record,

In charitee, y-thanked be our lord. (410)

Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee !'

And doun anon he sette him on his knee. 2120

This syke man wex wel ny wood for ire ;

He wolde that the frere had been on-fire

---

2091, 2. Hl. *transposes these lines*. 2095. Hl. of (*for at*). 2096. E.  
Hn. Hl. hoolly al ; *rest al holly (holy)*. 2097. E. Hl. speken. 2101, 2.  
Hl. *transposes these lines*. 2105. E. Cm. tyl ; *rest tyle*. 2110. E. Thanne.  
2116. Hl. siththen ; Cp. Ln. sethyns ; Cm. sithe that ; E. syn ; Hn. Ln. sith.  
E. Ennok ; *rest Elie (Elye)*. 2121. E. wax ; Hn. weex ; *rest wex*.

With his false dissimulacioun.

'Swich thing as is in my possessioun,'

Quod he, 'that may I yeven, and non other. 2125

Ye sey me thus, how that I am your brother?'

'Ye, certes,' quod the frere, 'trusteth weel;

I took our dame our lettre with our seel.' (420)

'Now wel,' quod he, 'and som-what shal I yive

Un-to your holy covent whyl I live, 2130

And in thyn hand thou shalt it have anoon;

On this condicioun, and other noon,

That thou departe it so, my dere brother,

That every frere have also mucche as other.

This shaltou swere on thy professioun, 2135

With-outhe fraude or cavillacioun.'

'I swere it,' quod this frere, 'upon my feith!'

And ther-with-al his hand in his he leith: (430)

'Lo, heer my feith! in me shal be no lak.'

'Now thanne, put thyn hand down by my bak,' 2140

Seyde this man, 'and grope wel bihinde;

Bynethe my buttoke ther shaltow finde

A thing that I have hid in privetee.'

'A!' thoghte this frere, 'this shal go with me!'

And doun his hand he launcheth to the clifte, 2145

In hope for to finde ther a yifte.

And whan this syke man felte this frere

Aboute his tuwel grope there and here, (440)

Amidde his hand he leet the frere a fart.

Ther nis no capul, drawinge in a cart, 2150

That mighte have lete a fart of swich a soun.

'The frere up stirte as doth a wood leoun:

'A! false cherl,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,

This hastow for despyt doon, for the nones!

Thou shalt abyge this fart, if that I may!' 2155

His meynee, whiche that herden this affray,

2125. Hl. yeue yow; *rest om.* yow. 2126. E. Cp. Ln. *om.* how. 2128. Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. with; E. and; Pt. of; Hl. vnder. 2129. Cp. Hl. yiue; *rest yeue.* 2133. E. leeue; *rest dere* (deere). 2137. E. Pt. by; *rest vpon.* 2140. E. Now thanne put in; Hn. Hl. Now thanne put; Pt. Now than put; Cp. Ln. Than putte (put). 2145. Hl. launched; Cp. Pt. Ln. launceth. 2148. Cm. tewel; Hl. tuel; Ln. touele. 2153. E. Pt. Ln. fals.



Cam lepinge in, and chaced out the frere ;  
 And forth he gooth, with a ful angry chere, (450)  
 And fette his felawe, ther-as lay his stoor.  
 He looked as it were a wilde boor ; 2160  
 He grinte with his teeth, so was he wrooth.  
 A sturdy pas doun to the court he gooth,  
 Wher-as ther woned a man of greet honour,  
 To whom that he was alwey confessour ;  
 This worthy man was lord of that village. 2165  
 This frere cam, as he were in a rage,  
 Wher-as this lord sat eting at his bord.  
 Unnetthes mighte the frere speke a word, (460)  
 Til atte laste he seyde : 'god yow see !'  
 This lord gan loke, and seide, '*benedicite* !' 2170  
 What, frere Iohn, what maner world is this ?  
 I see wel that som thing ther is amis.  
 Ye loken as the wode were ful of thevis,  
 Sit doun anon, and tel me what your greef is,  
 And it shal been amended, if I may.' 2175  
 'I have,' quod he, 'had a despyt this day,  
 God yelde yow ! adoun in your village,  
 That in this world is noon so povre a page, (470)  
 That he nolde have abhominacioun  
 Of that I have receyved in your toun. 2180  
 And yet ne greveth me no-thing so sore,  
 As that this olde cherl, with lokkes hore,  
 Blasphemed hath our holy covent eke.'  
 'Now, maister,' quod this lord, 'I yow biseke.'  
 'No maister, sire,' quod he, 'but servitour, 2185  
 Thogh I have had in scole swich honour.  
 God lyketh nat that "Raby" men us calle,  
 Neither in market ne in your large halle.' (480)  
 'No fors,' quod he, 'but tel me al your grief.'  
 'Sire,' quod this frere, 'an odious meschief 2190  
 This day bitid is to myn ordre and me,

2161. Hn. Cm. Pt. grynt ; Cp. grynded ; Ln. grenteth. 2162. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. paas. E. lordes court ; *rest om.* lordes. 2163. E. *om.* ther. 2170. E. bigan to ; Cm. gan to ; *rest gan.* 2172. *So* Hn. Cm. ; E. I trowe som maner thing. 2174. Cp. greef ; Cm. Hl. gref ; E. Hn. grief. 2175. E. Cp. Ln. Hl. if that ; *rest om.* that. 2181. E. Cp. Ln. *om.* ne. 2185. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. *om.* sire. 2186. E. swich ; Hl. such ; *rest that.* 2190. E. he (*for* this frere).

And so *per consequens* to ech degree  
 Of holy chirche, god amende it sone!’  
 ‘Sir,’ quod the lord, ‘ye woot what is to done.  
 Distempre yow noght, ye be my confessour; 2195  
 Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour.  
 For goddes love your pacience ye holde;  
 Tel me your grief:’ and he anon him tolde, (490)  
 As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.  
 The lady of the hous ay stille sat, 2200  
 Til she had herd al what the frere sayde:  
 ‘Ey, goddes moder,’ quod she, ‘blisful mayde!  
 Is ther oght elles? telle me feithfully.’  
 ‘Madame,’ quod he, ‘how thinketh yow her-by?’  
 ‘How that me thinketh?’ quod she; ‘so god me speede,  
 I seye, a cherl hath doon a cherles dede.  
 What shold I seye? god lat him never thee!  
 His syke heed is ful of vanitee, (500)  
 I hold him in a maner frenesy.’  
 ‘Madame,’ quod he, ‘by god I shal nat lye; 2210  
 But I on other weyes may be wreke,  
 I shal diffame him over-al ther I speke,  
 This false blasphemour, that charged me  
 To parte that wol nat departed be,  
 To every man y-liche, with meschaunce!’ 2215  
 The lord sat stille as he were in a traunce,  
 And in his herte he rolled up and down,  
 ‘How hadde this cherl imaginacioun (510)  
 To shewe swich a probleme to the frere?  
 Never erst er now herde I of swich matere; 2220  
 I trowe the devel putte it in his minde.  
 In ars-metryke shal ther no man finde,  
 Biforn this day, of swich a questioun.  
 Who sholde make a demonstracioun,  
 That every man sholde have y-liche his part 2225  
 As of the soun or savour of a fart?’

2192. E. Pt. in; *rest* to. 2200. E. al; *rest* ay. 2201. MS. Add. 5145  
 all; *rest om.* 2204. Hn. thynketh yow; Cp. thenke you; Hl. Ln. thynke  
 yow; E. thynke ye. Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. ther-by. 2205. thinketh = think'th.  
 2211. E. *ins.* hym *after* on (*wrongly*). E. *om.* may. 2212. Hn. Cp.  
 diffame; Cm. Hl. defame; E. disclaundre. 2218. E. the (*for* this). E. Cm.  
*insert* this *after* cherl. 2222. Ln. metrike; *rest* metrik. 2224. *So the*  
*rest*; E. Certes it was a shrewed conclusioun.

O nyce proude cherl, I shrewe his face!  
 Lo, sires,' quod the lord, with harde grace, (520)  
 'Who ever herde of swich a thing er now?  
 To every man y-lyke? tel me how? 2230  
 It is an impossible, it may nat be!  
 Ey, nyce cherl, god lete him never thee!  
 The rumblinge of a fart, and every soun,  
 Nis but of eir reverberacioun,  
 And ever it wasteth lyte and lyte away. 2235  
 Ther is no man can demen, by my fey,  
 If that it were departed equally.  
 What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewedly (530)  
 Un-to my confessour to-day he spak!  
 I holde him certeyn a demoniak! 2240  
 Now ete your mete, and lat the cherl go pleye,  
 Lat him go honge himself a devel weye!  
 Now stood the lordes squyer at the bord,  
 That carf his mete, and herde, word by word,  
 Of alle thinges of which I have yow sayd. 2245  
 'My lord,' quod he, 'be ye nat yvel apayd;  
 I coude telle, for a goun-clooth,  
 To yow, sir frere, so ye be nat wrooth, (540)  
 How that this fart sholde even deled be  
 Among your covent, if it lyked me.' 2250  
 'Tel,' quod the lord, 'and thou shalt have anon  
 A goun-cloth, by god and by Seint Iohn!'  
 'My lord,' quod he, 'whan that the weder is fair,  
 With-uten wind or perturbinge of air,  
 Lat bringe a cartwheel here in-to this halle, 2255  
 But loke that it have his spokes alle.  
 Twelf spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.  
 And bring me than twelf freres, woot ye why? (550)  
 For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.  
 The confessour heer, for his worthinesse, 2260  
 Shal parfourne up the nombre of his covent.

2227. E. vile; *rest* nyce. 2229. E. herd; *rest* herde. E. Cm. Cp. herd  
 euere. 2232. him] E. thee. 2235. E. Cp. Pt. Hl. litel and litel.  
 2245. *So* Hn. Cp. Ln.; E. which that I haue. 2246. E. Cp. beth; Ln. be; *rest*  
 be ye. 2249. E. euene delt shal; Hl. euen departed schuld; *rest as above*.  
 2255. E. Hl. *om.* here. Hl. a large wheel. 2257. Hn. Hl. Twelf; E.  
 Cm. Twelue. 2258. E. thanne. xij. 2259. E. Ln. twelue (*for* thrittene).

Than shal they knele doun, by oon assent,  
 And to every spokes ende, in this manere,  
 Ful sadly leye his nose shal a frere.  
 Your noble confessour, ther god him save, 2265  
 Shal holde his nose upright, under the nave.  
 Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and toght  
 As any tabour, hider been y-brought; (560)  
 And sette him on the wheel right of this cart,  
 Upon the nave, and make him lete a fart. 2270  
 And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,  
 By preve which that is demonstratif,  
 That equally the soun of it wol wende,  
 And eek the stink, un-to the spokes ende;  
 Save that this worthy man, your confessour, 2275  
 By-cause he is a man of greet honour,  
 Shal have the firste fruit, as reson is;  
 The noble usage of freres yet is this, (57c)  
 The worthy men of hem shul first be served;  
 And certainly, he hath it weel deserved. 2280  
 He hath to-day taught us so muchel good  
 With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,  
 That I may vouche-sauf, I sey for me,  
 He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,  
 And so wolde al his covent hardily; 2285  
 He bereth him so faire and holily.<sup>7</sup>  
 The lord, the lady, and ech man, save the frere,  
 Seyde that Iankin spak, in this matere, (58o)  
 As wel as Euclide or [as] Ptholomee.  
 Touchinge this cherl, they seyde, subtiltee 2290  
 And heigh wit made him speken as he spak;  
 He nis no fool, ne no demoniak.  
 And Iankin hath y-wonne a newe gounne.—  
 My tale is doon; we been almost at toune. 2294

**Here endeth the Somnours Tale.**

2262, 7. E. Thanne. 2268. E. Cm. been hyder. 2272. Hl. By verray proof.  
 2274. E. eke; Hn. eek. 2278. *So* Hn. Cp. Ln.; Pt. it (*for* yet); Hl. *om.*  
 yet; E. As yet the noble vsage of freres is. 2280. E. Hn. Cp. disserued.  
 2281. Hn. muchel; Hl. Cp. mochil; E. Ln. muche. 2285. E. the (*for* his).  
 2287. E. alle men. 2289. E. Euclide. *I supply 2nd* as (Hl. *supplies* elles);  
 Ln. *has* ptholome; E. Hn. Protholomee; Cp. Hl. *protholome*. 2291.  
 Hl. speken; *rest* speke. COLOPHON. *So* E. Hn. Cp. Hl.; E. Somnours.

GROUP E.

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 7877-7898.)



Here folweth the Prologe of the Clerkes Tale of  
Oxenford.

'SIR clerk of Oxenford,' our hoste sayde,  
 'Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a mayde,  
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord ;  
 This day ne herde I of your tonge a word.  
 I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme, 5  
 But Salomon seith, "every thing hath tyme."  
 For goddes sake, as beth of bettre chere,  
 It is no tyme for to studien here.  
 Telle us som mery tale, by your fey ;  
 For what man that is entred in a pley, 10  
 He nedes moot unto the pley assente.  
 But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente,  
 To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,  
 Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.  
 Telle us som mery thing of adventures ;— 15  
 Your termes, your colours, and your figures,  
 Kepe hem in stoor til so be ye endyte  
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kinges wryte.  
 Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, I yow preye,  
 That we may understonde what ye seye.' 20  
 This worthy clerk benignely answerde,  
 'Hoste,' quod he, 'I am under your yerde ;

---

1. Hl. hoste ; Cp. Ln. oste ; E. Hn. hoost.    17. E. Hl. that ye ; *rest omit*  
 that.    19. E. Hn. we ; *rest I.*    22. Ln. Oste ; E. Hn. Pt. Hoost ; Hl.  
 Sir host.

Ye han of us as now the governaunce,  
 And therfor wol I do yow obeisaunce,  
 As fer as reson axeth, hardily. 25  
 I wol yow telle a tale which that I  
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,  
 As preved by his wordes and his werk.  
 He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,  
 I prey to god so yeve his soule reste! 30  
 Fraunceys Petrark, the laureat poete,  
 Highte this clerk, whos rethoryke sweete  
 Enlumined al Itaille of poetrye,  
 As Linian dide of philosophye  
 Or lawe, or other art particuler; 35  
 But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer  
 But as it were a twinkling of an yë,  
 Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we dyë.  
 But forth to tellen of this worthy man,  
 That taughte me this tale, as I bigan, 40  
 I seye that first with heigh style he endyteth,  
 Er he the body of his tale wryteth,  
 A proheme, in the which discryveth he  
 Pemonde, and of Saluces the contree,  
 And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye, 45  
 That been the boundes of West Lumbardyë,  
 And of Mount Vesulus in special,  
 Where as the Poo, out of a welle smal,  
 Taketh his firste springing and his sours,  
 That estward ay encesseth in his cours 50  
 To Emelward, to Ferrare, and Venyse :  
 The which a long thing were to devyse.  
 And trewely, as to my Iugement,  
 Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,  
 Save that he wol conveyen his matere : 55  
 But this his tale, which that ye may here.'

32. Hl. rethorique; Cp. retorique; Pt. retorike; E. Hn. Ln. rethorik. 36.  
 E. *omits* suffre us. 51. E. Hn. Emele; Hl. Emyl; Cp. Pt. Ln. Emel. 55.  
 E. Hn. conuoyen; *rest* conueyen (-eye). 56. E. Hn. this his tale (*where* this  
 is a contraction for this is; cf. *mod.* E. 'tis); Hl. Pt. this is the tale; Ln. this  
 is tale.

## THE CLERKES TALE.



Here biginneth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

**T**HER is, at the west syde of Itaille,  
 Doun at the rote of Vesulus the colde,  
 A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,  
 Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde, 60  
 That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,  
 And many another delitable sighte,  
 And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,  
 As were his worthy eldres him bifore; 65  
 And obeisant and redy to his honde (10)  
 Were alle his luges, bothe lasse and more.  
 Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,  
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,  
 Bothe of his lordes and of his commune. 70

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,  
 The gentilleste y-born of Lumbardye,  
 A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,  
 And ful of honour and of curteisye;  
 Discreet y-nogh his contree for to gye, 75  
 Save in somme thinges that he was to blame, (20)  
 And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considereth nought  
 In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde,  
 But on his lust present was al his thoght, 80  
 As for to hauke and hunte on every syde;

76. E. Saue that; *rest omit* that.  
 Pt. myst; Hl. mighte.

79. *So* Hn. Ln.; E. hym myghte;

Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,  
 And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,  
 Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle.

Only that point his peple bar so sore, 85  
 That flokmele on a day they to him wente, (30)  
 And oon of hem, that wysest was of lore,  
 Or elles that the lord best wolde assente  
 That he sholde telle him what his peple mente,  
 Or elles coude he shewe wel swich matere, 90  
 He to the markis seyde as ye shul here.

'O noble markis, your humanitee  
 Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,  
 As ofte as tyme is of necessitee  
 That we to yow mowe telle our hevinesse; 95  
 Accepteth, lord, now for your gentillesse, (40)  
 That we with pitous herte un-to yow pleyne,  
 And lete your eres nat my voys disdeyne.

Al have I noght to done in this matere  
 More than another man hath in this place, 100  
 Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so dere,  
 Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,  
 I dar the better aske of yow a space  
 Of audience, to shewen our requeste,  
 And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste. 105

For certes, lord, so wel us lyketh yow (50)  
 And al your werk and ever han doon, that we  
 Ne coude nat us self devysen how  
 We mighte liven in more felicitee,  
 Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be, 110  
 That for to been a wedded man yow leste,  
 Than were your peple in sovereyn hertes reste.

---

84. Pt. Ln. oust; E. Hn. noght; Hl. no thing. 93. Hn. Pt. and  
 yeuth; Hl. and yiueth; E. to yeue; Ln. and whisse. 103. E. Hn. better;  
 rest better. 108. Pt. Ln. oure; E. Hn. Cp. vs. 110. E. Ln. omit it.



Boweth your nekke under that blisful yok  
 Of soveraynetee, noght of servyse,  
 Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok ; 115  
 And thenketh, lord, among your thoghtes wyse, (60)  
 How that our dayes passe in sondry wyse ;  
 For though we slepe or wake, or rome, or ryde,  
 Ay fleeth the tyme, it nil no man abyde.

And though your grene youthe floure as yit, 120  
 In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,  
 And deeth manaceth every age, and smit  
 In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon :  
 And al so certein as we knowe echoon  
 That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle 125  
 Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle. (70)

Accepteth than of us the trewe entente,  
 That never yet refuseden your heste,  
 And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,  
 Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte leste, 130  
 Born of the gentilleste and of the meste  
 Of al this lond, so that it oghte seme  
 Honour to god and yow, as we can deme.

Deliver us out of al this bisy drede,  
 And tak a wyf, for hye goddes sake ; 135  
 For if it so bifelle, as god forbede, (80)  
 That thurgh your deeth your linage sholde slake,  
 And that a straunge successour sholde take  
 Your heritage, o ! wo were us alyve !  
 Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve.' 140

Hir meke preyere and hir pitous chere  
 Made the markis herte han pitee.  
 'Ye wol,' quod he, 'myn owene peple dere,  
 To that I never erst thoghte streyne me.  
 I me reioused of my libertee, 145  
 That selde tyme is founde in mariage ; (90)  
 Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.

128. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. your ; E. Hn. Cm. thyn. 128, 130, 131. E. heeste, leeste, meeste ; Cm. heste, leste, meste. 137. Cp. Pt. lynage ; Ln. Hl. lignage ; E. lyne ; Hn. ligne ; Cm. lyf. 144. E. thoughte ; Hn. thoghte.

But nathelees I see your trewe entente,  
 And truste upon your wit, and have don ay ;  
 Wherfor of my free wil I wol assente 150  
 To wedde me, as sone as ever I may.  
 But ther-as ye han profred me to-day  
 To chese me a wyf, I yow relese  
 That choys, and prey yow of that profre cesse.

For god it woot, that children ofte been 155  
 Unlyk her worthy eldres hem bifore ; (100)  
 Bountee comth al of god, nat of the streen  
 Of which they been engendred and y-bore ;  
 I truste in goddes bountee, and therfore  
 My mariage and myn estaat and reste 160  
 I him bitake ; he may don as him leste.

Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,  
 That charge up-on my bak I wol endure ;  
 But I yow preye, and charge up-on your lyf,  
 That what wyf that I take, ye me assure 165  
 To worshipe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure, (110)  
 In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,  
 As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye  
 Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve ; 170  
 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee  
 At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,  
 Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve ;  
 And but ye wole assente in swich manere,  
 I prey yow, speketh na-more of this matere.' 175

With hertly wil they sworn, and assenten (120)  
 To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay ;  
 Bisekinge him of grace, er that they wenten,  
 That he wolde graunten hem a certain day  
 Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he may ; 180  
 For yet alwey the peple som-what dredde  
 Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde.

152. to-] E. this. 154. E. (*only*) omits yow. 165. So Hn. Cp. Ln. ; E. Cm. omit That ; Pt. om. what. 174. E. this ; rest swich, such.

He graunted hem a day, swich as him leste,  
 On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,  
 And seyde, he dide al this at hir requeste ; 185  
 And they, with humble entente, buxomly, (130)  
 Knelinge up-on her knees ful reverently  
 Him thanken alle, and thus they han an ende  
 Of hir entente, and hoom agayn they wende.

And heer-up-on he to his officeres 190  
 Comaundeth for the feste to purveye,  
 And to his privee knightes and squyeres  
 Swich charge yaf, as him liste on hem leye ;  
 And they to his comandement obeye,  
 And ech of hem doth al his diligence 195  
 To doon un-to the feste reverence. (140)

**Explicit prima pars. Incipit secunda pars.**

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honorable  
 Ther-as this markis shoop his mariage,  
 Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,  
 In which that povre folk of that village 200  
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,  
 And of hir labour took hir sustenance  
 After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man  
 Which that was holden povrest of hem alle ; 205  
 But hye god som tyme senden can (150)  
 His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle :  
 Ianicula men of that throp him calle.  
 A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to sighte,  
 And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte. 210

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,  
 Than was she oon the faireste under sonne ;  
 For povreliche y-fostred up was she,

---

199. Hl. throp; E. Hn. Cp. throop. 208. Pt. throp; E. Hn. Cp. throop;  
 Cm. thorp; Ln. thorpe. 211. E. bountee; rest beautee, beute.

No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte y-ronne ;  
 Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne 215  
 She drank, and for she wolde vertu plese, (160)  
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,  
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee  
 Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage ; 220  
 And in greet reverence and charitee  
 Hir olde povre fader fostred she ;  
 A fewe sheep spinning on feeld she kepte,  
 She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe 225  
 Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte, (170)  
 The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir livinge,  
 And made hir bed ful harde and no-thing softe ;  
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte  
 With everich obeisaunce and diligence 230  
 That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature,  
 Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yē  
 As he on hunting rood paraventure ;  
 And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye, 235  
 He noght with wantoun loking of folye (180)  
 His yēn caste on hir, but in sad wyse  
 Up-on hir chere he wolde him ofte avyse,

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,  
 And eek hir vertu, passing any wight 240  
 Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.  
 For thogh the peple have no greet insight  
 In vertu, he considered ful right  
 Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde  
 Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde. 245

---

233. E. caste; *rest* sette (set). 235. E. that it; *rest omit* that. 238.  
 E. gan; *rest* wolde. 238, 241. E. chiere. 242. E. hadde; Hn. Cm.  
 hath; Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. haue.

The day of wedding cam, but no wight can (190)  
 Telle what womman that it sholde be ;  
 For which merueille wondred many a man,  
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee,  
 'Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee? 250  
 Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas the whyle !  
 Why wol he thus him-self and us bigyle?'

But natheles this markis hath don make  
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,  
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake, 255  
 And of hir clothing took he the mesure (200)  
 By a mayde, lyk to hir stature,  
 And eek of othere ornamentes alle  
 That un-to swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern of the same day 260  
 Approacheth, that this wedding sholde be ;  
 And al the paleys put was in array,  
 Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree ;  
 Houses of office stuffed with plentee  
 Ther maystow seen of deyntevous vitaille, 265  
 That may be founde, as fer as last Itaille. (210)

This royal markis, richely arrayed,  
 Lordes and ladyes in his companye,  
 The whiche unto the feste were y-prayed,  
 And of his retenue the bachelrye, 270  
 With many a soun of sondry melodye,  
 Un-to the village, of the which I tolde,  
 In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, god woot, ful innocent,  
 That for hir shapen was al this array, 275  
 To fecchen water at a welle is went, (220)  
 And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may.  
 For wel she hadde herd seyde, that thilke day  
 The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,  
 She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte. 280

249. E. Cm. that they; *rest omit* that. 257. Hl. y-lik to hir of stature.  
 269. Cp. Ln. Hl. vnto; Cm. Pt. to; E. Hn. that to. E. weren.

She thoghte, 'I wol with othere maydens stonde,  
 That been my felawes, in our dore, and see  
 The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde  
 To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,  
 The labour which that longeth un-to me; 285  
 And than I may at leyser hir biholde, (230)  
 If she this wey un-to the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,  
 The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;  
 And she sette doun hir water-pot anoon 290  
 Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,  
 And doun up-on hir knees she gan to falle,  
 And with sad contenance kneleth stille  
 Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoughtful markis spak un-to this mayde 295  
 Ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere, (240)  
 'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he sayde,  
 And she with reverence, in humble chere.  
 Answerde, 'lord, he is al redy here.'  
 And in she gooth with-ouen lenger lette, 300  
 And to the markis she hir fader fette.

He by the hond than took this olde man,  
 And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde,  
 'Ianicula, I neither may ne can  
 Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde. 305  
 If that thou vouche-sauf, what-so bityde, (250)  
 Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,  
 As for my wyf, un-to hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,  
 And art my feithful lige man y-bore; 310  
 And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn  
 It lyketh thee, and specially therfore  
 Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,  
 If that thou wolt un-to that purpos drawe,  
 To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?' 315

297. E. Hn. Cm. *insert o after fader.*

302. E. thanne; Hn. than.

This sodeyn cas this man astoned so, (260)  
 That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking  
 He stood; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,  
 But only thus: 'lord,' quod he, 'my willing  
 Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking 320  
 I wol no-thing; ye be my lord so dere;  
 Right as yow lust governeth this matere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,  
 'That in thy chambre I and thou and she  
 Have a collacion, and wostow why? 325  
 For I wol axe if it hir wille be (270)  
 To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;  
 And al this shal be doon in thy presence,  
 I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whyl they were aboute 330  
 Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,  
 The peple cam un-to the hous with-oute,  
 And wondred hem in how honest manere  
 And tentify she kepte hir fader dere.  
 But outerly Grisildis wondre mighte, 335  
 For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte. (280)

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned  
 To seen so greet a gest come in that place;  
 She never was to swiche gestes woned,  
 For which she loked with ful pale face. 340  
 But shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
 Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde  
 To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel understonde  
 It lyketh to your fader and to me 345  
 That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde, (290)  
 As I suppose, ye wol that it so be.  
 But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,  
 'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,  
 Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse? 350

317. E. Cp. Hl. wax; Hn. weex; rest wex. 320. E. ayeins; Ln. a-yeines;  
 see l. 2325 below (Group E). 337. E. Pt. omit that.

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte  
 To al my lust, and that I frely may,  
 As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or smerte,  
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?  
 And eek whan I sey "ye," ne sey nat "nay," 355  
 Neither by word ne frowning contenance; (300)  
 Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.'

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,  
 She seyde, 'lord, undigne and unworthy  
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede; 360  
 But as ye wol your-self, right so wol I.  
 And heer I swere that never willingly  
 In werk ne thocht I nil yow disobeye,  
 For to be deed, though me were looth to deye.'

'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn!' quod he. 365  
 And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere (310)  
 Out at the dore, and after that cam she,  
 And to the peple he seyde in this manere,  
 'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth here.  
 Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye, 370  
 Who-so me loveth; ther is na-more to seye.'

And for that no-thing of hir olde gere  
 She sholde bringe in-to his hous, he bad  
 That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there;  
 Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad 375  
 To handle hir clothes wher-in she was clad. (320)  
 But natheles this mayde bright of hewe  
 Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed  
 Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smale 380  
 A corone on hir heed they han y-dressed,  
 And sette hir ful of nowches grete and smale;  
 Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?  
 Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,  
 Whan she translated was in swich richesse. 385



This markis hath hir spoused with a ring (330)  
 Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette  
 Up-on an hors, snow-whyte and wel ambling,  
 And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,  
 With Ioyful peple that hir ladde and mette, 390  
 Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende  
 In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
 I seye that to this newe markisesse  
 God hath swich favour sent hir of his grace, 395  
 That it ne semed nat by lyknesse (340)  
 That she was born and fed in rudenesse,  
 As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,  
 But norished in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woxen is so dere 400  
 And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore  
 And from hir birthe knewe hir yeer by yere,  
 Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han swore  
 That to Ianicle, of which I spak bifore,  
 She doghter nas, for, as by coniecture, 405  
 Hem thoughte she was another creature. (350)

For thogh that ever vertuuous was she,  
 She was encessed in swich excellence  
 Of thewes gode, y-set in heigh bountee,  
 And so discreet and fair of eloquence, 410  
 So benigne and so digne of reverence,  
 And coude so the peples herte embrace,  
 That ech hir lovede that loked on hir face.

Noght only of Saluces in the toun  
 Publiced was the bountee of hir name, 415  
 But eek bisyde in many a regioun, (360)  
 If oon seyde wel, another seyde the same;  
 So spradde of hir heigh bountee the fame,  
 That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,  
 Gon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde. 420

404. E. That she; *rest omit* she. 405. Cp. Ln. nas; E. Hn. Cm. Hl.  
 were; Pt. ne were. 415. E. Publiced; Pt. Publisshed; Hn. Publissed. E.  
 beautee; *rest* bountee. 418. E. heighe. E. name; *rest* fame.

Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,  
 Wedded with fortunat honestetee,  
 In goddes pees liveth ful esily  
 At hoom, and outward grace y-nogh had he ;  
 And for he saugh that under low degree 425  
 Was ofte vertu hid, the peple him helde (370)  
 A prudent man, and that is seyn ful selde.

Nat only this Grisildis thurgh hir wit  
 Coude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,  
 But eek, whan that the cas requyred it, 430  
 The commune profit coude she redresse.  
 Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevinesse  
 In al that lond, that she ne coude apese,  
 And wysly bringe hem alle in reste and ese.

Though that hir housbonde absent were anoon, 435  
 If gentil men, or othere of hir contree (380)  
 Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem atoon ;  
 So wyse and rype wordes hadde she,  
 And Iugements of so greet equitee,  
 That she from heven sent was, as men wende, 440  
 Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild  
 Was wedded, she a doughter hath y-bore,  
 Al had hir lever have born a knave child.  
 Glad was this markis and the folk therfore ; 445  
 For though a mayde child come al bifore, (390)  
 She may unto a knave child atteyne  
 By lyklihed, sin she nis nat bareyne.

**Explicit secunda pars.      Incipit tercia pars.**

425. E. saugh ; see B. 810. E. heigh ; *the rest* lowe, low. 426. E. *omits*  
 ofte. 429. So Cp. Ln. ; Hl. humblesse ; *rest* humbleness. 439. E.  
 Iuggementz. 444. E. man ; *rest* knaue. 447. E. man ; *the rest* knaue.  
 448. Cm. liklyhed ; E. Hn. liklihed.

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,  
 Whan that this child had souked but a throwe, 450  
 This markis in his herte longeth so  
 To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,  
 That he ne mighte out of his herte throwe  
 This merveillous desyr, his wyf tassaye,  
 Needless, god woot, he thoughte hir for taffraye. 455

He hadde assayed hir y-nogh bifore, (400)  
 And fond hir ever good ; what neded it  
 Hir for to tempte and alwey more and more ?  
 Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,  
 But as for me, I seye that yvel it sit 460  
 Tassaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,  
 And putten her in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wroghte in this manere ;  
 He cam alone a-night, ther as she lay,  
 With sterne face and with ful trouble chere, 465  
 And seyde thus, 'Grisild,' quod he, 'that day (410)  
 That I yow took out of your povre array,  
 And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse,  
 Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.

I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee, 470  
 In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,  
 Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be  
 That I yow took in povre estaat ful lowe  
 For any wele ye moot your-selven knowe.  
 Tak hede of every word that I yow seye, 475  
 Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye. (420)

Ye woot your-self wel, how that ye cam here  
 In-to this hous, it is nat longe ago,  
 And though to me that ye be lief and dere,  
 Un-to my gentils ye be no-thing so ; 480  
 They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and wo  
 For to be subgetz and ben in servage  
 To thee, that born art of a smal village.

---

457. E. foond ; Hn. Cm. fond. 465. Cm. sterne ; E. stierne. 466, 470.  
 Hl. Grisild ; E. Hn. Cm. Grisilde. 477. E. Hn. Cm. cam ; Cp. Pt. come ;  
 Ln. com ; Hl. comen. 482. E. subgetz and to ; rest omit to.

And namely, sith thy doghter was y-bore,  
 This wordes han they spoken doutelees; 485  
 But I desyre, as I have doon bifore, (430)  
 To live my lyf with hem in reste and pees;  
 I may nat in this caas be recchelees.  
 I moot don with thy doghter for the beste,  
 Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste. 490

And yet, god wot, this is ful looth to me;  
 But nathelees with-oute your witing  
 I wol nat doon, but this wol I,' quod he,  
 'That ye to me assente as in this thing.  
 Shewe now your pacience in your werking 495  
 That ye me highte and swore in your village (440)  
 That day that maketh was our mariage.'

Whan she had herd al this, she nocht ameved  
 Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce;  
 For, as it semed, she was nat agreved: 500  
 She seyde, 'lord, al lyth in your plesaunce,  
 My child and I with hertly obeisaunce  
 Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille  
 Your owene thing; werketh after your wille.

Ther may no-thing, god so my soule save, 505  
 Lyken to yow that may displese me; (450)  
 Ne I desyre no-thing for to have,  
 Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;  
 This wil is in myn herte and ay shal be.  
 No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface, 510  
 Ne chaunge my corage to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,  
 But yet he feyned as he were nat so;  
 Al drery was his chere and his loking  
 Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go. 515  
 Sone after this, a furlong wey or two, (460)  
 He prively hath told al his entente  
 Un-to a man, and to his wyf him sente.

499. E. chiere.  
 Ne I ne; *rest omit* ne.  
 thee.

503. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. and; *rest or.*  
 508. E. Hn. thee *vel* yee; Pt. Hl. 3e; Cm. Cp. Ln.

507. E. Hn.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,  
 The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde 520  
 In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can  
 Don execucioun on thinges badde.

The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde ;  
 And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,  
 In-to the chambre he stalked him ful stille. 525

'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it me, (470)  
 Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned ;  
 Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye  
 That lordes hestes mowe nat been y-feyned ;  
 They mowe wel been biwailed or compleyned, 530  
 But men mot nede un-to her lust obeye,  
 And so wol I ; ther is na-more to seye.

This child I am comanded for to take'—  
 And spak na-more, but out the child he hente  
 Despitously, and gan a chere make 535  
 As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente. (480)  
 Grisildis mot al suffren and consente ;  
 And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,  
 And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the diffame of this man, 540  
 Suspect his face, suspect his word also ;  
 Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.  
 Allas ! hir doghter that she lovede so  
 She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.  
 But natheles she neither weep ne syked, 545  
 Consenting hir to that the markis lyked. (490)

But atte laste spoken she bigan,  
 And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,  
 So as he was a worthy gentil man,  
 That she moste kisse hir child er that it deyde ; 550  
 And in her barm this litel child she leyde  
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse  
 And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.

524. his] E. the ; Cm. this. 530. E. Cm. and ; rest or. 547. E.  
 to spoken ; rest omit to. 552, 3. E. kisse, blisse ; rest blisse, kisse ; see 678.

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys,  
 'Far weel, my child; I shal thee never see; 555  
 But, sith I thee have marked with the croys, (500)  
 Of thilke fader blessed mote thou be,  
 That for us deyde up-on a croys of tree.  
 Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,  
 For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.' 560

I trowe that to a norice in this cas  
 It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;  
 Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed 'allas!'  
 But nathelees so sad stedfast was she,  
 That she endured all adversitec, 565  
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde, (510)  
 'Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes heste,  
 But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace,  
 That, but my lord forbad yow, atte leste 570  
 Burieth this litel body in som place  
 That bestes ne no briddes it to-race.'  
 But he no word wol to that purpos seye,  
 But took the child and wente upon his weye.

This sergeant cam un-to his lord ageyn, 575  
 And of Grisildis wordes and hir chere (520)  
 He tolde him point for point, in short and playn,  
 And him presenteth with his doghter dere.  
 Somwhat this lord hath rewthe in his manere;  
 But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille, 580  
 As lordes doon, whan they wol han hir wille;

And bad his sergeant that he prively  
 Sholde this child ful softe winde and wrappe  
 With alle circumstances tendrely,  
 And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe; 585  
 But, up-on peyne his heed of for to swappe, (530)

557. E. Hn. Cm. he; *rest* thou. 564. E. Cm. Pt. sad and; *rest omit* and.  
 E. stide-; Pt. Ln. sted-; *rest* stede-. 569. E. Pt. And; *rest* But. 583.  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. ful; *rest omit*.

That no man sholde knowe of his entente,  
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente ;

But at Boloigne to his suster dere,  
That thilke tyme of Panik was countesse, 590  
He sholde it take, and shewe hir this matere,  
Bisekinge hir to don hir bisinesse  
This child to fostre in alle gentillesse ;  
And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde  
From every wight, for oght that may bityde. 595

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this thing ; (540)  
But to this markis now retourne we ;  
For now goth he ful faste imagining  
If by his wyves chere he mighte see,  
Or by hir word aperceyve that she 600  
Were changed ; but he never hir coude finde  
But ever in oon y-lyke sad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,  
And eek in love as she was wont to be,  
Was she to him in every maner wyse ; 605  
Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she. (550)  
Non accident for noon adversitee  
Was seyn in hir, ne never hir doghter name  
Ne nempned she, in ernest nor in game.

**Explicit tercia pars.      Sequitur pars quarta.**

In this estaat ther passed been foure yeer 610  
Er she with childe was ; but, as god wolde,  
A knave child she bar by this Walter,  
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.  
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,  
Nat only he, but al his contree, merie 615  
Was for this child, and god they thanke and herie. (560)

588. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Hl. he cam (com) ; E. Ln. *omit.*      590. Hl. panik ;  
Cp. Panyke ; *rest* Pavik, Pauyk, Pavie.      594. E. him ; *rest* hire, hir.      612.  
E. man ; *rest* knaue.

Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the brest  
 Departed of his norice, on a day  
 This markis caughte yet another lest  
 To tempte his wyf yet offer, if he may. 620  
 O needles was she tempted in assay!  
 But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,  
 Whan that they finde a pacient creature.

‘Wyf,’ quod this markis, ‘ye han herd er this,  
 My peple sikly berth our mariage, 625  
 And namely, sith my sone y-boren is, (570)  
 Now is it worse than ever in al our age.  
 The murmur sleeth myn herte and my corage;  
 For to myne eres comth the voys so smerte,  
 That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte. 630

Now sey they thus, “whan Walter is agoon,  
 Then shal the blood of Ianicle succede  
 And been our lord, for other have we noon;”  
 Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of drede.  
 Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken hede; 635  
 For certainly I drede swich sentence, (580)  
 Though they nat pleyn speke in myn audience.

I wolde live in pees, if that I mighte;  
 Wherfor I am disposed outerly,  
 As I his suster servede by nighte, 640  
 Right so thenke I to serve him prively;  
 This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly  
 Out of your-self for no wo sholde outraye;  
 Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye.’

‘I have,’ quod she, ‘seyd thus, and ever shal, 645  
 I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn, (590)  
 But as yow list; noght greveth me at al,  
 Thogh that my doghter and my sone be slayn,  
 At your comandement, this is to sayn.  
 I have noght had no part of children tweyne 650  
 But first siknesse, and after wo and peyne.

626. Hl. y-boren; E. Hn. Cm. yborn.  
 serued. 643. E. outreye.

640. Cm. Cp. Hl. seruede; *rest*



Ye been our lord, doth with your owene thing  
 Right as yow list ; axeth no reed at me.  
 For, as I lefte at hoom al my clothing,  
 Whan I first cam to yow, right so,' quod she, 655  
 'Left I my wil and al my libertee, (600)  
 And took your clothing ; wherfor I yow preye,  
 Doth your plesaunce, I wol your lust obeye.

And certes, if I hadde prescience  
 Your wil to knowe er ye your lust me tolde, 660  
 I wolde it doon with-outen negligence ;  
 But now I woot your lust and what ye wolde,  
 Al your plesaunce ferme and stable I holde ;  
 For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese,  
 Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to plesse. 665

Deth may noght make no comparisoun (610)  
 Un-to your love : ' and, whan this markis sey  
 The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun  
 His yën two, and wondreth that she may  
 In pacience suffre al this array. 670  
 And forth he gooth with drery contenaunce,  
 But to his herte it was ful greet plesaunce.

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse  
 That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,  
 Or worse, if men worse can devyse, 675  
 Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of beautee. (620)  
 And ever in oon so pacient was she,  
 That she no chere made of hevynesse,  
 But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse ;

Save this ; she preyed him that, if he mighte, 680  
 Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,  
 His tendre limes, delicat to sighte,  
 Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.  
 But she non answer of him mighte have.  
 He wente his wey, as him no-thing ne roghte ; 685  
 But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte. (620)

This markis wondreth ever lenger the more  
 Up-on hir pacience, and if that he  
 Ne hadde soothly knowen ther-bifore,  
 That parfitly hir children lovede she, 690  
 He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,  
 And of malice or for cruel corage,  
 That she had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next him-self, certayn,  
 She loved hir children best in every wyse. 695  
 But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn, (640)  
 If these assayes mighte nat suffyse?  
 What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse  
 To preve hir wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse,  
 And he continuing ever in sturdinesse? 700

But ther ben folk of swich condicioun,  
 That, whan they have a certein purpos take,  
 They can nat stinte of hir entencioun,  
 But, right as they were bounden to a stake,  
 They wol nat of that firste purpos slake. 705  
 Right so this markis fulliche hath purposed (650)  
 To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance  
 That she to him was changed of corage ;  
 But never coude he finde variance ; 710  
 She was ay oon in herte and in visage ;  
 And ay the forther 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 semed thus, that of hem two 715  
 Ther nas but o wil ; for, as Walter leste, (660)  
 The same lust was hir plesance also,  
 And, god be thanked, al fil for the beste.  
 She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste  
 A wyf, as of hir-self, no-thing ne sholde 720  
 Wille in effect, but as hir housbond wolde.

687. E. wondred ; *rest* wondreth. 692. E. crueel. 699. E. or ; *rest* and.  
 E. stede-. 704. E. Hn. Cm. that ; *the rest* a.

The sclandre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,  
 That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,  
 For he a povre womman wedded hadde,  
 Hath mordred bothe his children prively. 725  
 Swich murmur was among hem comunly. (670)  
 No wonder is, for to the peples ere  
 Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore  
 Had loved him wel, the sclandre of his diffame 730  
 Made hem that they him hatede therfore ;  
 To been a mordrer is an hateful name.  
 But natheles, for ernest ne for game  
 He of his cruel purpos nolde stente ;  
 To tempte his wyf was set al his entente. 735

Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age, (680)  
 He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse  
 Enformed of his wil, sente his message,  
 Comaunding hem swiche bulles to devyse  
 As to his cruel purpos may suffyse, 740  
 How that the pope, as for his peples reste,  
 Bad him to wedde another, if him leste.

I seye, he bad they sholde countrefete  
 The popes bulles, making mencion  
 That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete, 745  
 As by the popes dispensacioun, (690)  
 To stinte rancour and dissencioun  
 Bitwixe his peple and him ; thus seyde the bulle,  
 The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is, 750  
 Wenden ful wel that it had been right so ;  
 But whan thise tydinges cam to Grisildis,  
 I deme that hir herte was ful wo.  
 But she, y-lyke sad for evermo,

731. Cp. Hl. hatede; rest hated. 734, 740. E. crueel. 749. E.  
 publiced; Cp. publissed; Hn. publissed. 751. Cm. been; Hn. ben;  
 rest be.

Disposed was, this humble creature, 755  
Thadversitee of fortune al tendure. (700)

Abyding ever his lust and his plesaunce,  
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,  
As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce;  
But shortly if this storie I tellen shal, 760  
This markis writen hath in special  
A lettre in which he sheweth his entente,  
And secrely he to Boloigne it sente.

To the erl of Panik, which that hadde tho  
Wedded his suster, preyde he specially 765  
To bringen hoom agayn his children two (710)  
In honorable estaat al openly.  
But o thing he him preyede outerly,  
That he to no wight, though men wolde enquere,  
Sholde nat telle, whos children that they were, 770

But seye, the mayden sholde y-wedded be  
Un-to the markis of Saluce anon.  
And as this erl was preyed, so dide he;  
For at day set he on his wey is goon  
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon, 775  
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde; (720)  
Hir yonge brother ryding hir bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage  
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere;  
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was of age, 780  
Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere.  
And thus in greet noblesse and with glad chere,  
Toward Saluces shaping hir Iourney,  
Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

**Explicit quarta pars.            Sequitur quinta pars.**

---

764. Hl. panyk; Cp. Panyke; *rest* Pavyk, Pauyke, Pavie. 770. E. Hn.  
Cp. Ln. that they; *the rest omit* that. 773. Cp. Cm. preyed; E. preyd;  
Hn. Hl. prayd.

Among al this, after his wikke usage, 785  
 This markis, yet his wyf to tempte more (730)  
 To the uttereste preve of hir corage,  
 Fully to han experience and lore  
 If that she were as stedfast as bifore,  
 He on a day in open audience 790  
 Ful boistously hath seyde hir this sentence :

‘Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough plesaunce  
 To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse,  
 As for your trouthe and for your obeisaunce,  
 Nought for your linage ne for your richesse ; 795  
 But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse (740)  
 That in gret lordshipe, if I wel avyse,  
 Ther is gret servitude in sondry wyse.

I may nat don as every plowman may ;  
 My peple me constreyneth for to take 800  
 Another wyf, and cryen day by day ;  
 And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,  
 Consenteth it, that dar I undertake ;  
 And troweliche thus muche I wol yow seye,  
 My newe wyf is coming by the weye. 805

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place, (750)  
 And thilke dower that ye broghten me  
 Tak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace ;  
 Retourneth to your fadres hous,’ quod he ;  
 ‘No man may alwey han prosperitee ; 810  
 With evene herte I rede yow tendre  
 The strook of fortune or of aventure.’

And she answerde agayn in pacience,  
 ‘My lord,’ quod she, ‘I woot, and wiste alway  
 How that bitwixen your magnificence 815  
 And my poverté no wight can ne may (760)  
 Maken comparison ; it is no nay.  
 I ne heeld me never digne in no manere  
 To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.

787. Cm. vtyreste ; E. outtreste.

789. E. Cp. stide- ; Pt. Ln. sted- ;

rest stede-. 812. E. This ; the rest The.

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made— 820  
 The heighe god take I for my witesse,  
 And also wisly he my soule glade—  
 I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,  
 But humble servant to your worthinesse,  
 And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure, 825  
 Aboven every worldly creature. (770)

That ye so longe of your benigntee  
 Han holden me in honour and nobleye,  
 Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be,  
 That thonke I god and yow, to whom I preye 830  
 Foryelde it yow; there is na-more to seye.  
 Un-to my fader gladly wol I wende,  
 And with him dwelle un-to my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,  
 Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede 835  
 A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al. (780)  
 For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,  
 And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,  
 God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take  
 Another man to housbonde or to make. 840

And of your newe wyf, god of his grace  
 So graunte yow wele and prosperitee:  
 For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,  
 In which that I was blisful wont to be,  
 For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod she, 845  
 'That whylom weren al myn hertes reste, (790)  
 That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire  
 As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde  
 It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing faire, 850  
 The which to me were hard now for to finde.  
 O gode god! how gentil and how kinde  
 Ye semed by your speche and your visage  
 The day that makid was our mariage!

But sooth is seyde, algate I finde it trewe— 855  
 For in effect it preved is on me— (800)

Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.  
 But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,  
 To dyen in the cas, it shal nat be  
 That ever in word or werk I shal repente 860  
 That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.

My lord, ye woot that, in my fadres place,  
 Ye dede me strepe out of my povre wede,  
 And richely me cladden, of your grace.  
 To yow broghte I noght elles, out of drede, 865  
 But feyth and nakednesse and maydenhede. (810)  
 And here agayn my clothing I restore,  
 And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore.

The remenant of your Iewels redy be  
 In-with your chambre, dar I sauflly sayn; 870  
 Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod she,  
 'I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.  
 Al your plesaunce wol I folwen fayn;  
 But yet I hope it be nat your entente  
 That I smoklees out of your paleys wente. 875

Ye coude nat doon so dishoneste a thing, (820)  
 That thilke wombe in which your children leye  
 Sholde, biforn the peple, in my walking,  
 Be seyn al bare; wherfor I yow preye,  
 Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye. 880  
 Remembre yow, myn owene lord so dere,  
 I was your wyf, thogh I unworthy were.

Wherfor, in guerdon of my maydenhede,  
 Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,  
 As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my mede, 885  
 But swich a smok as I was wont to were, (830)  
 That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here  
 That was your wyf; and heer take I my leve  
 Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve.'

867, 868. my] Cp. Pt. Ln. your. 869. Hn. Hl. Ln. Iewels; E. Iueles.  
 883. E. Hn. gerdon; rest guerdon, guerdozun.

'The smok,' quod he, 'that thou hast on thy bak,      890  
 Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee.'  
 But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,  
 But wente his wey for rewthe and for pitee.  
 Biforn the folk hir-selven strepeth she,  
 And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,      895  
 Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.      (840)

The folk hir folwe wepinge in hir weye,  
 And fortune ay they cursen as they goon;  
 But she fro weping kepte hir yēn dreye,  
 Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.      900  
 Hir fader, that this tyding herde anoon,  
 Curseth the day and tyme that nature  
 Shoop him to been a lyves creature.

For out of doute this olde povre man  
 Was ever in suspect of hir mariage;      905  
 For ever he demed, sith that it bigan,      (850)  
 That whan the lord fulfild had his corage,  
 Him wolde thinke it were a disparage  
 To his estaat so lowe for talighte,  
 And voyden hir as sone as ever he mighte.      910

Agayns his doghter hastilich goth he,  
 For he by noyse of folk knew hir cominge,  
 And with hir olde cote, as it mighte be,  
 He covered hir, ful sorwefully wepinge;  
 But on hir body mighte he it nat bringe.      915  
 For rude was the cloth, and more of age      (860)  
 By dayes fele than at hir mariage.

Thus with hir fader, for a certeyn space,  
 Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,  
 That neither by hir wordes ne hir face      920  
 Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,  
 Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence;



Ne of hir heigh estaat no remembraunce  
 Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in hir grete estaat 925  
 Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee; (870)  
 No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,  
 No pompe, no semblant of royaltee,  
 But ful of pacient benignitee,  
 Discreet and prydeles, ay honourable, 930  
 And to hir housbonde ever meke and stable.

Men speke of Iob and most for his humblesse,  
 As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel endyte,  
 Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,  
 Thogh clerkes preyse wommen but a lyte, 935  
 Ther can no man in humblesse him acyuite (880)  
 As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe  
 As wommen been, but it be falle of-newe.

[*Pars Sexta.*]

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Panik come,  
 Of which the fame up-sprang to more and lesse, 940  
 And in the peples eres alle and some  
 Was couth eek, that a newe markisesse  
 He with him broghte, in swich pompe and richesse,  
 That never was ther seyn with mannes yë  
 So noble array in al West Lumbardye. 945

The markis, which that shoop and knew al this, (890)  
 Er that this erl was come, sente his message  
 For thilke sely povre Grisildis;  
 And she with humble herte and glad visage,  
 Nat with no swollen thoght in hir corage, 950  
 Cam at his heste, and on hir knees hir sette,  
 And reverently and wysly she him grette.

933. E. Hn. conne; *rest* can. 937. Hn. kan; Cp. Ln. Hl. can; *rest omit*  
 (2nd time). 939. Hl. panik; Cp. Panyke; Pt. Pavie; *rest* Pavyk, Pauyk.  
 944. Hl. ye; *rest* eye.

'Grisild,' quod he, 'my wille is outerly,  
 This mayden, that shal wedded been to me,  
 Receyved be to-morwe as royally 955  
 As it possible is in myn hous to be. (900)  
 And eek that every wight in his degree  
 Have his estaat in sitting and servyse  
 And heigh plesaunce, as I can best devyse.

I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn 960  
 The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce  
 After my lust, and therfor wolde I fayn  
 That thyn were al swich maner governaunce ;  
 Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce ;  
 Though thyn array be badde and yvel biseye, 965  
 Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.' (910)

'Nat only, lord, that I am glad,' quod she,  
 'To doon your lust, but I desyre also  
 Yow for to serve and plesse in my degree  
 With-ouen feynting, and shal evermo. 970  
 Ne never, for no wele ne no wo,  
 Ne shal the gost with-in myn herte stente  
 To love yow best with al my trewe entente.'

And with that word she gan the hous to dighte,  
 And tables for to sette and beddes make ; 975  
 And peyned hir to doon al that she mighte, (920)  
 Preying the chambereres, for goddes sake,  
 To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake ;  
 And she, the moste servisable of alle,  
 Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle. 980

Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,  
 That with him broghte thise noble children tweye,  
 For which the peple ran to seen the sighte  
 Of hir array, so richely biseye ;  
 And than at erst amonges hem they seye, 985  
 That Walter was no fool, thogh that him leste (930)  
 To change his wyf, for it was for the beste.

---

953. Cp. Pt. wille ; *rest* wil. 977. Cp. Ill. Cm. chambereres ; E. Hn. Pt. Ln. chambereres. 981. Ill. Pt. Ln. vnderu ; E. Hn. Cp. vndren ; Cm. vndryn.

For she is fairer, as they demen alle,  
 Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age,  
 And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle, 990  
 And more plesant, for hir heigh linage;  
 Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,  
 That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesaunce,  
 Commending now the markis gouernaunce.—

*Auctor.* 'O stormy peple! unsad and ever untrewē! 995  
 Ay undiscreef and chaunging as a vane, (940)  
 Delyting ever in rumbel that is newe,  
 For lyk the mone ay wexe ye and wane;  
 Ay ful of clapping, dere y-nogh a Iane;  
 Your doom is fals, your constance yvel preveth, 1000  
 A ful greet fool is he that on yow levet!'

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,  
 Whan that the peple gazed up and doun,  
 For they were glad, right for the noveltee,  
 To han a newe lady of hir toun. 1005  
 Na-more of this make I now mencion;  
 (950)  
 But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,  
 And telle hir constance and hir businesse.—

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing  
 That to the feste was apertinent; 1010  
 Right noght was she abayst of hir clothing,  
 Though it were rude and somdel eek to-rent.  
 But with glad chere to the yate is went,  
 With other folk, to grete the markisesse,  
 And after that doth forth hir businesse. 1015

With so glad chere his gestes she receyveth, (960)  
 And conningly, everich in his degree,  
 That no defaute no man aperceyveth;  
 But ay they wondren what she mighte be  
 That in so povre array was for to see, 1020  
 And coude swich honour and reverence;  
 And worthily they preisen hir prudence.

997. E. Cm. rumbul; Hn. rumbel; Hl. rombel. 1000. Hl. yuel; Cm. euel; E. Hn. yuele. 1013. E. Hn. Hl. is she; *rest omit* she. E. Hn. Ln. chiere; Hl. chier. 1017. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. And so; Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit* so.

In al this mene whyle she ne stente  
 This mayde and eek hir brother to commende  
 With al hir herte, in ful benigne entente, 1025  
 So wel, that no man coude hir prys amende. (970)  
 But atte laste, whan that thise lordes wende  
 To sitten doun to mete, he gan to calle  
 Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

‘Grisilde,’ quod he, as it were in his pley, 1030  
 ‘How lyketh thee my wyf and hir beautee?’  
 ‘Right wel,’ quod she, ‘my lord; for, in good fey,  
 A fairer say I never noon than she.  
 I prey to god yeve hir prosperitee;  
 And so hope I that he wol to yow sende 1035  
 Plesance y-nogh un-to your lyves ende. (980)

O thing biseke I yow and warne also,  
 That ye ne prikke with no tormentinge  
 This tendre mayden, as ye han don mo;  
 For she is fostred in hir norishinge 1040  
 More tendrely, and, to my supposinge,  
 She coude nat adversitee endure  
 As coude a povre fostred creature.’

And whan this Walter say hir pacience,  
 Hir glade chere and no malice at al, 1045  
 And he so ofte had doon to hir offence, (990)  
 And she ay sad and constant as a wal,  
 Continuing ever hir innocence overal,  
 This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse  
 To rewen up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse. 1050

‘This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn,’ quod he,  
 ‘Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayed;  
 I have thy feith and thy benignitee,  
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,  
 In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed. 1055  
 Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse,’— (1000)  
 And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse.

1033, 1044. E. saugh; see l. 1114. 1040. E. Hn. norissyng. 1045.  
 E. Ln. chiere. 1056. E. goode; rest dere.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;  
 She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde;  
 She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep, 1060  
 Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.  
 'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by god that for us deyde,  
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,  
 Ne never hadde, as god my soule save!

This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed 1065  
 To be my wyf; that other feithfully (1010)  
 Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;  
 Thou bare him in thy body trewely.  
 At Boloigne have I kept hem prively;  
 Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye 1070  
 That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

And folk that otherweyes han seyde of me,  
 I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede  
 For no malice ne for no crueltee,  
 But for tassaye in thee thy wommanhede, 1075  
 And nat to sleen my children, god forbede! (1020)  
 But for to kepe hem prively and stille,  
 Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth  
 For pitous Ioye, and after hir swowninge 1080  
 She bothe hir yonge children un-to hir calleth,  
 And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,  
 Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge  
 Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres  
 She batheth bothe hir visage and hir heres. 1085

O, which a pitous thing it was to see (1030)  
 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here!  
 'Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow,' quod she,  
 'That ye han saved me my children dere!  
 Now rekke I never to ben deed right here; 1090  
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,  
 No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

1063. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. ne; Pt. and; E. Hn. *omit* ne. 1067. Cp. Ln. Hl.  
 purposed; E. Hn. Cm. supposed (*wrongly*); Pt. disposed. 1070. E. Taak.

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne,  
 Your woful mooder wende stedfastly  
 That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne 1095  
 Hadde eten yow ; but god, of his mercy, (1040)  
 And your benigne fader tendrely  
 Hath doon yow kept ;' and in that same stounde  
 Al so deyntyly she swapte adoun to grounde.

And in her swough so sadly holdeth she 1100  
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem tembrace,  
 That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee  
 The children from hir arm they gonne arace.  
 O many a teer on many a pitous face  
 Doun ran of hem that stoden hir bisyde ; 1105  
 Unnethe abouten hir mighte they abyde. (1050)

Walter hir gladeth, and hir sorwe slaketh ;  
 She ryseth up, abaysed, from hir traunce,  
 And every wight hir Ioye and feste maketh,  
 Til she hath caught agayn hir contenaunce. 1110  
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce,  
 That it was deyntee for to seen the chere  
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met y-fere.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,  
 Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon, 1115  
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array, (1060)  
 And in a cloth of gold that bryghte shoon,  
 With a coroune of many a riche stoon  
 Up-on hir heed, they in-to halle hir broghte,  
 And ther she was honoured as hir oghte. 1120

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,  
 For every man and womman dooth his might  
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende  
 Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light.  
 For more solempne in every mannes sight 1125  
 This feste was, and gretter of costage, (1070)  
 Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee  
 Liven these two in concord and in reste,  
 And richely his doghter married he 1130  
 Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste  
 Of al Itaille; and than in pees and reste  
 His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,  
 Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage 1135  
 In reste and pees, after his fader day; (1080)  
 And fortunat was eek in mariage,  
 Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.  
 This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,  
 As it hath been in olde tymes yore, 1140  
 And herkneth what this auctour seith therfore.

This storie is seyde, nat for that wyves sholde  
 Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,  
 For it were importable, though they wolde;  
 But for that every wight, in his degree, 1145  
 Sholde be constant in adversitee (1090)  
 As was Grisilde; therfor Petrark wryteth  
 This storie, which with heigh style he endyteth.

For, sith a womman was so pacient  
 Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte 1150  
 Receyven al in gree that god us sent;  
 For greet skile is, he preve that he wroghte.  
 But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,  
 As seith seint Iame, if ye his pistel rede;  
 He preveth folk al day, it is no drede, 1155

And suffreth us, as for our excercyse, (1100)  
 With sharpe scourges of adversitee  
 Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse;  
 Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,  
 Er we were born, knew al our freletee; 1160

1140. in] E. of.      1147. Cm. this Petrak; *rest omit* this. Hl. Petrark; E.  
 Hn. Cm. Petrak.      1160. E. *omits* al; *the rest have it*.

And for our beste is al his governaunce ;  
 Lat us than live in vertuous suffraunce.\*

But o word, lordinges, herkneth er I go :—  
 It were ful hard to finde now a dayes  
 In al a toun Grisildes three or two ;  
 For, if that they were put to swiche assayes,  
 The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes  
 With bras, that thogh the coyne be fair at yë,  
 It wolde rather breste a-two than plye.

1165  
 (1110)

For which heer, for the wyves love of Bathe,  
 Whos lyf and al hir secte god mayntene  
 In heigh maistrye, and elles were it scathe,  
 I wol with lusty herte fresshe and grene  
 Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene,  
 And lat us stinte of earnestful matere :—  
 Herkneth my song, that seith in this manere.

1170  
 1175  
 (1120)

#### Lenvoy de Chaucer.

Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,  
 And bothe atones buried in Itaille ;  
 For which I crye in open audience,

---

\* *It seems to have been Chaucer's intention, in the first instance, to end this Tale here. Hence, we find, in MSS. E. Hn. Cm. Dd., the following genuine, but rejected stanza, suitable for insertion at this point :—*

#### Bihold the merye wordes of the Hoste.

This worthy Clerk, whan ended was his tale,  
 Our hoste seyde, and swoor by goddes bones,  
 'Me were lever than a barel ale  
 My wyf at hoom had herd this legende ones ;  
 This is a gentil tale for the nones,  
 As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille ;  
 But thing that wol nat be, lat it be stille.'

5

Here endeth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

---

HEADING. E. Bihoold ; murye ; Hoost. 2. E. Oure hoost. 3. E. leuere. Dd. barel of ale. 5. E. Hn. Dd. is ; Cm. was. 6. E. Hn. wiste ; Dd. wyst ; Cm. woste. N.B. *With* l. 3, compare B. 3083.



No wedded man so hardy be tassaille 1180  
 His wyves pacience, in hope to finde  
 Grisildes, for in certein he shall faille!

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,  
 Lat noon humilitee your tonge naille,  
 Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence 1185  
 To wryte of yow a storie of swich mervaille (1130)  
 As of Grisildis pacient and kinde;  
 Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hir entraille!

Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,  
 But evere answereth at the countretaille; 1190  
 Beth nat bidaffed for your innocence,  
 But sharply tak on yow the governaille.  
 Emprinteth wel this lesson in your minde  
 For commune profit, sith it may availle.

Ye archewyves, stondesth at defence, 1195  
 Sin ye be stronge as is a greet camaille; (1140)  
 Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offence.  
 And scendre wyves, feble as in bataille,  
 Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Inde;  
 Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille. 1200

Ne dred hem nat, do hem no reverence;  
 For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,  
 The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence  
 Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille;  
 In Ialouslye I rede eek thou him binde, 1205  
 And thou shalt make him couche as dooth a quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence (1151)  
 Shew thou thy visage and thyn apparaille;  
 If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence,  
 To gete thee freendes ay do thy travaille; 1210  
 Be ay of chere as light as leef on linde,  
 And lat him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waille!

**Here endeth the Clerk of Oxonford his Tale.**

## THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 9089-9120).

### The Prologe of the Marchantes Tale.

‘**W**EPING and wayling, care, and other sorwe  
I know y-nogh, on even and a-morwe,’  
Quod the Marchaunt, ‘and so don othere mo 1215  
That wedded been, I trowe that it be so.  
For, wel I woot, it fareth so with me.  
I have a wyf, the worste that may be ;  
For thogh the feend to hir y-coupled were,  
She wolde him overmacche, I dar wel swere. 1220  
What sholde I yow reherce in special  
Hir hye malice? she is a shrewe at al. (10)  
Ther is a long and large difference  
Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience  
And of my wyf the passing crueltee. 1225  
Were I unbounden, al-so moot I thee!  
I wolde never eft comen in the snare.  
We wedded men live in sorwe and care ;  
Assaye who-so wol, and he shal finde  
I seye sooth, by seint Thomas of Inde, 1230  
As for the more part, I sey nat alle.  
God shilde that it sholde so bifalle ! (20)  
A! good sir hoost! I have y-wedded be  
Thise monthes two, and more nat, pardee ;  
And yet, I trowe, he that all his lyve 1235  
Wyflees hath been, thogh that men wolde him ryve  
Un-to the herte, ne coude in no manere  
Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now here  
Coude tellen of my wyves cursednesse!’  
‘Now,’ quod our hoost, ‘Marchaunt, so god yow blesse, 1240  
Sin ye so muchel knowen of that art,  
Ful hertely I pray yow telle us part.’ (30)  
‘Gladly,’ quod he, ‘but of myn owene sore,  
For sorry herte, I telle may na-more.’

## THE MARCHANTES TALE.

Here biginneth the Marchantes Tale.

**W**HYLOM ther was dwelling in Lumbardye 1245  
 A worthy knight, that born was of Pavye,  
 In which he lived in gret prosperitee;  
 And sixty yeer a wyfles man was he,  
 And folwed ay his bodily delyt  
 On wommen, ther-as was his appetyt, 1250  
 As doon thise foles that ben seculeer.  
 And whan that he was passed sixty yeer,  
 Were it for holinesse or for dotage,  
 I can nat seye, but swich a gret corage (10)  
 Hadde this knight to been a wedded man, 1255  
 That day and night he dooth al that he can  
 Tespyen where he mighte wedded be;  
 Preyinge our lord to granten him, that he  
 Mighte ones knowe of thilke blisful lyf  
 That is bitwixe an housbond and his wyf; 1260  
 And for to live under that holy bond  
 With which that first god man and womman bond.  
 ‘Non other lyf,’ seyde he, ‘is worth a bene;  
 For wedlok is so esy and so clene, (20)  
 That in this world it is a paradys.’ 1265  
 Thus seyde this olde knight, that was so wys.  
 And certainly, as sooth as god is king,  
 To take a wyf, it is a glorious thing,  
 And namely whan a man is old and hoor;  
 Thanne is a wyf the fruit of his tresor. 1270  
 Than sholde he take a yong wyf and a feir,

On which he mighte engendren him an heir,  
 And lede his lyf in Ioye and in solas,  
 Wher-as thise bacheleres singe 'allas,' (30)  
 Whan that they finden any adversitee 1275  
 In love, which nis but childish vanitee.  
 And trewely it sit wel to be so,  
 That bacheleres have often peyne and wo ;  
 On brotel ground they builde, and brotelnesse  
 They finde, whan they wene sikernesse. 1280  
 They live but as a brid or as a beste,  
 In libertee, and under non areste,  
 Ther-as a wedded man in his estaat  
 Liveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat, (40)  
 Under the yok of mariage y-bounde ; 1285  
 Wel may his herte in Ioye and blisse habounde.  
 For who can be so buxom as a wyf?  
 Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf  
 To kepe him, syk and hool, as is his make?  
 For wele or wo, she wol him nat forsake. 1290  
 She nis nat very him to love and serve,  
 Though that he lye bedrede til he sterve.  
 And yet somme clerkes seyn, it nis nat so,  
 Of whiche he, Theofraste, is oon of tho. (50)  
 What force though Theofraste liste lye? 1295  
 'Ne take no wyf,' quod he, 'for housbondrye,  
 As for to spare in houshold thy dispence ;  
 A trewe servant dooth more diligence,  
 Thy good to kepe, than thyn owene wyf.  
 For she wol clayme half part al hir lyf ; 1300  
 And if that thou be syk, so god me save,  
 Thy verry frendes or a trewe knave  
 Wol kepe thee bet than she that waiteth ay  
 After thy good, and hath don many a day. (60)  
 And if thou take a wyf un-to thyn hold, [T. om.  
 Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold.' [T. om.

1274, 1278. E. bacheleris. 1281, 2. E. Pt. beest, arreest ; Cm. Ln. beste, areste. 1285. E. Hn. this ; rest the. 1293. E. Cp. nis ; rest is. 1301. E. Hn. Cm. om. that. 1305, 6. Not in Cp. Ln. ; in a spurious form in Hn. Pt. III.

This sentence, and an hundred thinges worse,  
 Wryteth this man, ther god his bones corse !  
 But take no kepe of al swich vanitee ;  
 Deffye Theofraste and herke me. 1310

A wyf is goddes yifte verraily ;  
 Alle other maner yiftes hardily,  
 As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,  
 Or moebles, alle ben yiftes of fortune, (70)  
 That passen as a shadwe upon a wal. 1315  
 But dredelees, if pleyntly speke I shal,  
 A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure,  
 Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure.

Mariage is a ful gret sacrement ;  
 He which that hath no wyf, I holde him shent ; 1320  
 He liveth helples and al desolat,  
 I speke of folk in seculer estaat.

And herke why, I sey nat this for noght,  
 That womman is for mannes help y-wrought. (80)  
 The hye god, whan he hadde Adam maked, 1325

And saugh him al allone, bely-naked,  
 God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,  
 'Lat us now make an help un-to this man  
 Lyk to him-self ;' and thanne he made him Eve.  
 Heer may ye se, and heer-by may ye preve, 1330  
 That wyf is mannes help and his confort,  
 His paradys terrestre and his disport.

So buxom and so vertuous is she,  
 They moste nedes live in unitee. (90)  
 O flesh they been, and o flesh, as I gesse, 1335  
 Hath but on herte, in wele and in distresse.

A wyf ! a ! Seinte Marie, *benedicite* !  
 How mighte a man han any adversitee  
 That hath a wyf ? certes, I can nat seye.  
 The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye 1340  
 Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thinke.  
 If he be povre, she helpeth him to swinke ;

---

1310. Cp. Hl. herkne ; Pt. Ln. herkeneth. 1316. Cm. dredles ; Hn. Hl.  
 dreed nat ; Cp. Ln. drede nought ; Pt. drede it noujt. 1323. Cp. herkne ;  
 Pt. Ln. Hl. herken. 1340. Hl. ioye (*for* blisse).

She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel ;  
 Al that hir housbonde lust, hir lyketh weel ; (100)  
 She seith not ones ' nay,' whan he seith ' ye.' 1345  
 ' Do this,' seith he ; ' al redy, sir,' seith she.

O blisful ordre of wedlok precious,  
 Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,  
 And so commended and appreved eek,  
 That every man that halt him worth a leek, 1350  
 Up-on his bare knees oghte al his lyf  
 Thanken his god that him hath sent a wyf ;  
 Or elles preye to god him for to sende  
 A wyf, to laste un-to his lyves ende. (110)

For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse ; 1355  
 He may nat be deceyved, as I gesse,  
 So that he werke after his wyves reed ;  
 Than may he boldly beren up his heed,  
 They been so trewe and ther-with-al so wyse ;  
 For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse, 1360  
 Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede.

Lo, how that Iacob, as thise clerkes rede,  
 By good conseil of his moder Rebekke,  
 Bond the kides skin aboute his nekke ; (120)  
 Thurgh which his fadres benisoun he wan. 1365

Lo, Iudith, as the storie eek telle can,  
 By wys conseil she goddes peple kepte,  
 And slow him, Olofernus, whyl he slepte.

Lo Abigayl, by good conseil how she  
 Saved hir housbond Nabal, whan that he 1370  
 Sholde han be slayn ; and loke, Ester also  
 By good conseil delivered out of wo  
 The peple of god, and made him, Mardochee,  
 Of Assuere enhanced for to be. (130)

Ther nis no-thing in gree superlatyf, 1375  
 As seith Senek, above an humble wyf.

Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Caton bit ;  
 She shal comande, and thou shalt suffren it ;

1348. E. Hn. murye. 1350. Hl. holt ; Ln. holdeth. 1351. E. oughte ;  
 Hn. Cm. oghte. 1357. E. reede ; Hn. Cm. Cp. reed. *The scribe of E.*  
*misses 1358-61. by confusing this reed with rede (1361).* 1358-61. *From*  
 Hn. ; so Cm. ; so the rest (*nearly*). 1358. Hn. kепен ; rest beren, bere.

And yet she wol obeye of curteisye.  
 A wyf is keper of thyn housbondrye ; 1380  
 Wel may the syke man biwaille and wepe,  
 Ther-as ther nis no wyf the hous to kepe.  
 I warne thee, if wysly thou wolt wirche,  
 Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirche. (140)  
 If thou lovest thy-self, thou lovest thy wyf ; 1385  
 No man hateth his flesh, but in his lyf  
 He fostreth it, and therefore bidde I thee,  
 Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt never thee.  
 Housbond and wyf, what so men Iape or pleye,  
 Of worldly folk holden the siker weye ; 1390  
 They been so knit, ther may noon harm bityde ;  
 And namely, up-on the wyves syde.  
 For which this Ianuarie, of whom I tolde,  
 Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde, (150)  
 The lusty lyf, the vertuous quiete, 1395  
 That is in mariage hony-swete ;  
 And for his freendes on a day he sente,  
 To tellen hem theffect of his entente.  
 With face sad, his tale he hath hem told ;  
 He seyde, ' freendes, I am hoor and old, 1400  
 And almost, god wot, on my pittes brinke ;  
 Up-on my soule somewhat moste I thinke.  
 I have my body folily despended ;  
 Blessed be god, that it shal been amended ! (160)  
 For I wol be, certeyn, a wedded man, 1405  
 And that anon in al the haste I can,  
 Un-to som mayde fair and tendre of age.  
 I prey yow, shapeth for my mariage  
 Al sodeynly, for I wol nat abyde ;  
 And I wol fonde tespyen, on my syde, 1410  
 To whom I may be wedded hastily.  
 But for-as-muche as ye ben mo than I,  
 Ye shullen rather swich a thing espyen  
 Than I, and wher me best were to allyen. (170)  
 But o thing warne I yow, my freendes dere, 1415

1384. E. Hn. loued ; Cm. louede ; Cp. Pt. Ln. loueth ; Ill. doth. 1402.  
 E. Cm. the ; rest my. 1410. Cp. Ln. aspye.

I wol non old wyf han in no manere.  
 She shal nat passe twenty yeer, certayn ;  
 Old fish and yong flesh wolde I have ful fayn.  
 Bet is,' quod he, 'a pyk than a pikerel ;  
 And bet than old boef is the tendre veel. 1420  
 I wol no womman thritty yeer of age,  
 It is but bene-straw and greet forage.  
 And eek thise olde widwes, god it woot,  
 They conne so muchel craft on Wades boot, (180)  
 So muchel broken harm, whan that hem leste, 1425  
 That with hem sholde I never live in reste.  
 For sondry scoles maken sotil clerkis ;  
 Womman of manye scoles half a clerk is.  
 But certeynly, a yong thing may men gye,  
 Right as men may warm wex with handes plye. 1430  
 Wherefore I sey yow pleynly, in a clause,  
 I wol non old wyf han right for this cause.  
 For if so were, I hadde swich mischaunce,  
 That I in hir ne coude han no plesaunce, (190)  
 Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye, 1435  
 And go streight to the devel, whan I dye.  
 Ne children sholde I none up-on hir geten ;  
 Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,  
 Than that myn heritage sholde falle  
 In straunge hand, and this I tell yow alle. 1440  
 I dote nat, I woot the cause why  
 Men sholde wedde, and forthermore wot I,  
 Ther speketh many a man of mariage,  
 That woot na-more of it than woot my page, (200)  
 For whiche causes man sholde take a wyf. 1445  
 If he ne may nat liven chast his lyf,  
 Take him a wyf with greet devocioun,  
 By-cause of levelful procreacioun  
 Of children, to thonour of god above,  
 And nat only for paramour or love ; 1450

---

1418. E. Hn. Pt. *om.* ful. 1420. Cm. bef; Cp. Pt. beef. Hl. Ln. *om.* the.  
 1427. E. *sotile*. 1432. E. Cm. Cp. Ln. *om.* right. 1433. E. were that I.  
 1436. Hl. Hn. go; Cp. Pt. Ln. so; E. Cm. *om.* E. vnto (*for* to). 1438.  
 E. Pt. leuere that houndes. 1446. E. Siththe; Cm. Sith (*for* If). Hn. Cm.  
 Hl. ne; *rest om.*



And for they sholde lecherye eschue,  
 And yelde hir dettes whan that they ben due ;  
 Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen other  
 In meschief, as a suster shal the brother ; (210)  
 And live in chastitee ful holily. 1455  
 But sires, by your leve, that am nat I.  
 For god be thanked, I dar make avaunt,  
 I fele my limes stark and suffisaunt  
 To do al that a man bilongeth to ;  
 I woot my-selven best what I may do. 1460  
 Though I be hoor, I fare as dooth a tree  
 That blasmeth er that fruyt y-woxen be ;  
 A blosmy tree nis neither drye ne deed.  
 I fele me nowher hoor but on myn heed ; (220)  
 Myn herte and alle my limes been as grene 1465  
 As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene.  
 And sin that ye han herd al myn entente,  
 I prey yow to my wil ye wole assente.'

Diverse men diversely him tolde  
 Of mariage manye ensamples olde. 1470  
 Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, certeyn ;  
 But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,  
 As al day falleth altercacioun  
 Bitwixen freendes in disputisoun, (230)  
 Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two, 1475  
 Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,  
 Iustinus soothly called was that other.

Placebo seyde, 'o Ianuarie, brother,  
 Ful litel nede had ye, my lord so dere,  
 Conseil to axe of any that is here ; 1480  
 But that ye been so ful of sapience,  
 That yow ne lyketh, for your heighe prudence,  
 To weyven fro the word of Salomon.  
 This word seyde he un-to us everichon : (240)  
 "Wirk alle thing by conseil," thus seyde he, 1485  
 "And thanne shaltow nat repente thee."

---

1451. E. Hl. Cp. Pt. leccherye. 1456. Cm. siris. 1462. E. Cp. that ;  
 Ln. Hl. that the ; Cm. than ; Hn. Pt. the. 1463. E. Hn. And ; Pt. That ;  
 rest A. 1479. E. hadde.

But though that Salomon spak swich a word,  
 Myn owene dere brother and my lord,  
 So wisly god my soule bringe at reste,  
 I hold your owene conseil is the beste. 1490  
 For brother myn, of me tak this motyf,  
 I have now been a court-man al my lyf.  
 And god it woot, though I unworthy be,  
 I have stonden in ful greet degree (250)  
 Abouten lordes of ful heigh estaat; 1495  
 Yet hadde I never with noon of hem debaat.  
 I never hem contraried, trewely;  
 I woot wel that my lord can more than I.  
 What that he seith, I holde it ferme and stable;  
 I seye the same, or elles thing semblable. 1500  
 A ful gret fool is any conseillour,  
 That serveth any lord of heigh honour,  
 That dar presume, or elles thenken it,  
 That his conseil sholde passe his lordes wit. (260)  
 Nay, lordes been no foles, by my fay; 1505  
 Ye han your-selven shewed heer to-day  
 So heigh sentence, so holily and weel,  
 That I consente and conferme every-deel  
 Your wordes alle, and your opinioun.  
 By god, ther nis no man in al this toun 1510  
 Nin al Itaille, that coude bet han sayd;  
 Crist halt him of this conseil wel apayd.  
 And trewely, it is an heigh corage  
 Of any man, that stopen is in age, (270)  
 To take a yong wyf; by my fader kin, 1515  
 Your herte hangeth on a Ioly pin.  
 Doth now in this matere right as yow leste,  
 For finally I holde it for the beste.<sup>7</sup>  
 Iustus, that ay stille sat and herde,  
 Right in this wyse to Placebo answerde: 1520

1490. MSS. holde. 1491. E. taak. 1503. E. Hn. Cm. elles; *rest*  
 ones. 1506. Hn. Cm. shewed; E. seyde; Hl. y-spoken; *rest* spoken.  
 1511. E. Nyn; *rest* Ne in. Cm. al; *rest* om. 1512. E. Hn. *ins.* ful (Cm.  
 wol) *before* wel; *rest* Crist holdeth him of this ful wel apayd. 1514. Cp.  
 Hl. stopen; Ln. stoupin; E. Hn. stapen; Cm. schapyn. 1517. E. matiere.  
 1520. *All but* Cm. *insert* he *before* Right, or to, or answerde.

'Now brother myn, be pacient, I preye,  
 Sin ye han seyde, and herkneth what I seye.  
 Senek among his othere wordes wyse  
 Seith, that a man oghte him right wel avyse, (280)  
 To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel. 1525  
 And sin I oghte avyse me right wel  
 To whom I yeve my good away fro me,  
 Wel muchel more I oghte avysed be  
 To whom I yeve my body; for alwey  
 I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley 1530  
 To take a wyf with-oute avyusement.  
 Men moste enquire, this is myn assent,  
 Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,  
 Or proud, or elles other-weys a shrewe; (290)  
 A chydester, or wastour of thy good, 1535  
 Or riche, or poore, or elles mannish wood.  
 Al-be-it so that no man finden shal  
 Noon in this world that trotteth hool in al,  
 Ne man ne beest, swich as men coude devyse;  
 But natheles, it oghte y-nough suffise 1540  
 With any wyf, if so were that she hadde  
 Mo gode thewes than hir vyces badde;  
 And al this axeth leyser for tenquere.  
 For god it woot, I have wept many a tere (300)  
 Ful prively, sin I have had a wyf. 1545  
 Preyse who-so wole a wedded mannes lyf,  
 Certein, I finde in it but cost and care,  
 And observances, of alle blisses bare.  
 And yet, god woot, my neighebores aboute,  
 And namely of wommen many a route, 1550  
 Seyn that I have the moste stedefast wyf,  
 And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf.  
 But I wot best wher wringeth me my sho.  
 Ye mowe, for me, right as yow lyketh do; (310)  
 Avyseth yow, ye been a man of age, 1555  
 How that ye entren in-to mariage,

1531. E. Hn. Ln. withouten. 1539. E. Cm. which. Hl. man can; Cp.  
 Pt. men conne; E. Hn. Cm. men koude. 1543. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. to enquire.  
 1545. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. sin that I hadde. 1551. Ln. stedfast.

And namely with a yong wyf and a fair.  
 By him that made water, erthe, and air,  
 The yongest man that is in al this route  
 Is bisy y-nogh to bringen it aboute 1560  
 To han his wyf allone, trusteth me.  
 Ye shul nat plese hir fully yeres three,  
 This is to seyn, to doon hir ful plesaunce.  
 A wyf axeth ful many an observaunce. (320)  
 I prey yow that ye be nat yvel apayd.' 1565  
 'Wel,' quod this Ianuarie, 'and hastow sayd?  
 Straw for thy Senek, and for thy proverbes,  
 I counte nat a panier ful of herbes  
 Of scole-termes; wyser men than thow,  
 As thou hast herd, assenteden right now 1570  
 To my purpos; Placebo, what sey ye?'  
 'I seye, it is a cursed man,' quod he,  
 'That letteth matrimoine, sikerly.'  
 And with that word they rysen sodeynly, (330)  
 And been assented fully, that he sholde 1575  
 Be wedded whanne him list and wher he wolde.  
 Heigh fantasye and curious businesse  
 Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse  
 Of Ianuarie aboute his mariage.  
 Many fair shap, and many a fair visage 1580  
 Ther passeth thurgh his herte, night by night.  
 As who-so toke a mirour polished bright,  
 And sette it in a commune market-place,  
 Than sholde he see many a figure pace (340)  
 By his mirour; and, in the same wyse, 1585  
 Gan Ianuarie inwith his thoght devyse  
 Of maydens, whiche that dwelten him bisyde.  
 He wiste nat wher that he mighte abyde.  
 For if that oon have beaute in hir face,  
 Another stant so in the peples grace 1590  
 For hir sadnesse, and hir benignitee,

1559. E. yongeste. 1560. E. ynough; Cm. I-nogh. 1562. Cm. Hl. plese;  
*rest* plesen. 1566. E. Hn. ysaid; Cm. Hl. sayd; Cp. Pt. Ln. al said. 1573.  
 E. Hn. Hl. matrimoine; Pt. matrimoyne; *rest* matrimoyne. 1582. E. And;  
*rest* As. E. polissshed. 1584. E. Thanne. E. Hn. se ful many. 1587.  
 E. Cm. Pt. dwellen. 1591. E. Cm. benyngnytee.

That of the peple grettest voys hath she.  
 And somme were riche, and hadden badde name.  
 But nathelees, bitwixe ernest and game, (350)  
 He atte laste apoynted him on oon, 1595  
 And leet alle othere from his herte goon,  
 And chees hir of his owene auctoritee ;  
 For love is blind al day, and may nat see.  
 And whan that he was in his bed y-broght,  
 He purtreied, in his herte and in his thoght, 1600  
 Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,  
 Hir myddel smal, hir armes longe and sclendre,  
 Hir wyse governaunce, hir gentillesse,  
 Hir wommanly beringe and hir sadnesse. (360)  
 And whan that he on hir was condescended, 1605  
 Him thoughte his chois mighte nat ben amended.  
 For whan that he him-self concluded hadde,  
 Him thoughte ech other mannes wit so badde,  
 That impossible it were to replye  
 Agayn his chois, this was his fantasye. 1610  
 His freendes sente he to at his instaunce,  
 And preyed hem to doon him that plesaunce,  
 That hastily they wolden to him come ;  
 He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and some. (370)  
 Nedeth na-more for him to go ne ryde, 1615  
 He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde.  
 Placebo cam, and eek his freendes sone,  
 And alderfirst he bad hem alle a bone,  
 That noon of hem none argumentes make  
 Agayn the purpos which that he hath take ; 1620  
 'Which purpos was plesant to god,' seyde he,  
 'And verray ground of his prosperitee.'  
 He seyde, ther was a mayden in the toun,  
 Which that of beautee hadde greet renoun, (380)  
 Al were it so she were of smal degree ; 1625  
 Suffyseth him hir youthe and hir beautee.  
 Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to his wyf,  
 To lede in ese and holinesse his lyf.  
 And thanked god, that he mighte han hire al,

That no wight of his blisse parten shal. 1630  
 And preyde hem to labouren in this nede,  
 And shapen that he faille nat to spede;  
 For thanne, he seyde, his spirit was at ese.  
 'Thanne is,' quod he, 'no-thing may me displese, (390)  
 Saue o thing priketh in my conscience, 1635  
 The which I wol reherce in your presence.  
 I have,' quod he, 'herd seyde, ful yore ago,  
 Ther may no man han parfite blisses two,  
 This is to seye, in erthe and eek in hevene.  
 For though he kepe him fro the sinnes sevene, 1640  
 And eek from every branche of thilke tree,  
 Yet is ther so parfit felicitee,  
 And so greet ese and lust in mariage,  
 That ever I am agast, now in myn age, (400)  
 That I shal lede now so mery a lyf, 1645  
 So delicat, with-outen wo and stryf,  
 That I shal have myn hevene in erthe here.  
 For sith that verray hevene is boght so dere,  
 With tribulacioun and greet penaunce,  
 How sholde I thanne, that live in swich plesaunce 1650  
 As alle wedded men don with hir wyvis,  
 Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on lyve is?  
 This is my drede, and ye, my bretheren tweye,  
 Assoilleth me this questiou, I preye.' (410)  
 Iustinus, which that hated his folye, 1655  
 Answerde anon, right in his Iaperye;  
 And for he wolde his longe tale abregge,  
 He wolde noon auctoritee allegge,  
 But seyde, 'sire, so ther be noon obstacle  
 Other than this, god of his hye miracle 1660  
 And of his mercy may so for yow wirche,  
 That, er ye have your right of holy chirche,  
 Ye may repente of wedded mannes lyf,  
 In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf. (420)  
 And elles, god forbede but he sente 1665

1630. Cm. of; Cp. Ln. with; *rest om.* 1631. Hn. labouren; *rest* labore.  
 1645. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 1660. Hn. Pt. hye; E. hygh. 1661. E. his  
 hygh mercy; *rest om.* hygh. 1665. Cp. Pt. Ln. but if.

A wedded man him grace to repente  
 Wel ofte rather than a sengle man!  
 And therefore, sire, the beste reed I can,  
 Dispeire yow noght, but have in your memorie,  
 Paraunter she may be your purgatorie! 1670  
 She may be goddes mene, and goddes whippe;  
 Than shal your soule up to hevене skippe  
 Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowe!  
 I hope to god, her-after shul ye knowe, (430)  
 That their nis no so greet felicitee 1675  
 In mariage, ne never-mo shal be,  
 That yow shal lette of your savacioun,  
 So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,  
 The lustes of your wyf attemprely,  
 And that ye plese hir nat to amorously, 1680  
 And that ye kepe yow eek from other sinne.  
 My tale is doon:—for my wit is thinne.  
 Beth nat agast her-of, my brother dere.—  
 (But lat us waden out of this matere. (440)  
 The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde, 1685  
 Of mariage, which we have on honde,  
 Declared hath ful wel in litel space).—  
 ‘Fareth now wel, god have yow in his grace.’  
 And with this word this Iustin and his brother  
 Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of other. 1690  
 For whan they sawe it moste nedes be,  
 They wroghten so, by sly and wys treetee,  
 That she, this mayden, which that Maius highte,  
 As hastily as ever that she mighte, (450)  
 Shal wedded be un-to this Ianuarie. 1695  
 I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,  
 If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,  
 By which that she was feffed in his lond;  
 Or for to herknen of hir riche array.  
 But finally y-comen is the day 1700  
 That to the chirche bothe be they went  
 For to receyve the holy sacrament.

1672. E. Thanne. 1682. *Incomplete*. 1686. Hn. we; *rust* ye. 1691. Hn.  
 Cp. sawe; E. Hl. saugh. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. *ins.* that *bef.* it. E. *om.* nedes.  
 1692. sly] Hl. sleighte. 1693. MSS. Mayus. 1698. Hl. feoffed.

Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his nekke,  
 And bad hir be lyk Sarra and Rebekke, (460)  
 In wisdom and in trouthe of mariage; 1705  
 And seyde his orisons, as is usage,  
 And crouched hem, and bad god sholde hem blesse,  
 And made al siker y-nogh with holinesse.

Thus been they wedded with solempnitee,  
 And at the feste sitteth he and she 1710  
 With other worthy folk up-on the deys.  
 Al ful of Ioye and blisse is the paleys,  
 And ful of instruments and of vitaille,  
 The moste deyntevous of al Itaille. (470)  
 Biforn hem stoode swiche instruments of soun, 1715  
 That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,  
 Ne maden never swich a melodye.

At every cours than cam loud minstraleye,  
 That never tromped Ioab, for to here,  
 Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clere, 1720  
 At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.  
 Bacus the wyn hem skinketh al aboute,  
 And Venus laugheth up-on every wight.  
 For Ianuarie was bicomme hir knight, (480)  
 And wolde bothe assayen his corage 1725  
 In libertee, and eek in mariage;  
 And with hir fyrbrond in hir hand aboute  
 Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route.  
 And certainly, I dar right wel seyn this,  
 Ymenëus, that god of wedding is, 1730  
 Saugh never his lyf so mery a wedded man.  
 Hold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,  
 That wrytest us that ilke wedding murie  
 Of hir, Philologye, and him, Mercurie, (490)  
 And of the songes that the Muses songe. 1735  
 To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy tonge,  
 For to descryven of this mariage.  
 Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stouping age,

---

1704. E. lyk to; *rest om.* to. 1706. his] E. hir. 1707. E. Hn. Cm.  
 croucheth. 1715. *So* Cm. Hl.; E. *puts* swich *before* soun; Hn. *repeats* swich  
*before* soun. 1718. E. Hn. thannc; Hl. ther. 1731. E. myrie; Hn. murye.



Ther is swich mirthe that it may nat be writen ;  
 Assayeth it your-self, than may ye witen 1740  
 If that I lye or noon in this matere.

Maius, that sit with so benigne a chere,  
 Hir to biholde it semed fayëryë ;  
 Quene Ester loked never with swich an yë (500)  
 On Assuer, so meke a look hath she. 1745  
 I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee ;  
 But thus muche of hir beautee telle I may,  
 That she was lyk the brighte morwe of May,  
 Fulfild of alle beautee and plesaunce.

This Ianuarie is ravished in a traunce 1750  
 At every time he loked on hir face ;  
 But in his herte he gan hir to manace,  
 That he that night in armes wolde hir streyne  
 Harder than ever Paris dide Eleyne. (510)

But nathelees, yet hadde he greet pitee, 1755  
 That thilke night offenden hir moste he ;  
 And thoughte, 'allas ! o tendre creature !  
 Now wolde god ye mighte wel endure  
 Al my corage, it is so sharp and kene ;  
 I am agast ye shul it nat sustene. 1760

But god forbede that I dide al my might !  
 Now wolde god that it were woxen night,  
 And that the night wolde lasten evermo.  
 I wolde that al this peple were ago.' (520)  
 And finally, he doth al his labour, 1765  
 As he best mighte, savinge his honour,  
 To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.

The tyme cam that reson was to ryse ;  
 And after that, men daunce and drinken faste,  
 And spyces al aboute the hous they caste ; 1770  
 And ful of Ioye and blisse is every man ;  
 All but a squyer, highte Damian,  
 Which carf biforn the knight ful many a day.  
 He was so ravished on his lady May, (530)

1740. E. thanne. 1741. E. matiere. 1742. E. benyngne ; chiere. 1743.  
 Cp. Pt. Hl. fayerye : *rest* fairye. 1744. Pt. Hl. ye ; Cp. yhe ; *rest* eye. 1751.  
 Hl. lokith. 1772. E. Hn. Cm. highte ; *rest* that highte (hight).

That for the verray peyne he was ny wood ; 1775  
 Almost he swelte and swowned ther he stood.  
 So sore hath Venus hurt him with hir brond,  
 As that she bar it daunsinge in hir hond.  
 And to his bed he wente him hastily ;  
 Na-more of him as at this tyme speke I. 1780  
 But ther I lete him wepe y-nough and pleyne,  
 Til fresshe May wol rewen on his peyne.

O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw bredeth ! **Auctor.**  
 O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth ! (540)  
 O servant traitour, false hoomly hewe, 1785  
 Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly untrewē,  
 God shilde us alle from your aqueeyntaunce !  
 O Ianuarie, dronken in plesaunce  
 Of mariage, see how thy Damian,  
 Thyn owene squyer and thy borne man, 1790  
 Entendeth for to do thee vileinye.  
 God graunte thee thyn hoomly fo tespye.  
 For in this world nis worse pestilence  
 Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence. (550)

Parfourned hath the sonne his ark diurne, 1795  
 No lenger may the body of him soiurne  
 On thorisonte, as in that latitude.  
 Night with his mantel, that is derk and rude,  
 Gan oversprede the hemisperie aboute ;  
 For which departed is this lusty route 1800  
 Fro Ianuarie, with thank on every syde.  
 Hom to hir houses lustily they ryde,  
 Wher-as they doon hir thinges as hem leste,  
 And whan they sye hir tyme, goon to reste. (560)  
 Sone after that, this hastif Ianuarie 1805  
 Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger tarie.  
 He drinketh ipocras, clarree, and vernage  
 Of spyces hote, tencresen his corage ;  
 And many a letuarie hadde he ful fyn,

1780. Hl. as; *rest om.* E. om. I. 1784. Cp. Hl. famuler; Pt. famulere; Ln. famyleie. 1786. Hn. Cp. neddre; Cm. neddere; Hl. nedder; Pt. adder. 1789. Pt. Hl. Of; Cp. Ln. O (!); *rest* In. 1790. Cm. bore; Cp. Ln. Hl. borne; *rest* born. 1792. Cp. Ln. to espye; Hn. Hl. espye. 1802. E. Hl. hous; *rest* houses. 1808. Cp. Pt. Hl. to encresen. 1809. E. hath.

Swiche as the cursed monk dan Constantyn 1810  
 Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*;  
 To eten hem alle, he nas no-thing eschu.  
 And to his privee freendes thus seyde he :  
 'For goddes love, as sone as it may be, (570)  
 Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse.' 1815  
 And they han doon right as he wol devyse.  
 Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon ;  
 The bryde was broght a-bedde as stille as stoon ;  
 And whan the bed was with the preest y-blessed,  
 Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed. 1820  
 And Ianuarie hath faste in armes take  
 His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.  
 He lulleth hir, he kisseth hir ful ofte  
 With thikke bristles of his berd unsofte, (580)  
 Lyk to the skin of houndfish, sharp as brere, 1825  
 For he was shave al newe in his manere.  
 He rubbeth hir aboute hir tendre face,  
 And seyde thus, 'allas! I moot trespace  
 To yow, my spouse, and yow gretly offende,  
 Er tyme come that I wil doun descende. 1830  
 But nathelees, considereth this,' quod he,  
 'Ther nis no werkman, what-so-ever he be,  
 That may bothe werke wel and hastily ;  
 This wol be doon at leyser parfity. (590)  
 It is no fors how longe that we pleye ; 1835  
 In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye ;  
 And blessed be the yok that we been inne,  
 For in our actes we mowe do no sinne.  
 A man may do no sinne with his wyf,  
 Ne hurte him-selven with his owene knyf; 1840  
 For we han leve to pleye us by the lawe.'  
 Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawe ;  
 And than he taketh a sop in fyn clarree,  
 And upright in his bed than sitteth he, (600)  
 And after that he sang ful loude and clere, 1845

---

1810. E. *om.* cursed. 1812. Cm. Ln. was; *rest* nas. 1824. Cp. Ill.  
 thikke; *rest* thilke (*with* lk = kk). E. Cm. brustles. 1838. E. Hn. Cm.  
*om.* our. 1843. E. thanne; fyne. 1844. E. thanne.

And kiste his wyf, and made wantoun chere.  
 He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,  
 And ful of Iargon as a flekked pye.  
 The slakke skin aboute his nekke shaketh,  
 Whyl that he sang ; so chaunteth he and craketh. 1850  
 But god wot what that May thoughte in hir herte,  
 Whan she him saugh up sittinge in his sherte,  
 In his night-cappe, and with his nekke lene ;  
 She preyseth nat his pleying worth a bene. (610)  
 Than seide he thus, ' my reste wol I take ; 1855  
 Now day is come, I may no lenger wake.'  
 And doun he leyde his heed, and sleep til pryme.  
 And afterward, whan that he saugh his tyme,  
 Up ryseth Ianuarie ; but fresshe May  
 Holdeth hir chambre un-to the fourthe day, 1860  
 As usage is of wyves for the beste.  
 For every labour som-tyme moot han reste,  
 Or elles longe may he nat endure ;  
 This is to seyn, no lyves creature, (620)  
 Be it of fish, or brid, or beest, or man. 1865  
 Now wol I speke of woful Damian,  
 That languisseth for love, as ye shul here ;  
 Therefore I speke to him in this manere :  
 I seye, ' O sely Damian, allas !  
 Answer to my demaunde, as in this cas, 1870  
 How shaltow to thy lady fresshe May  
 Telle thy wo? She wole alwey seye " nay " ;  
 Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo biwreye ;  
 God be thyn help, I can no better seye.' (630)  
 This syke Damian in Venus fyr 1875  
 So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr ;  
 For which he putte his lyf in aventure,  
 No lenger mighte he in this wyse endure ;  
 But prively a penner gan he borwe,  
 And in a lettre wroot he al his sorwe, 1880  
 In manere of a compleynt or a lay,

1846. E. wantowne. 1847. E. coltish. 1848. Cp. Pt. Girgoun ; Ln. Girgun. 1851. Hn. thoghte. 1855. E. Thanne. 1860. Pt. Ln. Hl. Holdeth ; Cp. Holt ; E. Hn. Heeld ; Cm. Held. 1867. Cp. langureth ; Pt. languowreth ; Ln. longuith. 1870. E. Andswere.

Un-to his faire fresshe lady May.  
 And in a purs of silk, heng on his sherte,  
 He hath it put, and leyde it at his herte. (640)  
 The mone that, at noon, was, thilke day 1885  
 That Ianuarie hath wedded fresshe May,  
 In two of Taur, was in-to Cancre gliden ;  
 So long hath Maius in hir chambre biden,  
 As custume is un-to thise nobles alle.  
 A bryde shal nat eten in the halle, 1890  
 Til dayes foure or three dayes atte leste  
 Y-passed been ; than lat hir go to feste.  
 The fourthe day compleet fro noon to noon,  
 Whan that the heighe masse was y-doon, (650)  
 In halle sit this Ianuarie, and May 1895  
 As fresh as is the brighte someres day.  
 And so bifel, how that this gode man  
 Remembred him upon this Damian,  
 And seyde, 'Seinte Marie ! how may this be,  
 That Damian entendeth nat to me ? 1900  
 Is he ay syk, or how may this bityde ?'  
 His squyeres, whiche that stoden ther bisyde,  
 Excused him by-cause of his siknesse,  
 Which letted him to doon his businesse ; (660)  
 Noon other cause mighte make him tarie. 1905  
 'That me forthinketh,' quod this Ianuarie,  
 'He is a gentil squyer, by my trouthe !  
 If that he deyde, it were harm and routhe ;  
 He is as wys, discret, and as secree  
 As any man I woot of his degrec ; 1910  
 And ther-to manly and eek servisable,  
 And for to been a thrifty man right abl  
 But after mete, as sone as ever I may,  
 I wol my-self visyte him and eek May, (670)  
 To doon him al the confort that I can.' 1915  
 And for that word him blessed every man,  
 That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,  
 He wolde so conforten in siknesse

His squyer, for it was a gentil dede.  
 'Dame,' quod this Ianuarie, 'tak good hede, 1920  
 At-after mete ye, with your wommen alle,  
 Whan ye han been in chambre out of this halle,  
 That alle ye go see this Damian;  
 Doth him disport, he is a gentil man; (680)  
 And telleth him that I wol him visyte, 1925  
 Have I no-thing but rested me a lyte;  
 And spede yow faste, for I wole abyde  
 Til that ye slepe faste by my syde.'  
 And with that word he gan to him to calle  
 A squyer, that was marchal of his halle, 1930  
 And tolde him certeyn thinges, what he wolde.  
 This fresshe May hath streight hir wey y-holde,  
 With alle hir wommen, un-to Damian.  
 Doun by his beddes syde sit she than, (690)  
 Confortinge him as goodly as she may. 1935  
 This Damian, whan that his tyme he say,  
 In secree wise his purs, and eek his bille,  
 In which that he y-writen hadde his wille,  
 Hath put in-to hir hand, with-uten more,  
 Save that he syketh wonder depe and sore, 1940  
 And softely to hir right thus seyde he:  
 'Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me;  
 For I am deed, if that this thing be kid.'  
 This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hid, (700)  
 And wente hir wey; ye gete namore of me. 1945  
 But un-to Ianuarie y-comen is she,  
 That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.  
 He taketh hir, and kisseth hir ful ofte,  
 And leyde him doun to slepe, and that anon.  
 She feyned hir as that she moste gon 1950  
 Ther-as ye woot that every wight mot nede.  
 And whan she of this bille hath taken hede,  
 She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,  
 And in the privee softely it caste. (710)  
 Who studieth now but faire fresshe May? 1955  
 Adoun by olde Ianuarie she lay,

That sleep, til that the coughe hath him awaked ;  
 Anon he preyde hir strepen hir al naked ;  
 He wolde of hir, he seyde, han som plesaunce,  
 And seyde, hir clothes dide him encombraunce, 1960  
 And she obeyeth, be hir lief or looth.  
 But lest that precious folk be with me wrooth,  
 How that he wroghte, I dar nat to yow telle ;  
 Or whether hir thoughte it paradys or helle ; (720)  
 But here I lete hem werken in hir wyse 1965  
 Til evensong rong, and that they moste aryse.  
 Were it by destinee or aventure,  
 Were it by influence or by nature,  
 Or constellacion, that in swich estat  
 The hevene stood, that tyme fortunat 1970  
 Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes  
 (For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn this clerkes)  
 To any womman, for to gete hir love,  
 I can nat seye ; but grete god above, (730)  
 That knoweth that non act is causelees, 1975  
 He deme of al, for I wol holde my pees.  
 But sooth is this, how that this fresshe May  
 Hath take swich impression that day,  
 For pitee of this syke Damian,  
 That from hir herte she ne dryve can 1980  
 The remembraunce for to doon him ese.  
 ‘Certeyn,’ thoghte she, ‘whom that this thing displese,  
 I rekke noght, for here I him assure,  
 To love him best of any creature, (740)  
 Though he na-more hadde than his sherte.’ 1985  
 Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.  
 Heer may ye se how excellent franchyse  
 In wommen is, whan they hem narwe avyse.  
 Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,  
 That hath an herte as hard as any stoon, 1990  
 Which wolde han lete him sterven in the place  
 Wel rather than han graunted him hir grace ;

1957. Hn. Cm. coghe ; Ln. couhe. 1962. E. ye ; Cm. the ; *rest* that.  
 1964. E. wheither that ; Hn. Cm. Hl. *om.* that. 1966. Cp. Ln. euesong.  
 1967. *All but* Ln. Hl. *ins.* by *after* or. 1969, 70. E. *estaat*, *fortunaat*.  
 1971. Hn. Hl. As ; E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Was. 1991. E. Cm. *lat.* E. *storuen*.

And hem reioysen in hir cruel pryde,  
And rekke nat to been an homicyde. (750)

This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,  
Right of hir hande a lettre made she, 1995

In which she graunteth him hir verray grace ;  
Ther lakketh nocht but only day and place,  
Wher that she mighte un-to his lust suffyse :  
For it shal be right as he wol devyse. 2000

And whan she saugh hir time, up-on a day,  
To visite this Damian goth May,  
And sotilly this lettre doun she threste  
Under his pilwe, rede it if him leste. (760)

She taketh him by the hand, and harde him twiste 2005  
So secrely, that no wight of it wiste,  
And bad him been al hool, and forth she wente  
To Ianuarie, whan that he for hir sente.

Up ryseth Damian the nexte morwe,  
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe. 2010

He kembeth him, he proyneth him and pyketh,  
He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh ;  
And eek to Ianuarie he gooth as lowe  
As ever dide a dogge for the bowe. (770)

He is so plesant un-to every man, 2015  
(For craft is al, who-so that do it can)  
That every wight is fayne to speke him good ;  
And fully in his lady grace he stood.  
Thus lete I Damian aboute his nede,  
And in my tale forth I wol procede. 2020

Somme clerkes holden that felicitee  
Stant in delyt, and therefor certeyn he,  
This noble Ianuarie, with al his might,  
In honest wyse, as longeth to a knight, (780)

Shoop him to live ful deliciously. 2025  
His housinge, his array, as honestly  
To his degree was makid as a kinges.  
Amonges othere of his honest thinges,

1993. E. crueel. 1996. Hn. Hl. makid; Cm. makede. 1998. Cm. Hl. but only; rest only but. 2002. All visite; perhaps read visiten. 2007. she] E. he. 2008. hir] E. him. 2011. E. preyneth; Hn. prayneth; Hl. pruneth. 2018. Hn. Cm. ladyes; rest lady. 2024, 2028. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. honeste.



He made a gardin, walled al with stoon ;  
 So fair a gardin woot I nowher noon. 2030  
 For out of doute, I verraily suppose,  
 That he that wroot the Romance of the Rose  
 Ne coude of it the beautee wel devyse ;  
 Ne Priapus ne mighte nat suffyse, (790)  
 Though he be god of gardins, for to telle 2035  
 The beautee of the gardin and the welle,  
 That stood under a laurer alwey grene.  
 Ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his quene,  
 Proserpina, and al hir fayërye  
 Disporten hem and maken melodye 2040  
 Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men tolde.

This noble knight, this Ianuarie the olde,  
 Swich deintee hath in it to walke and pleye,  
 That he wol no wight suffren bere the keye (800)  
 Save he him-self ; for of the smale wicket 2045  
 He bar alwey of silver a smal cliket,  
 With which, whan that him leste, he it unshette.  
 And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette  
 In somer seson, thider wolde he go,  
 And May his wyf, and no wight but they two ; 2050  
 And thinges whiche that were nat doon a-bedde,  
 He in the gardin parfourned hem and spedde.  
 And in this wyse, many a mery day,  
 Lived this Ianuarie and fresshe May. (810)  
 But worldly Ioye may nat alwey dure 2055  
 To Ianuarie, ne to no creature.

O sodeyn hap, o thou fortune instable, **Auctor.**  
 Lyk to the scorpion so deceivable,  
 That flaterest with thyn heed when thou wolt stinge ;  
 Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn enveniminge. 2060  
 O brotil Ioye ! o swete venim queynte !  
 O monstre, that so subtilly canst peynte  
 Thy yiftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,  
 That thou deceyvest bothe more and lesse ! (820)

2032. Cm. Hl. romauns ; Ln. romans. 2039. Cp. Hl. fayerie ; rest fairye.  
 2046. E. baar. Hl. smal ; rest om. 2053. E. Hn. murye. 2059. E.  
 syngye ; rest stinge. 2061. venim] Cp. Pt. Ln. poyson. 2063. E. stidefastnesse.

Why hastow Ianuarie thus deceyved, 2065  
 That haddest him for thy ful frend receyved?  
 And now thou hast biraft him bothe hise yën,  
 For sorwe of which desyreth he to dyen.  
 Allas! this noble Ianuarie free,  
 Amidde his lust and his prosperitee, 2070  
 Is woxen blind, and that al sodeynly.  
 He wepeth and he wayleth pitously;  
 And ther-with-al the fyr of Ialousye,  
 Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som folye, (830)  
 So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn 2075  
 That som man bothe him and hir had slayn.  
 For neither after his deeth, nor in his lyf,  
 Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,  
 But ever live as widwe in clothes blake,  
 Soul as the turtle that lost hath hir make. 2080  
 But atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,  
 His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye;  
 For whan he wiste it may noon other be,  
 He paciently took his adversitee; (840)  
 Save, out of doute, he may nat forgoon 2085  
 That he nas Ialous evermore in oon;  
 Which Ialousye it was so outrageous,  
 That neither in halle, nin noon other hous,  
 Ne in noon other place, never-the-mo,  
 He nolde suffre hir for to ryde or go, 2090  
 But-if that he had hand on hir alway;  
 For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,  
 That loveth Damian so benignely,  
 That she mot outhere dyen sodeynly, (850)  
 Or elles she mot han him as hir leste; 2095  
 She wayteth whan hir herte wolde breste.  
 Up-on that other syde Damian  
 Bicomem is the sorwefulleste man  
 That ever was; for neither night ne day  
 Ne mighte he speke a word to fresshe May, 2100

---

2067. Hl. yea; Cm. Iyen; *rest* eyen.      2074. E. swich; *rest* som (sum).  
 2080. Cp. Ln. Soule; Pt. Sool; *rest* Soul.      2089. E. Nyn; *rest* Ne in.  
 2091. E. hond (*but* hand in l. 2103).      2093. E. benyngnely.

As to his purpos, of no swich matere,  
 But-if that Ianuarie moste it here,  
 That hadde an hand up-on hir evermo.  
 But nathelees, by wryting to and fro (860)  
 And privee signes, wiste he what she mente ; 2105  
 And she knew eek the fyn of his entente.

O Ianuarie, what mighte it thee availle, **Auctor.**  
 Thou mightest see as fer as shippes saille?  
 For also good is blind deceyved be,  
 As be deceyved whan a man may se. 2110  
 Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hondred yën,  
 For al that ever he coude poure or pryen,  
 Yet was he blent ; and, god wot, so ben mo,  
 That wenen wisly that it be nat so. (870)  
 Passe over is an ese, I sey na-more. 2115

This fresshe May, that I spak of so yore,  
 In warme wex hath emprented the cliket,  
 That Ianuarie bar of the smale wicket,  
 By which in-to his gardin ofte he wente.  
 And Damian, that knew al hir entente, 2120  
 The cliket countrefeted prively ;  
 Ther nis na-more to seye, but hastily  
 Som wonder by this cliket shal bityde,  
 Which ye shul heren, if ye wole abyde. (880)

O noble Ovyde, ful sooth seystou, god woot ! **Auctor.**  
 What sleighte is it, thogh it be long and hoot, 2126  
 That he nil finde it out in som manere?  
 By Piramus and Tesbee may men lere ;  
 Thogh they were kept ful longe streite overal,  
 They been accorded, rouninge thurgh a wal, 2130  
 Ther no wight coude han founde out swich a sleighte.

But now to purpos ; er that dayes eighte  
 Were passed, er the monthe of Iuil, bifil  
 That Ianuarie hath caught so greet a wil, (890)  
 Thurgh egging of his wyf, him for to pleye 2135  
 In his gardin, and no wight but they tweye,

2108. E. Ln. Thogh thou ; Hl. If thou ; *rest* Thou. 2109. Cm. Ln. also ;  
*rest* as. 2110. *All* As to be. 2111. Ln. yene ; *rest* eyen. 2117. Pt.  
 Ln. warme ; *rest* warm. *Perhaps read* emprented hath. 2118. Pt. smal ;  
*rest* smale. 2133, 4. Cm. befel, wyl ; *rest* bifille, wille ; *see note.*

That in a morwe un-to this May seith he :  
 'Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free ;  
 The turtles vois is herd, my douve swete ;  
 The winter is goon, with alle his reynes wete ; 2140  
 Com forth now, with thyn eyën columbyn !  
 How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn !  
 The gardin is enclosed al aboute ;  
 Com forth, my whyte spouse ; out of doute, (900)  
 Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wyf ! 2145  
 No spot of thee ne knew I al my lyf.  
 Com forth, and lat us taken our disport ;  
 I chees thee for my wyf and my confort.'  
 Swiche olde lewed wordes used he ;  
 On Damian a signe made she, 2150  
 That he sholde go biforen with his cliket :  
 This Damian thanne hath opened the wiket,  
 And in he stirte, and that in swich manere,  
 That no wight mighte it see neither y-here ; (910)  
 And stille he sit under a bush anoon. 2155  
 This Ianuarie, as blind as is a stoon,  
 With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,  
 In-to his fresshe gardin is ago,  
 And clapte to the wiket sodeynly.  
 'Now, wyf,' quod he, 'heer nis but thou and I, 2160  
 That art the creature that I best love.  
 For, by that lord that sit in heven above,  
 Lever ich hadde dyen on a knyf,  
 Than thee offende, trewe dere wyf ! (920)  
 For goddes sake, think how I thee chees, 2165  
 Noght for no coveityse, doutelees,  
 But only for the love I had to thee.  
 And though that I be old, and may nat see,  
 Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow why.  
 Three thinges, certes, shul ye winne ther-by ; 2170  
 First, love of Crist, and to your-self honour,  
 And al myn heritage, toun and tour ;

2139. E. turtle. 2140. Cp. Pt. Ln. alle (al) ; *rest om.* 2146. Cp. Pt. Ln. in (*for of*). 2147. E. som ; *rest our* (eure). 2151. Ln. before ; *rest biforn* ; *read biforen.* 2163. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. to dyen ; Cp. Pt. Ln. *om.* to. 2170. E. Hn. shal ; Pt. Cm. Hl. shul.

I yeve it yow, maketh chartres as yow leste ;  
 This shal be doon to-morwe er sonne reste. (930)  
 So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse, 2175  
 I prey yow first, in covenant ye me kisse.  
 And thogh that I be Ialous, wyte me nought.  
 Ye been so depe enprented in my thocht,  
 That, whan that I considere your beautee,  
 And ther-with-al the unlykly elde of me, 2180  
 I may nat, certes, thogh I sholde dye,  
 Forbere to been out of your companye  
 For verray love ; this is with-uten doute.  
 Now kis me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute.' (940)

This fresshe May, whan she thise wordes herde, 2185  
 Benignely to Ianuarie answerde,  
 But first and forward she bigan to wepe,  
 'I have,' quod she, 'a soule for to kepe  
 As wel as ye, and also myn honour,  
 And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour, 2190  
 Which that I have assured in your hond,  
 Whan that the preest to yow my body bond ;  
 Wherefore I wole answer in this manere  
 By the leve of yow, my lord so dere : (950)  
 I prey to god, that never dawe the day 2195  
 That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,  
 If ever I do un-to my kin that shame,  
 Or elles I empeyre so my name,  
 That I be fals ; and if I do that lakke,  
 Do strepe me and put me in a sakke, 2200  
 And in the nexte river do me drenche.  
 I am a gentil womman and no wenche.  
 Why speke ye thus ? but men ben ever untrewe,  
 And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe. (960)  
 Ye han non other contenance, I leve, 2205  
 But speke to us of untrust and repreve.'

And with that word she saugh wher Damian  
 Sat in the bush, and coughen she bigan,

2177, 2181. E. though. 2179. E. Pt. om. that. 2186. E. Benyngnely.  
 2194. Cp. Pt. Ln. With (*for* By). 2205. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. can (*for* han).  
 2208. E. Ill. coughen ; Hn. coghen ; Cm. coghe.

And with hir finger signes made she,  
 That Damian sholde climbe up-on a tree, 2210  
 That charged was with fruit, and up he wente ;  
 For verraily he knew al hir entente,  
 And every signe that she coude make  
 Wel bet than Ianuarie, hir owene make. (970)  
 For in a lettre she had told him al 2215  
 Of this matere, how he werchen shal.  
 And thus I lete him sitte up-on the pyrie,  
 And Ianuarie and May rominge myrie.

Bright was the day, and blew the firmament,  
 Phebus of gold his stremes down hath sent, 2220  
 To gladen every flour with his warmnesse.  
 He was that tyme *in Geminis*, as I gesse,  
 But litel fro his declinacioun  
 Of Cancer, Iovis exaltacioun. (980)  
 And so bifel, that brighte morwe-tyde, 2225  
 That in that gardin, in the ferther syde,  
 Pluto, that is the king of fayërye,  
 And many a lady in his companye,  
 Folwinge his wyf, the quene Proserpyne,  
 Ech after other, right as any lync— 2230  
 Whil that she gadered floures in the mede,  
 In Claudian ye may the story rede,  
 How in his grisly carte he hir fette:—  
 This king of fairye thanne adoun him sette (990)  
 Up-on a bench of turves, fresh and grene, 2235  
 And right anon thus seyde he to his quene.

'My wyf,' quod he, 'ther may no wight sey nay ;  
 Thexperience so preveth every day  
 The treson whiche that women doon to man.  
 Ten hondred thousand [stories] telle I can 2240

2215. E. hadde toold. 2217. Pt. pirry; Hn. purye; *rest* pyrie (pirie, pyry). 2218. Hn. murye; Cp. myry; Hl. mirye; Cm. Pt. Ln. merie (mery).  
 2220. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. *put* hath *before* of gold; Cp. Pt. Ln. down hath his stremes sent. E. Hn. Hl. ysent; *rest* sent. 2227. Cp. Pt. Ln. the; *rest om.*  
 Cp. Hl. fayerye; *rest* fairye. 2230. Cm. ony; E. Hl. a (*for* any). Cp. Pt. Ln. *have* Which that he rauysshed out of Proserpyna (!). 2232. Hl. story; *rest* stories. 2233. E. And; *rest* How. E. grisely. E. Hn. Cm. sette; *rest* fette. 2234. Cp. Pt. Ln. *om.* thanne. 2237. E. seye. 2239. E. tresons.  
 2240. *I supply* stories. Pt. Ln. telle; *rest* tellen.

Notable of your untrouthe and brotilnesse.  
 O Salomon, wys, richest of richesse,  
 Fulfd of sapience and of worldly glorie,  
 Ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie (1000)  
 To every wight that wit and reson can. 2245  
 Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man :  
 "Amonges a thousand men yet fond I oon,  
 But of wommen alle fond I noon."  
 Thus seith the king that knoweth your wikkednesse ;  
 And Iesus *filius Syrak*, as I gesse, 2250  
 Ne speketh of yow but selde reverence.  
 A wilde fyr and corrupt pestilence  
 So falle up-on your bodies yet to-night !  
 Ne see ye nat this honorable knight, (1010)  
 By-cause, allas ! that he is blind and old, 2255  
 His owene man shal make him cokewold ;  
 Lo heer he sit, the lechour, in the tree.  
 Now wol I graunten, of my magestee,  
 Un-to this olde blinde worthy knight  
 That he shal have ayeyn his eyen sight, 2260  
 Whan that his wyf wold doon him vileinye ;  
 Than shal he knowen al hir harlotrye  
 Both in repreve of hir and othere mo.'  
 'Ye shal,' quod Proserpyne, 'wol ye so ; (1020)  
 Now, by my modres sires soule I swere, 2265  
 That I shal yeven hir suffisant answeere,  
 And alle wommen after, for hir sake ;  
 That, though they be in any gilt y-take,  
 With face bold they shulle hem-self excuse,  
 And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuse. 2270  
 For lakke of answer, noon of hem shal dyen.  
 Al hadde man seyn a thing with bothe his yën,  
 Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,  
 And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtilly, (1030)  
 So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees. 2275

2242. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. wys and ; Cp. Pt. Ln. *om. both wys and and*.  
 2247. S. E. foond. 2262. E. Thanne. 2264. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. and  
 wol (*for wol*). 2272. Pt. Hl. yen ; *rest eyen (eyzen)*. 2273. Cp. Pt. Ln.  
 so (*for wommen*). 2274. E. visage it (*for chyde, by mistake*).

What rekketh me of your auctoritees?

I woot wel that this Iew, this Salomon,  
Fond of us wommen foles many oon.  
But though that he ne fond no good womman,  
Yet hath ther founde many another man 2280  
Wommen ful trewe, ful gode, and vertuous.  
Witnessse on hem that dwelle in Cristes hous,  
With martirdom they preved hir constance.  
The Romayn gestes maken remembrance (1040)  
Of many a verray trewe wyf also. 2285

But sire, ne be nat wrooth, al-be-it so,  
Though that he seyde he fond no good womman,  
I prey yow take the sentence of the man ;  
He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee  
Nis noon but god, that sit in Trinitee. 2290

Ey! for verray god, that nis but oon,  
What make ye so muche of Salomon?  
What though he made a temple, goddes hous?  
What though he were riche and glorious? (1050)  
So made he eek a temple of false goddis, 2295

How mighte he do a thing that more forbode is?  
Pardee, as faire as ye his name emplastre,  
He was a lechour and an ydolastre ;  
And in his elde he verray god forsook.  
And if that god ne hadde, as seith the book. 2300

Y-spared him for his fadres sake, he sholde  
Have lost his regne rather than he wolde.  
I sette noght of al the vileinye,  
That ye of wommen wryte, a boterflye. (1060)  
I am a womman, nedes moot I speke, 2305

Or elles swelle til myn herte breke.  
For sithen he seyde that we ben Iangleresses,  
As ever hool I mote brouke my tresses,  
I shal nat spare, for no curteisye,  
To speke him harm that wolde us vileinye.' 2310

---

2278. E. Foond; foles. 2279. E. foond. 2284. E. Hn. Cm. Hl.  
eek maken; rest om. eek. 2287. E. foond. 2290. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. but  
neither he ne she (for that . . . Trinitee). 2291. So all. 2298. E.  
leechour. 2300. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. om. that. 2301. E. Cm. om. him.  
2303. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. sette right noght.



'Dame,' quod this Pluto, 'be no lenger wrooth;  
 I yeve it up; but sith I swoor myn ooth  
 That I wolde graunten him his sighte ageyn,  
 My word shal stonde, I warne yow, certeyn. (1070)  
 I am a king, it sit me noght to lye.' 2315

'And I,' quod she, 'a queene of fayërye.  
 Hir answe're shal she have, I undertake;  
 Lat us na-more wordes heer-of make.  
 For sothe, I wol no lenger yow contrarie.'

Now lat us turne agayn to Ianuarie, 2320  
 That in the gardin with his faire May  
 Singeth, ful merier than the papeiay,  
 'Yow love I best, and shal, and other noon.'  
 So longe aboute the aleyes is he goon, (1080)  
 Til he was come agaynes thilke pyrie, 2325  
 Wher-as this Damian sitteth ful myrie  
 An heigh, among the fresshe leves grene.

This fresshe May, that is so bright and shene,  
 Gan for to syke, and seyde, 'allas, my syde!  
 Now sir,' quod she, 'for aught that may bityde, 2330  
 I moste han of the peres that I see,  
 Or I mot dye, so sore longeth me  
 To eten of the smale peres grene.

Help, for hir love that is of hevене quene! (1090)  
 I telle yow wel, a womman in my plyt 2335  
 May han to fruit so greet an appetyt,  
 That she may dyen, but she of it have.'

'Allas!' quod he, 'that I ne had heer a knave  
 That coude climbe; allas! allas!' quod he,  
 'That I am blind.' 'Ye, sir, no fors,' quod she: 2340  
 'But wolde ye vouche-sauf, for goddes sake,  
 The pyrie inwith your armes for to take,  
 (For wel I woot that ye mistruste me)  
 Thanne sholde I climbe wel y-nogh,' quod she, (1100)  
 'So I my foot mighte sette upon your bak.' 2345

'Certes,' quod he, 'ther-on shal be no lak,  
 Mighte I yow helpen with myn herte blood.'

2316. Cp. Hl. fayerye; *rest* fairye (fayre). 2322. E. Hn. Cm. murier.  
 2325. Hl. agaynes; *rest* agayns. 2327. Pt. Ln. Hl. On (*for* An .

He stoupeth doun, and on his bak she stood,  
 And caughte hir by a twiste, and up she gooth.  
 Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth ; 2350  
 I can nat glose, I am a rude man.

And sodeynly anon this Damian  
 Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng.  
 And whan that Pluto saugh this grete wrong, (1110)  
 To Ianuarie he gaf agayn his sighte, 2355

And made him see, as wel as ever he mighte.  
 And whan that he hadde caught his sighte agayn,  
 Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn.  
 But on his wyf his thoght was evermo ;

Up to the tree he caste his eyen two, 2360  
 And saugh that Damian his wyf had dressed  
 In swich manere, it may nat ben expressed  
 But if I wolde speke uncurteisly :

And up he yaf a roring and a cry (1120)  
 As doth the moder whan the child shal dye : 2365  
 'Out! help! allas! harrow!' he gan to crye,  
 'O stronge lady store, what dostow?'

And she answerde, 'sir, what eyleth yow ?  
 Have pacience, and reson in your minde,  
 I have yow holpe on bothe your eyen blinde. 2370  
 Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,

As me was taught, to hele with your yën,  
 Was no-thing bet to make yow to see  
 Than strugle with a man up-on a tree. (1130)  
 God woot, I dide it in ful good entente.' 2375

'Strugle!' quod he, 'ye, algate in it wente!  
 God yeve yow bothe on shames deeth to dyen!  
 He swyved thee, I saugh it with myne yën,  
 And elles be I hanged by the hals!'

'Thanne is,' quod she, 'my medicyne al fals ; 2380  
 For certainly, if that ye mighte see,  
 Ye wolde nat seyn thise wordes un-to me ;  
 Ye han som glimsing and no parfit sighte.'

2355. Pt. Ln. Hl. his sight ageyn (*and miss* ll. 2356, 2357, *by confusion with* agayn *in* 2357). 2367. E. Hn. Cm. stoor; Pt. stoor; Cp. Ln. Hl. stoure. 2372, 2378. Ln. Hl. yen; *rest* eyen (eyzen). 2380. E. Pt. Ln. Hl. *om.* al.

'I see,' quod he, 'as wel as ever I mighte, (1140)  
Thonked be god! with bothe myne eyen two, 2385  
And by my trouthe, me thoughte he dide thee so.'

'Ye maze, maze, gode sire,' quod she,  
'This thank have I for I have maad yow see ;  
Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was so kinde!'

'Now, dame,' quod he, 'lat al passe out of minde. 2390  
Com doun, my lief, and if I have missayd,  
God help me so, as I am yvel apayd.

But, by my fader soule, I wende han seyn,  
How that this Damian had by thee leyn, (1150)  
And that thy smok had leyn up-on his brest.' 2395

'Ye, sire,' quod she, 'ye may wene as yow lest ;  
But, sire, a man that waketh out of his sleep,  
He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep  
Up-on a thing, ne seen it parfitly,  
Til that he be adawed verrailly ; 2400

Right so a man, that longe hath blind y-be,  
Ne may nat sodeynly so wel y-see,  
First whan his sighte is newe come ageyn,  
As he that hath a day or two y-seyn. (1160)

Til that your sighte y-satled be a whyle, 2405  
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigyle.  
Beth war, I prey yow ; for, by hevene king,  
Ful many a man weneth to seen a thing,  
And it is al another than it semeth.

He that misconceyveth, he misdemeth.' 2410  
And with that word she leep doun fro the tree.

This Ianuarie, who is glad but he ?  
He kisseth hir, and clippeth hir ful ofte,  
And on hir wombe he stroketh hir ful softe, (1170)  
And to his palays hoom he hath hir lad. 2415

Now, gode men, I pray yow to be glad.  
Thus endeth heer my tale of Ianuarie ;  
God bless us and his moder Seinte Marie !

Here is ended the Marchantes Tale of Ianuarie.

---

2394, 5. E. hadde. 2397. Cm. Pt. om. his. 2405. Cp. Pt. Hl. I-stabled ;  
Ln. stablid. 2416. E. om. to. 2418. Hn. Hl. add Amen.  
COLOPHON. So E. Hn. ; Hl. Here endith the marchauntes tale.

## EPILOGUE TO THE MARCHANTES TALE.



‘**E**Y! goddes mercy!’ seyde our Hoste tho,  
 ‘Now swich a wyf I pray god kepe me fro!      2420  
 Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilitees  
 In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees  
 Ben they, us sely men for to deceyve,  
 And from a sothe ever wol they weyve;  
 By this Marchauntes Tale it preveth weel.      2425  
 But doutelees, as trewe as any steel  
 I have a wyf, though that she povre be;  
 But of hir tonge a labbing shrewe is she,      (10)  
 And yet she hath an heep of vyces mo;  
 Ther-of no fors, lat alle swiche things go.      2430  
 But, wite ye what? in conseil be it seyde,  
 Me reweth sore I am un-to hir teyd.  
 For, and I sholde rekenen every vyce  
 Which that she hath, y-wis, I were to nyce,  
 And cause why; it sholde reported be      2435  
 And told to hir of somme of this meynee;  
 Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,  
 Sin wommen connen outen swich chaffare;      (20)  
 And eek my wit suffyseth nat ther-to  
 To tellen al; wherfor my tale is do.’      2440

---

HEADING. E. The Prologe of the Squieres Tale; Hn. Here folwen the  
 Wordes of the Worthy Hoost to the Frankeleyn; Pt. The prologe of the  
 Frankeleyn. 2419. E. oure Hoost; Hl. our hoste. 2421. Hl. subtilitees;  
 E. Hn. subtiltees. 2424. E. Hn. sooth; Pt. Hl. soth (*not sothe*); see G.  
 167, 662.

GROUP F.

THE SQUIERES TALE.

(T. 10315-10334).

[THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE.]

'SQUIER, com neer, if it your wille be,  
And sey somewhat of love; for, certes, ye  
Connen ther-on as muche as any man.'  
'Nay, sir,' quod he, 'but I wol seye as I can  
With hertly wille; for I wol nat rebelle 5  
Agayn your lust; a tale wol I telle.  
Have me excused if I speke amis,  
My wil is good; and lo, my tale is this.

**Here biginneth the Squieres Tale.**

At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye, (1)  
Ther dwelte a king, that werreyed Russye, 10  
Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty man.  
This noble king was cleped Cambinskan,  
Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun  
That ther nas no-wher in no regioun  
So excellent a lord in alle thing; 15  
Him lakked noght that longeth to a king.  
As of the secte of which that he was born  
He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn; (10)  
And ther-to he was hardy, wys, and riche,  
Pitous and Iust, and ever-more y-liche 20

---

HEADING (*after* l. 8). So E. Hn. Pt. Hl. 20. Hn. Pictous and Iust and euere moore yliche; E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. And pitous and Iust alwey yliche (*with first syllable deficient*).

Sooth of his word, benigne and honorable,  
 Of his corage as any centre stable;  
 Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous  
 As any bachelor of al his hous.  
 A fair persone he was and fortunat, 25  
 And kepte alwey so wel royal estat,  
 That ther was nowher swich another man.  
 This noble king, this Tartre Cambinskan (20)  
 Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,  
 Of whiche the eldeste highte Algarsyf, 30  
 That other sone was cleped Cambalo.  
 A doghter hadde this worthy king also,  
 That yongest was, and highte Canacee.  
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee,  
 It lyth nat in my tonge, nin my conning; 35  
 I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing.  
 Myn English eek is insufficient;  
 It moste been a rethor excellent, (30)  
 That coude his colours longing for that art,  
 If he sholde hir discryven every part. 40  
 I am non swich, I moot speke as I can.  
 And so bifel that, whan this Cambinskan  
 Hath twenty winter born his diademe,  
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,  
 He leet the feste of his nativitee 45  
 Don cryen thurghout Sarray his citee,  
 The last Idus of March, after the yeer.  
 Phebus the sonne ful Ioly was and cleer; (40)  
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun  
 In Martes face, and in his mansioun 50  
 In Aries, the colerik hote signe.  
 Ful lusty was the weder and benigne,  
 For which the foules, agayn the sonne shene,  
 What for the seson and the yonge grene,  
 Ful loude songen hir affeccious; 55  
 Him semed han geten hem protecciouns  
 Agayn the swerd of winter kene and cold.

23. and strong] E. strong and. 35. nin] Cp. Pt. Ln. ne in; Hl. ne.  
 38. E. I moste, *misuritten*; Hl. He moste; *rest* It moste. 46. Hn.  
 thurghout; *rest* thurgh. 53. E. Hn. foweles.

This Cambinskan, of which I have yow told, (50)  
 In royal vestiment sit on his deys,  
 With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys, 60  
 And halt his feste, so solempne and so riche  
 That in this world ne was ther noon it liche.  
 Of which if I shal tellen al tharray,  
 Than wolde it occupye a someres day ;  
 And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse 65  
 At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.  
 I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,  
 Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes. (60)  
 Eek in that lond, as tellen knightes olde,  
 Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee holde, 70  
 That in this lond men recche of it but smal ;  
 Ther nis no man that may reporten al.  
 I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme,  
 And for it is no fruit but los of tyme ;  
 Un-to my firste I wol have my recours. 75  
 And so bifel that, after the thridde cours,  
 Whyl that this king sit thus in his nobleye,  
 Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges pleye (70)  
 Biforn him at the bord deliciously,  
 In at the halle-dore al sodeynly 80  
 Ther cam a knight up-on a stede of bras,  
 And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.  
 Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,  
 And by his syde a naked swerd hanging ;  
 And up he rydeth to the heighe bord. 85  
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word  
 For merveille of this knight ; him to biholde  
 Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde. (80)  
 This strange knight, that cam thus sodeynly,  
 Al armed save his heed ful richely, 90  
 Saluëth king and queen, and lordes alle,  
 By ordre, as they seten in the halle,  
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce  
 As wel in speche as in contenance,

62. E. Hl. om. ne. 68. E. nor ; rest ne. 78. E. Hn. mynstrals. 86. E. spoken ; Cm. spokyn ; rest spoke. 91. E. Saleweth ; Hn. Cm. Salueth ; rest salued.

That Gawain, with his olde curteisye,	95
Though he were come ageyn out of Fairye,	
Ne coude him nat amende with a word.	
And after this, biforn the heighe bord,	(90)
He with a manly voys seith his message,	
After the forme used in his langage,	100
With-ouen vyce of sillable or of lettre ;	
And, for his tale sholde seme the better,	
Accordant to his wordes was his chere,	
As techeth art of speche hem that it lere ;	
Al-be-it that I can nat sounne his style,	105
Ne can nat climben over so heigh a style,	
Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,	
Thus muche amounteth al that ever he mente,	(100)
If it so be that I have it in minde.	
He seyde, 'the king of Arabie and of Inde,	110
My lige lord, on this solempne day	
Saluëth yow as he best can and may,	
And sendeth yow, in honour of your feste,	
By me, that am al redy at your heste,	
This stede of bras, that esily and wel	115
Can, in the space of o day naturel,	
This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,	
Wher-so yow list, in droghte or elles shoures,	(110)
Beren your body in-to every place	
To which your herte wilneth for to pace	120
With-ouen wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair ;	
Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air	
As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,	
This same stede shal bere yow ever-more	
With-ouen harm, til ye be ther yow leste,	125
Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste ;	
And turne ayeyn, with wrything of a pin.	
He that it wroghte coude ful many a gin ;	(120)
He wayted many a constellacioun	
Er he had doon this operacioun ;	130

---

96. E. Cm. comen.      105. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. it ; E. Hn. Cm. *omit.*      110. E. Hn. Arabe.      113, 114. E. feeste, heeste.      115. E. Hn. weel.      116. E. naturel.      123. E. whan þat ; *rest omit* þat.



And knew ful many a seel and many a bond.

This mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,  
Hath swich a might, that men may in it see  
Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee  
Un-to your regne or to your-self also ; 135

And openly who is your freend or foo.  
And over al this, if any lady bright  
Hath set hir herte on any maner wight, (130)  
If he be fals, she shal his treson see,  
His newe love and al his subtiltee 140

So openly, that ther shal no-thing hyde.  
Wherfor, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,  
This mirour and this ring, that ye may see,  
He hath sent to my lady Canacee,  
Your excellente doghter that is here. 145

The vertu of the ring, if ye wol here,  
Is this ; that, if hir lust it for to were  
Up-on hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere, (140)  
Ther is no foul that fleeth under the hevene  
That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene, 150

And knowe his mening openly and pleyne,  
And answeere him in his langage ageyn.  
And every gras that groweth up-on rote  
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do bote,  
Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde. 155

This naked swerd, that hangeth by my syde,  
Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye smyte,  
Thurgh-out his armure it wol kerve and byte, (150)  
Were it as thikke as is a branched ook ;  
And what man that is wounded with the strook 160

Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,  
To stroke him with the platte in thilke place  
Ther he is hurt : this is as muche to seyn,  
Ye mote with the platte swerd ageyn  
Stroke him in the wounde, and it wol close ; 165

This is a verry sooth, with-oute glose,

---

138. E. Pt. in ; *rest* on.      144. E. vn-to ; Cm. on-to ; *rest* to.      158. E.  
wol hym ; *rest omit* hym.      160. E. a ; Cm. that ; *rest* the.      162. Hn.  
platte ; *rest* plat (*see* 164).      E. Cm. that ; *rest* thilke.      164. E. Cm. Pt. plat ;  
*rest* platte.      165. E. Cm. Strike ; *rest* Stroke.

It failleth nat whyl it is in your hold.'

And whan this knight hath thus his tale told, (160)  
He rydeth out of halle, and doun he lighte.

His stede, which that shoon as sonne brighte, 170  
Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.

This knight is to his chambre lad anon,  
And is unarmed and to mete y-set.

The presentes ben ful royally y-fet,  
This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour, 175

And born anon in-to the heighe tour  
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore ;

And un-to Canacee this ring was bore (170)  
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.

But sikerly, with-ouen any fable, 180  
The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,

It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed.

Ther may no man out of the place it dryve

For noon engyn of windas or polyve ;

And cause why, for they can nat the craft. 185

And therefore in the place they han it laft

Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere

To voyden him, as ye shal after here. (180)

Greet was the prees, that swarmeth to and fro,

To gauren on this hors that stondest so ; 190

For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,

So wel proporcioned for to ben strong,

Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye ;

Ther-with so horsly, and so quik of yë

As it a gentil Poilleys courser were. 195

For certes, fro his tayl un-to his ere,

Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende

In no degree, as al the peple wende. (190)

But evermore hir moste wonder was,

How that it coude goon, and was of bras ; 200

It was of Fairye, as the peple semed.

Diverse folk diversely they demed ;

171. Hl. as stille ; *rest om.* as. 173. E. vn-to ; *the rest* to. 178. E.  
Cm. this ; *rest* the. 184. E. ne ; *rest* or. 189. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. swarmed.  
195. E. Poilleys. 200. E. go. 201. E. Hn. a ; Cm. as ; *rest* of. E.  
Cm. al the ; *rest omit* al. 202. they] Hn. Cp. Pt. han ; Ln. haue.

As many hedes, as many wittes ther been.  
 They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,  
 And maden skiles after hir fantasies, 205  
 Rehersinge of thise olde poetryes,  
 And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,  
 The hors that hadde wings for to flee; (200)  
 Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,  
 That broghte Troye to destruccion, 210  
 As men may in thise olde gestes rede.  
 'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is evermore in drede;  
 I trowe som men of armes been ther-inne,  
 That shapen hem this citee for to winne.  
 It were right good that al swich thing were knowe.' 215  
 Another rownded to his felawe lowe,  
 And seyde, 'he lyeth, it is rather lyk  
 An apparence y-maad by som magyk, (210)  
 As Iogelours pleyen at thise festes grete.'  
 Of sondry doutes thus they Iangle and trete, 220  
 As lewed peple demeth comunly  
 Of thinges that ben maad more subtilly  
 Than they can in her lewednes comprehende;  
 They demen gladly to the badder ende.  
 And somme of hem wondred on the mirour, 225  
 That born was up in-to the maister-tour,  
 How men mighte in it swiche thinges see.  
 Another answerde, and seyde it mighte wel be (220)  
 Naturelly, by composiciouns  
 Of angles and of slye reflexiouns, 230  
 And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.  
 They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,  
 And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves  
 Of queynte mirours and of prospectyves,  
 As knowen they that han hir bokes herd. 235  
 And othere folk han wondred on the swerd  
 That wolde percen thurgh-out every-thing;  
 And fille in speche of Thelophus the king, (230)

203. E. hedges; Hn. heuedes; Cp. heedes; *rest* hedes (hedis). Hl. om. ther.  
 206. thise] Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. the. 207. E. that it; *rest omit* that. 211.  
 Hl. may; *rest omit*. 217. E. Cm. it; *rest* for it. 223. E. lewednesse; Hl.  
 lewednes. 226. E. hye; Cm. hyghe; *rest* maister.

And of Achilles with his queynte spere,  
 For he coude with it bothe hele and dere, 240  
 Right in swich wyse as men may with the sword  
 Of which right now ye han your-selven herd.  
 They speken of sondry harding of metal,  
 And speke of medicynes ther-with-al,  
 And how, and whanne, it sholde y-harded be ; 245  
 Which is unknowe algates unto me.  
 Tho speke they of Canaceës ring,  
 And seyden alle, that swich a wonder thing (240)  
 Of craft of ringes herde they never non,  
 Save that he, Moyses, and king Salomon 250  
 Hadde a name of konning in swich art.  
 Thus seyn the peple, and drawn hem apart.  
 But nathelees, somme seyden that it was  
 Wonder to maken of fern-asshen glas,  
 And yet nis glas nat lyk asshen of fern ; 255  
 But for they han y-knowen it so fern,  
 Therefore cesseth her Iangling and her wonder.  
 As sore wondren somme on cause of thonder, (250)  
 On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on mist,  
 And alle thing, til that the cause is wist. 260  
 Thus Iangle they and demen and devyse,  
 Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse.  
 Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,  
 And yet ascending was the beest royal,  
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran, 265  
 Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambynskan,  
 Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hye.  
 Toform him gooth the loude minstraleye, (260)  
 Til he cam to his chambre of parements,  
 Ther as they sownen diverse instruments, 270  
 That it is lyk an heven for to here.  
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,  
 For in the Fish hir lady sat ful hye,

239. E. Cm. with ; *rest* for. 251. *All* Hadde (Had). 256. Hl.  
 i-knowen ; *rest* knowen. 260. E. Hl. on alle ; *rest om.* on. 262. E. Hn.  
 the bord ; *rest* his bord. 265. Hn. Aldiran ; Hl. adryan ; *rest* Aldrian.  
 266. Hl. *repeats* this ; *rest omit 2nd* this. 269, 270. E. parementz, Instru-  
 mentz. 271. Hl. Ln. heuen ; *rest* heuene.

And loketh on hem with a freendly yë.

This noble king is set up in his trone. 275

This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,

And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.

Heer is the revel and the Iolitee (270)

That is nat able a dul man to devyse.

He moste han knowen love and his servyse, 280

And been a festlich man as fresh as May,

That sholde yow devysen swich array.

Who coude telle yow the forme of daunces,

So uncouth and so fresshe contenaunces,

Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges 285

For drede of Ialouse mennes aperceyvinges?

No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.

Therefor I passe of al this lustiheed; (280)

I seye na-more, but in this Iolynesse

I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse. 290

The styward bit the spyces for to hye,

And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.

The usshers and the squyers ben y-goon;

The spyces and the wyn is come anon.

They ete and drinke; and whan this hadde an ende, 295

Un-to the temple, as reson was, they wende.

The service doon, they soupen al by day.

What nedeth yow rehercen hir array? (290)

Ech man wot wel, that at a kinges feeste

Hath plentee, to the moste and to the leeste, 300

And deyntees mo than been in my knowing.

At-after soper gooth this noble king

To seen this hors of bras, with al the route

Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.

Swich wondring was ther on this hors of bras 305

That, sin the grete sege of Troye was,

Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,

Ne was ther swich a wondring as was tho. (300)

But fynally the king axeth this knight

275. E. Cm. vp in; rest vp on. 288. E. Hn. of; rest ouer. 291. Hl. the; rest omit. 298. E. me; the rest yow. 299. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. that at; E. Cm. Hl. om. at. 300. Hath (so; for Is; cf. French il y a.) 303. E. Cm. the; Hl. his; rest a.

The vertu of this courser and the might, 310  
 And preyede him to telle his governaunce.

This hors anoon bigan to trippe and daunce,  
 Whan that this knight leyde hand up-on his reyne,  
 And seyde, 'sir, ther is na-more to seyne,  
 But, whan yow list to ryden any-where, 315  
 Ye moten trille a pin, stant in his ere,  
 Which I shall telle yow bitwix vs two.

Ye mote nempne him to what place also (310)  
 Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.

And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde, 320  
 Bidde him descende, and trille another pin,  
 For ther-in lyth the effect of al the gin,

And he wol doun descende and doon your wille ;  
 And in that place he wol abyde stille,  
 Though al the world the contrarie hadde y-swore ; 325  
 He shal nat thennes ben y-drawe ne y-bore.

Or, if yow liste bidde him thennes goon,  
 Trille this pin, and he wol vanishe anoon (320)

Out of the sighte of every maner wight,  
 And come agayn, be it by day or night, 330

When that yow list to clepen him ageyn  
 In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn  
 Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful sone.  
 Ryde whan yow list, ther is na-more to done.'

Enformed whan the king was of that knight, 335  
 And hath conceyved in his wit aright

The maner and the forme of al this thing,  
 Thus glad and blythe, this noble doughty king (330)  
 Repeireth to his revel as biforn.

The brydel is un-to the tour y-born, 340  
 And kept among his Iewels leve and dere.

The hors vanissed, I noot in what manere,  
 Out of hir sighte; ye gete na-more of me.

311. Cm. preyede; Hn. preyed; E. preyde. 317. E. Hn. Cm. yow telle; rest telle yow. 322. E. ther; Cm. there; rest ther-inne, ther-in. 324. Cp. Hl. abyde; Hn. abiden; Pt. Ln. abide; E. Cm. stonde; see l. 320. 326. E. Hn. nor; the rest ne. 327. Cp. liste; Ln. luste; Hl. lust to; Cm. wit; E. Hn. Pt. list. 330. Hl. by; rest omit. 338. E. Cm. Thus; rest Ful. E. Cm. omit doughty. 241. E. Iueles.

But thus I lete in lust and Iolitee  
 This Cambynskan his lordes festeyinge, 345  
 Til wel ny the day bigan to springe.

**Explicit prima pars.      Sequitur pars secunda.**

The norice of digestioun, the slepe,  
 Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe, (340)  
 That muchel drink and labour wolde han reste ;  
 And with a galping mouth hem alle he keste, 350  
 And seyde, 'it was tyme to lye adoun,  
 For blood was in his dominacioun ;  
 Cherissheth blood, natures freend,' quod he.  
 They thanken him galpinge, by two, by three,  
 And every wight gan drawe him to his reste, 355  
 As slepe hem bad ; they toke it for the beste.  
 Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me ;  
 Ful were hir hedes of fumositee, (350)  
 That causeth drem, of which ther nis no charge.  
 They slepen til that it was pryme large, 360  
 The moste part, but it were Canacee ;  
 She was ful mesurable, as wommen be.  
 For of hir fader hadde she take leve  
 To gon to reste, sone after it was eve ;  
 Hir liste nat appalled for to be, 365  
 Nor on the morwe unfestlich for to see ;  
 And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne awook.  
 For swich a Ioye she in hir herte took (360)  
 Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,  
 That twenty tyme she changed hir colour ; 370  
 And in hir slepe, right for impressioun  
 Of hir mirour, she hadde a visioun.  
 Wherefore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,  
 She cleped on hir maistresse hir bisyde,  
 And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse. 375

Thise olde wommen that been gladly wyse,  
 As is hir maistresse, answerde hir anoon,  
 And seyde, 'madame, whider wil ye goon (370)

358. E. heddes; Cm. heedys.      366. Hn. Cm. Nor; E. III Ne; Cp. Pt.  
 Ln. For [*for* Nor].      372. E. Avisioun; *rest* a visioun.      377. E. *omits* is.

Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste.  
 'I wol,' quod she, 'aryse, for me leste 380  
 No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute.'

Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a gret route,  
 And up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve;  
 Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,  
 As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne, 385  
 That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne;  
 Noon hyer was he, whan she redy was;  
 And forth she walketh esily a pas, (380)  
 Arrayed after the lusty seson sote  
 Lightly, for to pleye and walke on fote; 390  
 Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynee;  
 And in a trench, forth in the park, goth she.  
 The vapour, which that fro the erthe glood,  
 Made the sonne to seme rody and brood;  
 But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte 395  
 That it made alle hir hertes for to lighte,  
 What for the seson and the morweninge,  
 And for the foules that she herde singe; (390)  
 For right anon she wiste what they mente  
 Right by hir song, and knew al hir entente. 400

The knotte, why that every tale is told,  
 If it be taried til that lust be cold  
 Of hem that han it after herkned yore,  
 The savour passeth ever lenger the more,  
 For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee. 405  
 And by the same reson thinketh me,  
 I sholde to the knotte condescende,  
 And maken of hir walking sone an ende. (400)

Amidde a tree fordrye, as whyt as chalk,  
 As Canacee was pleying in hir walk, 410  
 Ther sat a faucon over hir heed ful hye,  
 That with a pitous voys so gan to crye  
 That all the wode resounded of hir cry.  
 Y-beten hath she hir-self so pitously

379. E. Hn. ou; Cm. at; rest in. 382. E. Hn. an; Cm. Hl. a. 386. E.  
 Cm. foure (*rightly*); Hn. 4; rest ten. 409. E. fordryed; Cm. fordreyed; *but*  
 Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. for-drye; Hl. for-drue. 414. E. Cm. hath; rest hadde had.



With bothe hir winges, til the rede blood 415  
 Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood.  
 And ever in oon she cryde alwey and shrighthe,  
 And with hir beek hir-selven so she prighte, (410)  
 That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel beste,  
 That dwelleth either in wode or in foreste 420  
 That nolde han wept, if that he wepe coude,  
 For sorwe of hir, she shrighthe alwey so loude.  
 For ther nas never yet no man on lyve—  
 If that I coude a faucon wel discryve—  
 That herde of swich another of fairnesse, 425  
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse  
 Of shap, and al that mighte y-rekened be.  
 A faucon peregryn than semed she (420)  
 Of fremde land ; and evermore, as she stood,  
 She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood, 430  
 Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.

This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,  
 That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,  
 Thurgh which she understood wel every thing  
 That any foul may in his ledene seyn, 435  
 And coude answeere him in his ledene ageyn,  
 Hath understonde what this faucon seyde,  
 And wel neigh for the rewthe almost she deyde. (430)  
 And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,  
 And on this faucon loketh pitously, 440  
 And heeld hir lappe abroad, for wel she wiste  
 The faucon moste fallen fro the twiste,  
 When that it swowned next, for lakke of blood.  
 A longe while to wayten hir she stood  
 Till atte laste she spak in this manere 445  
 Un-to the hauk, as ye shul after here.

‘What is the cause, if it be for to telle,  
 That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?’ (440)  
 Quod Canacee un-to this hauk above.

---

416. E. Cm. *omit as.* 419, 420. E. Hn. Pt. *beest, forest ; rest beste,*  
*foreste.* 420. E. Hn. *outher ; rest eyther.* 421. E. Pt. *she ; the rest he.*  
 423. *So Cp. Hl. ; E. Hn. Cm. neuere man yet ; Pt. Ln. neuere yit man.* 433.  
 E. Hn. *baar.* 435. E. *fowel.* 438. Hl. *rewthe ; Ln. reuthe ; rest routhe.*  
 448. E. Hn. *pyne ; rest peyne.* 449. E. *the ; rest this.*

'Is this for sorwe of death or los of love? 450  
 For, as I trowe, thise ben causes two  
 That causen moost a gentil herte wo ;  
 Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke.  
 For ye your-self upon your-self yow wreke,  
 Which proveth wel, that either love or drede 455  
 Mot been encheson of your cruel dede,  
 Sin that I see non other wight yow chace.  
 For love of god, as dooth your-selven grace (450)  
 Or what may ben your help ; for west nor cest  
 Ne sey I never er now no brid ne beest 460  
 That ferde with him-self so pitously.  
 Ye sle me with your sorwe, verrailly ;  
 I have of yow so gret compassioun.  
 For goddes love, com fro the tree adoun ;  
 And, as I am a kinges doghter trewe, 465  
 If that I verrailly the cause knewe  
 Of your dise, if it lay in my might,  
 I wolde amende it, er that it were night, (460)  
 As wisly helpe me gret god of kinde !  
 And herbes shal I right y-nowe y-finde 470  
 To hele with your hurtes hastily.'

Tho shrighthe this faucon more pitously  
 Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde anoon,  
 And lyth aswowne, deed, and lyk a stoon,  
 Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take 475  
 Un-to the tyme she gan of swough awake.  
 And, after that she of hir swough gan breyde,  
 Right in hir haukes ledene thus she seyde :— (470)  
 'That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte,  
 Feling his similitude in peynes smerte, 480  
 Is preved al-day, as men may it see,  
 As wel by werk as by auctoritee ;  
 For gentil herte kytheth gentillesse.  
 I see wel, that ye han of my distresse

---

452. E. causeth ; *rest* causen.      455. E. Hn. outhur ; *rest* either.      459.  
 460. E. Hn. Est, beest ; Cp. est, best ; Cm. cst, beste ; *rest* este, beste.  
 463. E. passioun ; *rest* compassioun.      469. E. the grete ; *rest* omit the.  
 472. Hn. Cp. Pt. yet moore ; E. Cm. moore yet ; Hl. Ln. more.      477. Cm.  
 swow a-breyde.      481. E. Hl. omit it.      484 E. Cm. omit that.

T. 10799-10833.] F. THE SQUIERES TALE	475
Compassioun, my faire Canacee,	485
Of verray wommanly benignitee	
That nature in your principles hath set.	
But for non hope for to fare the bet,	(480)
But for to obeye un-to your herte free,	
And for to maken other be war by me,	490
As by the whelp chasted is the leoun,	
Right for that cause and that conclusioun,	
Whyl that I have a leyser and a space,	
Myn harm I wol confessen, er I pace.'	
And ever, whyl that oon hir sorwe tolde,	495
That other weep, as she to water wolde,	
Til that the faucon bad hir to be stille ;	
And, with a syk, right thus she seyde hir wille.	(490)
'Ther I was bred (allas ! that harde day !)	
And fostred in a roche of marbul gray	500
So tendrely, that nothing eyed me,	
I niste nat what was adversitee,	
Til I coude flee ful hye under the sky.	
Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,	
That semed welle of alle gentillesse ;	505
Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,	
It was so wrapped under humble chere,	
And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,	(500)
Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,	
That no wight coude han wend he coude feyne,	510
So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures.	
Right as a serpent hit him under floures	
Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,	
Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,	
Doth so his cerimonies and obeisaunces,	515
And kepeth in semblant alle his observances	
That sowneth in-to gentillesse of love.	
As in a toumbe is al the faire above,	(510)
And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,	

487. E. yset ; Cm. I-set ; *the rest* set, sette. 489. E. *omits* to. 491. E. Hn. chasted ; *rest* chastysed ; *I should propose to read* is chasted ; *but authority is lacking*. 492. *So* Hl. ; *rest* and for that. 498. E. Hn. wille ; *rest* tille (!) 499. E. Cm. That ; *rest* Ther. 508. MSS. trouthe, trowthe. 510. E. I ne ; Cm. I not ; *rest* no wight. 511. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. coloures. 512. hit] Hl. hut ; Ln. hideth. 516. *Pronounced* kep'th.

Swich was this ypocryte, bothe cold and hoot, 520  
 And in this wyse he served his entente,  
 That (save the feend) non wiste what he mente.  
 Til he so longe had wopen and compleyned,  
 And many a yeer his service to me feyned,  
 Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce, 525  
 Al innocent of his crouned malice,  
 For-fered of his deeth, as thoughte me,  
 Upon his othes and his seuretee, (520)  
 Graunted him love, on this condicioun,  
 That evermore myn honour and renoun 530  
 Were saved, bothe privee and apert ;  
 This is to seyn, that, after his desert,  
 I yaf him al myn herte and al my thought—  
 God woot and he, that otherwyse nought—  
 And took his herte in chaunge for myn for ay. 535  
 But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many a day,  
 "A trew wight and a theef thenken nat oon."  
 And, whan he saugh the thing so fer y-goon, (530)  
 That I had graunted him fully my love,  
 In swich a gyse as I have seyde above, 540  
 And yeven him my trewe herte, as free  
 As he swoor he his herte yaf to me ;  
 Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,  
 Fil on his knees with so devout humblesse,  
 With so heigh reverence, and, as by his chere, 545  
 So lyk a gentil love-re of manere,  
 So ravished, as it semed, for the Ioye,  
 That never Iason, ne Parys of Troye, (540)  
 Iason? certes, ne non other man,  
 Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan 550  
 To loven two, as writen folk biforn,  
 Ne never, sin the firste man was born,  
 Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,  
 Countrefete the sophimes of his art ;

520. E. the ; *the rest* this. 526. Hl. crouned ; Hn. Cp. Pt. crowned ; E.  
 corouned. 529. MSS. vp-on (*for* on). 533. Cm. Ln. Hl. and al ; *rest*  
*omit* al. 535. E. for myn ; *rest* of myn. 537. Hl. Pt. trew ; *rest* trewe.  
 542. *All* yaf his herte. 545. *Only* Cm. *om.* and. 548. E. Cm. Troilus ;  
*rest* Iason. 551. Cm. wrytyn ; *rest* writen.

Ne were worthy unbokete his galoche, 555  
 Ther doublenesse or feyning sholde approche,  
 Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me!  
 His maner was an heven for to see (550)  
 Til any womman, were she never so wys;  
 So peynted he and kembde at point-devys 560  
 As wel his wordes as his contenaunce.  
 And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,  
 And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,  
 That, if so were that any thing him smerte,  
 Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste, 565  
 Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte twiste.  
 And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,  
 That my wil was his willes instrument; (560)  
 This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil  
 In alle thing, as fer as reson fil, 570  
 Keping the boundes of my worship ever.  
 Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,  
 As him, god woot! ne never shal na-mo.  
 This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,  
 That I supposed of him noght but good. 575  
 But fynally, thus atte laste it stood,  
 That fortune wolde that he moste twinne  
 Out of that place which that I was inne. (570)  
 Wher me was wo, that is no questioun;  
 I can nat make of it discripcioun; 580  
 For o thing dar I tellen boldely,  
 I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther-by;  
 Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bileve.  
 So on a day of me he took his leve,  
 So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly 585  
 That he had felt as mucche harm as I,  
 Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh his hewe.  
 But natheles, I thoughte he was so trewe, (580)  
 And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn  
 With-inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyn; 590  
 And reson wolde eek that he moste go

555. E. vnbokelen. 557. E. Cp. dide; Cm. dede; *rest* did. 562. E.  
 Cm. *omit* so. 572. E. Hn. lief; Ln. lefe; *rest* leef. 585. Cp. *om.* that.

For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,  
 That I made vertu of necessitee,  
 And took it wel, sin that it moste be.  
 As I best mighte, I hidde fro him my sorwe, 595  
 And took him by the hond, seint Iohn to borwe,  
 And seyde him thus: "lo, I am youres al;  
 Beth swich as I to yow have been, and shal." (590)  
 What he answerde, it nedeth noght reherce,  
 Who can sey bet than he, who can do werse? 600  
 Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath he doon.  
 "Therfor bihoveth him a ful long spoon  
 That shal ete with a feend," thus herde I seye.  
 So atte laste he moste forth his weye,  
 And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him leste. 605  
 Whan it cam him to purpos for to reste,  
 I trowe he hadde thilke text in minde,  
 That "alle thing, repeiring to his kinde, (600)  
 Gladeth him-self"; thus seyn men, as I gesse;  
 Men loven of propre kinde newfangelnesse, 610  
 As briddes doon that men in cages fede.  
 For though thou night and day take of hem hede,  
 And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,  
 And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,  
 Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe, 615  
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,  
 And to the wode he wol and wormes ete;  
 So newefangel been they of hir mete, (610)  
 And loven novelryes of propre kinde;  
 No gentillesse of blood [ne] may hem binde. 620  
 So ferde this tercelet, allas the day!  
 Though he were gentil born, and fresh and gay,  
 And goodly for to seen, and humble and free,  
 He saugh up-on a tyme a kyte flee,  
 And sodeynly he loved this kyte so, 625  
 That al his love is clene fro me ago,

601. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. wel seyde; Cm. I-seyde; E. seyde. 602. E. Hn.  
 Cm. hire; rest him. 616. Hl. has here lost 8 leaves, to l. 1223. 619. E.  
 nouelrie; the rest have the plural, except Ln. none leures, a corruption of  
 nouelries. 620. I supply ne. 622. Hn. and fressh; rest omit and.  
 623. E. Hn. goodlich; rest goodly. E. Pt. om. and before humble.

And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse ;  
 Thus hath the kyte my love in hir servyse, (620)  
 And I am lorn with-outen remedye !'

And with that word this faucon gan to crye, 630  
 And swowned eft in Canaceës barme.

Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes harme,  
 That Canacee and alle hir wommen made ;  
 They niste how they mighte the faucon glade.  
 But Canacee hom bereth hir in hir lappe, 635

And softely in plastres gan hir wrappe,  
 Ther as she with hir beek had hurt hir-selve.  
 Now can nat Canacee but herbes delve (630)

Out of the grounde, and make salves newe  
 Of herbes precious, and fyne of hewe, 640

To helen with this hauk ; fro day to night  
 She dooth hir businesse and al hir might.

And by hir beddes heed she made a mewe,  
 And covered it with veluëttes blewe,  
 In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene. 645

And al with-oute, the mewe is peynted grene,  
 In which were peynted alle these false foules,  
 As beth these tidifs, tercelets, and oules, (640)

Right for despyt were peynted hem bisyde,  
 And pyes, on hem for to crye and chyde. 650

Thus lete I Canacee hir hauk keping ;  
 I wol na-more as now speke of hir ring,  
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn

How that this faucon gat hir love ageyn  
 Repentant, as the storie telleth us, 655  
 By mediacioun of Cambalus,

The kinges sone, of whiche I yow tolde.  
 But hennes-forth I wol my proces holde (650)  
 To speke of adventures and of batailles,

That never yet was herd so grete merveillles. 660

632, 633. E. Hn. Cp. barm, harm ; *rest* barme, harme. 639. E. Hn. saues ;  
*the rest* salues. 642. E. hire fulle ; *the rest* al hir. 644. Slo. velowetys.  
 647. E. ther were ypeynted ; *rest* were peynted. 648. E. Hn. tidyues ; Ln.  
 tideues ; *rest* tidifs. 649, 650. *Transposed by* Tyrwhitt. 650. And] Cp.  
 Pt. Ln. om. 657. Slo. Ln. whiche ; *rest* which. Hn. of which I to yow tolde.

First wol I telle yow of Cambynskan,  
 That in his tyme many a citee wan;  
 And after wol I speke of Algarsyf,  
 How that he wan Theodora to his wyf,  
 For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was, 665  
 Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of bras;  
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo,  
 That faught in listes with the bretheren two (660)  
 For Canacee, er that he mighte hir winne.  
 And ther I lefte I wol ageyn biginne. 670

**Explicit secunda pars. Incipit pars tercia.**

Appollo whirleth up his char so hye, [T. *om.*  
 Til that the god Mercurius hous the slye— [T. *om.*

. . . . .

—••—

**Here folwen the wordes of the Frankelin to the Squier,  
and the wordes of the Host to the Frankelin.**

'In feith, Squier, thou hast thee wel y-quit,  
 And gentilly I preise wel thy wit,'  
 Quod the Frankeleyn, 'considering thy youthe, 675  
 So feelingly thou spekest, sir, I allow the!  
 As to my doom, there is non that is here  
 Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,  
 If that thou live; god yeve thee good chaunce,  
 And in vertu sende thee continuaunce! 680  
 For of thy speche I have greet deyntee.  
 I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee, (10)  
 I hadde lever than twenty pound worth lond,  
 Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,  
 He were a man of swich discrecioun 685  
 As that ye been! fy on possessioun

664. E. Theodera. 672. Here the MSS. fail. Ln. has 8 spurious lines  
 in place of ll. 671, 672. HEADING. So E.; Hn. The prologue of the Mar-  
 chauntes tale. 676. E. allowethe; Hn. allowthe.



But-if a man be vertuous with-al.  
 I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,  
 For he to vertu listeth nat entende;  
 But for to pleye at dees, and to despende, 690  
 And lese al that he hath, is his usage.  
 And he hath lever talken with a page (20)  
 Than to comune with any gentil wight  
 Ther he mighte lerne gentillesse aright.  
 'Straw for your gentillesse,' quod our host; 695  
 'What, frankeleyn? pardee, sir, wel thou wost  
 That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste  
 A tale or two, or breken his biheste.'  
 'That knowe I wel, sir,' quod the frankeleyn;  
 'I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn 700  
 Though to this man I speke a word or two.'  
 'Telle on thy tale with-outhe wordes mo.' (30)  
 'Gladly, sir host,' quod he, 'I wol obeye  
 Un-to your wil; now herkneth what I seye.  
 I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse 705  
 As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse;  
 I prey to god that it may plesen yow,  
 Than woot I wel that it is good y-now.'

[The Frankleyn's Prologue follows immediately; see p. 482.]

---

689. E. listneth; *rest* listeth, lusteth. 695, 696. Laud 600 *has* host, wost;  
 E. Hn. Pt. hoost, woost.

## THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 11021-11040).

### The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale.

[*This Prologue follows immediately after the Words on p. 481.*]

THISE olde gentil Britons in hir dayes  
Of diverse aventures maden layes, 710  
Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge ;  
Which layes with hir instruments they songe, (40)  
Or elles redder hem for hir plesaunce ;  
And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,  
Which I shal seyn with good wil as I can. 715  
But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,  
At my biginning first I yow biseche  
Have me excused of my rude speche ;  
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn ;  
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn. 720  
I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,  
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero. (50)  
Colours ne knowe I none, with-outen drede,  
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,  
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte. 725  
Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte ;  
My spirit feleth noght of swich matere.  
But if yow list, my tale shul ye here.

---

HEADING. So E.; Ln. Incipit prologus de le Frankeleyne; Hn. Pt. Here bigyneth the Frankeleyns tale. Hl. *omits* ll. 709-1223. 712. E. whiche. 722. E. Hn. Scithero. 726. Cp. Ln. ben me to; Pt. bene to me; Hn. they ben to; E. been to.

## THE FRANKELEYNS TALE.



## Here biginneth the Frankeleyns Tale.

**I**N Armorik, that called is Britayne,  
 Ther was a knight that loved and dide his payne 730  
 To serve a lady in his beste wyse;  
 And many a labour, many a greet emprise  
 He for his lady wroghte, er she were wonne.  
 For she was oon, the faireste under sonne,  
 And eek therto come of so heigh kinrede, 735  
 That wel unnethes dorste this knight, for drede,  
 Telle hir his wo, his peyne, and his distresse.  
 But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse, (10)  
 And namely for his meke obeysaunce,  
 Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce, 740  
 That prively she fil of his accord  
 To take him for hir housbonde and hir lord,  
 Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wyves;  
 And for to lede the more in blisse hir lyves,  
 Of his free wil he swoor hir as a knight, 745  
 That never in al his lyf he, day ne night,  
 Ne sholde up-on him take no maistrye  
 Agayn hir wil, ne kythe hir Ialousye, (20)  
 But hir obeye, and folwe hir wil in al  
 As any love to his lady shal; 750  
 Save that the name of soveraynetee,  
 That wolde he have for shame of his degree.  
 She thanked him, and with ful greet humblesse  
 She seyde, 'sire, sith of your gentillesse  
 Ye profre me to have so large a reyne, 755  
 Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,

As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.  
 Sir, I wol be your humble trewe wyf, (30)  
 Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte breste.<sup>7</sup>  
 Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste. 760  
 For o thing, sires, sauflly dar I seye,  
 That frendes everich other moot obeye,  
 If they wol longe holden companye.  
 Love wol nat ben constreyned by maistrye ;  
 Whan maistrie comth, the god of love anon 765  
 Beteth hise winges, and farewel ! he is gon !  
 Love is a thing as any spirit free ;  
 Wommen of kinde desiren libertee, (40)  
 And nat to ben constreyned as a thral ;  
 And so don men, if I soth seyen shal. 770  
 Loke who that is most pacient in love,  
 He is at his avantage al above.  
 Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn ;  
 For it venquisseth, as thise clerkes seyn,  
 Things that rigour sholde never atteyne. 775  
 For every word men may nat chyde or pleyne.  
 Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I goon,  
 Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or noon. (50)  
 For in this world, certein, ther no wight is,  
 That he ne dooth or seith som-tyme amis. 780  
 Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,  
 Wyn, wo, or chaunginge of complexioun  
 Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken.  
 On every wrong a man may nat be wroken ;  
 After the tyme, moste be temperaunce 785  
 To every wight that can on governaunce.  
 And therfore hath this wyse worthy knight,  
 To live in ese, suffrance hir bihight, (60)  
 And she to him ful wisly gan to swere  
 That never sholde ther be defaute in here. 790  
 Heer may men seen an humble wys accord ;  
 Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,  
 Servant in love, and lord in mariage ;  
 Than was he bothe in lordship and servage ;

Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above, 795  
 Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love ;  
 His lady, certes, and his wyf also,  
 The which that lawe of love acordeth to. (70)

And whan he was in this prosperitee,  
 Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree, 800  
 Nat fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling was,  
 Wher-as he liveth in blisse and in solas.

Who coude telle, but he had wedded be,  
 The Ioye, the ese, and the prosperitee  
 That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf? 805

A yeer and more lasted this blisful lyf,  
 Til that the knight of which I speke of thus,  
 That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus, (80)  
 Shoop him to goon, and dwelle a yeer or tweyne  
 In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne, 810  
 To seke in armes worship and honour ;  
 For al his lust he sette in swich labour ;  
 And dwelled ther two yeer, the book seith thus.

Now wol I stinte of this Arveragus,  
 And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf, 815  
 That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes lyf.  
 For his absence wepeth she and syketh,

As doon thise noble wyves whan hem lyketh. (90)  
 She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth ;  
 Desyr of his presence hir so distreyneth, 820  
 That al this wyde world she sette at noght.

Hir frendes, whiche that knewe hir hevy thought,  
 Conforten hir in al that ever they may ;  
 They prechen hir, they telle hir night and day,  
 That causelees she sleeth hir-self, allas ! 825  
 And every confort possible in this cas  
 They doon to hir with al hir bisnesse,  
 Al for to make hir leve hir hevinesse. (100)

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,  
 Men may so longe graven in a stoon, 830  
 Til som figure ther-inne emprented be.  
 So longe han they confortd hir, til she

801. Ln. penmarke; *rest* Pedmark. 803. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde.  
 810. Cm. er (*for* eek); Pt. om. 814. E. stynten.

Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,  
 The emprenting of hir consolacioun,  
 Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage ; 835  
 She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.

And eek Arveragus, in al this care,  
 Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his welfare, (110)  
 And that he wol come hastily agayn ;  
 Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn. 840

Hir freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,  
 And preyede hir on knees, for goddes sake,  
 To come and romen hir in companye,  
 Away to dryve hir derke fantasye.  
 And finally, she graunted that requeste ; 845  
 For wel she saugh that it was for the beste.

Now stood hir castel faste by the see,  
 And often with hir freendes walketh she (120)  
 Hir to disporte up-on the bank an heigh,  
 Wher-as she many a ship and barge seigh 850  
 Seilinge hir cours, wher-as hem liste go ;  
 But than was that a parcel of hir wo.  
 For to hir-self ful ofte 'allas !' seith she,  
 'Is ther no ship, of so manye as I see,  
 Wol bringen hom my lord? than were myn herte 855  
 Al warisshed of his bittre peynes smerte.'

Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and thinke,  
 And caste hir eyen downward fro the brinke. (130)  
 But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,  
 For verray fere so wolde hir herte quake, 860  
 That on hir feet she mighte hir noght sustene.  
 Than wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,  
 And pitously in-to the see biholde,  
 And seyn right thus, with sorweful sykes colde :

'Eterne god, that thurgh thy purveyaunce 865  
 Ledest the world by certein governaunce,  
 In ydel, as men seyn, ye no-thing make ;  
 But, lord, these grisly feendly rokkes blake, (140)  
 That semen rather a foul confusioun

842. Cm. preyede ; Cp. preyed ; E. Hn. preyde ; Pt. preiden. 851. E.  
 Hn. Seillynge. 852. E. thanne. 855. E. thanne. 862. E. Thanne.

Of werk than any fair creacioun 870  
 Of swich a parfit wys god and a stable,  
 Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?  
 For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne eest,  
 Ther nis y-fostred man, ne brid, ne beest;  
 It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth. 875  
 See ye nat, lord, how mankinde it destroyeth?  
 An hundred thousand bodies of mankinde  
 Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in minde, (150)  
 Which mankinde is so fair part of thy werk  
 That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk. 880  
 Than semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee  
 Toward mankinde; but how than may it be  
 That ye swiche menes make it to destroyen,  
 Whiche menes do no good, but ever anoyen?  
 I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem leste, 885  
 By arguments, that al is for the beste,  
 Though I ne can the causes nat y-knowe.  
 But tilke god, that made wind to blowe, (160)  
 As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;  
 To clerkes lete I al disputisoun. 890  
 But wolde god that alle these rokkes blake  
 Were sonken in-to helle for his sake!  
 These rokkes sleen myn herte for the fere.'  
 Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous tere.  
 Hir freendes sawe that it was no disport 895  
 To romen by the see, but discomfort;  
 And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.  
 They leden hir by riveres and by welles, (170)  
 And eek in othere places delitables;  
 They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables. 900  
 So on a day, right in the morwe-tyde,  
 Un-to a gardin that was ther bisyde,  
 In which that they had maad hir ordinaunce  
 Of vitaille and of other purveyaunce,  
 They goon and pleye hem al the longe day. 905

873. MSS. eest, est.      874. MSS. beest, best.      881. E. Thanne. Pt.  
 cheerte.      882. E. thanne.      887. E. om. ne.      889. Cm. Cp. Pt. this is  
 (this=this is).      890. E. al this; rest om. this.      903. E. hadde.

And this was on the sixte morwe of May,  
 Which May had peynted with his softe shoures  
 This gardin ful of leves and of floures ; (180)  
 And craft of mannes hand so curiously  
 Arrayed hadde this gardin, trewely, 910  
 That never was ther gardin of swich prys,  
 But-if it were the verray paradys.  
 The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte  
 Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte  
 That ever was born, but-if to gret siknesse, 915  
 Or to gret sorwe helde it in distresse ;  
 So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.  
 At-after diner gonne they to daunce, (190)  
 And singe also, save Dorigen allone,  
 Which made alwey hir compleint and hir mone ; 920  
 For she ne saugh him on the daunce go,  
 That was hir housbonde and hir love also.  
 But nathelees she moste a tyme abyde,  
 And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.  
 Up-on this daunce, amonges othere men, 925  
 Daunced a squyer biforen Dorigen,  
 That fressher was and Iolyer of array,  
 As to my doom, than is the monthe of May. (200)  
 He singeth, daunceth, passinge any man  
 That is, or was, sith that the world bigan. 930  
 Ther-with he was, if men sholde him discryve,  
 Oon of the beste faringe man on-lyve ;  
 Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,  
 And wel biloved, and holden in gret prys.  
 And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal, 935  
 Unwiting of this Dorigen at al,  
 This lusty squyer, servant to Venus,  
 Which that y-cleped was Aurelius, (210)  
 Had loved hir best of any creature  
 Two yeer and more, as was his aventure, 940  
 But never dorste he telle hir his grevaunce ;

906. E. in ; *rest* on. 907, 939. E. hadde. 914. *So* Cm. (*see* Group F, l. 396) ; E. Hn. *made*, *and om.* for to ; Cp. Pt. Wold han made ony pensif herte light. 926. Cp. biforen ; Hn. Cm. bifore ; E. biforn. 941. E. Hn. tellen.



With-uten coppe he drank al his penaunce.  
 He was despeyred, no-thing dorste he seye,  
 Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wreye  
 His wo, as in a general compleyning ; 945  
 He seyde he lovede, and was biloved no-thing.  
 Of swich matere made he manye layes,  
 Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes, (220)  
 How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,  
 But languissheth, as a furie dooth in helle ; 950  
 And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko  
 For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.  
 In other manere than ye here me seye,  
 Ne dorste he nat to hir his wo biwreye ;  
 Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at daunces, 955  
 Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,  
 It may wel be he loked on hir face  
 In swich a wyse, as man that asketh grace ; (230)  
 But no-thing wiste she of his entente.  
 Natheless, it happed, er they thennes wente, 960  
 By-cause that he was hir neighebour,  
 And was a man of worship and honour,  
 And hadde y-knowen him of tyme yore,  
 They file in speche ; and forth more and more  
 Un-to his purpos drough Aurelius, 965  
 And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde thus :  
 ‘Madame,’ quod he, ‘by god that this world made,  
 So that I wiste it mighte your herte glade, (240)  
 I wolde, that day that your Arveragus  
 Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius, 970  
 Had went ther never I sholde have come agayn ;  
 For wel I woot my service is in vayn.  
 My guerdon is but bresting of myn herte ;  
 Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte ;  
 For with a word ye may me sleen or save, 975  
 Heer at your feet god wolde that I were grave !  
 I ne have as now no leyser more to seye ;  
 Have mercy, swete, or ye wol do me deye !’ (250)

950. E. Cm. a furey ; Hn. Pt. a fuyre ; Cp. fuyre ; Ln. fire. 956. E. Hn.  
 yong. 965. E. Hn. this ; *rest* his. 971. E. Hn. Cm. Ln. Hadde.  
 973. E. Hn. gerdon.

She gan to loke up-on Aurelius :  
 'Is this your wil,' quod she, 'and sey ye thus?' 980  
 Never erst,' quod she, 'ne wiste I what ye mente.  
 But now, Aurelie, I knowe your entente,  
 By thilke god that yaf me soule and lyf,  
 Ne shal I never been untrewed wyf  
 In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit : 985  
 I wol ben his to whom that I am knit ;  
 'Tak this for fynal answer as of me.'  
 But after that in pley thus seyde she : (260)  
 'Aurelie,' quod she, 'by heighe god above,  
 Yet wolde I graunte yow to been your love, 990  
 Sin I yow see so pitously complayne ;  
 Loke what day that, endelong Britayne,  
 Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,  
 That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon—  
 I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene 995  
 Of rokkes, that ther nis no stoon y-sene,  
 Than wol I love yow best of any man ;  
 Have heer my trouthe in al that ever I can.' (270)  
 'Is ther non other grace in yow,' quod he.  
 'No, by that lord,' quod she, 'that maked me ! 1000  
 For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.  
 Lat swiche folies out of your herte slyde.  
 What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf  
 For to go love another mannes wyf,  
 That hath hir body whan so that him lyketh?' 1005  
 Aurelius ful ofte sore syketh ;  
 Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,  
 And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde : (280)  
 'Madame,' quod he, 'this were an impossible !  
 Than moot I dye of sodein deth horrible.' 1010  
 And with that word he turned him anon.  
 Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,  
 And in the aleyes romeden up and down,  
 And no-thing wiste of this conclusioun,  
 But sodeinly bigonne revel newe 1015

987. E. Hn. Taak. 993. Cm. remoue ; Cp. Ln. remewe ; Pt. remeue. 997,  
 1010. E. Thanne. 1011. MSS. anon, anone. 1012. E. Hn. coome.

Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe ;  
 For thorisonte hath reft the sonne his light ;  
 This is as muche to seye as it was night. (290)  
 And hoom they goon in Ioye and in solas,  
 Save only wrecche Aurelius, allas ! 1020  
 He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte ;  
 He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte.  
 Him semed that he felte his herte colde ;  
 Up to the hevене his handes he gan holde,  
 And on his knowes bare he sette him down, 1025  
 And in his raving seyde his orisoun.  
 For verry wo out of his wit he breyde.  
 He niste what he spak, but thus he seyde ; (300)  
 With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne  
 Un-to the goddes, and first un-to the sonne : 1030  
 He seyde, ' Appollo, god and governour  
 Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,  
 That yevest, after thy declinacioun,  
 To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,  
 As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or hye, 1035  
 Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable yë  
 On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.  
 Lo, lord ! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn (310)  
 With-oute gilt, but thy benignitee  
 Upon my dedly herte have som pitee ! 1040  
 For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,  
 Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.  
 Now voucheth sauf that I may yow devyse  
 How that I may been holpe and in what wyse.  
 Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene, 1045  
 That of the see is chief goddesse and quene,  
 Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,  
 Yet emperesse aboven him is she : (320)  
 Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desyr  
 Is to be quiked and lightned of your fyr, 1050

1017. Lu. the orizonte. 1025. Cm. kneis ; Cp. Pt. knees. 1035. E.  
 Hn. or ; *rest* and. Pt. hic ; E. Hn. Cp. heighe ; Cm. hyghe ; Ln. hihe.  
 1036. Pt. ye ; Cm. Iye ; E. Hn. Cp. eighe ; Ln. eyhe. 1037. E. *om.* that.  
 1044. E. holpen. 1045. E. Lucina, *glossed* i. luna. 1048. E. Emperisse.  
 1050. Hn. lighted ; Cm. lyghtenyd.

For which she folweth yow ful bisily,  
 Right so the see desyreth naturelly  
 To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse  
 Bothe in the see and riveres more and lesse.  
 Wherefore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste— 1055  
 Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste—  
 That now, next at this opposicioun,  
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun, (330)  
 As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,  
 That fyve fadme at the leeste it overspringe 1060  
 The hyste rokke in Armorik Briteyne ;  
 And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne ;  
 Than certes to my lady may I seye :  
 " Holdeth your heste, the rokkes been awaye."  
 Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me ; 1065  
 Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye ;  
 I seye, preyeth your suster that she go  
 No faster cours than ye thise yeres two. (340)  
 Than shal she been evene atte fulle alway,  
 And spring-flood laste bothe night and day. 1070  
 And, but she vouche-sauf in swiche manere  
 To graunte me my sovereyn lady dere,  
 Prey hir to sinke every rok adoun  
 In-to hir owene derke regioun  
 Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne, 1075  
 Or never-mo shal I my lady winne.  
 Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke ;  
 Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheke, (350)  
 And of my peyne have som compassioun.  
 And with that word in swowne he fil adoun, 1080  
 And longe tyme he lay forth in a traunce.  
 His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,  
 Up caughte him and to bedde he hath him broght.  
 Dispeyred in this torment and this thoght  
 Lete I this woful creature lye ; 1085  
 Chese he, for me, whether he wol live or dye.  
 Arveragus, with hele and greet honour,  
 As he that was of chivalrye the flour, (360)

1063, 9. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. Thanne.  
 teeris. 1086. E. wheither.

1074. E. Hn. dirke.

1078. E.

Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.  
 O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen, 1090  
 That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne armes,  
 The fresshe knight, the worthy man of armes,  
 That loveth thee, as his owene hertes lyf.  
 No-thing list him to been imaginatyf  
 If any wight had spoke, whyl he was oute, 1095  
 To hire of love; he hadde of it no doute.  
 He nocht entendeth to no swich matere,  
 But daunceth, Iusteth, maketh hir good chere; (370)  
 And thus in Ioye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,  
 And of the syke Aurelius wol I telle. 1100  
 In langour and in torment furious  
 Two yeer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,  
 Er any foot he mighte on erthe goon;  
 Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,  
 Save of his brother, which that was a clerk; 1105  
 He knew of al this wo and al this werk.  
 For to non other creature certeyn  
 Of this matere he dorste no word seyn. (380)  
 Under his brest he bar it more secree  
 Than ever dide Pamphilus for Galathee. 1110  
 His brest was hool, with-oute for to sene,  
 But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.  
 And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure  
 In surgerye is perilous the cure,  
 But men mighte touche the arwe, or come therby. 1115  
 His brother weep and wayled prively,  
 Til atte laste him fil in remembraunce,  
 That whyl he was at Orliens in Fraunce, (390)  
 As yonge clerkes, that been likerous  
 To reden artes that been curious, 1120  
 Seken in every halke and every herne  
 Particuler sciences for to lerne,  
 He him remembred that, upon a day,  
 At Orliens in studie a book he say

1096. Cp. Pt. Ln. ther-of (*for* of it). 1100. E. Cm. I wol (wele) yow;  
*rest* wol (wil) I. 1101. E. Hn. Cm. furyus. 1109. E. Hn. baar. 1118.  
 Cm. whil; *rest* whiles. Ln. Cp. Pt. Orliaunce.

Of magik naturel, which his felawe, 1125  
 That was that tyme a bacheler of lawe,  
 Al were he ther to lerne another craft,  
 Had prively upon his desk y-laft; (400)  
 Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns,  
 Touchinge the eighte and twenty mansiouns 1130  
 That longen to the mone, and swich folye,  
 As in our dayes is nat worth a flye;  
 For holy chirches feith in our bileve  
 Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.  
 And whan this book was in his remembraunce, 1135  
 Anon for Ioye his herte gan to daunce,  
 And to him-self he seyde prively:  
 'My brother shal be warissshed hastily; (410)  
 For I am siker that ther be sciences,  
 By whiche men make diverse apparences 1140  
 Swiche as thise subtile tregetoures pleye.  
 For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye,  
 That tregetours, with-inne an halle large,  
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,  
 And in the halle rowen up and down. 1145  
 Somtyme hath semed come a grim leoun;  
 And somtyme floures springe as in a mede;  
 Somtyme a vyne, and grapes whyte and rede; (420)  
 Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;  
 And whan hem lyked, voyded it anoon. 1150  
 Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.  
 Now than conclude I thus, that if I mighte  
 At Orliens som old felawe y-finde,  
 That hadde this mones mansions in minde,  
 Or other magik naturel above, 1155  
 He sholde wel make my brother han his love.  
 For with an apparence a clerk may make  
 To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes blake (430)  
 Of Britaigne weren y-voyled everichon,

1125. E. natureel. 1129. Pt. om. the (*which seems better*). 1140.  
 E. whee (!); *for* whiche. 1141. Cm. tregettourys; Cp. tregetoures; *rest*  
 tregetours. 1147, 8. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit these two lines*. 1150. E. Cm. Ln.  
 hym; *rest* hem. 1152. E. thanne. 1155. E. natureel.

And shippes by the brinke comen and gon, 1160  
 And in swich forme endure a day or two ;  
 Than were my brother warissshed of his wo.  
 Than moste she nedes holden hir biheste,  
 Or elles he shal shame hir atte leste.'

What sholde I make a lenger tale of this? 1165  
 Un-to his brotheres bed he comen is,  
 And swich confort he yaf him for to gon  
 To Orlens, that he up stirte anon, (440)  
 And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare,  
 In hope for to ben lissed of his care. 1170

Whan they were come almost to that citee,  
 But-if it were a two furlong or three,  
 A yong clerk rominge by him-self they mette,  
 Which that in Latin thriftily hem grette,  
 And after that he seyde a wonder thing : 1175  
 'I knowe,' quod he, 'the cause of your coming';  
 And er they ferther any fote wente,  
 He tolde hem al that was in hir entente. (450)

This Briton clerk him asked of felawes  
 The whiche that he had knowe in olde dawes ; 1180  
 And he answerde him that they dede were,  
 For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,  
 And forth with this magicien is he gon  
 Hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at ese. 1185  
 Hem lakked no vitaille that mighte hem plese ;  
 So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon  
 Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon. (460)

He shewed him, er he wente to sopeer,  
 Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer ; 1190  
 Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye,  
 The gretteste that ever were seyn with yë.  
 He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,  
 And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.  
 He saugh, whan voided were thise wilde deer, 1195

---

1161. E. Hn. Pt. enduren. Hn. Cm. day; E. wowke; Cp. Pt. Ln. yeer.  
 1162, 3. E. Thanne. 1184. E. Hn. Cm. *put forth before* is. 1185. E.  
 Hn. maden. 1191-1196. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit six lines*. 1192. Cm. Iye;  
 E. Hn. eye.

These fauconers upon a fair river,  
 That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.  
 Tho saugh he knightes Iusting in a playn; (470)  
 And after this, he dide him swich plesaunce,  
 That he him shewed his lady on a daunce 1200  
 On which him-self he daunced, as him thoughte.  
 And whan this maister, that this magik wroughte,  
 Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,  
 And farewel! al our revel was ago.  
 And yet remoeved they never out of the hous, 1205  
 Whyll they saugh al this sighte merveillous,  
 But in his studie, ther-as his bookes be,  
 They seten stille, and no wight but they three. (480)  
 To him this maister called his squyer,  
 And seyde him thus: 'is redy our soper?' 1210  
 Almost an houre it is, I undertake,  
 Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,  
 Whan that these worthy men wenten with me  
 In-to my studie, ther-as my bookes be.'  
 'Sire,' quod this squyer, 'whan it lyketh yow, 1215  
 It is al redy, though ye wol right now.'  
 'Go we than soupe,' quod he, 'as for the beste;  
 This amorous folk som-tyme mote han reste.' (490)  
 At-after soper fille they in treetee,  
 What somme sholde this maistres guerdon be, 1220  
 To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,  
 And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.  
 He made it straunge, and swoor, so god him save,  
 Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,  
 Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon. 1225  
 Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,  
 Answerde thus, 'fy on a thousand pound!  
 This wyde world, which that men seye is round, (500)  
 I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.  
 This bargayn is ful drive, for we ben knit. 1230  
 Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!

1216. E. though; Hn. thogh. 1217. E. Hn. Cm. thanne. 1218. E. Hn.  
 hir reste; *rest om.* hir. 1220. E. Hn. Cm. gerdoun. 1221. Cm. remeuyn;  
 Cp. remewe; Ln. remoue. 1224. *Here* Hl. *begins again.*



But loketh now, for no necligence or slouthe,  
 Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to-morwe.  
 'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have heer my feith to borwe.'  
 To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him leste, 1235  
 And wel ny al that night he hadde his reste;  
 What for his labour and his hope of blisse,  
 His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse. (510)  
 Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,  
 To Britaigne toke they the righte way, 1240  
 Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde,  
 And been descended ther they wolde abyde;  
 And this was, as the bokes me remembre,  
 The colde frosty seson of Decembre.  
 Phebus wex old, and hewed lyk latoun, 1245  
 That in his hote declinacioun  
 Shoon as the burned gold with stremes brighte;  
 But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte, (520)  
 Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.  
 The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn, 1250  
 Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.  
 Ianus sit by the fyr, with double berd,  
 And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn.  
 Biforn him stant braun of the tusked swyn,  
 And "Nowel" cryeth every lusty man. 1255  
 Aurelius, in al that ever he can,  
 Doth to his maister chere and reverence,  
 And preyeth him to doon his diligence (530)  
 To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,  
 Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte. 1260  
 This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man,  
 That night and day he spedde him that he can,  
 To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun;  
 This is to seye, to make illusioun,  
 By swich an apparence or Iogelrye, 1265  
 I ne can no termes of astrologye,

1241. *So all; see 1184.* 1243. E. Hn. thise; Hl. these; *rest* the. 1245.  
 Cm. Pt. wex; E. Hn. Hl. Cp. wax. 1254. Hl. Cm. Cp. braun; Pt. brawne;  
 E. Hn. brawen. 1257. E. chiere; Cm. Ln. Hl. chier. 1263. E. Hn. Cm.  
 wayten. 1264. E. Cm. maken. 1265. E. a (*for* an).

That she and every wight sholde wene and seye,  
 That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye, (540)  
 Or elles they were sonken under grounde.  
 So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde 1270  
 To maken his Iapes and his wrecchednesse  
 Of swich a supersticious cursednesse.  
 His tables Toletanes forth he broght,  
 Ful wel corrected, ne ther lacked noght,  
 Neither his collect ne his expans yeres, 1275  
 Ne his rotes ne his othere geres,  
 As been his centres and his arguments,  
 And his proporcionels conveniens (550)  
 For his equacions in every thing.  
 And, by his eighte spere in his wirking, 1280  
 He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove  
 Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above  
 That in the ninthe speere considered is;  
 Ful subtilly he calculated al this.  
 Whan he had founde his firste mansioun, 1285  
 He knew the remenant by proporcioun;  
 And knew the arysing of his mone weel,  
 And in whos face, and terme, and every-deel; (560)  
 And knew ful weel the mones mansioun  
 Acordaunt to his operacioun, 1290  
 And knew also his othere observaunces  
 For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces  
 As hethen folk used in thilke dayes;  
 For which no lenger maketh he delays,  
 But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye, 1295  
 It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye.  
 Aurelius, which that yet despeired is  
 Wher he shal han his love or fare amis, (570)  
 Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;

---

1269. E. ellis. 1273. E. Hn. tolletanes; Hl. tollitanes; *rest* colletanes (!).  
 E. broght; Hn. broght. 1274. E. nought; Hn. noght. 1275. E. yeeris.  
 1276. *So all*: (E. hise, rootes, geris). 1277. Ln. centres; *rest* centris. 1278.  
 Hn. Hl. proporcioncls; E. -cioneles; Cm. -ciounys; Cp. Pt. -cions. 1280.  
 E. spere. 1283. Cm. nynte; Hl. fourthe (!); *rest* 9. 1284. E. he hadde  
 kalkuled; *rest om.* hadde. 1285. E. hadde. 1293. Cp. Pt. Hl. vsed; E. Hn.  
 vseden. 1295. E. Hn. Cm. wyke; Hl. Cp. wike; Pt. Ln. weke. 1296. Hl.  
*om.* alle.

And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle, 1300  
 That voided were thise rokkes everichon,  
 Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,  
 And seyde, 'I woful wrecche, Aurelius,  
 Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,  
 That me han holpen fro my cares colde :'  
 1305  
 And to the temple his wey forth hath he holde,  
 Wher-as he knew he sholde his lady see.  
 And whan he saugh his tyme, anon-right he, (580)  
 With dredful herte and with ful humble chere,  
 Salewed hath his sovereyn lady dere : 1310  
 'My righte lady,' quod this woful man,  
 'Whom I most drede and love as I best can,  
 And lothest were of al this world displese,  
 Nere it that I for yow have swich disece,  
 That I moste dyen heer at your foot anon, 1315  
 Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon ;  
 But certes outhere moste I dye or pleyne ;  
 Ye slee me giltelees for verray peyne. (590)  
 But of my deeth, thogh that ye have no routhe,  
 Avyseth yow, er that ye breke your trouthe. 1320  
 Repenteth yow, for thilke god above,  
 Er ye me sleen by-cause that I yow love.  
 For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight ;  
 Nat that I chalange any thing of right  
 Of yow my sovereyn lady, but your grace ; 1325  
 But in a gardin yond, at swich a place,  
 Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me ;  
 And in myn hand your trouthe pligheten ye (600)  
 To love me best, god woot, ye seyde so,  
 Al be that I unworthy be therto. 1330  
 Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,  
 More than to save myn hertes lyf right now ;  
 I have do so as ye comanded me ;  
 And if ye vouche-sauf, ye may go see.  
 Doth as yow list, have your biheste in minde, 1335  
 For quik or deed, right ther ye shul me finde ;

1302. E. Cm. hise.      1318. Pt. Cp. giltelees ; Hl. gulteles ; *rest* giltless  
 (-les).      1333. E. Hn. Hl. do ; *rest* don.      1336. E. Hn. shal ; Ln. schal.

In yow lyth al, to do me live or deye ;—  
 But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye !' (610)  
 He taketh his leve, and she astonied stood,  
 In al hir face nas a drope of blood ; 1340  
 She wende never han come in swich a trappe :  
 'Allas !' quod she, 'that ever this sholde happe !  
 For wende I never, by possibilitee,  
 That swich a monstre or merveille mighte be !  
 It is agayns the proces of nature' : 1345  
 And hoom she gooth a sorweful creature.  
 For verray fere unnethe may she go,  
 She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two, (620)  
 And swowneth, that it routhe was to see ;  
 But why it was, to no wight tolde she ; 1350  
 For out of toune was goon Arveragus.  
 But to hir-self she spak, and seyde thus,  
 With face pale and with ful sorweful chere,  
 In hir compleynt, as ye shul after here :  
 'Allas,' quod she, 'on thee, Fortune, I pleyne, 1355  
 That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne ;  
 For which, tescape, woot I no socour  
 Save only deeth or elles dishonour ; (630)  
 Oon of these two bihoveth me to chese.  
 But nathelees, yet have I lever to lese 1360  
 My lyf than of my body have a shame,  
 Or knowe my-selven fals, or lese my name,  
 And with my deth I may be quit, y-wis.  
 Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,  
 And many a mayde y-slayn hir-self, allas ! 1365  
 Rather than with hir body doon trespas ?  
 Yis, certes, lo, these stories beren wisse ;  
 Whan thretty tyraunts, ful of cursednesse, (640)  
 Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte feste,  
 They comanded his doghtres for tareste, 1370  
 And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt

---

1340. Hl. oon ; Pt. on (*for a*). 1354. E. Hn. Cm. shal. 1357. Hl.  
 Fro ; *rest* For. 1358. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. *om.* elles. 1360. Pt. Hl. *om.* to.  
 1367. Cm. bere. 1368. Cm. thretty ; Hl. thritty ; *rest xxx.* 1369. E.  
 Hadde. E. Hn. Cm. Athenes. E. at ; *rest* atte, at the.

Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delyt,  
 And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce  
 Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mischaunce!  
 For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede, 1375  
 Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede,  
 They prively ben stirt in-to a welle,  
 And dreynte hem-selven, as the bokes telle. (650)

They of Messene lete enquere and seke  
 Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke, 1380  
 On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye;  
 But was ther noon of al that companye  
 That she nas slayn, and with a good entente  
 Chees rather for to dye than assente  
 To been oppressed of hir maydenhede. 1385  
 Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede?

Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristoclidis  
 That loved a mayden, heet Stimphalides, (660)  
 Whan that hir fader slayn was on a night,  
 Un-to Dianes temple goth she right, 1390  
 And hente the image in hir handes two,  
 Fro which image wolde she never go.  
 No wight ne mighte hir handes of it arace,  
 Til she was slayn right in the selve place.  
 Now sith that maydens hadden swich despyt 1395  
 To been defouled with mannes foul delyt,  
 Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee  
 Than be defouled, as it thinketh me. (670)

What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,  
 That at Cartage birafte hir-self hir lyf? 1400  
 For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,  
 She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun  
 In-to the fyr, and chees rather to dye  
 Than any Romayn dide hir vileinye.

Hath nat Lucesse y-slayn hir-self, allas! 1405  
 At Rome, whanne she oppressed was  
 Of Tarquin, for hir thoughte it was a shame

1374. Cp. Ln. pavement. 1379. Cm. Messene; E. Hn. Hl. Mecene. 1388.  
 E. Hl. heet; Hn. Cm. highte; Cp. Ln. that hight (hiht); Pt. which hiȝt.  
 1406. Hl. whanne; E. Hn. Cm. whan; Cp. Pt. there; Ln. thare.

- To liven whan she hadde lost hir name? (680)  
 The sevene maydens of Milesie also  
 Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and wo, 1410  
 Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde oppresse.  
 Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,  
 Coude I now telle as touchinge this matere.  
 Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so dere  
 Hirselves slow, and leet hir blood to glyde 1415  
 In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,  
 And seyde, "my body, at the leeste way,  
 Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may." (690)  
 What sholde I mo ensamples heer-of sayn,  
 Sith that so manye han hem-selven slayn 1420  
 Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?  
 I wol conclude, that it is bet for me  
 To sleen my-self, than been defouled thus.  
 I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,  
 Or rather sleen my-self in som manere, 1425  
 As dide Demociones doghter dere,  
 By-cause that she wolde nat defouled be.  
 O Cedasus! it is ful greet pitee, (700)  
 To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas!  
 That slowe hem-selven for swich maner cas. 1430  
 As greet a pitee was it, or wel more,  
 The Theban mayden, that for Nichanore  
 Hir-selven slow, right for swich maner wo.  
 Another Theban mayden dide right so;  
 For oon of Macedoine hadde hir oppressed, 1435  
 She with hir deeth hir maydenhede redressed.  
 What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,  
 That for swich cas birafte hir-self hir lyf? (710)  
 How trewe eek was to Alcebiades  
 His love, that rather for to dyen chees 1440  
 Than for to suffre his body unburied be!

1408. Hn. Cm. Hl. hadde; *rest* had. 1409. Hn. Cp. Ln. Milesie; E. Cm. Melesie. 1410. Hn. Cm. Hl. verray; *rest om.* 1414. Hn. Hl. habradace; Cp. Pt. habradas; Ln. Abradas. 1430. *All* hem-self; *see* l. 1420. 1435. Cm. Massedoyne; Ln. Macedoyne; Cp. Macedoigne; Pt. Masidoigne; Hl. Macidone; E. Hn. Macidoyne. 1437. Hn. Hl. Niceratis; Cm. Nycherates. 1440. Cm. al (*for* that); E. *om.*

Lo which a wyf was Alceste,' quod she.

'What seith Omer of gode Penelopee?

Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee.

Pardee, of Laodomya is writen thus, 1445

That whan at Troye was slayn Protheselaus,

No lenger wolde she live after his day.

The same of noble Porcia telle I may; (720)

With-oute Brutus coude she nat live,

To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive. 1450

The parfit wyfhod of Arthemesyne

Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye.

O Teuta, queen! thy wyfly chastitee

To alle wyves may a mirour be.

The same thing I seye of Bilia, [T. om.

Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.' [T. om.

Thus pleyned Dorigene a day or tweye,  
Purposinge ever that she wolde deye. (730)

But nathelees, upon the thridde night,

Hom cam Arveragus, this worthy knight, 1460

And asked hir, why that she weep so sore?

And she gan wepen ever lenger the more.

'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever was I born!

Thus have I seyde,' quod she, 'thus have I sworn'—

And told him al as ye han herd bifore; 1465

It nedeth nat reherce it yow na-more.

This housbond with glad chere, in freendly wyse,

Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse: (740)

'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?'

'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'god help me so, as wis; 1470

This is to muche, and it were goddes wille.'

'Ye, wyf,' quod he, 'lat slepen that is stille;

It may be wel, paraventure, yet to-day.

Ye shul your trouthe holden, by my fay!

For god so wisly have mercy on me, 1475

1442. Cp. Ln. Alcestem; Pt. Alcesteyn; rest Alceste. 1443. E. Penelopee; rest Penolopee (-pe). 1445. Hn. Hl. Laodomya; E. Cm. Lacedomya; rest Leodamya. 1450. Cp. Cm. Hl. yiue; E. Hn. Pt. yeue. 1452. E. Honoured. 1453. Cm. Cp. Hl. queen; rest queene (quene). 1455, 1456. *These two lines are in E. and edd. only.* E. Bilyea (*edd.* Bilia; *see note*). 1457. E. pleyne; rest pleyned. 1463. E. I was; rest was I. 1467. E. Hl. chiere. 1475. Hl. on; E. Hn. Cm. vp on.

I hadde wel lever y-stiked for to be,  
 For verray love which that I to yow have,  
 But-if ye sholde your trouthe kepe and save. (750)  
 Trouthe is the hyste thing that man may kepe':—  
 But with that word he brast anon to wepe, 1480  
 And seyde, 'I yow forbede, up peyne of deeth,  
 That never, whyl thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,  
 To no wight tel thou of this aventure.  
 As I may best, I wol my wo endure,  
 Ne make no contenance of hevynesse, 1485  
 That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse.'  
 And forth he cleped a squyer and a mayde:  
 'Goth forth anon with Dorigen,' he sayde, (760)  
 'And bringeth hir to swich a place anon.'  
 They take hir leve, and on hir wey they gon; 1490  
 But they ne wiste why she thider wente.  
 He nolde no wight tellen his entente. (764)  
 Paraventure an heep of yow, y-wis, [T. *om.*  
 Wol holden him a lewed man in this, [T. *om.*  
 That he wol putte his wyf in Iupartye; [T. *om.*  
 Herkneeth the tale, er ye up-on hir crye. [T. *om.*  
 She may have bettre fortune than yow semeth; [T. *om.*  
 And whan that ye han herd the tale, demeth. [T. *om.*  
 This squyer, which that highte Aurelius, (771)  
 On Dorigen that was so amorous, 1500  
 Of aventure happed hir to mete  
 Amidde the toun, right in the quikkeste strete,  
 As she was boun to goon the wey forth-right  
 Toward the gardin ther-as she had hight.  
 And he was to the gardinward also; 1505  
 For wel he spyed, whan she wolde go  
 Out of hir hous to any maner place.  
 But thus they mette, of aventure or grace; (780)  
 And he saleweth hir with glad entente,  
 And asked of hir whiderward she wente? 1510  
 And she answerde, half as she were mad,  
 'Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,

1481. E. *om.* of. 1483. In. tel; *rest* telle; *see* l. 1591. 1493-98.  
 Found in E. only. 1500. E. In. Cm. amorus. 1503. E. boun; *rest* boun.



My trouthe for to holde, alas ! alas !'  
 Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,  
 And in his herte had greet compassioun 1515  
 Of hir and of hir lamentacioun,  
 And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,  
 That bad hir holden al that she had hight, (790)  
 So looth him was his wyf sholde breke hir trouthe ;  
 And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe, 1520  
 Consideringe the beste on every syde,  
 That fro his lust yet were him lever abyde  
 Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecchednesse  
 Agayns franchyse and alle gentillesse ;  
 For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus : 1525  
 ' Madame, seyth to your lord Arveragus,  
 That sith I see his grete gentillesse (800)  
 To yow, and eek I see wel your distresse,  
 That him were lever han shame (and that were routhe)  
 Than ye to me sholde breke thus your trouthe, 1530  
 I have wel lever ever to suffre wo  
 Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.  
 I yow relesse, madame, in-to your hond  
 Quit every surement and every bond,  
 That ye han maad to me as heer-biforn, 1535  
 Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.  
 My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never reprove  
 Of no biheste, and here I take my leve, (810)  
 As of the treweste and the beste wyf  
 That ever yet I knew in al my lyf. 1540  
 But every wyf be-war of hir biheste,  
 On Dorigene remembreth atte leste.  
 Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,  
 As well as can a knight, with-uten drede.'  
 She thonketh him up-on hir knees al bare, 1545  
 And hoom un-to hir housbond is she fare,  
 And tolde him al as ye han herd me sayd ;  
 And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd, (820)  
 That it were impossible me to wryte ;  
 What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte ? 1550

1515. E. Hn. Cm. hadde. 1527. E. Hn. seyeth. 1534. Hn. serement ;  
 Hl. seurement.

Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf  
 In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.  
 Never eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene ;  
 He cherisseth hir as though she were a quene ;  
 And she was to him trewe for evermore. 1555  
 Of this two folk ye gete of me na-more.

Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,  
 Curseth the tyme that ever he was born : (830)  
 ‘Allas,’ quod he, ‘allas ! that I bihighte  
 Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte 1560  
 Un-to this philosophre ! how shal I do ?  
 I see na-more but that I am fordo.  
 Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,  
 And been a begger ; heer may I nat dwelle,  
 And shamen al my kinrede in this place, 1565  
 But I of him may gete better grace.  
 But nathelees, I wol of him assaye,  
 At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye, (840)  
 And thanke him of his grete curteisye ;  
 My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye.’ 1570

With herte soor he gooth un-to his cofre,  
 And broghte gold un-to this philosophre,  
 The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse,  
 And him bisecheth, of his gentillesse,  
 To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt, 1575  
 And seyde, ‘maister, I dar wel make avaunt,  
 I failed never of my trouthe as yit ;  
 For sikerly my dette shal be quit (850)  
 Towardes yow, how-ever that I fare  
 To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare. 1580  
 But wolde ye vouche-sauf, up-on seurtee,  
 Two yeer or three for to respyten me,  
 Than were I wel ; for elles moot I selle  
 Myn heritage ; ther is na-more to telle.’  
 This philosophre sobrely answerde, 1585

---

1556. E. *om.* two. 1580. E. Hn. Cp. a-begged ; Ln. abigged ; Hl. a  
 begge ; Cm. Pt. a beggere. 1581. Cm. Cp. Hl. seurte ; Pt. swerte ; E.  
 Hn. seuretee. 1583. E. Thanne.

And seyde thus, whan he thise wordes herde :  
 'Have I nat holden covenant un-to thee?'  
 'Yes, certes, wel and trewely,' quod he. (86c)  
 'Hastow nat had thy lady as thee lyketh?'  
 'No, no,' quod he, and sorwefully he syketh. 1590  
 'What was the cause? tel me if thou can.'  
 Aurelius his tale anon bigan,  
 And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifore ;  
 It nedeth nat to yow reherce it more.  
 He seide, 'Arveragus, of gentillesse, 1595  
 Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse  
 Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals.'  
 The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als, (870)  
 How looth hir was to been a wikked wyf,  
 And that she lever had lost that day hir lyf, 1600  
 And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh innocence :  
 'She never erst herde speke of apparence ;  
 That made me han of hir so greet pitee.  
 And right as frely as he sente hir me,  
 As frely sente I hir to him ageyn. 1605  
 This al and som, ther is na-more to seyn.'

This philosophre answerde, 'leve brother,  
 Everich of yow dide gentilly til other. (880)  
 Thou art a squyer, and he is a knight ;  
 But god forbede, for his blisful might, 1610  
 But-if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede  
 As wel as any of yow, it is no drede !  
 Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound,  
 As thou right now were copen out of the ground,  
 Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me. 1615  
 For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee  
 For al my craft, ne noght for my travaille.  
 Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitaille ; (890)  
 It is y-nogh, and farewel, have good day :'  
 And took his hors, and forth he gooth his way. 1620

---

1596. E. Hn. Hadde. 1602. E. Hn. III. hadde herd ; *rest* herde (herd).  
 1606. E. Hn. This ; *rest* This is. 1613. E. releesse. 1614. Cp. Hl. crope ;  
 Ln. crepe. Cm. *om.* the. 1616. E. Cm. Cp. taken.

Lordinges, this question wolde I aske now, 1621  
Which was the moste free, as thinketh yow?  
Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.  
I can na-more, my tale is at an ende. (896)

**Here is ended the Frankeleyns Tale.**

\* \* For ll. 11929-34 in Tyrwhitt's text, see Note at the foot of p. 289; for ll. 11935-12902, see pp. 290-319; for ll. 12903-15468, see pp. 165-289.

---

1621. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. *ins.* thanne *before* wolde. COLOPHON. *From* E.;  
Hn. Here endeth, &c.; Pt. Thus endeth the Frankleyn his tale.

GROUP G.

THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

\* \* *In Tyrwhitt's text, ll. 15469-15489; see p. 508.*



The Prologe of the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

THE ministre and the norice un-to vyces,  
Which that men clepe in English ydelnesse,  
That porter of the gate is of delycles,  
To eschue, and by hir contrarie hir oppresse,  
That is to seyn, by leueful bisnesse, 5  
Wel oghten we to doon al our entente,  
Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.

For he, that with his thousand cordes slye  
Continuelly us waiteth to biclappe,  
Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye, 10  
He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe,  
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,  
He nis nat war the feend hath him in honde;  
Wel oughte us werche, and ydelnes withstonde.

And though men dradden never for to dye, 15  
Yet seen men wel by reson doutelees,  
That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,  
Of which ther never comth no good encrees;  
And seen, that slouthe hir holdeth in a lees  
Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke, 20  
And to deuouren al that othere swinke.

---

7. Hn. Ill. hente; E. shente, Pt. shent, Ln. schent, *wrongly*. 17. E. Hn.  
Pt. Ln. Hl. roten; Cm. rote. 18. E. Hn. no good nencrees; Pt. Ln. non  
encrese; Hl. good encres; Cm. encrees. 19. Cm. hire; Pt. hare; Hn. Ln.  
hir; E. it; Hl. her.

And for to putte us fro swich ydelnesse,  
 That cause is of so greet confusioun,  
 I have heer doon my feithful bisnesse,  
 After the legende, in translacioun 25  
 Right of thy glorious lyf and passioun,  
 Thou with thy gerland wroght of rose and lilie;  
 Thee mene I, mayde and martir, scint Cecilie!

*Inuocacio ad Mariam.*

AND thou that flour of virgines art alle,  
 Of whom that Bernard list so wel to wryte, 30  
 To thee at my biginning first I calle;  
 Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endyte  
 Thy maydens deeth, that wan thurgh hir meryte  
 The eternal lyf, and of the feend victorie,  
 As man may after reden in hir storie. 35

Thou mayde and mooder, doghter of thy sone,  
 Thou welle of mercy, sinful soules cure,  
 In whom that god, for bountee, chees to wone,  
 Thou humble, and heigh over every creature,  
 Thou nobledest so ferforth our nature, 40  
 That no desdeyn the maker hadde of kinde,  
 His sone in blode and flesh to clothe and winde.

Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydes  
 Took mannes shap the eternal love and pees,  
 That of the tryne compas lord and gyde is, 45  
 Whom erthe and see and heven, out of relees,  
 Ay herien; and thou, virgin wemmelees,  
 Bar of thy body, and dweltest mayden pure,  
 The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence 50  
 With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee  
 That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,

---

27. Hn. Pt. of; E. Cm. Ln. Hl. with. 28. Hn. Cm. Pt. Ln. martir seinte  
 (seint); Hl. martir; E. mooder. 32. Hn. mendite (*showing the scansion*).  
 34, 44. E. eterneel; Hn. Cm. eternal. 43. E. Hn. Cm. Pt. sydis.

Nat only helpest hem that preyen thee,  
 But ofte tyme, of thy benignitee,  
 Ful frely, er that men thyn help biseche, 55  
 Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche.

Now help, thou meke and blisful fayre mayde,  
 Me, flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle ;  
 Think on the womman Cananee, that sayde  
 That whelpes eten somme of the crommes alle 60  
 That from hir lordes table been y-falle ;  
 And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,  
 Be sinful, yet accepte my bileve.

And, for that feith is deed with-outen werkes,  
 So for to werken yif me wit and space, 65  
 That I be quit fro thennes that most derk is !  
 O thou, that art so fayr and ful of grace,  
 Be myn advocat in that heighe place  
 Ther-as withouten ende is songe 'Osanne,'  
 Thou Cristes mooder, doghter dere of Anne ! 70

And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,  
 That troubled is by the contagioun  
 Of my body, and also by the wighte  
 Of erthly luste and fals affecciou ;  
 O haven of refut, o salvacioun 75  
 Of hem that been in sorwe and in distresse,  
 Now help, for to my werk I wol me dresse.

Yet preye I yow that reden that I wryte,  
 Foryeve me, that I do no diligence  
 This ilke storie subtilly to endyte ; 80  
 For both have I the wordes and sentence  
 Of him that at the seintes reverence  
 The storie wroot, and folwe hir legende,  
 And prey yow, that ye wol my werk amende.

---

54. E. often ; Hn. Cm. ofte. 80. Hn. Cm. tendite (*shewing the scansion*).  
 82. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. him ; *but* Cp. Pt. Ln. hem. 83. Cm. folwe ; E. Hn. Hl.  
 folwen ; Cp. Pt. Ln. folowen. 84. E. I pray ; Cp. And pray I ; *rest* And  
 pray (*or* prei, *or* preye).

*Interpretacio nominis Cecilie, quam ponit frater Iacobus  
Ianuensis in Legenda Aurea.*

FIRST wolde I yow the name of seint Cecilie 85  
Expoune, as men may in hir storie see,  
It is to seye in English 'hevenes lilie,'  
For pure chastnesse of virginitee;  
Or, for she whytnesse hadde of honestee,  
And grene of conscience, and of good fame 90  
The sote savour, 'lilie' was hir name.

Or Cecile is to seye 'the wey to blinde,'  
For she ensample was by good techinge;  
Or elles Cecile, as I writen finde,  
Is ioyned, by a maner conioininge 95  
Of 'hevene' and 'Lia'; and heer, in figuringe,  
The 'heven' is set for thoght of holinesse,  
And 'Lia' for hir lasting businesse.

Cecile may eek be seyde in this manere,  
'Wanting of blindnesse,' for hir grete light 100  
Of sapience, and for hir thewes clere;  
Or elles, lo! this maydens name bright  
Of 'hevene' and 'leos' comth, for which by right  
Men mighte hir wel 'the heven of peple' calle,  
Ensample of gode and wyse werkes alle. 105

For 'leos' 'peple' in English is to seye,  
And right as men may in the hevene see  
The sonne and mone and sterres every weye,  
Right so men gostly, in this mayden free,  
Seyen of feith the magnanimittee, 110  
And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,  
And sondry werkes, brighte of excellence.

---

HEADING. *In margin of E. Hn. (E. om. Aurea).* 85. *E. omits yow.*  
91. *E. favour; rest savour; see l. 229.* 95. *E. manere.* 110. *E. Syen;*  
*Cp. Ln. Seyen; Hn. Sayen.*



And right so as thise philosophres wryte  
 That heven is swift and round and eek brenninge,  
 Right so was fayre Cecilie the whyte 115  
 Ful swift and bisy ever in good werkinge,  
 And round and hool in good perseveringe,  
 And brenning ever in charitee ful brighte ;  
 Now have I yow declared what she highte.

*Explicit.*

**Here biginneth the Seconde Nonnes Tale, of the lyf  
 of Seinte Cecile.**

**T**HIS mayden bright Cecilie, as hir lyf seith, 120  
 Was comen of Romayns, and of noble kinde,  
 And from hir cradel up fostred in the feith  
 Of Crist, and bar his gospel in hir minde ;  
 She never cessed, as I writen finde,  
 Of hir preyere, and god to love and drede, 125  
 Biseking him to kepe hir maydenhede.

And when this mayden sholde unto a man  
 Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,  
 Which that y-cleped was Valerian,  
 And day was comen of hir mariage, 130  
 She, ful devout and humble in hir corage,  
 Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful fayre,  
 Had next hir flesh y-clad hir in an heyre.

And whyl the organs maden melodye,  
 To god alone in herte thus sang she ; 135  
 ‘O lord, my soule and eek my body gye  
 Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be :’  
 And, for his love that deyde upon a tree,  
 Every seconde or thridde day she faste,  
 Ay biddinge in hir orisons ful faste. 140

---

134. Hl. Hn. organs ; Ln. orgens ; E. Orgues ; Cp. Orgles ; Pt. Orgels.  
 137. E. it ; *rest* I. 138. Hn. Cm. Cp. Hl. deyde ; E. dyde. 139. E. Hn.  
 and ; *rest* or.

The night cam, and to bedde moste she gon  
 With hir housbonde, as ofte is the manere,  
 And prively to him she seyde anon,  
 'O swete and wel biloved spouse dere,  
 Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it here, 145  
 Which that right fain I wolde unto yow seye,  
 So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye.'

Valerian gan faste unto hir swere,  
 That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,  
 He sholde never-mo biwreien here; 150  
 And thanne at erst to him thus seyde she,  
 'I have an angel which that loveth me,  
 That with greet love, wher-so I wake or slepe,  
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe.

And if that he may felen, out of drede, 155  
 That ye me touche or love in vileinye,  
 He right anon wol slee yow with the dede,  
 And in your yowthe thus ye shulden dye;  
 And if that ye in clene love me gye,  
 He wol yow loven as me, for your clenness, 160  
 And shewen yow his Ioye and his brightnesse.'

Valerian, corrected as god wolde,  
 Answerde agayn, 'if I shal trusten thee,  
 Lat me that angel se, and him biholde;  
 And if that it a verray angel be, 165  
 Than wol I doon as thou hast preyed me;  
 And if thou love another man, for sothe  
 Right with this swerd than wol I slee yow bothe.'

Cecile answerde anon right in this wyse,  
 'If that yow list, the angel shul ye see, 170  
 So that ye trowe on Crist and yow baptyse.  
 Goth forth to Via Apia,' quod she,  
 'That fro this toun ne stant but myles three,  
 And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle,  
 Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow telle. 175

147. E. me; rest it; see l. 150.  
 170. 171. on] E. in.

152, 164. E. aungel; but angel in 165,

Telle hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem sente,  
 To shewen yow the gode Urban the olde,  
 For secree nedes and for good entente.  
 And whan that ye seint Urban han biholde,  
 Telle him the wordes whiche I to yow tolde; 180  
 And whan that he hath purged yow fro sinne,  
 Thanne shul ye see that angel, er ye twinne.'

Valerian is to the place y-gon,  
 And right as him was taught by his lerninge,  
 He fond this holy olde Urban anon 185  
 Among the seintes buriels lotinge.  
 And he anon, with-ouen tarynge,  
 Dide his message; and whan that he it tolde,  
 Urban for Ioye his hondes gan up holde.

The teres from his yën leet he falle— 190  
 'Almighty lord, o Iesu Crist,' quod he,  
 'Sower of chast conseil, herde of us alle,  
 The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee  
 That thou hast sowe in Cecile, tak to thee!  
 Lo, lyk a bisy bee, with-ouen gyle, 195  
 Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile!

For thilke spouse, that she took but now  
 Ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth here,  
 As meke as ever was any lamb, to yow!  
 And with that worde, anon ther gan appere 200  
 An old man, clad in whyte clothes clere,  
 That hadde a book with lettre of golde in honde,  
 And gan biforn Valerian to stonde.

Valerian as deed fil doun for drede  
 Whan he him saugh, and he up hente him tho, 205  
 And on his book right thus he gan to rede—

---

178. E. thynges; *rest* nedes, nedis, needes. 180. E. Cp. Ln. Hl. whiche  
 þat I; *but* Hn. Cm. Pt. *omit* that. 190. Ln. yen; *rest* eyen, cyhen. 192.  
 E. Hn. hierde. 197. E. Hl. right; *rest* but. 203. E. bifore; Hl. to-forn;  
*rest* biforn, biforne, before.

'Oo Lord, oo feith, oo god with-uten mo,  
 Oo Cristendom, and fader of alle also,  
 Aboven alle and over al everywhere'—  
 These wordes al with gold y-writen were. 210

Whan this was rad, than seyde this olde man,  
 'Levestow this thing or no? sey ye or nay.'  
 'I leve al this thing,' quod Valerian,  
 'For sother thing than this, I dar wel say,  
 Under the hevене no wight thinke may.' 215  
 Tho vanished the olde man, he niste where,  
 And pope Urban him cristened right there.

Valerian goth hoom, and fint Cecilie  
 With-inne his chambre with an angel stonde;  
 This angel hadde of roses and of lilie 220  
 Corones two, the which he bar in honde;  
 And first to Cecile, as I understonde,  
 He yaf that oon, and after gan he take  
 That other to Valerian, hir make.

'With body clene and with unwemmed thoght 225  
 Kepeth ay wel these corones,' quod he;  
 'Fro Paradys to yow have I hem broght,  
 Ne never-mo ne shal they roten be,  
 Ne lese her sote savour, trusteth me;  
 Ne never wight shal seen hem with his yë, 230  
 But he be chaast and hate vileinyë.

And thou, Valerian, for thou so sone  
 Assentedest to good conseil also,  
 Sey what thee list, and thou shalt han thy bone.'  
 'I have a brother,' quod Valerian tho, 235  
 'That in this world I love no man so.  
 I pray yow that my brother may han grace  
 To knowe the trouthe, as I do in this place.'

---

208. E. Hn. Cm. O; Hl. On; Cp. Pt. Ln. Of. 209. E. *omits* and.  
 210-216. Hl. *omits*. 214. E. *oother*; *rest* sother. 216. E. Hn. Cm.  
 this; Pt. that; Cp. Ln. the. 217. Hl. Pt. cristened; Cm. cristenede; E. Hn.  
 Cp. cristned. 226. E. three; Hl. thre; *rest* quod he.

The angel seyde, 'god lyketh thy requeste,  
 And bothe, with the palm of martirdom, 240  
 Ye shullen come unto his blisful feste.'  
 And with that word Tiburce his brother com.  
 And whan that he the savour undernom  
 Which that the roses and the lilies caste,  
 With-inne his herte he gan to wondre faste, 245

And seyde, 'I wondre, this tyme of the yeer,  
 Whennes that sote savour cometh so  
 Of rose and lilies that I smelle heer.  
 For though I hadde hem in myn hondes two,  
 The savour mighte in me no depper go. 250  
 The sote smel that in myn herte I finde  
 Hath changed me al in another kinde.'

Valerian seyde, 'two corones han we,  
 Snow-whyte and rose-reed, that shynen clere,  
 Whiche that thyn yën han no might to see ; 255  
 And as thou smellest hem thurgh my preyere,  
 So shaltow seen hem, leve brother dere,  
 If it so be thou wolt, withouten slouthe,  
 Bileve aright and knowen verray trouthe.'

Tiburce answerde, 'seistow this to me 260  
 In soothnesse, or in dreem I herkne this?'  
 'In dremes,' quod Valerian, 'han we be  
 Unto this tyme, brother myn, y-wis.  
 But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is.'  
 'How woostow this,' quod Tiburce, 'in what wyse?' 265  
 Quod Valerian, 'that shal I thee devyse.

The angel of god hath me the trouthe y-taught  
 Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt reneye  
 The ydoles and be clene, and elles naught.'—

---

251. *The MSS. have swete here; but in l. 247 we find only sote, soote, swote, suote, except swete in Pt.; in l. 229, E. Hl. soote; Hn. swote; Cm. sote; Cp. Pt. Ln. swete. 267. E. Ln. Hl omit the.*

And of the miracle of thise corones tweye 270  
 Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye ;  
 Solempnely this noble doctour dere  
 Commendeth it, and seith in this manere :

The palm of martirdom for to receyve,  
 Seinte Cecile, fulfild of goddes yifte, 275  
 The world and eek hir chambre gan she weyve ;  
 Witnes Tyburces and Valerians shrifte,  
 To whiche god of his bountee wolde shifte  
 Corones two of floures wel smellinge,  
 And made his angel hem the corones bringe : 280

The mayde hath broght thise men to blisse above ;  
 The world hath wist what it is worth, certeyn,  
 Devocioun of chastitee to love.—  
 Tho shewede him Cecile al open and pleyn  
 That alle ydoles nis but a thing in veyn ; 285  
 For they been dombe, and therto they been deve,  
 And charged him his ydoles for to leve.

‘Who so that troweth nat this, a beste he is,’  
 Quod tho Tiburce, ‘if that I shal nat lye.’  
 And she gan kisse his brest, that herde this, 290  
 And was ful glad he coude trouthe espye.  
 ‘This day I take thee for myn allye,’  
 Seyde this blisful fayre mayde dere ;  
 And after that she seyde as ye may here :

‘Lo, right so as the love of Crist,’ quod she, 295  
 ‘Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in that wyse  
 Anon for myn allye heer take I thee,  
 Sin that thou wolt thyn ydoles despyse.  
 Go with thy brother now, and thee baptyse,  
 And make thee clene ; so that thou mowe biholde 300  
 The angels face of which thy brother tolde.’

---

273. E. hym ; rest it. 277. The MSS. have Cecilies, wrongly (for Valerians) ; Lat. text—Ualeriani ; cf. l. 281. 281. E. Hn. omit thise ; the rest retain it, except Cm., which has brought hem to blysse. 284. Cp. Pt. Ln. omit al. 288. E. Hn. Pt. beest ; Hl. best ; Cm. Cp. Ln. beste.

Tiburce answerde and seyde, 'brother dere,  
 First tel me whider I shal, and to what man?'  
 'To whom?' quod he, 'com forth with right good chere,  
 I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban.' 305  
 'Til Urban? brother myn Valerian,'  
 Quod tho Tiburce, 'woltow me thider lede?  
 Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.

Ne menestow nat Urban,' quod he tho,  
 'That is so ofte dampned to be deed, 310  
 And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,  
 And dar nat ones putte forth his heed?  
 Men sholde him brennen in a fyr so reed  
 If he were founde, or that men mighte him spye;  
 And we also, to bere him companye— 315

And whyl we seken thilke divinitee  
 That is y-hid in hevene prively,  
 Algate y-brend in this world shul we be!'  
 To whom Cecile answerde boldely,  
 'Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully 320  
 This lyf to lese, myn owene dere brother,  
 If this were livinge only and non other.

But ther is better lyf in other place,  
 That never shal be lost, ne drede thee noght,  
 Which goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace; 325  
 That fadres sone hath alle thinges wrought;  
 And al that wrought is with a skilful thought,  
 The goost, that fro the fader gan procede,  
 Hath sowled hem, withouten any drede.

By word and by miracle goddes sone, 330  
 Whan he was in this world, declared here  
 'That ther was other lyf ther men may wone.'  
 To whom answerde Tiburce, 'o suster dere,  
 Ne seydestow right now in this manere,  
 Ther nis but o god, lord in soothfastnesse; 335  
 And now of three how maystow bere witnesse?'

303. E. Hn. Cm. that I; *rest omit* that. 304. Hl. *om.* right. 323. Ln.  
 Hl. Pt. better; E. Hn. better. 326. E. thyng ywroght; Hn. Cm. thynges  
 wroght. 326-337. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit.*

‘That shal I telle,’ quod she, ‘er I go.  
 Right as a man hath sapiences three,  
 Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,  
 So, in o being of divinitee, 340  
 Three persones may ther right wel be.’  
 Tho gan she him ful bisily to preche  
 Of Cristes come and of his peynes teche,

And many pointes of his passioun ;  
 How goddes sone in this world was withholde, 345  
 To doon mankinde pleyn remissioun,  
 That was y-bounde in sinne and cares colde :  
 Al this thing she unto Tiburce tolde.  
 And after this Tiburce, in good entente,  
 With Valerian to pope Urban he wente, 350

That thanked god ; and with glad herte and light  
 He cristned him, and made him in that place  
 Parfit in his lerninge, goddes knight.  
 And after this Tiburce gat swich grace,  
 That every day he saugh, in tyme and space, 355  
 The angel of god ; and every maner bone  
 That he god axed, it was sped ful sone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn  
 How many wondres Iesus for hem wroughte ;  
 But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn, 360  
 The sergeants of the toun of Rome hem soghte,  
 And hem biforn Almache the prefect broghte,  
 Which hem apposed, and knew al hir entente,  
 And to the image of Iupiter hem sente,

And seyde, ‘who so wol nat sacrificyse,  
 Swap of his heed, this is my sentence here.’ 365  
 Anon thise martirs that I yow devyse,  
 Oon Maximus, that was an officere  
 Of the prefectes and his corniculere,  
 Hem hente ; and whan he forth the seintes ladde, 370  
 Him-self he weep, for pitee that he hadde.

340. E. *omits* o.  
 opposed, *wrongly*.

355. E. saugh ; Hl. say.  
 366. E. Cm. Hl. *omit* is.

363. Hl. apposed ; *the rest*



Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,  
 He gat him of the tormentoures leve,  
 And ladde hem to his hous withoute more ;  
 And with hir preching, er that it were eve, 375  
 They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,  
 And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone  
 The false feith, to trowe in god allone.

Cecilie cam, whan it was woxen night,  
 With prestes that hem cristned alle y-fere ; 380  
 And afterward, whan day was woxen light,  
 Cecile hem seyde with a ful sobre chere,  
 ‘ Now, Cristes owene knightes leve and dere,  
 Caste alle away the werkes of derknesse,  
 And armeth yow in armure of brightnesse. 385

Ye han for sothe y-doon a gret bataille,  
 Your cours is doon, your feith han ye conserved,  
 Goth to the corone of lyf that may nat faille ;  
 The rightful Iuge, which that ye han served,  
 Shall yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.’ 390  
 And whan this thing was seyde as I devyse,  
 Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacrifice.

But whan they weren to the place broght,  
 To tellen shortly the conclusioun,  
 They nolde encense ne sacrifice right noght, 395  
 But on hir knees they setten hem adoun  
 With humble herte and sad devocioun,  
 And losten bothe hir hedes in the place.  
 Hir soules wenten to the king of grace.

This Maximus, that saugh this thing bityde, 400  
 With pitous teres tolde it anon-right,  
 That he hir soules saugh to heven glyde  
 With angels ful of cleernesse and of light,  
 And with his word converted many a wight ;

---

373. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. tormentours. 382. E. Hn. Hl. ful stedefast ; Cm. ful  
 sobre ; Cp. Pt. Ln. sobre. 384. Cp. Pt. Casteth ; rest Cast. 392. E. Hn.  
 Cm. ledde. 398. E. Hn. Cm. heuedes ; rest hedes. 400. E. saugh ; Hn.  
 Cp. Hl. say. 404. E. this ; rest his.

For which Almachius dide him so to-bete 405  
With whippe of leed, til he his lyf gan lete.

Cecile him took and buried him anoon  
By Tiburce and Valerian softly,  
Withinne hir burying-place, under the stoon.  
And after this Almachius hastily 410  
Bad his ministres fecchen openly  
Cecile, so that she mighte in his presence  
Doon sacrifice, and Iupiter encense.

But they, converted at hir wyse lore,  
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence 415  
Unto hir word, and cryden more and more,  
'Crist, goddes sone withouten difference,  
Is verray god, this is al our sentence,  
That hath so good a servant him to serve;  
This with o voys we trowen, thogh we sterve!' 420

Almachius, that herde of this doinge,  
Bad fecchen Cecile, that he might hir see,  
And alderfirst, lo! this was his axinge,  
'What maner womman artow?' tho quod he.  
'I am a gentil womman born,' quod she. 425  
'I axe thee,' quod he, 'thogh it thee greve,  
Of thy religioun and of thy bileve.'

'Ye han bigonne your question folily,'  
Quod she, 'that wolden two answeres conclude  
In oo demande; ye axed lewedly.' 430  
Almache answerde unto that similitude,  
'Of whennes comth thyn answering so rude?'  
'Of whennes?' quod she, whan that she was freyned  
'Of conscience and of good feith unfeyned.'

Almachius seyde, 'ne takestow non hede 435  
Of my power?' and she answerde him this—  
'Your might,' quod she, 'ful litel is to drede;

---

405. E. Hn. Cm. Ill. so bete; Cp. Pt. Ln. so to-bete. 406. E. the;  
rest his. 418. E. omits al. 424. Cp. Pt. Ln. tho; rest omit. 436.  
Hn. Hl. this; Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. thus; E. omits.

For every mortal mannes power nis  
 But lyk a bladdre, ful of wind, y-wis.  
 For with a nedles poynt, whan it is blowe, 440  
 May al the boost of it be leyd ful lowe.'

'Ful wrongfully bigonne thou,' quod he,  
 'And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce;  
 Wostow nat how our mighty princes free  
 Han thus comanded and maad ordinaunce, 445  
 That every cristen wight shal han penaunce  
 But-if that he his cristendom withseye,  
 And goon al quit, if he wol it reneye?'

'Your princes erren, as your nobley dooth,'  
 Quod tho Cecile, 'and with a wood sentence 450  
 Ye make us gilty, and it is nat sooth;  
 For ye, that knowen wel our innocence,  
 For as muche as we doon a reverence  
 To Crist, and for we bere a cristen name,  
 Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame. 455

But we that knowen thilke name so  
 For vertuous, we may it nat withseye.'  
 Almache answerde, 'chees oon of these two,  
 Do sacrifice, or cristendom reneye,  
 That thou mowe now escapen by that weye.' 460  
 At which the holy blisful fayre mayde  
 Gan for to laughe, and to the Iuge seyde,

'O Iuge, confus in thy nycetee,  
 Woltow that I reneye innocence,  
 To make me a wikked wight?' quod she; 465  
 'Lo! he dissimuleth here in audience,  
 He stareth and woodeth in his advertence!  
 To whom Almachius, 'unsely wrecche,  
 Ne woostow nat how far my might may strecche?

451. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* it.467. E. and he; *rest omit* he.

Han nocht our mighty princes to me yeven, 470  
 Ye, bothe power and auctoritee  
 To maken folk to dyen or to liven?  
 Why spekestow so proudly than to me?'  
 'I speke nocht but stedfastly,' quod she,  
 'Nat proudly, for I seye, as for my syde, 475  
 We haten deedly thilke vyce of pryde.

And if thou drede nat a sooth to here,  
 Than wol I shewe al openly, by right,  
 That thou hast maad a ful gret lesing here.  
 Thou seyst, thy princes han thee yeven might 480  
 Bothe for to sleen and for to quiken a wight;  
 Thou, that ne mayst but only lyf bireve,  
 Thou hast non other power ne no leve!

But thou mayst seyn, thy princes han thee maked  
 Ministre of deeth; for if thou speke of mo, 485  
 Thou lyst, for thy power is ful naked.'  
 'Do wey thy boldnes,' seyde Almachius tho,  
 'And sacrifice to our goddes, er thou go;  
 I recche nat what wrong that thou me profre,  
 For I can suffre it as a philosophre; 490

But thilke wronges may I nat endure  
 That thou spekest of our goddes here,' quod he.  
 Cecile answerede, 'o nyce creature,  
 Thou seydest no word sin thou spak to me  
 That I ne knew therwith thy nycetee; 495  
 And that thou were, in every maner wyse,  
 A lewed officer and a veyn Iustyse.

Ther lakketh no-thing to thyn utter yën  
 That thou nart blind, for thing that we seen alle  
 That it is stoon, that men may wel espyen, 500  
 That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle.  
 I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,  
 And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it finde,  
 Sin that thou seest nat with thyn yën blinde.

475. E. speke; *rest* seye.487. III. lewednes; *rest* boldnesse.

It is a shame that the peple shal 505  
 So scorne thee, and laughe at thy folye ;  
 For comunly men woot it wel overal,  
 That mighty god is in his hevenes hye,  
 And thise images, wel thou mayst espye,  
 To thee ne to hem-self mowe nought profyte, 510  
 For in effect they been nat worth a myte.'

Thise wordes and swiche othere seyde she,  
 And he weex wroth, and bad men sholde hir lede  
 Hom til hir hous, 'and in hir hous,' quod he,  
 'Brenne hir right in a bath of flambes rede.' 515  
 And as he bad, right so was doon in dede ;  
 For in a bath they gonne hir faste shetten,  
 And night and day greet fyr they under betten.

The longe night and eek a day also,  
 For al the fyr and eek the bathes hete, 520  
 She sat al cold, and felede no wo,  
 It made hir nat a drope for to swete.  
 But in that bath hir lyf she moste lete ;  
 For he, Almachius, with ful wikke entente  
 To sleen hir in the bath his sonde sente. 525

Three strokes in the nekke he smoot hir tho,  
 The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce  
 He mighte nought smyte al hir nekke a-two ;  
 And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce,  
 That no man sholde doon man swich penaunce 530  
 The ferthe strook to smyten, softe or sore,  
 This tormentour ne dorste do na-more.

But half-deed, with hir nekke y-corven there,  
 He lefte hir lye, and on his way is went.  
 The cristen folk, which that aboute hir were, 535  
 With shetes han the blood ful faire y-hent.  
 Thre dayes lived she in this torment,

---

510. E. Ln. *insert ne before mowe* ; E. mowen ; Hn. mowe. 518. E.  
 fyre ; Hn. Cm. fyr. 521. Cm. felede ; E. Hn. feled ; Cp. Pt. Ln. felt of it.  
 524. E. Hn. a ful ; Cm. a ; *rest* ful. 528. Cp. Pt. smyten ; *rest* smyte. 530.  
 man (2') E. men. 534. Cm. is went ; *rest* he wente (*or* he went) *against the rime*.

And never cessed hem the feith to teche ;  
That she hadde fostred, hem she gan to preche ;

And hem she yaf hir moebles and hir thing, 540  
And to the pope Urban bitook hem tho,  
And seyde, 'I axed this at hevene king,  
To han respyt three dayes and na-mo,  
To recomende to yow, er that I go,  
These soules, lo ! and that I mighte do werche 545  
Here of myn hous perpetuelly a cherche.'

Seint Urban, with his deknes, prively  
The body fette, and buried it by nighte  
Among his othere seintes honestly.  
Hir hous the chirche of seint Cecilie highte ; 550  
Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte ;  
In which, into this day, in noble wyse,  
Men doon to Crist and to his seint servyse.

**Here is ended the Seconde Nonnes Tale.**

---

542. E. at ; *rest* of ; see G 621. 548. E. This ; *rest* The. 550. E. Hn.  
Ln. seinte. 553. E. Hn. Pt. seinte ; Cp. seintz ; Pt. seintes. COLOPHON.  
*From* E. Hn. ; Hl. Here endeth the secounde Nonne hir tale of the lif of seint  
Cecilie.

# THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 16022-16043.)

## The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes Tale.

**W**HAN ended was the lyf of seint Cecyle,  
 Er we had riden fully fyve myle, 555  
 At Boghton under Blee us gan atake  
 A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,  
 And undernethe he hadde a whyt surplys.  
 His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,  
 So swatte, that it wonder was to see; 560  
 It semed he had priked myles three.  
 The hors eek that his yeman rood upon  
 So swatte, that unnethe mighte it gon. (10)  
 Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful hye,  
 He was of fome al flekked as a pye. 565  
 A male tweyfold on his croper lay,  
 It semed that he caried lyte array.  
 Al light for somer rood this worthy man,  
 And in myn herte wondren I bigan  
 What that he was, til that I understood 570  
 How that his cloke was sowed to his hood;  
 For which, when I had longe avysed me,  
 I demed him som chanon for to be. (20)  
 His hat heng at his bak doun by a laas,  
 For he had riden more than trot or paas; 575

---

554. E. toold was al; Cm. told was; *rest* ended was. E. Pt. seinte. 558.  
 So E.; *rest* And vnder that he hadde a whit surplys. 559. E. which þat; *rest*  
*omit* which. 561. E. as he; Cm. that he; *rest* he. 562. E. hakeney; *rest*  
 hors. 564. E. *omits* ll. 564, 565. 566. E. Hn. vpon; *rest* on. 569. E.  
 to wondren; *rest omit* to. 574. E. Hn. heeng; Hl. heng; Cm. Cp. hyng.

He had ay priked lyk as he were wood.  
 A clote-leef he hadde under his hood  
 For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from hete.  
 But it was Ioye for to seen him swete!  
 His forheed dropped as a stillatorie, 580  
 Were ful of plantain and of paritorie.  
 And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,  
 'God save,' quod he, 'this Ioly companye!' (30)  
 Faste have I priked,' quod he, 'for your sake,  
 By-cause that I wolde yow atake, 585  
 To ryden in this mery companye.'  
 His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,  
 And seyde, 'sires, now in the morwe-tyde  
 Out of your hostelrye I saugh you ryde,  
 And warned heer my lord and my soverayn, 590  
 Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,  
 For his desport; he loveth daliaunce.'  
 'Freend, for thy warning god yeve thee good chaunce,'  
 Than seyde our host, 'for certes, it wolde seme (41)  
 Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme; 595  
 He is ful Iocund also, dar I leye.  
 Can he oght telle a mery tale or tweye,  
 With which he glade may this companye?'  
 'Who, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye,  
 He can of murthe, and eek of Iolitec 600  
 Nat but ynough; also sir, trusteth me,  
 And ye him knewe as wel as do I,  
 Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily (50)  
 He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse.  
 He hath take on him many a greet emprise, 605  
 Which were ful hard for any that is here  
 To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere.  
 As homely as he rit amonges yow,  
 If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your prow;  
 Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce 610  
 For mochel good, I dar leye in balaunce

586. E. som; *rest* this.      589. E. Hn. saugh; Pt. segh.      591. E. *omits*  
 that.      593. E. *omits* good.      594. E. certein; *rest* certes.      603. E. Cm.  
 craftily; *rest* thriftily.



Al that I have in my possessioun.  
He is a man of heigh discrecioun, (60)

I warne you wel, he is a passing man.'  
'Wel,' quod our host, 'I pray thee, tel me than, 615  
Is he a clerk, or noon? tel what he is.'

'Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, y-wis,'  
Seyde this yeman, 'and in wordes fewe,  
Host, of his craft som-what I wol yow shewe.  
I seye, my lord can swich subtiltee— 620

(But al his craft ye may nat wite at me;  
And som-what helpe I yet to his werking)—  
That al this ground on which we been ryding, (70)  
Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,  
He coude al clene turne it up-so-doun, 625  
And pave it al of silver and of gold.'

And whan this yeman hadde thus y-told  
Unto our host, he seyde, '*benedicite!*  
This thing is wonder merveillous to me,  
Sin that thy lord is of so heigh prudence, 630  
By-cause of which men sholde him reverence,  
That of his worship rekketh he so lyte;  
His oversloppe nis nat worth a myte, (80)  
As in effect, to him, so mote I go!  
It is al baudy and to-tore also. 635

Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee preye,  
And is of power better cloth to beye,  
If that his dede accorde with thy speche?  
Telle me that, and that I thee biseche.'

'Why?' quod this yeman, 'wherto axe ye me? 640  
God help me so, for he shal never thee!  
(But I wol nat avowe that I seye,  
And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye). (90)

He is to wys, in feith, as I bileve;  
That that is overdoon, it wol nat preve 645  
Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vyce.

Wherfor in that I holde him lewed and nyce.

For whan a man hath over-greet a wit,  
Ful oft him happeth to misusen it;

621. E. for; Hl. of; *rest* at. 627. E. this tale; Cm. this; *rest* thus.

So dooth my lord, and that me greveth sore. 650  
 God it amende, I can sey yow na-more.  
 'Ther-of no fors, good yeman,' quod our host;  
 'Sin of the conning of thy lord thou wost, (100)  
 Tel how he dooth, I pray thee hertely,  
 Sin that he is so crafty and so sly. 655  
 Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?'  
 'In the suburbes of a toun,' quod he,  
 'Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,  
 Wher-as thise robbours and thise theves by kinde  
 Holden hir privee fereful residence, 660  
 As they that dar nat shewen hir presence;  
 So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe.'  
 'Now,' quod our host, 'yit lat me talke to the; (110)  
 Why artow so discoloured of thy face?'  
 'Peter!' quod he, 'god yeve it harde grace, 665  
 I am so used in the fyr to blowe,  
 That it hath chaunged my colour, I trowe.  
 I am nat wont in no mirour to pry,  
 But swinke sore and lerne multiplie.  
 We blondren ever and pouren in the fyr, 670  
 And for al that we fayle of our desyr,  
 For ever we lakken our conclusioun.  
 To mochel folk we doon illusioun, (120)  
 And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,  
 Or ten, or twelve, or many sommes mo, 675  
 And make hem wenen, at the leeste weye,  
 That of a pound we coude make tweye!  
 Yet is it fals, but ay we han good hope  
 It for to doon, and after it we grope.  
 But that science is so fer us biforn, 680  
 We mowen nat, al-though we hadde it sworn,  
 It overtake, it slit away so faste;  
 It wol us maken beggers atte laste.' (130)  
 Whyl this yeman was thus in his talking,  
 This chanoun drough him neer, and herde al thing 685  
 Which this yeman spak, for suspeciou

663. Cm. Hl. yit; *rest omit.* E. telle; Cm. speke; *rest talke.* 672. E.  
 Cm. lakke; *rest lakken.* E. of oure; *rest omit of.* 681. E. *omits it.*

Of mennes speche ever hadde this chanoun.  
 For Catoun seith, that he that gilty is  
 Demeth al thing be spoke of him, y-wis.  
 That was the cause he gan so ny him drawe 690  
 To his yeman, to herknen al his sawe.  
 And thus he seyde un-to his yeman tho,  
 'Hold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes mo, (140)  
 For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abyge;  
 Thou sclaudrest me heer in this companye, 695  
 And eek discoverest that thou sholdest hyde.'  
 'Ye,' quod our host, 'telle on, what so bityde;  
 Of al his threting rekke nat a myte!'  
 'In feith,' quod he, 'namore I do but lyte.'  
 And whan this chanon saugh it wolde nat be, 700  
 But his yeman wolde telle his privetee,  
 He fledde away for verray sorwe and shame.  
 'A!' quod the yeman, 'heer shal aryse game, (150)  
 Al that I can anon now wol I telle.  
 Sin he is goon, the foule feend him quelle! 705  
 For never her-after wol I with him mete  
 For peny ne for pound, I yow bihete!  
 He that me broghte first unto that game,  
 Er that he dye, sorwe have he and shame!  
 For it is ernest to me, by my feith; 710  
 That fele I wel, what so any man seith.  
 And yet, for al my smert and al my grief,  
 For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief, (160)  
 I coude never leve it in no wyse.  
 Now wolde god my wit mighte suffyse 715  
 To tellen al that longeth to that art!  
 But natheles yow wol I tellen part;  
 Sin that my lord is gon, I wol nat spare;  
 Swich thing as that I knowe, I wol declare.— 719

**Here endeth the Prologe of the Chanouns  
 Yemannes Tale.**

---

686. E. Cm. Which this; *rest* Which that this; cf. ll. 684, 691, 701 (yemán).  
 698. E. his; *rest* this. E. Cm. rekke; Cp. recche I; Hl. Pt. Ln. recche the.  
 706. So Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln.; E. *omits* after, *having heer only*. 711. E. that;  
*rest* so. 717. E. And; *rest* But.

## THE CHANOONS YEMANNES TALE.

Here biginneth the Chanouns Yeman his Tale.

[*Prima pars.*]

**W**ITH this chanoun I dwelt have seven yeer, 720  
 And of his science am I never the neer.  
 Al that I hadde, I have y-lost ther-by;  
 And god wot, so hath many mo than I. (170)  
 Ther I was wont to be right fresh and gay  
 Of clothing and of other good array, 725  
 Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;  
 And wher my colour was bothe fresh and reed,  
 Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;  
 Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe.  
 And of my swink yet blered is myn yë, 730  
 Lo! which avantage is to multiplie!  
 That slyding science hath me maad so bare,  
 That I have no good, wher that ever I fare; (180)  
 And yet I am endetted so ther-by  
 Of gold that I have borwed, trewely, 735  
 That whyl I live, I shal it quyte never.  
 Lat every man be war by me for ever!  
 What maner man that casteth him ther-to,  
 If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do.  
 So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat winne, 740  
 But empte his purs, and make his wittes thinne.  
 And whan he, thurgh his madnes and folye,  
 Hath lost his owene good thurgh Iupartye, (190)

Thanne he excyteth other folk ther-to,  
 To lese hir good as he him-self hath do. 745  
 For unto shrewes Ioye it is and ese  
 To have hir felawes in peyne and disese ;  
 Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.  
 Of that no charge, I wol speke of our werk.  
 Whan we been ther as we shul exercyse 750  
 Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wyse,  
 Our termes been so clergial and so queynte.  
 I blowe the fyr til that myn herte feynte. (200)

What sholde I tellen ech proporcioun  
 Of thinges whiche that we werche upon, 755  
 As on fyve or sixe ounces, may wel be,  
 Of silver or som other quantite,  
 And bisie me to telle yow the names  
 Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,  
 That into poudre grounden been ful smal? 760  
 And in an erthen potte how put is al,  
 And salt y-put in, and also papeer,  
 Biforn thise poudres that I speke of heer, (210)  
 And wel y-covered with a lampe of glas,  
 And mochel other thing which that ther was? 765  
 And of the pot and glasses enluting,  
 That of the eyre mighte passe out no-thing?  
 And of the esy fyr and smart also,  
 Which that was maad, and of the care and wo  
 That we hadde in our matires sublyming, 770  
 And in amalgaming and calcening  
 Of quik-silver, y-clept Mercurie crude?  
 For alle our sleightes we can nat conclude. (220)  
 Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,  
 Our grounden litarge eek on the porphurie, 775  
 Of ech of thise of ounces a certeyn  
 Nought helpeth us, our labour is in veyn.  
 Ne eek our spiritis ascencioun,

761. E. *omits* how. 762. E. Cm. papeer ; Ln. papere ; Lich. papire ;  
 Cp. Pt. Ill. paupere. (Tyrwhitt *reads* pepere.) 764. *The MSS. have* lampe,  
 laumpe, lamp. 767. Lich. Pt. eyre ; Ln. eyere ; E. eyr ; Cm. ayr ; Cp. Ill.  
 aier. 775. E. in ; Cm. & ; *rest* on. 776. E. And ; *rest* Of.

Ne our materes that lyen al fixe adoun,  
 Mowe in our werking no-thing us avayle. 780  
 For lost is al our labour and travayle,  
 And al the cost, a twenty devel weye,  
 Is lost also, which we upon it leye. (230)

Ther is also ful many another thing  
 That is unto our craft apertening; 785  
 Though I by ordre hem nat reherce can,  
 By-cause that I am a lewed man,  
 Yet wol I telle hem as they come to minde,  
 Though I ne can nat sette hem in hir kinde;  
 As bole armoniak, verdegrees, boras, 790  
 And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas,  
 Our urinales and our descensories,  
 Violes, croslets, and sublymatories, (240)  
 Cucurbites, and alembykes eek,  
 And othere swiche, dere y-nough a leek. 795  
 Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,  
 Watres rubifying and boles galle,  
 Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimstoon;  
 And herbes coude I telle eek many oon,  
 As egreinoine, valerian, and lunarie, 800  
 And othere swiche, if that me liste tarie.  
 Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,  
 To bringe aboute our craft, if that we may. (250)  
 Our fourneys eek of calcinacioun,  
 And of watres albificacioun, 805  
 Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,  
 Poudres diverse, assches, dong, pisse, and cley,  
 Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole;  
 And divers fyres maad of wode and cole;  
 Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat, 810  
 And combust materes and coagulat,  
 Cley maad with hors or mannes heer, and oile  
 Of tartre, alum, glas, berm, wort, and argoile, (260)

782. E. Cm. a; Ln. in; *rest on.* 782, 3. Cm. Pt. Ln. weye, leye; *rest*  
*way, lay.* 790. E. vertgrees; Li. Cm. Cp. III. verdegrees; Pt. verdegrees.  
 792. E. Li. III. vrinals; Cm. vrynallis; Cp. Pt. vrinales. 803. E. purpos  
 if; *rest* craft if that. 806. *The MSS. all retain an.* 808. *Miswritten pottes*  
*in E.; Hl. poketts.* 812. E. and; *rest or.* 813. *Accent alum on the u.*

Resalgar, and our materes enbibing;  
 And eek of our materes encorporing, 815  
 And of our silver citrinacioun,  
 Our cementing and fermentacioun,  
 Our ingottes, testes, and many mo.

I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,  
 The foure spirites and the bodies sevene, 820  
 By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem nevene.

The firste spirit quik-silver called is,  
 The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis, (270)  
 Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon.

The bodies sevene eek, lo! hem heer anoon: 825

Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,  
 Mars yren, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe,  
 Saturnus leed, and Iupiter is tin,  
 And Venus coper, by my fader kin!

This cursed craft who-so wol exercyse, 830

He shal no good han that him may suffyse;  
 For al the good he spendeth ther-aboute,  
 He lese shal, ther-of have I no doute. (280)

Who-so that listeth outen his folye,  
 Lat him come forth, and lerne multiplie; 835

And every man that oght hath in his cofre,  
 Lat him appere, and wexe a filosofre.

Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere?

Nay, nay, god woot, al be he monk or frere,  
 Prest or chanoun, or any other wight, 840

Though he sitte at his book bothe day and night,  
 In lernyng of this elvish nyce lore,

Al is in veyn, and parde, mochel more! (290)

To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee,  
 Fy! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat be; 845

Al conne he letterure, or conne he noon,  
 As in effect, he shal finde it al oon.

For bothe two, by my savacioun,  
 Concluden, in multiplicacioun,

---

817. E. And of oure; *rest omit* And of. 820. E. seuene; *rest* foure.  
 834. E. *omits* so. 836. E. oght hath; *rest* hath oght (ought). 838. E.  
 Cm. Hl. Askauns; Ln. Ascaunce; *rest* Ascaunce. 846. E. Cm. And; *rest* Al.

Y-lyke wel, whan they han al y-do; 850  
 This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two.  
 Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille  
 Of watres corosif and of limaille, (300)  
 And of bodyes mollificacioun,  
 And also of hir induracioun, 855  
 Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,  
 To tellen al wolde passen any bible  
 That o-wher is; wherfor, as for the beste,  
 Of alle thise names now wol I me reste.  
 For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe 860  
 To reyse a feend, al loke he never so rowe.  
 A! nay! lat be; the philosophres stoon,  
 Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon; (310)  
 For hadde we him, than were we siker y-now.  
 But, unto god of heven I make avow, 865  
 For al our craft, whan we han al y-do,  
 And al our sleighte, he wol nat come us to.  
 He hath y-maad us spenden mochel good,  
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood,  
 But that good hope crepeth in our herte, 870  
 Supposinge ever, though we sore smerte,  
 To be releved by him afterward;  
 Swich supposing and hope is sharp and hard; (320)  
 I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever;  
 That futur temps hath maad men to dissever, 875  
 In trust ther-of, from al that ever they hadde.  
 Yet of that art they can nat wexen sadde,  
 For unto hem it is a bitter swete;  
 So semeth it; for nadde they but a shete  
 Which that they mighte wrappe hem inne a-night, 880  
 And a bak to walken inne by day-light,  
 They wolde hem selle and spenden on this craft;  
 They can nat stinte til no-thing be laft. (330)  
 And evermore, wher that ever they goon,

860, 861. E. Pt. Hl. ynowe, rowe; Li. ynogh, rogh; Cm. I-nogh, rogh; Cp. ynough, rough. 864. we (2)] E. it. 867. E. With; *rest* And. 868. Cm. I-mad vs; Hl. I-made vs; E. maad vs; *rest* vs made. 871. E. *omits* euer. 875. Cm. to; *rest omit.* 880. E. Inne at; *rest* in a. 881. E. brat; *rest* bak. 882. E. Li. the; *rest* this.



Men may hem knowe by smel of brimstoon; 885  
 For al the world, they stinken as a goot;  
 Her savour is so rammish and so hoot,  
 That, though a man from hem a myle be,  
 The savour wol infecte him, trusteth me;  
 Lo, thus by smelling and threedbare array, 890  
 If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.  
 And if a man wol aske hem prively,  
 Why they been clothed so unthriftily, (340)  
 They right anon wol rownen in his ere,  
 And seyn, that if that they espyed were, 895  
 Men wolde hem slee, by-cause of hir science;  
 Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!  
 Passe over this; I go my tale un-to.  
 Er than the pot be on the fyr y-do,  
 Of metals with a certein quantite, 900  
 My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he—  
 Now he is goon, I dar seyn boldely—  
 For, as men seyn, he can don craftily; (350)  
 Algate I woot wel he hath swich a name,  
 And yet ful ofte he renneth in a blame; 905  
 And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth so,  
 The pot to-breketh, and farewel! al is go!  
 These metals been of so greet violence,  
 Our walles mowe nat make hem resistance,  
 But if they weren wrought of lym and stoon; 910  
 They percen so, and thurgh the wal they goon,  
 And somme of hem sinken in-to the ground—  
 Thus han we lost by tymes many a pound— (360)  
 And somme are scatered al the floor aboute,  
 Somme lepe in-to the roof; with-outen doute, 915  
 Though that the feend noght in our sighte him shewe,  
 I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe!  
 In helle wher that he is lord and sire,  
 Nis ther more wo, ne more rancour ne ire.

888. E. a Mile from hem; *rest* from hem a myle. 889. E. truste; *rest* trusteth. 890. E. And; *rest* Lo. E. smel; *rest* smellyng. 899. E. Ln. Lich. that; *rest* than. 902. dar] E. Ln. dare. 905. E. oft. 912. E. Cm. synke; *rest* sinken. 915. E. lepte; *rest* lepe, lepen. 918. E. lord is; *rest* is lord. 919. So E. Cm.; *rest* Nis ther no more wo ne anger ne ire.

Whan that our pot is broke, as I have sayd, 920  
Every man chit, and halt him yvel apayd.

Som seyde, it was long on the fyr-making,  
Som seyde, nay! it was on the blowing; (370)

(Than was I fered, for that was myn office);  
'Straw!' quod the thridde, 'ye been lewed and nyce, 925  
It was nat tempred as it oghte be.'

'Nay!' quod the ferthe, 'stint, and herkne me;  
By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of beech,  
That is the cause, and other noon, so theech!'  
I can nat telle wher-on it was long, 930

But wel I wot greet stryf is us among.  
'What!' quod my lord, 'ther is na-more to done,  
Of these perils I wol be war eft-sonne; (380)

I am right siker that the pot was crased.  
Be as be may, be ye no-thing amased; 935  
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swythe,  
Plukke up your hertes, and beth gladde and blythe.'

The mullok on an hepe y-sweped was,  
And on the floor y-cast a canevas,  
And al this mullok in a sive y-throwe, 940  
And sifted, and y-piked many a throwe.

'Pardee,' quod oon, 'somwhat of our metal  
Yet is ther heer, though that we han nat al. (390)  
Al-though this thing mishapped have as now,

Another tyme it may be wel y-now, 945  
Us moste putte our good in aventure;  
A marchant, parde! may nat ay endure,

'Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;  
Somtyme his good is drenched in the see,  
And somtym comth it sauf un-to the londe.' 950

'Pees!' quod my lord, 'the next tyme I wol fonde  
To bringe our craft al in another plyte;  
And but I do, sirs, lat me han the wyte; (400)  
Ther was defaute in som-what, wel I woot.'

Another seyde, the fyr was over hoot:— 955

922. E. Cm. along; *rest* long. 927. E. fourthe; *see* l. 824. 930. Cm.  
Hl. long; *rest* along; *see* l. 922. 931. E. vs is; *rest* is vs. 938. Cm.  
I-swepid; Ln. ysweped; E. sweped; Cp. Pt. Hl. yswoped. 951. E. shal;  
*rest* wol, wil, wele. 952. E. bryngen; *rest* bringe. 953. E. omits sirs.

But, be it hoot or cold, I dar seye this,  
 That we concluden evermore amis.  
 We fayle of that which that we wolden have,  
 And in our madnesse evermore we rave.  
 And whan we been togidres everichoon, 960  
 Every man semeth a Salomon.  
 But al thing which that shyneth as the gold  
 Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it told; (410)  
 Ne every appel that is fair at yë  
 Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or crye. 965  
 Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us;  
 He that semeth the wysest, by Iesus!  
 Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef;  
 And he that semeth trewest is a theef;  
 That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende, 970  
 By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

*Explicit prima pars. Et sequitur pars secunda.*

Ther is a chanoun of religioun  
 Amonges us, wolde infecte al a toun, (420)  
 Though it as greet were as was Ninivee,  
 Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three. 975  
 His sleightes and his infinit falsnesse  
 Ther coude no man wryten, as I gesse,  
 Thogh that he mighte liven a thousand yeer.  
 In al this world of falshede nis his peer;  
 For in his termes so he wolde him winde, 980  
 And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,  
 Whan he commune shal with any wight,  
 That he wol make him doten anon right, (430)  
 But it a feend be, as him-selven is.  
 Ful many a man hath he bigyled er this, 985  
 And wol, if that he live may a whyle;

---

956. E. And; *rest* But. 962. E. euery; *rest* al, alle. Cm. schynyth; Ln. schyneth; Hl. schineth; E. seineth; Cp. semeth. 963. Cp. Pt. Ln. it; E. Cm. Hl. *omit* it. 964. E. to; *rest* at. 965. E. Nis; *rest* Ne is. 966. E. *omits* lo. 967. E. Cm. wiseste; *rest* wisest. 972. E. was; *rest* is. Cf. l. 987. 976. E. sleighte; Hl. sleight; *rest* sleightes. 978. E. lyue myghte; *rest* myghte lyuen. 979. E. nas; Ln. ne is; *rest* nis, nys.

And yet men ryde and goon ful many a myle  
 Him for to seke and have his aqueyntaunce,  
 Noght knowinge of his false governaunce.  
 And if yow list to yeve me audience, 990  
 I wol it tellen heer in your presence.  
 But worshipful chanouns religious,  
 Ne demeth nat that I sclandre your hous, (440)  
 Al-though my tale of a chanoun be.  
 Of every ordre som shrewe is, parde, 995  
 And god forbede that al a companye  
 Sholde rewe a singuler mannes folye.  
 To sclandre yow is no-thing myn entente,  
 But to correcten that is mis I mente.  
 This tale was nat only told for yow, 1000  
 But eek for othere mo ; ye woot wel how  
 That, among Cristes apostelles twelve,  
 Ther nas no traytour but Iudas him-selve. (450)  
 Than why sholde al the remenant have blame  
 That giltles were? by yow I seye the same. 1005  
 Save only this, if ye wol herkne me,  
 If any Iudas in your covent be,  
 Remeveth him bitymes, I yow rede,  
 If shame or los may causen any drede.  
 And beth no-thing displeed, I yow preye, 1010  
 But in this cas herkneth what I shal seye.

In London was a preest, an annueleer,  
 That therin dwelled hadde many a yeer, (460)  
 Which was so plesaunt and so servisable  
 Unto the wyf, wher-as he was at table, 1015  
 That she wolde suffre him no-thing for to paye  
 For bord ne clothing, wente he never so gaye ;  
 And spending-silver hadde he right y-now.  
 Therof no fors ; I wol procede as now,  
 And telle forth my tale of the chanoun, 1020

991. Cp. Pt. Ln. tellen ; *rest* telle. 993. E. desclandre ; *rest* sclandre ;  
*see* l. 998. 994. E. Al-though that ; *rest omit* that. 997. E. o ; *rest* a.  
 1002. Cm. apostellis ; Li. aposteles ; E. apostles. 1004. E. Hl. a blame ;  
*rest omit* a. 1008. Cm. Remeuyth ; E. Remoeueth. 1011. F. herketh.  
 1012. E. *omits* an. 1013. E. had dwelled ; *rest* dwelled hadde (*or* had).

That broghte this preest to confusioun.

This false chanoun cam up-on a day  
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay, (470)

Biseching him to lene him a certeyn  
Of gold, and he wolde quyte it him ageyn. 1025

'Lene me a mark,' quod he, 'but dayes three,

And at my day I wol it quyten thee.

And if so be that thou me finde fals,

Another day do hange me by the hals!'

This preest him took a mark, and that as swythe, 1030

And this chanoun him thanked ofte sythe,

And took his leve, and wente forth his weye,

And at the thridde day broghte his moneye, (480)

And to the preest he took his gold agayn,

Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fayn. 1035

'Certes,' quod he, 'no-thing anoyeth me

To lene a man a noble, or two or three,

Or what thing were in my possessioun,

Whan he so trewe is of condicioun,

That in no wyse he breke wol his day; 1040

To swich a man I can never seye nay.'

'What!' quod this chanoun, 'sholde I be untrew?

Nay, that were thing y-fallen al of-newe. (490)

Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe

Un-to that day in which that I shal crepe 1045

In-to my grave, and elles god forbede;

Bileveth this as siker as is your crede.

God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,

That ther was never man yet yvel apayd

For gold ne silver that he to me lente, 1050

Ne never falshede in myn herte I mente.

And sir,' quod he, 'now of my privetee,

Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me, (500)

And kythed to me so greet gentillesse,

Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse, 1055

I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,

1043. E. Cm. a thyng; *rest omit a.*

1045. E. Ln. In-to; *rest Vn-to.*

1046. E. or; *rest and.*

1047. E. the; Hl. your; *rest is your.*

1056. E.

if that; *rest and if (or yif.)*

I wol yow teche pleyedly the manere,  
 How I can werken in philosophye.  
 Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at yë,  
 That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.' 1060  
 'Ye,' quod the preest, 'ye, sir, and wol ye so?  
 Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertely!'  
 'At your comandement, sir, trewely,' (510)  
 Quod the chanoun, 'and elles god forbede!'  
 Lo, how this thief coude his servyse bede! 1065  
 Ful sooth it is, that swich profred servyse  
 Stinketh, as witnessen these olde wyse;  
 And that ful sone I wol it verifie  
 In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,  
 That ever-more delyt hath and gladnesse— 1070  
 Swich feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse—  
 How Cristes peple he may to meschief bringe;  
 God kepe us from his fals dissimulinge! (520)  
 Noght wiste this preest with whom that he delte,  
 Ne of his harm cominge he no-thing felte. 1075  
 O sely preest! o sely innocent!  
 With coveityse anon thou shalt be blent!  
 O gracelees, ful blind is thy conceit,  
 No-thing ne artow war of the deceit  
 Which that this fox y-shapen hath to thee! 1080  
 His wily wrenches thou ne mayst nat flec.  
 Wherfor, to go to the conclusioun  
 That refereth to thy confusioun, (530)  
 Unhappy man! anon I wol me hye  
 To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye, 1085  
 And eek the falsnesse of that other wrecche,  
 As ferforth as that my conning may stretche.  
 This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden wene?  
 Sir host, in feith, and by the hevenes quene,  
 It was another chanoun, and nat he, 1090  
 That can an hundred fold more subtiltee!

1059. Cp. Hl. heed; E. Li. heede. 1061. *After* sir, E. *wrongly inserts*  
 quod he. 1073. E. Cm. false; *rest* fals. 1078, 1079. Hn. Hl. conceyt,  
 deceyt; E. conceite, deceite. 1080. E. for; *rest* to. 1085. E. his; Cm.  
 heigh; *rest* thy. 1087. Cm. that, *which seems required*; *rest* omit.

He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme ;  
 Of his falshede it dulleth me to ryme. (540)  
 Ever whan that I speke of his falshede,  
 For shame of him my chekes wexen rede ; 1095  
 Algates, they biginnen for to glowe,  
 For reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,  
 In my visage ; for fumes dyverse  
 Of metals, which ye han herd me reherce,  
 Consumed and wasted han my reednesse. 1100  
 Now tak heed of this chanouns cursednesse !  
 ‘Sir,’ quod he to the preest, ‘lat your man gon  
 For quik-silver, that we it hadde anon ; (550)  
 And lat him bringen ounces two or three ;  
 And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see 1105  
 A wonder thing, which ye saugh never er this.’  
 ‘Sir,’ quod the preest, ‘it shall be doon, y-wis.’  
 He bad his servant fecchen him this thing,  
 And he al redy was at his bidding,  
 And wente him forth, and cam anon agayn 1110  
 With this quik-silver, soothly for to sayn,  
 And took these ounces three to the chanoun ;  
 And he hem leyde fayre and wel adoun, (560)  
 And bad the servant coles for to bringe,  
 That he anon mighte go to his werkinge. 1115  
 The coles right anon weren y-fet,  
 And this chanoun took out a crosselet  
 Of his bosom, and shewed it the preest.  
 ‘This instrument,’ quod he, ‘which that thou seest,  
 Tak in thyn hand, and put thy-self ther-inne 1120  
 Of this quik-silver an ounce, and heer biginne,  
 In the name of Crist, to wexe a filosofre.  
 Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre (570)  
 To shewen hem thus muche of my science.  
 For ye shul seen heer, by experience, 1125  
 That this quik-silver wol I mortifye

---

1101. E. heede ; Hl. heed ; Cm. hed.      1103. E. Cm. hadde it ; *rest* it  
 hadde.      1106. Cm. Cp. say ; E. saugh.      1111. E. Cm. soothly ; *rest*  
 schortly.      1112. Hl. took ; E. toke.      1113. E. Cm. hem ; *rest* it.      1118.  
 E. to the ; *rest omit* to.      1120. Hl. Cp. Tak ; E. Taake.      1123. E. to  
 whiche ; Cm. to whiche that ; *rest* whiche that.

Right in your sighte anon, withouten lye,  
 And make it as good silver and as fyn  
 As ther is any in your purs or myn,  
 Or elleswher, and make it malliable; 1130  
 And elles, holdeth me fals and unable  
 Amonges folk for ever to appere!  
 I have a poudre heer, that coste me dere, (580)  
 Shal make al good, for it is cause of al  
 My conning, which that I yow shewen shal. 1135  
 Voydeth your man, and lat him be ther-oute,  
 And shet the dore, whyls we been aboute  
 Our privetee, that no man us espye  
 Whyls that we werke in this philosophye.'  
 Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede, 1140  
 This ilke servant anon-right out yede,  
 And his maister shette the dore anon,  
 And to hir labour speedily they gon. (590)  
 This preest, at this cursed chanouns bidding,  
 Up-on the fyr anon sette this thing, 1145  
 And blew the fyr, and bisied him ful faste;  
 And this chanoun in-to the croslet caste  
 A poudre, noot I wher-of that it was  
 Y-maad, other of chalk, other of glas,  
 Or som-what elles, was nat worth a flye, 1150  
 To blynde with the preest; and bad him hye  
 The coles for to couchen al above  
 The croslet, 'for, in tokening I thee love,' (600)  
 Quod this chanoun, 'thyn owene hondes two  
 Shul werche al thing which that shal heer be do.' 1155  
 'Graunt mercy,' quod the preest, and was ful glad,  
 And couched coles as the chanoun bad.  
 And whyle he bisy was, this feendly wrecche,  
 This fals chanoun, the foule feend him fecche!

1127. E. I wol nat; Hl. with-outen; Cm. with-outyn; *the rest* withoute (*or*  
 without.) 1128. E. *omits* it. 1135. E. to yow; *rest omit* to. 1137.  
 Hl. Cp. Pt. schitte. 1147. Cm. Hl. croslet; E. Li. crosselet. *So in*  
 1153. 1149. other (2)] E. Li. or; Pt. or ellis. 1155. Cm. Hl. that;  
 E. *om.*; *rest as.* E. Cm. heer; *rest om.* 1157. E. Cm. cole; *rest* coles.  
 E. that; Cm. that the; *rest* the. 1159. Li. Pt. Ln. fals; *rest* false.



Out of his bosom took a bechen cole, 1160  
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,  
 And ther-in put was of silver lymaille  
 An ounce, and stopped was, with-outen fayle, (610)  
 The hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in.  
 And understondeth, that this false gin 1165  
 Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore ;  
 And othere thinges I shal telle more  
 Herafterward, which that he with him broghte ;  
 Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoghte,  
 And so he dide, er that they wente a-twinne ; 1170  
 Til he had terved him, coude he not blinne.  
 It dulleth me whan that I of him speke,  
 On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke, (620)  
 If I wiste how ; but he is heer and ther :  
 He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher. 1175  
 But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes love !  
 He took his cole of which I spak above,  
 And in his hond he baar it prively.  
 And whyls the preest couchede busily  
 The coles, as I tolde yow er this, 1180  
 This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon amis ;  
 This is nat couched as it oghte be ;  
 But sone I shal amenden it,' quod he. (630)  
 'Now lat me medle therwith but a whyle,  
 For of yow have I pitee, by seint Gyle ! 1185  
 Ye been right hoot, I see wel how ye swete,  
 Have heer a cloth, and wype away the wete.'  
 And whyles that the preest wyped his face,  
 This chanoun took his cole with harde grace,  
 And leyde it above, up-on the middeward 1190  
 Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,

1160. E. he took ; *rest omit* he. 1162, 1164. E. lemaille ; *but* Cm. lymayle, lymayl ; *see* l. 853. 1171. E. terned ; Cm. ternede ; *rest* turned, turned. E. he coude. 1175. E. Cp. that he ; *rest omit* that. 1177. E. this ; *rest* his ; *see* l. 1189. 1179. Cm. couchede ; Cp. couchide ; *rest* couched. 1188. Cm. Pt. whilis ; Hl. Lichf. whiles ; E. whils. 1189. *So* E. ; Cm. with sory grace (*see* l. 665). *Most MSS. have* I shrewe his face, and make l. 1188 *end with* him wyped has. 1190. E. *has* aboue vp on ; Cm. *the same*, *but omitting* it ; Hl. abouen on ; *the rest* vpon abouen. 1191. Cm. Hl. croslet ; E. Cp. crosselet.

Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.  
 'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chanoun thenne, (640)  
 'As swythe al shal be wel, I undertake;  
 Sitte we doun, and lat us mery make.' 1195  
 And whan that this chanounes bechen cole  
 Was brent, al the lymaille, out of the hole,  
 Into the croslet fil anon adoun;  
 And so it moste nedes, by resoun,  
 Sin it so even aboven couched was; 1200  
 But ther-of wiste the preest no-thing, alas!  
 He demed alle the coles y-liche good,  
 For of the sleighte he no-thing understood. (650)  
 And whan this alkamistre saugh his tyme,  
 'Rys up,' quod he, 'sir preest, and stondesth by me; 1205  
 And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,  
 Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalk-stoon;  
 For I wol make oon of the same shap  
 That is an ingot, if I may han hap.  
 And bringeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne, 1210  
 Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne  
 How that our bisnesse shal thryve and preve.  
 And yet, for ye shul han no misbileve (660)  
 Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence,  
 I ne wol nat been out of your presence, 1215  
 But go with yow, and come with yow ageyn.  
 The chambre-dore, shortly for to seyn,  
 They opened and shette, and wente hir weye.  
 And forth with hem they carieden the keye,  
 And come agayn with-ouen any delay. 1220  
 What sholde I tarien al the longe day?  
 He took the chalk, and shoop it in the wyse  
 Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse. (670)  
 I seye, he took out of his owene sleve,  
 A teyne of silver (yvele mote he cheve!) 1225  
 Which that ne was nat but an ounce of weighte;  
 And taketh heed now of his cursed sleighte!

1195. E. myrie; Cm. Cp. merye; *rest* mery. 1200. E. abouen it; *rest* aboue. 1203. the] E. that. 1205. Lichf. Cp. Pt. stondesth; Ln. Hl. stonde; Cm. stand; E. sit. 1206. ye] E. I. 1214. E. conceite. 1226. Cm. ne; *rest omit.* 1227. E. taak; *rest* taketh.

He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek in brede,  
 Of this teyne, with-ouen any drede,  
 So slyly, that the preest it nat espyde ; 1230  
 And in his sleve agayn he gan it hyde ;  
 And fro the fyr he took up his matere,  
 And in thingot putte it with mery chere, (680)  
 And in the water-vessel he it caste  
 Whan that him luste, and bad the preest as faste, 1235  
 'Look what ther is, put in thyn hand and grope,  
 Thow finde shalt ther silver, as I hope ;  
 What, devel of helle ! sholde it elles be ?  
 Shaving of silver silver is, pardee !'  
 He putte his hond in, and took up a teyne 1240  
 Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne  
 Was this preest, whan he saugh that it was so.  
 'Goddess blessing, and his modres also, (690)  
 And alle halwes have ye, sir chanoun,'  
 Seyde this preest, 'and I hir malisoun, 1245  
 But, and ye vouche-sauf to techen me  
 This noble craft and this subtiltee,  
 I wol be youre, in al that ever I may !'  
 Quod the chanoun, 'yet wol I make assay  
 The second tyme, that ye may taken hede 1250  
 And been expert of this, and in your nede  
 Another day assaye in myn absence  
 This disciplyne and this crafty science. (700)  
 Lat take another ounce,' quod he tho,  
 'Of quik-silver, with-ouen wordes mo, 1255  
 And do ther-with as ye han doon er this  
 With that other, which that now silver is.'  
 This preest him bisieth in al that he can  
 To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,  
 Comanded him, and faste he blew the fyr, 1260  
 For to come to theeffect of his desyr.  
 And this chanoun, right in the mene whyle,

1228. E. eek ; *rest omit.* 1229. Tyrwhitt reads *Of thilke ; I propose*—As  
 of this teyne. 1236. E. What that heer is ; *rest* Look what ther is. 1239.  
 E. *omits* ll. 1238, 1239. *From* Lichf. 1242. E. Hl. *omit* that ; *found in* Cm.  
 Cp. Pt. Ln. 1247. Hl. subtilite ; Cm. sotylete ; E. subtiltee ; *rest* sotilte,  
 sotiltie ; *see* l. 620. 1249. E. preest ; *rest* chanoun. 1260. E. he ; *rest om.*

Al redy was, the preest eft to bigyle, (710)  
 And, for a countenance, in his hande he bar  
 An holwe stikke (tak keep and be war!) 1265  
 In the ende of which an ounce, and na-more,  
 Of silver lymail put was, as bifore  
 Was in his cole, and stopped with wex weel  
 For to kepe in his lymail every deel.  
 And whyl this preest was in his bisnesse, 1270  
 This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse  
 To him anon, and his pouder caste in  
 As he did er; (the devel out of his skin (720)  
 Him terve, I pray to god, for his faldhede;  
 For he was ever fals in thoght and dede); 1275  
 And with this stikke, above the croslet,  
 That was ordeyned with that false get,  
 He stired the coles, til relente gan  
 The wex agayn the fyr, as every man,  
 But it a fool be, woot wel it mot nede, 1280  
 And al that in the stikke was out yede,  
 And in the croslet hastily it fel.  
 Now gode sirs, what wol ye bet than wel? (730)  
 Whan that this preest thus was bigyled ageyn,  
 Supposing noght but trouthe, soth to seyn, 1285  
 He was so glad, that I can nat expresse  
 In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse;  
 And to the chanoun he profred eftsone  
 Body and good; 'ye,' quod the chanoun sone,  
 'Though povre I be, crafty thou shalt me finde; 1290  
 I warne thee, yet is ther more bihinde.  
 Is ther any coper her-inne?' seyde he.  
 'Ye,' quod the preest, 'sir, I trowe wel ther be.' (740)  
 'Elles go by us som, and that as swythe,  
 Now, gode sir, go forth thy wey and hy the.' 1295

1265. Hl. keep; E. kepe; Cm. keepe; *rest* hede. 1268. E. *omits* Was.  
 1272. Lichf. Ln. pouder; Cm. poudere; E. Cp. poudre. 1274. E. terve; Cm.  
 Pt. turne; *rest* torne. 1277. E. Cm. Iet (=jet); Hl. get; Ln. gett; Cp. Pt.  
 gette. 1283. Cm. goode; E. good; *see* l. 1295. Cp. Pt. Ln. The preest  
 supposede nothing but wel. 1284. Cp. Pt. Ln. But busyed him faste, and  
 was wonder fayn. 1286. E. ne kan; *rest omit* ne. 1292. *So all.* 1295.  
 Cm. Hl. goode; E. good; *rest omit.*

He wente his wey, and with the copper cam,  
 And this chanoun it in his handes nam,  
 And of that copper weyed out but an ounce.  
 Al to simple is my tonge to pronounce,  
 As minstre of my wit, the doublenesse 1300  
 Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse.  
 He semed frendly to hem that knewe him noght,  
 But he was feendly bothe in herte and thought. (750)  
 It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,  
 And nathelees yet wol I it expresse, 1305  
 To thentente that men may be war therby,  
 And for noon other cause, trewely.

He putte his ounce of copper in the croslet,  
 And on the fyr as swythe he hath it set,  
 And caste in poudre, and made the preest to blowe, 1310  
 And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,  
 As he dide er, and al nas but a lape ;  
 Right as him liste, the preest he made his ape ; (760)  
 And afterward in the ingot he it caste,  
 And in the panne putte it at the laste 1315  
 Of water, and in he putte his owene hond.  
 And in his sleve (as ye biforn-hond  
 Herde me telle) he hadde a silver teyne.  
 He slyly took it out, this cursed heyne—  
 Unwiting this preest of his false craft— 1320  
 And in the pannes botme he hath it laft ;  
 And in the water rombled to and fro,  
 And wonder prively took up also (770)  
 The copper teyne, noght knowing this preest,  
 And hidde it, and him hente by the breest, 1325  
 And to him spak, and thus seyde in his game,  
 ‘Stoupeth adoun, by god, ye be to blame,  
 Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whyl-er,  
 Putte in your hand, and loketh what is ther.’

This preest took up this silver teyne anon, 1330  
 And thanne seyde the chanoun, ‘lat us gon

1301. E. Cm. alle ; *rest omit* ; *read* al.      1308. Cm. his ; E. the ; *rest*  
 this.    1316. E. the water ; *rest* water and.    1318. E. *omits* he.    1319.  
 Cp. Hl. took ; Cm. tok ; E. tooke.    1328. E. a ; *rest* I.

With these three teynes, which that we han wrought,  
 To som goldsmith, and wite if they been oght. (780)  
 For, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood,  
 But-if that they were silver, fyn and good, 1335  
 And that as swythe preved shal it be.'

Un-to the goldsmith with these teynes three  
 They wente, and putte these teynes in assay  
 To fyr and hamer; mighte no man sey nay,  
 But that they weren as hem oghte be. 1340

This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?  
 Was never brid gladder agayn the day,  
 Ne nightingale, in the sesoun of May, (790)  
 Nas never noon that luste bet to singe;  
 Ne lady lustier in carolinge 1345

Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,  
 Ne knight in armes to doon an hardy dede  
 To stonde in grace of his lady dere,  
 Than had this preest this sory craft to lere;  
 And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde, 1350  
 'For love of god, that for us alle deyde,  
 And as I may deserve it un-to yow,  
 What shal this receit coste? telleth now!' (800)

'By our lady,' quod this chanoun, 'it is dere,  
 I warne yow wel; for, save I and a frere,  
 In Engelond ther can no man it make.' 1355

'No fors,' quod he, 'now, sir, for goddes sake,  
 What shal I paye? telleth me, I preye.'

'Y-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere, I seye;  
 Sir, at o word, if that thee list it have, 1360  
 Ye shul paye fourty pound, so god me save!  
 And, nere the freendship that ye dide er this  
 To me, ye sholde paye more, y-wis.' (810)

This preest the somme of fourty pound anon  
 Of nobles fette, and took hem everichon 1365  
 To this chanoun, for this ilke receit;  
 Al his werking nas but fraude and deceit.

'Sir preest,' he seyde, 'I kepe han no loos

1336. E. it shal; Ln. schal he; *rest* shal it. 1339. E. seye; Cm. sey.  
 1344. E. man; *rest* noon (non). 1353. E. receite; Lichf. Cp. III. receyt.

Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos;  
 And as ye love me, kepeth it secree; 1370  
 For, and men knewe al my subtiltee,  
 By god, they wolden han so greet envye  
 To me, by-cause of my philosophye, (820)  
 I sholde be deed, ther were non other weye.'  
 'God it forbede!' quod the preest, 'what sey ye?' 1375  
 Yet hadde I lever spenden al the good  
 Which that I have (and elles wexe I wood!)  
 Than that ye sholden falle in swich mescheef.'  
 'For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,'  
 Quod the chanoun, 'and far-wel, grant mercy!' 1380  
 He wente his wey and never the preest him sy  
 After that day; and whan that this preest sholde  
 Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde, (830)  
 Of this receit, far-wel! it wolde nat be!  
 Lo, thus byiaped and bigyled was he! 1385  
 Thus maketh he his introduccioun  
 To bringe folk to hir destruccioun.—

Considereth, sirs, how that, in ech estaat,  
 Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat  
 So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon. 1390  
 This multiplying blent so many oon,  
 That in good feith I trowe that it be  
 The cause grettest of swich scarsetee. (840)  
 Philosophres speken so mistily  
 In this craft, that men can nat come therby, 1395  
 For any wit that men han now a-dayes.  
 They mowe wel chiteren, as doon this Iayes,  
 And in her termes sette hir lust and peyne,  
 But to hir purpos shul they never atteyne.  
 A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught, 1400  
 To multiplye, and bringe his good to naught!  
 Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,  
 A mannes mirthe it wol torne un-to grame, (85c)

1371. E. Cp. knewen; Cm. knewyn; *rest* knewe. Ln. subtilite; Cm. subtilete; E. soutiltee; *see* ll. 620, 1247. 1377. E. or; *rest* and. 1387. E. Cm. omit hir. 1390. E. Hl. vnnethe; *rest* vnnethes. 1397. E. as that doon; Cm. as don; *rest* as doon thise.

And empten also grete and hevy purses,  
 And maken folk for to purchasen curses 1405  
 Of hem, that han hir good therto y-lent.  
 O! fy! for shame! they that han been brent,  
 Allas! can they nat flee the fyres hete?  
 Ye that it use, I rede ye it lete,  
 Lest ye lese al; for bet than never is late. 1410  
 Never to thryve were to long a date.  
 Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never finde;  
 Ye been as bolde as is Bayard the blinde, (860)  
 That blundreth forth, and peril casteth noon;  
 He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon 1415  
 As for to goon besydes in the weye.  
 So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.  
 If that your yën can nat seen aright,  
 Loke that your minde lakke nought his sight.  
 For, though ye loke never so brode, and stare, 1420  
 Ye shul nat winne a myte on that chaffare,  
 But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.  
 Withdrawe the fyr, lest it to faste brenne; (870)  
 Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,  
 For, if ye doon, your thrift is goon ful clene. 1425  
 And right as swythe I wol yow tellen here,  
 What philosophres seyn in this matere.  
 Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newe Toun,  
 As his Rosarie maketh mencion;  
 He seith right thus, with-ouen any lye, 1430  
 ‘Ther may no man Mercurie mortifye,  
 But it be with his brother knowleching.  
 How that he, which that first seyde this thing, (880)  
 Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;  
 He seith, how that the dragoun, doutelees, 1435  
 Ne deyeth nat, but-if that he be slayn  
 With his brother; and that is for to sayn,  
 By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other  
 He understood; and brimston by his brother,

1404. E. Cp. heuye; *rest* hevy. 1407. E. *omits* O. 1414. E. blondreth.  
 1421. E. Cm. no thyng wyne; Hl. nought wyne (upon); *rest* nat wyne a  
 myte. 1427. Cm. What that 3e; *rest* What that the (*badly*). 1434. E.  
 fader first was; *rest omit* first.



That out of *sol* and *luna* were y-drawe. 1440  
 And therfor,' seyde he, 'tak heed to my sawe,  
 Let no man bisy him this art for to seche,  
 But-if that he thentencioun and speche (89c)  
 Of philosophres understonde can ;  
 And if he do, he is a lewed man. 1445  
 For this science and this conning,' quod he,  
 'Is of the secree of secrees, parde.'  
 Also ther was a disciple of Plato,  
 That on a tyme seyde his maister to,  
 As his book Senior wol bere witnesse, 1450  
 And this was his demande in soothfastnesse :  
 'Tel me the name of the privy stoon?'  
 And Plato answerde unto him anoon, (900)  
 'Tak the stoon that Titanos men name.'  
 'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnesia is the same,' 1455  
 Seyde Plato. 'Ye, sir, and is it thus?  
 This is *ignotum per ignotius*.  
 What is Magnesia, good sir, I yow preye?'  
 'It is a water that is maad, I seye,  
 Of elementes foure,' quod Plato. 1460  
 'Tel me the rote, good sir,' quod he tho,  
 'Of that water, if that it be your wille?'  
 'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certein, that I nille. (910)  
 The philosophres sworn were everichoon,  
 That they sholden discovere it un-to noon, 1465  
 Ne in no book it wryte in no manere ;  
 For un-to Crist it is so leef and dere  
 That he wol nat that it discovered be,  
 But wher it lyketh to his deitee  
 Man for tenspyre, and eek for to defende 1470  
 Whom that him lyketh ; lo, this is the ende.'  
 Thanne conclude I thus ; sith god of hevene  
 Ne wol nat that the philosophres nevene (92c)  
 How that a man shal come un-to this stoon,

1441. Cm. Cp. Hl. heed ; *rest* heede, hede. 1447. E. Cm. of the secretes ; Cp. Pt. of secrees ; Hl. of secretz ; Ln. of secretees. 1455, 8. Lichf. Ln. magnesia ; *rest* magnasia. 1461. E. roote ; *rest* roche, rooche, roches. 1462. Cm. that it ; *rest omit* that. 1467. E. lief ; Lichf. Cp. Pt. Hl. leef ; Cm. lef. 1472. Hl. syn ; Lichf. Cm. syn that ; E. sith that ; Cp. Pt. sithens that ; *rest* sith that, sithens that.

I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon. 1475  
 For who-so maketh god his adversarie,  
 As for to werken any thing in contrarie  
 Of his wil, certes, never shal he thryve,  
 Thogh that he multiplye terme of his lyve.  
 And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale; 1480  
 God sende every trewe man bote of his bale!—Amen. (928)

Here is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

---

1475. E. vs; *the rest* as. 1477. E. werken; Cm. werkyn; Hl. werke;  
*rest* worche. 1479. E. Cm. *omit* his. COLOPHON. *So in* E. Cm.; Hl.  
*has*—Here endeth the chanouns yeman his tale.

---

GROUP H.

THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 16950-16968).



Here folweth the Prologe of the Maunciples Tale.

WITE ye nat wher ther stant a litel toun  
Which that y-cleped is Bob-up-and-doun,  
Under the Blee, in Caunterbury weye?  
Ther gan our hoste for to Iape and pleye,  
And seyde, 'sirs, what! Dun is in the myre! 5  
Is ther no man, for preyere ne for hyre,  
That wol awake our felawe heer bihinde?  
A theef mighte him ful lightly robbe and binde.  
See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes bones,  
As he wol falle from his hors at ones. 10  
Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?  
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penaunce,  
For he shal telle a tale, by my fey!  
Al-though it be nat worth a botel hey.  
Awake, thou cook,' quod he, 'god yeve thee sorwe, 15  
What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?  
Hastow had fleen al night, or artow dronke,  
Or hastow with som quene al night y-swonke,  
So that thou mayst nat holden up thyn heed?'

---

HEADING: *from* E. Cp.; Cm. *has*—Heryth the merye wordys of the Host to the cok of Lundene. 1. E. Hn. Woot; Cp. Hl. Wot; Cm. Wote; Pt. Ln. Wete; Wite *is better, as in* l. 82. 7. Cm. here; E. Hn. Hl. al; *rest omit.* 9. *So* Cp. Hl.; E. see how for; Hn. se how for; Cm. so how for.

This cook, that was ful pale and no-thing reed, 20  
 Seyde to our host, 'so god my soule blesse,  
 As ther is falle on me swich hevinesse,  
 Noot I nat why, that me were lever slepe  
 Than the beste galoun wyn in Chepe.'  
 'Wel,' quod the maunciple, 'if it may doon ese 25  
 To thee, sir cook, and to no wight displese  
 Which that heer rydeth in this companye,  
 And that our host wol, of his curteisye,  
 I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;  
 For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale, 30  
 Thyn yën daswen eek, as that me thinketh,  
 And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stinketh,  
 That sheweth wel thou art not wel disposed;  
 Of me, certein, thou shalt nat been y-glosed.  
 Se how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight, 35  
 As though he wolde us swolwe anon-right.  
 Hold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kin!  
 The devel of helle sette his foot ther-in!  
 Thy cursed breeth infecte wol us alle;  
 Fy, stinking swyn, fy! foule moot thee falle! 40  
 A! taketh heed, sirs, of this lusty man.  
 Now, swete sir, wol ye Iusten atte fan?  
 Ther-to me thinketh ye been wel y-shape!  
 I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,  
 And that is whan men pleyen with a straw.' 45  
 And with this speche the cook wex wrooth and wraw,  
 And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste  
 For lakke of speche, and doun the hors him caste,  
 Wher as he lay, til that men up him took;  
 This was a fayr chivachee of a cook! 50  
 Allas! he nadde holde him by his ladel!  
 And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,  
 Ther was greet showving bothe to and fro,  
 To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,

29. E. omits as. 31. E. Hn. Hl. daswen; Cm. daswe; Cp. dasewen; Pt. dasen; Ln. dasoweþe. 36. Cp. Ln. vs swolwe; rest swolwe vs. 40. E. thou; rest thee or the. 46. Cm. Pt. Ln. wex; rest wax. 49. E. Hn. vp hym; rest him vp.

So unweldy was this sory palled gost. 55  
 And to the maunciple thanne spak our host,  
 'By-cause drink hath dominacioun  
 Upon this man, by my savacioun  
 I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.  
 For, were it wyn, or old or moysty ale, 60  
 That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,  
 And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.  
 He hath also to do more than y-nough  
 To kepe him and his capel out of slough ;  
 And, if he falle from his capel eft-sone, 65  
 Than shul we alle have y-nough to done,  
 In lifting up his hevvy dronken cors.  
 Telle on thy tale, of him make I no fors.  
 But yet, maunciple, in feith thou art to nyce,  
 Thus openly repreve him of his vyce. 70  
 Another day he wol, peraventure,  
 Reclayme thee, and bringe thee to lure ;  
 I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,  
 As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,  
 That wer not honeste, if it cam to preef.' 75  
 'No,' quod the maunciple, 'that were a greet mescheef !  
 So mighte he lightly bringe me in the snare.  
 Yet hadde I lever payen for the mare  
 Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve ;  
 I wol nat wratthe him, al-so mote I thryve ! 80  
 That that I spak, I seyde it in my bourde ;  
 And wite ye what ? I have heer, in a gourde,  
 A draught of wyn, ye, of a rype grape,  
 And right anon ye shul seen a good Iape.  
 This cook shal drinke ther-of, if I may ; 85  
 Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay !'  
 And certainly, to tellen as it was,  
 Of this vessel the cook drank faste, allas !  
 What neded him ? he drank y-nough biforn.

55. E. vnweeldy. 59. E. Cm. Ln. *put* lewedly *before* he. 62. So E.  
 Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. ; Cm. sneseth ; Pt. galpeth. 64. E. of ; *rest* of the. 76. *All*  
*the 7 MSS. retain a :* Hl. *omits* No. 79. E. Which that ; *rest omit* that.  
 81. E. speke ; *rest* spak. 85. E. Pt. if that ; *rest omit* that. 89. So E. ;  
 Cm. nedith hym ; Hn. Hl. neded it ; *rest* needeth it.

And whan he hadde pouped in this horn, 90  
 To the maunciple he took the gourde agayn ;  
 And of that drinke the cook was wonder fayn,  
 And thanked him in swich wyse as he coude.

Than gan our host to laughen wonder loude,  
 And seyde, 'I see wel, it is necessarie, 95  
 Wher that we goon, good drink we with us carie ;  
 For that wol turne rancour and disese  
 Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.

O thou Bachus, y-blessed be thy name,  
 That so canst turnen earnest in-to game! 100  
 Worship and thank be to thy deitee!  
 Of that matere ye gete na-more of me.  
 Tel on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye.'

'Wel, sir,' quod he, 'now herkneth what I seye.'

**Thus endeth the Prologe of the Manciple.**

90. E. Hn. Cm. this; *rest* his. 96. E. that; *rest* good. 98. *So* E. Hn.;  
 Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. To acord; Pt. To pees. 99. Hl. thou; *rest omit.* Cp. Pt.  
 Ln. Bachus; *rest* Bacus. COLOPHON. *From* Pt.

## THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

Here biginneth the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

**W**HAN Phebus dwelled here in this erthe adoun, 105  
 As olde bokes maken mencion,  
 He was the moste lusty bachiler  
 In al this world, and eek the beste archer ;  
 He slow Phitoun, the serpent, as he lay  
 Slepinge agayn the sonne upon a day ; 110  
 And many another noble worthy dede  
 He with his bowe wroghte, as men may rede.  
 Pleyen he coude on every minstralcye,  
 And singen, that it was a melodye, (10)  
 To heren of his clere vois the soun. 115  
 Certes the king of Thebes, Amphioun,  
 That with his singing walled that citee,  
 Coude never singen half so wel as he.  
 Therto he was the semelieste man  
 That is or was, sith that the world bigan. 120  
 What nedeth it his fetures to discryve ?  
 For in this world was noon so fair on lyve.  
 He was ther-with fulfild of gentillesse,  
 Of honour, and of parfit worthinesse. (20)  
 This Phebus, that was flour of bachelrye, 125  
 As wel in fredom as in chivalrye,  
 For his desport, in signe eek of victorie  
 Of Phitoun, so as telleth us the storie,  
 Was wont to beren in his hand a bowe.  
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe, 130

105. E. world ; *rest* erthe.  
 Cp. bachelrye ; E. Bachilrie.

108. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. Of (*for* In).  
 130. E. hadde.

125. Hn.

Which in a cage he fostred many a day,  
 And taughte it speken, as men teche a Iay.  
 Whyt was this crowe, as is a snow-whyt swan,  
 And countrefete the speche of every man (30)  
 He coude, whan he sholde telle a tale. 135  
 Ther-with in al this world no nightingale  
 Ne coude, by an hondred thousand deel,  
 Singen so wonder merily and weel.

Now had this Phebus in his hous a wyf,  
 Which that he lovede more than his lyf, 140  
 And night and day dide ever his diligence  
 Hir for to plesse, and doon hir reverence,  
 Save only, if the sothe that I shal sayn,  
 Ialous he was, and wolde have kept hir fayn; (40)  
 For him were looth by-iaped for to be. 145  
 And so is every wight in swich degree;  
 But al in ydel, for it availleth nocht.  
 A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thoght,  
 Sholde nat been kept in noon await, certayn;  
 And trewely, the labour is in vayn 150  
 To kepe a shrewe, for it wol nat be.  
 This holde I for a verray nycetee,  
 To spille labour, for to kepe wyves;  
 Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lyves. (50)

But now to purpos, as I first bigan: 155  
 This worthy Phebus dooth all that he can  
 To plesen hir, weninge by swich plesaunce,  
 And for his manhede and his governaunce,  
 That no man sholde han put him from hir grace.  
 But god it woot, ther may no man embrace 160  
 As to destreyne a thing, which that nature  
 Hath naturelly set in a creature.

Tak any brid, and put it in a cage,  
 And do al thyn entente and thy corage (60)  
 To fostre it tendrely with mete and drinke, 165

132. Hl. speken; *rest* speke. 133. E. *om.* is. 138. E. Hn. myrily.  
 139. E. hadde. 143. E. Cm. *om.* if; Hn. that. that] Hn. if. 147. E. Cm.  
 in ydel; *rest* for naught. 157. E. Cm. that; Hn. for; *rest* by (be).  
 162. E. naturelly. 163. E. Taak.



Of alle deyntees that thou canst bithinke,  
 And keep it al-so clenly as thou may;  
 Al-though his cage of gold be never so gay,  
 Yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold,  
 Lever in a forest, that is rude and cold, 170  
 Gon ete wormes and swich wrecchednesse.  
 For ever this brid wol doon his businesse  
 To escape out of his cage, if he may;  
 His libertee this brid desireth ay. (70)

Lat take a cat, and fostre him wel with milk, 175  
 And tendre flesh, and make his couche of silk,  
 And lat him seen a mous go by the wal;  
 Anon he weyveth milk, and flesh, and al,  
 And every deyntee that is in that hous,  
 Swich appetyt hath he to ete a mous. 180  
 Lo, here hath lust his dominacioun,  
 And appetyt flemeth discrecioun.

A she-wolf hath also a vileins kinde;  
 The lewedeste wolf that she may finde, (80)  
 Or leest of reputacion wol she take, 185  
 In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.

Alle these ensamples speke I by these men  
 That been untrewe, and no-thing by women.  
 For men han ever a likerous appetyt  
 On lower thing to parfourne hir delyt 190  
 Than on hir wyves, be they never so faire,  
 Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.  
 Flesh is so newefangel, with meschaunce,  
 That we ne conne in no-thing han plesaunce (90)  
 That souneth in-to vertu any whyle. 195

This Phebus, which that thoghte upon no gyle,  
 Deceyved was, for al his Iolitee;  
 For under him another hadde she,  
 A man of litel reputacioun,  
 Noght worth to Phebus in comparisoun. 200

---

170. Cp. Pt. Ln. wilde (*for* rude); Hl. wyd. 173. Cp. when; Ln. Hl.  
 whan; *rest* if. 174. E. Hn. Cm. this; *rest* the. 180. E. he hath; Cp.  
 hath sche; *rest* hath he. 185. Hl. *ins.* him, and the *rest* that, before wol  
 (*badly*). 195. Hl. Cm. souneth; *rest* sowneth. 200. Cp. Hl. Nought; E.  
 Hn. Nat; *rest* Not; see l. 254.

The more harm is; it happeth ofte so,  
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and wo.

And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,  
His wyf anon hath for hir lemman sent, (100)  
Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavish speche! 205  
Foryeveth it me, and that I yow biseche.

The wyse Plato seith, as ye may rede,  
The word mot nede accorde with the dede.  
If men shal telle proprely a thing,  
The word mot cosin be to the werking. 210

I am a boistous man, right thus seye I,  
Ther nis no difference, trewely,  
Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,  
If of hir body dishonest she be, (110)  
And a povre wenche, other than this— 215

If it so be, they werke bothe amis—  
But that the gentile, in estaat above,  
She shal be cleped his lady, as in love;  
And for that other is a povre womman,  
She shal be cleped his wenche, or his lemman. 220  
And, god it woot, myn owene dere brother,  
Men leyn that oon as lowe as lyth that other.

Right so, bitwixe a titlelees tiraunt  
And an outlawe, or a theef erraunt, (120)  
The same I seye, ther is no difference. 225  
To Alisaundre told was this sentence;

That, for the tyrant is of gretter might,  
By force of meynee for to sleen doun-right,  
And brennen hous and hoom, and make al plain,  
Lo! therfor is he cleped a capitain; 230

And, for the outlawe hath but smal meynee,  
And may nat doon so greet an harm as he,  
Ne bringe a contree to so greet mescheef,  
Men clepen him an outlawe or a theef. (130)  
But, for I am a man nocht textuel, 235

---

214. E. Cp. dishoneste; Hn. deshoneste.      215. *For* a, Tyrwhitt reads any.  
217. E. Cm. hir estaat (stat); rest om. hir.      223. *In* Hn., titlelees is glossed  
by sine titulo.      226. Hl. told was; rest was told.      235, 236. E. textueel,  
deel.

I wol nocht telle of textes never a del ;  
I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.

Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir lemman,  
Anon they wroghten al hir lust volage.

The whyte crowe, that heng ay in the cage, 240  
Biheld hir werk, and seyde never a word.

And whan that hoom was come Phebus, the lord,  
This crowe sang 'cokkow! cokkow! cokkow!'

'What, brid?' quod Phebus, 'what song singestow? (140)  
Ne were thow wont so merily to singe 245

That to myn herte it was a reioisinge  
To here thy vois? allas! what song is this?'

'By god,' quod he, 'I singe nat amis ;  
Phebus,' quod he, 'for al thy worthinesse, 250  
For al thy beautee and thy gentillesse,

For al thy song and al thy minstralcye,  
For al thy waiting, blered is thyn yë

With oon of litel reputacioun,  
Noght worth to thee, as in comparisoun, (150)

The mountance of a gnat; so mote I thryve! 255  
For on thy bed thy wyf I saugh him swyve.'

What wol ye more? the crowe anon him tolde,  
By sadde tokenes and by wordes bolde,

How that his wyf had doon hir lecherye,  
Him to gret shame and to gret vileinye; 260

And tolde him ofte, he saugh it with his yën.  
This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,

Him thoughte his sorweful herte brast a-two ;  
His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a flo, (160)

And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn. 265  
This is theeffect, ther is na-more to sayn ;

For sorwe of which he brak his minstralcye,  
Bothe harpe, and lute, and giterne, and sautrye ;

And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe.  
And after that, thus spak he to the crowe: 270

240. E. they (*for* that). E. heeng; Ln. honge; *rest* heng. 241. E. Biheeld. 245. E. Hn. myrily. 251. E. Cm. Hl. *om.* 2nd al. 254. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* as. 255. E. Hn. montance. 261. Cm. Hl. yen; Ln. eyzen; *rest* eyen. 263. E. Hn. Cm. And; *rest* Him.

'Traitour,' quod he, 'with tonge of scorioun,  
 Thou hast me broght to my confusioun!  
 Allas! that I was wrought! why nere I deed?  
 O dere wyf, o gemme of lustiheed, (170)  
 That were to me so sad and eek so trewe, 275  
 Now lystow deed, with face pale of hewe,  
 Ful giltelees, that dorste I swere, y-wis!  
 O rakel hand, to doon so foule amis!  
 O trouble wit, o ire recchelees,  
 That unavysed smytest giltelees! 280  
 O wantrust, ful of fals suspecioun,  
 Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?  
 O every man, be-war of rakelnesse,  
 Ne trowe no-thing with-outen strong witsnesse; (180)  
 Smyt nat to sone, er that ye witen why, 285  
 And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly  
 Er ye doon any execucioun,  
 Up-on your ire, for suspecioun.  
 Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire  
 Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the mire. 290  
 Allas! for sorwe I wol my-selven slee!'  
 And to the crowe, 'o false theef!' seyde he,  
 'I wol thee quyte anon thy false tale!  
 Thou songe whylom lyk a nightingale; (190)  
 Now shaltow, false theef, thy song forgon, 295  
 And eek thy whyte fetheres everichon,  
 Ne never in al thy lyf ne shaltou speke.  
 Thus shal men on a traitour been awreke;  
 Thou and thyn of-spring ever shul be blake,  
 Ne never swete noise shul ye make, 300  
 But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,  
 In tokening that thurgh thee my wyf is slayn.'  
 And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,  
 And pulled his whyte fetheres everichon, (200)  
 And made him blak, and refte him al his song, 305

276. Cm. Hl. lyst thow; Pt. Ln. liest thou; Cp. lyes thou. 277. Cm. gylteles; Cp. Hl. gulteles; E. Hn. giltelees; rest giltles. 278. Cm. trouble; rest trouble. 280. E. smyeth; rest smytest. Cm. gilteles; Cp. Hl. gulteles; E. giltles. 300. E. voys (for noyse). 302. is] Cp. Hl. was.

And eek his speche, and out at dore him slong  
 Un-to the devel, which I him bitake ;  
 And for this caas ben alle crowes blake.—  
 Lordings, by this ensample I yow preye,  
 Beth war, and taketh kepe what I seye : 310  
 Ne telleth never no man in your lyf  
 How that another man hath dight his wyf ;  
 He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn.  
 Daun Salomon, as wyse clerkes seyn, (210)  
 Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel ; 315  
 But as I seyde, I am noght textuel.  
 But nathelees, thus taughte me my dame :  
 ‘My sone, think on the crowe, a goddes name ;  
 My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep thy freend.  
 A wikked tonge is worse than a feend. 320  
 My sone, from a feend men may hem blesse ;  
 My sone, god of his endelees goodnesse  
 Walled a tonge with teeth and lippes eke,  
 For man sholde him avyse what he speke. (220)  
 My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche, 325  
 Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes teche ;  
 But for a litel speche avysely  
 Is no men shent, to speke generally.  
 My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne  
 At alle tyme, but whan thou doost thy peyne 330  
 To speke of god, in honour and preyere.  
 The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt lere,  
 Is to restreyne and kepe wel thy tonge.—  
 Thus lerne children whan that they ben yonge.— (230)  
 My sone, of muchel speking yvel-avysed, 335  
 Ther lasse speking hadde y-nough suffysed,  
 Comth muchel harm, thus was me told and taught.  
 In muchel speche sinne wanteth naught.  
 Wostow wher-of a rakel tonge serveth ?  
 Right as a swerd forcutteth and forkerveth 340

308. E. Cp. caas ; Hn. Cm. Ln. cas ; Pt. caus ; Hl. cause. 310. E. Hn.  
 Cm. I ; Hl. ye ; *rest* that ye. 315. E. Hn. kepen ; *rest* kepe. E. Cm. weel.  
 316. E. textueel ; Hl. tixed wel. 318. a] E. on ; Hl. in. 319, 320. E.  
 Hn. freend, feend. 327. Hl. a ; *rest om.* 330. E. Hn. Cm. tymes.

An arm a-two, my dere sone, right so  
 A tonge cutteth frendship al a-two.  
 A Iangler is to god abhominable ;  
 Reed Salomon, so wys and honourable ; (240)  
 Reed David in his psalmes, reed Senekke. 345  
 My sone, spek nat, but with thyn heed thou bekke.  
 Dissimule as thou were deaf, if that thou here  
 A Iangler speke of perilous matere.  
 The Fleming seith, and lerne it, if thee leste,  
 That litel Iangling causeth muchel reste. 350  
 My sone, if thou no wikked word hast seyde,  
 Thee thar nat drede for to be biwreyde ;  
 But he that hath misseyde, I dar wel sayn,  
 He may by no wey clepe his word agayn. (250)  
 Thing that is seyde, is seyde ; and forth it gooth, 355  
 Though him repente, or be him leef or looth.  
 He is his thral to whom that he hath sayde  
 A tale, of which he is now yvel apayde.  
 My sone, be war, and be non auctour newe  
 Of tydinges, whether they ben false or trewe. 360  
 Wher-so thou come, amonges hye or lowe,  
 Kepe wel thy tonge, and thenk up-on the crowe.

**Here is ended the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.**

GROUP I.

THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE.

(T. 17312-17330).



Here folweth the Prologe of the Persones Tale.

**B**Y that the maunciple hadde his tale al ended,  
 The sonne fro the south lyne was descended  
 So lowe, that he nas nat, to my sighte,  
 Degreës nyne and twenty as in highte.  
 Foure of the clokke it was tho, as I gesse; 5  
 For eleven foot, or litel more or lesse,  
 My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there,  
 Of swich feet as my lengthe parted were  
 In six feet equal of proporcioun.  
 Ther-with the mones exaltacioun, 10  
 I mene Libra, alwey gan ascende,  
 As we were entringe at a thropes ende;  
 For which our host, as he was wont to gye,  
 As in this caas, our Ioly companye,  
 Seyde in this wyse, 'lordings everichoon, 15  
 Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon.  
 Fulfild is my sentence and my decree;  
 I trowe that we han herd of ech degree.  
 Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce;

---

1. E. Hn. al; *rest om.*      2. E. Cm. was; *rest is.*      3. E. ne nas; Cm.  
 ne was; Cp. Pt. Ln. was.    5. *The MSS. have Ten; but see the note.*    8. Hn.  
 swich; E. swiche.      10. *Perhaps for the mones we should read Saturnes; see*  
*the note.*      11. *So all but Hl., which has In mena.*      12. thropes] Hl.  
 townes.      17. E. Fulfilled; Hn. Cp. Fulfild; *see l. 19.*

I prey to god, so yeve him right good chaunce, 20  
 That telleth this tale to us lustily.  
 Sir preest,' quod he, 'artow a vicary?  
 Or art a person? sey sooth, by thy fey!  
 Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat our pley;  
 For every man, save thou, hath told his tale, 25  
 Unbokel, and shewe us what is in thy male;  
 For trewely, me thinketh, by thy chere,  
 Thou sholdest knitte up wel a greet matere.  
 Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes bones!'

This Persone him answerde, al at ones, 30  
 'Thou getest fable noon y-told for me;  
 For Paul, that wryteth unto Timothee,  
 Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse,  
 And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.  
 Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest, 35  
 Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?  
 For which I seye, if that yow list to here  
 Moralitee and vertuous matere,  
 And thanne that ye wol yeve me audience,  
 I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence, 40  
 Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I can.  
 But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,  
 I can nat geste—rum, ram, ruf—by lettre,  
 Ne, god wot, rym holde I but litel better;  
 And therfor, if yow list, I wol nat glose. 45  
 I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose  
 To knitte up al this feeste, and make an ende.  
 And Iesu, for his grace, wit me sende  
 To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,  
 Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage 50  
 That highte Ierusalem celestial.  
 And, if ye vouche-sauf, anon I shal  
 Biginne upon my tale, for whiche I preye  
 Telle your avys, I can no better seye.  
 But nathelees, this meditacioun 55

23. Cm. art; E. Hn. arte; Hl. artow; *rest* art thou. 30. *I supply* him  
*from* ed. 1550. 32. E. Hn. Thymothee. 33. E. Hl. weyueth. 40. E.  
*omits* ful. 41. E. leefful; Hn. leueful; Pt. leefull; Cp. Ln. lefful. 43.  
 E. geeste. rum] Hn. Cp. Ln. rom. 46. E. Hn. myrie.



I putte it ay under correccioun  
 Of clerkes, for I am nat textuel ;  
 I take but the sentens, trusteth wel.  
 Therfor I make protestacioun  
 That I wol stonde to correccioun.' 60

Up-on this word we han assented sone,  
 For, as us semed, it was for to done,  
 To enden in som vertuous sentence,  
 And for to yeve him space and audience ;  
 And bede our host he sholde to him seye, 65  
 That alle we to telle his tale him preye.

Our host hadde the wordes for us alle:—  
 'Sir preest,' quod he, 'now fayre yow bifalle !  
 Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly here'—  
 And with that word he seyde in this manere— 70  
 'Telleth,' quod he, 'your meditacioun.  
 But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun ;  
 Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,  
 And to do wel god sende yow his grace !'

**Explicit prohemium.**

---

57, 58. E. textuel, weel. 58. E. omits the. Hl. sentens ; rest sentence. 59. E. make a ; rest omit a. 62. E. vs ; rest it, which is inferior. COLOPHON. So E. Hn. Ln. ; Pt.—Thus endeth the prolog of the persons tale.

## THE PERSONES TALE.

## Here biginneth the Persones Tale.

*Ier. 6<sup>o</sup>. State super vias et videte et interrogate de viis antiquis, que sit via bona; et ambulate in ea, et inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, &c.*

§ 1. Our swete lord god of hevene, that no man wole perisse, but wole that we comen alle to the knoweleche of him, and to  
75 the blisful lyf that is perdurable, / amonesteth us by the prophete Ieremie, that seith in this wyse: / ‘stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde pathes (that is to seyn, of olde sentences) which is the goode wey; / and walketh in that wey, and ye shul finde reffreshinge for your soules,’ &c. / Manye been the weyes espirituels that leden folk to oure Lord Iesu Crist, and to the regne of glorie. / Of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble wey and a ful covenable, which may nat faile to man ne to womman, that thurgh sinne hath misgoon fro the righte  
80 wey of Ierusalem celestial; / and this wey is cleped Penitence, of which man sholde gladly herknen and enquire with al his herte; / to witen what is Penitence, and whennes it is cleped Penitence, and in how manye maneres been the accions or werkinges of Penitence, / and how manye spyces ther been of Penitence, and whiche thinges apertenen and bihoven to Penitence, and whiche thinges destourben Penitence. /

§ 2. Seint Ambrose seith, that ‘Penitence is the pleyninge of man for the gilt that he hath doon, and na-more to do any thing for which him oghte to pleyne.’ / And som doctour seith: ‘Penitence is the waymentinge of man, that sorweth for his sinne

---

HEADING. From E. (E. Heere; Persouns). 75. E. om. 2nd to. 76. E. and seith; rest that seith. 78. E. Hn. Ln. shal; Pt. shul. 79. Pt. spiritual; Ln. spirituele. So. E. om. 2nd ful. E. to no man; rest om. no. 82. Ln. penance (for 2nd and 3rd Penitence). 83. E. spesces; Hl. spieces; rest spices. 84. E. om. the before gilt.

and pyneth him-self for he hath misdoon.' / Penitence, with 85  
 certeyne circumstances, is verrey repentance of a man that halt  
 him-self in sorwe and other peyne for hise giltes. / And for he  
 shal be verrey penitent, he shal first biwailen the sinnes that he  
 hath doon, and stidefastly purposen in his herte to have shrift of  
 mouthe, and to doon satisfaccioun, and never to doon thing for  
 which him oghte more to biwayle or to compleyne, and to con-  
 tinue in goode werkes: or elles his repentance may nat availle. /  
 For as seith seint Isidre: 'he is a Iaper and a gabber, and no  
 verrey repentant, that eftsoone dooth thing, for which him oghte  
 repente.' / Wepinge, and nat for to stinte to doon sinne, may  
 nat avaylle. / But nathelees, men shal hope that every tyme that 90  
 man falleth, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thurgh Peni-  
 tence, if he have grace: but certainly it is greet doute. / For as  
 seith Seint Gregorie: 'unnethe aryseth he out of sinne, that is  
 charged with the charge of yvel usage.' / And therefore re-  
 pentant folk, that stinte for to sinne, and forlete sinne er that  
 sinne forlete hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker of hir sa-  
 vacioun. / And he that sinneth, and verraily repenteth him in  
 his laste ende, holy chirche yet hopeth his savacioun, by the grete  
 mercy of oure lord Iesu Crist, for his repentaunce; but tak the  
 siker wey. /

§ 3 And now, sith I have declared yow what thing is Penitence,  
 now shul ye understonde that ther been three accions of Peni-  
 tence. / The firste accion of Penitence is, that a man be 95  
 baptized after that he hath sinned. / Seint Augustin seith:  
 'but he be penitent for his olde sinful lyf, he may nat biginne  
 the newe clene lif.' / For certes, if he be baptized withouten  
 penitence of his olde gilt, he receiveth the mark of baptisme, but  
 nat the grace ne the remission of his sinnes, til he have repent-  
 ance verrey. / Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly  
 sinne after that they han received baptisme. / The thridde  
 defaute is, that men fallen in venial sinnes after hir baptisme, fro  
 day to day. / Ther-of seith Seint Augustin, that 'penitence of 100  
 goode and humble folk is the penitence of every day.' /

---

85. Ln. III. peyneth. 86. III. holt. 88. E. *om.* to *bef.* biwayle and  
 continue. 90. III. doon; E. *om.*; *rest* do. 94. III. Ln. ende; E. Hn. Pt.  
*om.* E. taak (*glossed* tene); siker (*glossed* certum). Cm. sikerer. *After* wey,  
 Cm. *adds*—& the more certeyn. 96. *All but* E. *om.* accion of Penitence.  
 97. III. but if. 98-100. E. Hn. baptesme. 100. III. in-to venial synne.

§ 4. The spyces of Penitence been three. That oon of hem is solempne, another is commune, and the thridde is privee. / Thilke penance that is solempne, is in two maneres ; as to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of children, and swich maner thing. / Another is, whan a man hath sinned openly, of which sinne the fame is openly spoken in the contree ; and thanne holy chirche by Iugement destreinet him for to do open penaunce. / Commune penaunce is that preestes enioinen men comunly in certeyn caas ; as for to goon, peraventure, naked in  
 105 pilgrimages, or bare-foot. / Privee penaunce is thilke that men doon alday for privee sinnes, of whiche we shryve us prively and receyve privee penaunce. /

§ 5. Now shaltow understande what is bihovely and necessarie to verray parfit Penitence. And this stant on three things ; / Contricioun of herte, Confessioun of Mouth, and Satisfaccioun. / For which seith Seint Iohn Crisostom : ‘ Penitence destreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enioyned, with contricion of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaccion ; and in werkinge of alle maner humilitee.’ / And this is fruitful Penitence agayn three things in whiche we wratthe oure lord  
 110 Iesu Crist : / this is to seyn, by delyt in thinkinge, by recchelesnesse in spekinge, and by wikked sinful werkinge. / And agayns this wikkede giltes is Penitence, that may be lykned un-to a tree. /

§ 6. The rote of this tree is Contricion, that hydeth him in the herte of him that is verray repentant, right as the rote of a tree hydeth him in the erthe. / Of the rote of Contricion springeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaccion. / For which Crist seith in his gospel : ‘ dooth digne fruit of Penitence’ ; for by this fruit may men knowe this tree, and nat by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by  
 115 the braunches ne by the leves of Confession. / And therefore oure Lord Iesu Crist seith thus : ‘ by the fruit of hem ye shul knowen hem.’ / Of this rote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is moder of sikernesse, and this seed is egre and

---

102. E. Hn. *speces* (*glossed species*) ; *rest* spiecs. 103. E. Hn. As to ; *rest* as is to. 104. E. Another thyng is ; *rest om.* thyng. Hl. streyneth. 105. E. Cm. *om.* comunly. 106. E. they shryue hem. 107. E. is bihovely ; Cm. is behofly ; *rest* bihoueth (*behoueth*). Hl. stondith. 109. Hl. humblete. 112. Hl. these thre wickid. 117. E. a grace (*for of grace*).

hoot. / The grace of this seed springeth of god, thurgh remembrance of the day of dome and on the peynes of helle. / Of this matere seith Salomon, that 'in the drede of god man forgetteth his sinne.' / The hete of this seed is the love of god, and the desiring of the Ioye perdurable. / This hete draweth <sup>125</sup> the herte of a man to god, and dooth him haten his sinne. / For soothly, ther is no-thing that savoureth so wel to a child as the milk of his norice, ne no-thing is to him more abhominable than thilke milk whan it is medled with other mete. / Right so the sinful man that loveth his sinne, him semeth that it is to him most swete of any-thing; / but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly our lord Iesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nis to him no-thing more abhominable. / For soothly, the lawe of god is the love of god; for which David the prophete seith: 'I have loved thy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate'; he that loveth god kepeth his lawe and his word. / This tree saugh the prophete <sup>125</sup> Daniel in spirit, up-on the avision of the king Nabugodonosor, whan he conseiled him to do penitence. / Penaunce is the tree of lyf to hem that it receiven, and he that holdeth him in verry penitence is blessed; after the sentence of Salomon. /

§ 7. In this Penitence or Contricion man shal understonde foure thinges, that is to seyn, what is Contricion: and whiche been the causes that moeven a man to Contricion: and how he sholde be contrit: and what Contricion availleth to the soule. / Thanne is it thus: that Contricion is the verry sorwe that a man receiveth in his herte for his sinnes, with sad purpos to shryve him, and to do penaunce, and nevermore to do sinne. / And this sorwe shal been in this manere, as seith seint Bernard: 'it shal been hevy and grevous, and ful sharpe and poinant in herte.' / First, for man hath agilt his lord and his creatour; <sup>130</sup> and more sharpe and poinant, for he hath agilt his fader celestial; / and yet more sharpe and poinant, for he hath wrathed and agilt him that boghte him; which with his precious blood hath delivered us fro the bondes of sinne, and fro the crueltee of the devel and fro the peynes of helle. /

§ 8. The causes that oghte moeve a man to Contricion been six. First, a man shal remembre him of hise sinnes; / but loke

122. E. *om.* is to him.      125. E. loued god; *rest* loueth god.      126. E. *om.* in spirit. up-on] E. in.      131. Cp. agult; Hl. agiltid.      134. E. looke he; *rest om.* he.

he that thilke remembrance ne be to him no delyt by no wey,  
 but greet shame and sorwe for his gilt. For Iob seith: 'sinful  
 men doon werkes worthy of Confession.' / And therefore seith  
 Ezechie: 'I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf, in bitter-  
 135 nesse of myn herte.' / And god seith in the Apocalips: 're-  
 membreth yow fro whennes that ye been falle'; for biforn that  
 tyme that ye sinned, ye were the children of god, and limes of  
 the regne of god; / but for your sinne ye been woxen thral and  
 foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclandre of  
 holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of  
 the fyr of helle. / And yet more foul and abhominable, for ye  
 trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that retourneth to  
 eten his spewing. / And yet be ye fouler for your longe con-  
 tinuing in sinne and your sinful usage, for which ye be roten in  
 your sinne, as a beest in his dong. / Swiche manere of thoghtes  
 140 maken a man to have shame of his sinne, and no delyt, as god  
 seith by the prophete Ezechiel: / 'ye shal remembre yow of  
 youre weyes, and they shuln displese yow.' Sothly, sinnes been  
 the weyes that leden folk to helle. /

§ 9. The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdeyn  
 of sinne is this: that, as seith seint Peter, 'who-so that doth  
 sinne is thral of sinne'; and sinne put a man in greet thraldom. /  
 And therefore seith the prophete Ezechiel: 'I wente sorweful in  
 desdayn of my-self.' And certes, wel oghte a man have desdayn  
 of sinne, and withdrawe him from that thraldom and vileinye. /  
 And lo, what seith Seneca in this matere. He seith thus:  
 'though I wiste that neither god ne man ne sholde nevere knowe  
 it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to do sinne.' / And the same  
 Seneca also seith: 'I am born to gretter things than to be thral  
 145 to my body, or than for to maken of my body a thral.' / Ne a  
 fouler thral may no man ne womman maken of his body, than  
 for to yeven his body to sinne. / Al were it the fouleste cherl, or  
 the fouleste womman that liveth, and leest of value, yet is he  
 thanne more foule and more in servitude. / Evere fro the hyer  
 degree that man falleth, the more is he thral, and more to god  
 and to the world vile and abhominable. / O gode god, wel oghte

135. Hl. Ln. Ezechiel.

137. E. *perpetuel*.

143. E. And certes;

*rest om.* And.144. E. Hn. *wrongly ins.* god after that.147. *All*

servitude.

148. E. *om.* vile and.

man have desdayn of sinne; sith that, thurgh sinne, ther he was free, now is he naked bonde. / And therfore seyth Seint Augustin: 'if thou hast desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte or sinne, have thou thanne desdayn that thou thy-self sholdest do sinne.' / Take reward of thy value, that thou ne be to foul to thy-self. / Allas! wel oghten they thanne have desdayn to be servauntz and thralles to sinne, and sore been ashamed of hemself, / that god of his endeles goodnesse hath set hem in heigh estaat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of body, hele, beautee, prosperitee, / and boghte hem fro the deeth with his herte blood, that they so unkindely, agayns his gentillesse, quytten him so vileinsly, to slaughtre of hir owene soules. / O gode god, ye wommen that been of so greet beautee, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, that seith: / 'he lyketh a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, lyk to a ring of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe.' / For right as a sowe wroteth in everich ordure, so wroteth she hir beautee in the stinkinge ordure of sinne. /

§ 10. The thridde cause that oghte moeve a man to Contricion, is drede of the day of dome, and of the horrible peynes of helle. / For as seint Ierome seith: 'at every tyme that me remembreth of the day of dome, I quake; / for whan I ete or drinke, or what-so that I do, evere semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn ere: / riseth up, ye that been dede, and cometh to the Iugement.' / O gode god, muchel oghte a man to drede swich a Iugement, 'ther-as we shullen been alle,' as seint Poul seith, 'biforn the sete of oure lord Iesu Crist'; / wher-as he shal make a general congregacion, wher-as no man may been absent. / For certes, there availleth noon essoyne ne excusacion. / And nat only that oure defautes shullen be iuged, but eek that alle oure werkes shullen openly be knowe. / And as seith Seint Bernard: 'ther ne shal no pledinge availle, ne no sleighte; we shullen yeven rekeninge of everich ydel word.' / Ther shul we han a Iuge that may nat been deceived ne corrupt. And why? For, certes, alle our thoghtes been discovered as to him; ne for preyere ne for mede he shal nat been corrupt. / And therfore

150. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. Austyn. 152. Hl. men (*for* they). 154. Cm. vileynly. 155, 6. *So* Hl.; E. Hn. he seith liketh; Cp. he seith he likeneth; Cm. he seith & likkenyth; Pt. He liketh. E. soughe; *rest* sowe. 157. E. soughe; *om.* she. 166. E. *om.* 2nd no.

seith Salomon : ' the wratthe of god ne wol nat spare no wight, for preyere ne for yifte ' ; and therefore, at the day of doom, ther nis noon hope to escape. / Wherfore, as seith Seint Anselm : ' ful greet angwissh shul the sinful folk have at that tyme ; / ther shal the sterne and wrothe Iuge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open to destroyen him that moot biknowen hise sinnes, whiche sinnes openly been shewed biforn  
 170 god and biforn every creature. / And on the left syde, mo develes than herte may bithinke, for to harie and drawe the sinful soules to the pyne of helle. / And with-inne the hertes of folk shal be the bytinge conscience, and with-oute-forth shal be the world al brenninge. / Whider shal thanne the wrecched sinful man flee to hyden him ? Certes, he may nat hyden him ; he moste come forth and shewen him. ' / For certes, as seith seint Ierome : ' the erthe shal casten him out of him, and the see also ; and the eyr also, that shal be ful of thonder-clappes and lightnings. ' / Now sothly, who-so wel remembreth him of these things, I gesse that his sinne shal nat turne him in-to delyt, but  
 175 to greet sorwe, for drede of the peyne of helle. / And therefore seith Iob to god : ' suffre, lord, that I may a whyle biwaille and wepe, er I go with-oute returning to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse of deeth ; / to the lond of misese and of derknesse, where-as is the shadwe of deeth ; where-as ther is noon ordre or ordinance, but grisly drede that evere shal laste. ' / Lo, here may ye seen that Iob preyde respyt a whyle, to biwepe and waille his trespas ; for soothly oon day of respyt is bettre than al the tresor of the world. / And for-as-muche as a man may acquiten him-self biforn god by penitence in this world, and nat by tresor, therefore sholde he preyre to god to yeve him respyt a whyle, to biwepe and biwailen his trespas. / For certes, al the sorwe that a man mighte make fro the beginning of the world, nis but a litel thing  
 180 at regard of the sorwe of helle. / The cause why that Iob clepeth helle ' the lond of derknesse ' ; / under-stondeth that he clepeth it ' londe ' or erthe, for it is stable, and nevere shal faille ; ' derk, ' for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material. / For certes,

---

168. Cp. Pt. Ln. *repeat* (after god) wol nought ben corrupte and therefore saith Salamon. 170. E. Hn. stierne. moot] E. noot. 171. on] E. in. E. Ln. peyne ; Cm. pit ; *rest* pyne. 175. E. Hn. in ; Hl. to ; *rest* in-to. 178. Hl. oon ; Cm. on ; E. a ; *rest* oo (o). 182. or] E. Cp. Ln. of. E. Hn. dirk.



the derke light, that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne, shal turne him al to peyne that is in helle; for it sheweth him to the horrible develes that him tormenten. / 'Covered with the derknesse of deeth': that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of god; for certes, the sighte of god is the lyf perdurable. / 'The derknesse of deeth' been the sinnes that the wrecched man hath doon, whiche that destourben him to see the face of god; right as doth a derk cloude bitwixe us and the sonne. / 'Lond of misese': by-cause that ther been 185 three maneres of defautes, agayn three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lyf, that is to seyn, honours, delyces, and richesses. / Agayns honour, have they in helle shame and confusion. / For wel ye woot that men clepen 'honour' the reverence that man doth to man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence. For certes, na-more reverence shal be doon there to a king than to a knave. / For which god seith by the prophete Ieremye: 'thilke folk that me despysen shul been in despyt.' / 'Honour' is eek cleped greet lordshipe; ther shal no man serven other but of harm and torment. 'Honour' is eek cleped greet dignitee and heighnesse; but in helle shul they been al fortroden of develes. / And god seith: 'the horrible develes shulle goon 190 and comen up-on the hevedes of the dampned folk.' And this is for-as-muche as, the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the more shulle they been abated and defouled in helle. / Agayns the richesses of this world, shul they han misese of poverte; and this poverte shal been in foure thinges: / in defaute of tresor, of which that David seith; 'the riche folk, that embraceden and oneden al hir herte to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepinge of deeth; and no-thing ne shul they finden in hir handes of al hir tresor.' / And more-over, the miseise of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke. / For god seith thus by Moyses; 'they shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hir drinke, and the venim of the dragon hir morsels.' / 195 And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of clothing: for they shulle be naked in body as of clothing, save the fyr in which they brenne and othere filthes; / and naked shul they been of

188. E. Hn. woot; Cm. wote; Hl. witen; Cp. wite; Ln. weten. 189.  
Hl. displesen (*for* despysen). 190. E. *om. from* ther shal to *and* greet.  
195. E. with the bitter; *rest om. thc.* Hl. teeth (*for* deeth).

soule, of alle manere vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Where been thanne the gaye robes and the softe shetes and the smale shertes?/ Lo, what seith god of hem by the prophete Isaye: 'that under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hir covertures shulle been of wormes of helle.'/ And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of freendes; for he nis nat povre that hath goode freendes, but there is no freend; / for neither god ne no creature shal been freend to hem, and  
 200 everich of hem shal haten other with deedly hate. / 'The sones and the doghtren shullen rebellen agayns fader and mooder, and kinrede agayns kinrede, and chyden and despysen everich of hem other,' bothe day and night, as god seith by the prophete Michias. / And the lovinge children, that whylom loveden so fleshly everich other, wolden everich of hem eten other if they mighte. / For how sholden they love hem togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem other in the prosperitee of this lyf? / For truste wel, hir fleshly love was deedly hate; as seith the prophete David: 'who-so that loveth wikkednesse he hateth his soule.' / And who-so hateth his owene soule, certes,  
 205 he may love noon other wight in no manere. / And therefore, in helle is no solas ne no frendshipe, but evere the more fleshly kinredes that been in helle, the more cursinges, the more chydinges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. / And forther-over, they shul have defaute of alle manere delycles; for certes, delycles been after the appetytes of the fyve wittes, as sighte, heringe, smellinginge, savoringe, and touchinge. / But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therfore ful of teres; and hir heringe, ful of waymentinge and of grintage of teeth, as seith Iesu Crist; / hir nosethirles shullen be ful of stinkinge stink. And as seith Isaye the prophete: 'hir savoringe shal be ful of bitter galle.' / And touchinge of al hir body, y-covered with 'fyr that nevere shal quenche, and with wormes that nevere shul dyen,' as god seith by the mouth of  
 210 Isaye. / And for-as-muche as they shul nat wene that they may dyen for peyne, and by hir deeth flee fro peyne, that may they understonden by the word of Iob, that seith: 'ther-as is the

---

197. E. as of alle; *rest om.* as. E. (*only*) smale shetes and the softe shertes.  
 203. E. *om.* hem *after* love. 206. E. *om.* 1st in helle. 207. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. *om.* after. 208. Cp. Hl. Ln. gruntynge; Cm. grochyngge; Pt. gnaistyngge.

shadwe of deeth.' / Certes, a shadwe hath the lyknesse of the thing of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thing of which it is shadwe. / Right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lyk deeth for the horrible anguiss, and why? For it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholde dye anon; but certes they shal nat dye. / For as seith Seint Gregorie: 'to wrecche caytives shal be deeth with-oute deeth, and ende with-uten ende, and defaute with-oute failinge. / For hir deeth shal alwey liven, and hir ende shal everemo biginne, and hir defaute shal nat faille.' <sup>215</sup> And therefore seith Seint Iohn the Evangelist: 'they shullen folwe deeth, and they shul nat finde him; and they shul desyren to dye, and deeth shal flee fro hem.' / And eek Iob seith: that 'in helle is noon ordre of rule.' / And al-be-it so that god hath creat alle thinges in right ordre, and no-thing with-uten ordre, but alle thinges been ordeyned and nombred; yet nathelees they that been dampned been no-thing in ordre, ne holden noon ordre. / For the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruit. / For, as the prophete David seith: 'god shal destroie the fruit of the erthe as fro hem;' ne water ne shal yeve hem no moisture; ne the eyr no refressing, ne fyr no light. / For as seith seint Basilie: <sup>220</sup> 'the brenninge of the fyr of this world shal god yeven in helle to hem that been dampned; / but the light and the cleernesse shal be yeven in hevене to hise children'; right as the gode man yeveth flesh to hise children, and bones to his houndes. / And for they shullen have noon hope to escape, seith seint Iob atte laste: that 'ther shal horroure and grisly drede dwellen with-uten ende.' / Horroure is alwey drede of harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the hertes of hem that been dampned. And therefore han they lorn al hir hope, for sevене causes. / First, for god that is hir Iuge shal be with-uten mercy to hem; ne they may nat plesse him, ne noon of hise halwes; ne they ne may yeve no-thing for hir raunson; / ne they have no <sup>225</sup> vois to speke to him; ne they may nat flee fro peyne; ne they have no goodnesse in hem, that they mowe shewe to deliver hem fro peyne. / And therefore seith Salomon: 'the wikked man dyeth; and whan he is deed, he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne.' / Who-so thanne wolde wel understande these peynes,

214. Hl. shal be yiue deth.      218. E. in the ordre.      221. E. Cm. Basilie; *rest* Basile.    225. E. Cm. and they (*1st time*).    228. E. the (*for* these).

and bithinke him weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his sinnes, certes, he sholde have more talent to syken and to wepe than for to singen and to pleye./ For as that seith Salomon: 'who-so that hadde the science to knowe the peynes that been establised and ordeyned for sinne, he wolde make sorwe.'/ 'Thilke science,' as seith seint Augustin, 'maketh a man to  
230 waymenten in his herte.'/

§ 11. The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricion, is the sorweful remembrance of the good that he hath left to doon here in erthe; and eek the good that he hath lorn. / Soothly, the gode werkes that he hath left, outhere they been the gode werkes that he wroghte er he fel in-to deedly sinne, or elles the gode werkes that he wroghte while he lay in sinne. / Soothly, the gode werkes, that he dide biforn that he fil in sinne, been al mortified and astoned and dulled by the ofte sinning. / The othere gode werkes, that he wroghte whyl he lay in deedly sinne, they been outrelly dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevене. / Thanne thilke gode werkes that been mortified by ofte sinning, whiche gode werkes he dide whyl he was in charitee, ne mowe  
235 nevere quiken agayn with-outhe verray penitence. / And ther-of seith god, by the mouth of Ezechiel: that, 'if the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he live?' / Nay; for alle the gode werkes that he hath wroght ne shul nevere been in remembrance; for he shal dyen in his sinne. / And up-on thilke chapitre seith seint Gregorie thus: 'that we shulle understonde this principally; / that whan we doon deedly sinne, it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawn in-to memorie the gode werkes that we han wroght biforn.' / For certes, in the werkinge of the deedly sinne, ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon biforn; that is to seyn, as for to  
240 have therby the lyf perdurable in hevене. / But nathelees, the gode werkes quiken agayn, and comen agayn, and helpen, and availen to have the lyf perdurable in hevене, whan we han contricion. / But soothly, the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly sinne, for-as-muche as they were doon in deedly sinne, they may nevere quiken agayn. / For certes, thing that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quikene; and nathelees, al-be-it that

232. E. Pt. Ln. that he hath wroght (*1st time*). 233. Ln. mortified; Hl. amortised; *rest* mortefied. Cp. Pt. astonyed; Hl. astoneyed. 235. Ln. Hl. mortified; *rest* mortefied. 240. E. is for to seyn. 242. E. quyke.

they ne availle nocht to han the lyf perdurable, yet availen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles to geten temporal richesse, / or elles that god wole the rather enlumine and lightne the herte of the sinful man to have repentance; / and eek they availen for to usen a man to doon gode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. / And thus the curteis lord <sup>245</sup> Iesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost; for in somewhat it shal availle. / But for-as-muche as the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in good lyf, been al mortified by sinne folwinge; and eek, sith that alle the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly synne, been outrely dede as for to have the lyf perdurable; / wel may that man, that no good werke ne dooth, singe thilke newe Frenshe song: "*Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.*" / For certes, sinne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace. / For soothly, the grace of the holy goost fareth lyk fyr, that may nat been ydel; for fyr failleth anoon as it forleteth his wirkinge, and right so grace fayleth anoon as it forleteth his werkinge. / Than leseth the sinful man <sup>250</sup> the goodnesse of glorie, that only is bihight to gode men that labouren and werken. / Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to god, to whom he oweth al his lyf. / For trust wel, 'he shal yeven acountes,' as seith seint Bernard, 'of alle the godes that han be yeven him in this present lyf, and how he hath hem despended; / in so muche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal yeve of it a rekening.' /

§ 12. The fifthe thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is remembrance of the passion that oure lord Iesu Crist suffred for our sinnes. / For, as seith seint Bernard: 'whyl that I live, I <sup>255</sup> shal have remembrance of the travailles that oure lord Crist suffred in preching; / his werinesse in travailling, hise temptacions whan he fasted, hise longe wakinges whan he preyde, hise teres whan that he weep for pitee of good peple; / the wo and the shame and the filthe that men seyden to him; of the foule spitting that men spitte in his face, of the buffettes that men yaven

247. Ln. mortified; Hn. Hl. amortised; *rest* mortefied. 254. *All* nocht (nat) so; ed. 1550, in so (*better*). 255. Hl. for vs and for our synnes.

him, of the foule mowes, and of the repreves that men to him seyden ; / of the nayles with whiche he was nailed to the croys, and of al the remenant of his passion that he suffred for my sinnes, and no-thing for his gilt.' / And ye shul understonde, that in mannes sinne is every manere of ordre or ordinance turned up-so-  
 260 down. / For it is sooth, that god, and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man been so ordeyned, that everich of these foure things sholde have lordshipe over that other ; / as thus : god sholde have lordshipe over reson, and reson over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. / But sothly, whan man sinneth, al this ordre or ordinance is turned up-so-down. / And therefore thanne, for-as-muche as the reson of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to god, that is his lord by right, therefore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. / And why ? For sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns reson ; and by that wey leseth reson the lordshipe over sen-  
 265 sualitee and over the body. / For right as reson is rebel to god, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to reson and the body also. / And certes, this disordinance and this rebellion oure lord Iesu Crist aboghte up-on his precious body ful dere, and herkneth in which wyse. / For-as-muche thanne as reson is rebel to god, therefore is man worthy to have sorwe and to be deed. / This suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitraysted of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, ' so that his blood brast out at every nail of hise handes,' as seith seint Augustin. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel as reson of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therefore is man worthy to have shame ; and this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, whan they spetten in his  
 270 visage. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel thanne as the caitif body of man is rebel bothe to reson and to sensualitee, therefore is it worthy the deeth. / And this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man up-on the croys, where-as ther was no part of his body free, withouten greet peyne and bitter passion. / And al this suffred Iesu Crist, that nevere forfeled. And therefore resonably may be seyde of Iesu in this manere : ' to muchel am I peyned for the thinges that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shendshipe that man is worthy to have.' / And therefore may the sinful

---

261. E. Cm. *om.* so.    269. E. Cm. his blood ; *rest* the blood.    270. Hl. face (*for* visage).    273. Cm. (*and* ed. 1550) And therefore . . . manere ; *rest om.*

man wel seye, as seith seint Bernard : ‘acursed be the bitternesse of my sinne, for which ther moste be suffred so muchel bitternesse.’ / For certes, after the diverse discordances of oure wikkednesses, was the passion of Iesu Crist ordeyned in diverse thinges, / as thus. Certes, sinful mannes soule is bitraysed of the 275  
 devel by coveitise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth fleshly delyces ; and yet is it tormented by inpa-  
 cience of adversitee, and bispet by servage and subieccion of sinne ; and atte laste it is slayn fynally. / For this disordinaunce of sinful man was Iesu Crist first bitraysed, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of sinne and peyne. / Thanne was he biscorned, that only sholde han been honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges. / Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage aungels desyren to looke, vileynsly bispet. / Thanne was he scourged that no-thing hadde agilt ; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. / Thanne was acompliced the word of Isaye : 280  
 ‘he was wounded for oure misdedes, and defouled for oure felonies.’ / Now sith that Iesu Crist took up-on him-self the peyne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle, that for hise sinnes goddes sone of hevene sholde al this peyne endure. /

§ 13. The sixte thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is the hope of three thynges ; that is to seyn, foryiffnesse of sinne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevene, with which god shal guerdone a man for hise gode dedes. / And for-as-muche as Iesu Crist yeveth us these yiftes of his largesse and of his sovereyn bountee, therefore is he cleped *Iesus Nazareus rex Iudeorum*. / Iesus is to seyn ‘saveour’ or ‘salvacion,’ on whom men shul hope to have foryiffnesse of sinnes, which that is proprely salvacion of sinnes. / And therefore seyde the aungel to 285  
 Ioseph : ‘thou shalt clepen his name Iesus, that shal saven his peple of hir sinnes.’ / And heer-of seith seint Peter : ‘ther is noon other name under hevene that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Iesus.’ / *Nazareus* is as muche for to seye as ‘florisslinge,’ in which a man shal hope, that he that yeveth him remission of sinnes shal yeve him eek grace wel

275. E. disconcordances. 276. E. temporel. bispet] E. dispeir (!). 277. E. om. first. 281. E. Ysaye that seith that he; rest om. that seith that. 283. E. Hn. guerdone; Cm. gerdounnyn. 285. E. om. is after that.

for to do. For in the flour is hope of fruit in tyme cominge ; and in foryifnesse of sinnes hope of grace wel for to do. / 'I was atte dore of thyn herte,' seith Iesus, 'and cleped for to entre ; he that openeth to me shal have foryifnesse of sinne. / I wol entre in-to him by my grace, and soupe with him,' by the goode werkes that he shal doon ; whiche werkes been the foode of god ; 'and he shal soupe with me,' by the grete Ioye that I shal yeven  
 290 him. / Thus shal man hope, for hise werkes of penaunce, that god shall yeven him his regne ; as he bihoteth him in the gospel. /

§ 14. Now shal a man understonde, in which manere shal been his contricion. I seye, that it shal been universal and total ; this is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentant for alle hise sinnes that he hath doon in delyt of his thoght ; for delyt is ful perilous. / For ther been two manere of consentinges ; that oon of hem is cleped consentinge of affeccion, when a man is moeved to do sinne, and delyteth him longe for to thinke on that sinne ; / and his reson aperceyveth it wel, that it is sinne agayns the lawe of god, and yet his reson refreyneth nat his foul delyt or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayns the reverence of god ; al-though his reson ne consente noght to doon that sinne in dede, / yet seyn somme doctours that swich delyt that dwelleth  
 305 longe, it is ful perilous, al be it nevere so lite. / And also a man sholde sorwe, namely, for al that evere he hath desired agayn the lawe of god with perfit consentinge of his reson ; for ther-of is no doute, that it is deedly sinne in consentinge. / For certes, ther is no deedly sinne, that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delyt ; and so forth in-to consentinge and in-to dede. / Wherfore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delytes, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of grete sinnes outward. / Wherfore I seye, that swiche wikked delytes and wikked thoghtes been subtile bigyleres of hem that shullen be dampned. / More-over, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes as wel as for hise wikkede dedes ; for certes, the repentance of a singuler sinne, and nat repente of alle hise othere sinnes, or elles repenten him of alle  
 300 hise othere sinnes, and nat of a singuler sinne, may nat availle. / For certes, god almighty is al good ; and ther-fore he foryeveth al,



or elles right nocht. / And heer-of seith seint Augustin : ‘ I woot certainly / that god is enemy to everich sinnere ’ ; and how thanne ? He that observeth o sinne, shal he have foryifnesse of the remenaunt of hise othere sinnes ? Nay. / And forther-over, contricion sholde be wonder sorweful and anguissous, and therefore yeveth him god pleynty his mercy ; and therefore, whan my soule was anguissous with-inne me, I hadde remembrance of god that my preyere mighte come to him. / Forther-over, contricion moste be continuel, and that man have stedefast purpos to shryven him, and for to amenden him of his lyf. / For soothly, whyl<sup>305</sup> contricion lasteth, man may evere have hope of foryifnesse ; and of this comth hate of sinne, that destroyeth sinne bothe in himself, and eek in other folk, at his power. / For which seith David : ‘ ye that loven god hateth wikkednesse. ’ For trusteth wel, to love god is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth. /

§ 15. The laste thing that man shal understonde in contricion is this ; wher-of avayleth contricion. I seye, that som tyme contricion delivereth a man fro sinne ; / of which that David seith : ‘ I seye, ’ quod David, that is to seyn, ‘ I purposed fermely to shryve me ; and thow, Lord, relesedest my sinne. ’ / And right so as contricion availleth nocht, with-uten sad purpos of shrifte, if man have oportunittee, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfacion with-uten contricion. / And more-over, contricion destroy-<sup>310</sup> eth the prison of helle, and maketh wayk and feble alle the strengthes of the develes, and restoreth the yiftes of the holy goost and of alle gode vertues ; / and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth the soule fro the peyne of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of sinne, and restoreth it to alle godes espiituels, and to the companye and communion of holy chirche. / And forther-over, it maketh him that whylom was sone of ire to be sone of grace ; and alle these things been preved by holy writ. / And therefore, he that wolde sette his entente to these things, he were ful wys ; for soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to sinne, but yeven his body and al his herte to the service of Iesu Crist, and ther-of doon him hommage. / For soothly, oure swete lord Iesu Crist hath spared

303. E. *om.* I woot certainly.fro ; *rest om.* a. 311. E. feble.

305. E. continuel.

308. E. Ln. a man

314. Hl. herte (*for* entente).

313. Hl. Pt. Ln. things he prouith by.

us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of mannes  
315 soule, a sory song we mighten alle singe. /

**Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur secunda  
pars eiusdem.**

§ 16. The seconde partie of Penitence is Confession, that is  
signe of contricion. / Now shul ye understonde what is Con-  
fession, and whether it oghte nedes be doon or noon, and whiche  
things been covenable to verray Confession. /

§ 17. First shaltow understonde that Confession is verray  
shewing of sinnes to the preest; / this is to seyn 'verray,' for  
he moste confessen him of alle the condicions that bilongen to  
his sinne, as ferforth as he can. / Al moot be seyde, and no  
thing excused ne hid ne forwrapped, and noght avaunte him of  
320 his gode werkes. / And forther over, it is necessarie to under-  
stonde whennes that sinnes springen, and how they encreesen, and  
whiche they been. /

§ 18. Of the springinge of sinnes seith seint Paul in this wise:  
that 'right as by a man sinne entred first in-to this world, and  
thurgh that sinne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred in-to alle men  
that sinneden.' / And this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred  
in-to this world whan he brak the comaundement of god. / And  
therefore, he that first was so mighty that he sholde not have  
dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste nedes dye, whether he  
wolde or noon; and all his progenie in this world that in thilke  
man sinneden. / Loke that in thestaat of innocence, when Adam  
and Eve naked weren in paradys, and no-thing ne hadden shame  
325 of hir nakednesse, / how that the serpent, that was most wylly of  
alle othere bestes that god hadde maked, seyde to the womman:  
'why comaunded god to yow, ye sholde nat eten of every tree  
in paradys?' / The womman answerde: 'of the fruit,' quod  
she, 'of the trees in paradys we feden us; but soothly, of the  
fruit of the tree that is in the middel of paradys, god forbad us  
for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest per-aventure we should dyen.' /  
The serpent seyde to the womman: 'nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen  
of deeth; for sothe, god woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of,  
youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowinge

317, 324. E. wheither.      320. him of his] E. Cm. thee of thy.      321. E.  
encreessen.      323. E. Hn. comaundementz; rest comaundement.      325.  
Pt. þe astate; Ln. þe state; Cm. stat.      327. ne] E. and.      328. E. om. ye  
before shul.

good and harm.' / The womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feding, and fair to the eyen, and delytable to the sighte ; she tok of the fruit of the tree, and eet it, and yaf to hir housbonde, and he eet ; and anon the eyen of hem bothe openeden. / And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige-leves a manere of breches to hiden hir membres. / There 330 may ye seen that deedly sinne hath first suggestion of the feend, as sheweth here by the naddre ; and afterward, the delyt of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve ; and after that, the consentinge of resoun, as sheweth here by Adam. / For trust wel, thogh so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flesh, and the flesh hadde delyt in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etinge of the fruit, yet stood he in thestaat of innocence. / Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original ; for of him fleshly descended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt matere. / And whan the soule is put in our body, right anon is contract original sinne ; and that, that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and sinne. / And therefore be we alle born sonnes of wratthe and of dampnacion perdurable, if it nere baptesme that we receyven, which binimeth us the culpe ; but for sothe, the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptation, which peyne highte concupiscence. / Whan it is wrong- 335 fully disposed or ordeyned in man, it maketh him coveite, by coveitise of flesh, fleshly sinne, by sighte of hise eyen as to erthely thinges, and coveitise of hynesse by pryde of herte. /

§ 19. Now as for to speken of the firste coveitise, that is, concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefulliche y-maked and by rightful Iugement of god ; / I seye, for-as-muche as man is nat obeisaunt to god, that is his lord, therefore is the flesh to him disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norissinge of sinne and occasion of sinne. / Therefore, al the whyle that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme, and moeved in his flesh to sinne. / And this thing may nat faille as longe as he liveth ; it may wel waxe feble and faille, by vertu of baptesme and by the grace of god thurgh penitence ; / but fully 340

330. E. Cm. a manere ; *rest* in manere. 335. E. bynyneth ; II. n. Pt. III. bynyneth. 338. E. norrissyng. 340. E. fieble ; *rest* feble.

ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal som tyme be moeved in him-self, but-if he were al refreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie or colde drinkes. / For lo, what seith seint Paul: 'the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flesh; they been so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde.' / The same seint Paul, after his grete penaunce in water and in lond (in water by night and by day, in greet peril and in greet peyne, in lond, in famine, in thirst, in cold and clothlees, and ones stoned almost to the death) / yet seyde he: 'allas! I, caytif man, who shal delivere me fro the prisoun of my caytif body?' / And seint Ierome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, where-as he hadde no companye but of wilde bestes, where-as he ne hadde no mete but herbes and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopen for hete and ny  
 345 destroyed for cold, / yet seyde he: that 'the brenninge of lecherie boiled in al his body.' / Wherfore I woot wel sikerly, that they been deceyved that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. / Witnessse on Seint Iame the Apostel, that seith: that 'every wight is tempted in his owen concupiscence'; that is to seyn, that everich of us hath matere and occasion to be tempted of the norissinge of sinne that is in his body. / And therefore seith Seint Iohn the Evaungelist: 'if that we seyn that we beth with-oute sinne, we deceyve us-selve, and trouthe is nat in us.' /

§ 20. Now shal ye understonde in what manere that sinne wexeth or encreseth in man. The firste thing is thilke norissinge  
 350 of sinne, of which I spak biforn, thilke fleshly concupiscence. / And after that comth the subieccion of the devel, this is to seyn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fyr of fleshly concupiscence. / And after that, a man bithinketh him whether he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. / And thanne, if that a man withstonde and weyve the firste entysinge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no sinne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feleth he anon a flambe of delyt. / And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen him wel, or elles he wol falle anon in-to consentinge of sinne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme and place. / And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: 'the feend seith, I wole

345. E. Ethiopeen; *rest* -pen.

350. E. encreesseth.

352. E. wheither.

chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestion, and I wole hente him by moevynge or stringe of sinne. I wol departe my pryse or my praye by deliberacion, and my lust shal been accompliced in delyt; I wol drawe my swerd in consentinge: / 355 for certes, right as a swerd departeth a thing in two peces, right so consentinge departeth god fro man: 'and thanne wol I sleen him with myn hand in dede of sinne'; thus seith the feend. / For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is sinne accompliced by temptacion, by delyt, and by consentinge; and thanne is the sin cleped actual. /

§ 21. For sothe, sinne is in two maneres; outhere it is venial, or deedly sinne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature more than Iesu Crist oure creatour, thanne is it deedly sinne. And venial synne is it, if man love Iesu Crist lasse than him oghte. / For sothe, the dede of this venial sinne is ful perilous; for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to god more and more. / And therefore, if a man charge him-self with manye swiche venial sinnes, certes, but-if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amenuse in him al the love that he hath to Iesu Crist; / and in this wise skippeth venial in-to 360 deedly sinne. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial sinnes, the more is he enclyned to fallen in-to deedly sinne. / And therefore, lat us nat be negligent to deschargen us of venial sinnes. For the proverbe seith: that manye smale maken a greet. / And herkne this ensample. A greet wave of the see comth som-tyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the ship. And the same harm doth som-tyme the smale dropes of water, that entren thurgh a litel crevace in-to the thurrok, and in-to the botme of the ship, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. / And therefore, al-though ther be a difference bitwixe these two causes of drenchinge, algates the ship is dreynt. / Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly sinne, and of anoyouse veniale sinnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly, that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he sinneth venially, is as greet in his herte as the love of god, or more. / And therefore, the love of every thing, that is nat biset in 365 god ne doon principally for goddes sake, al-though that a man love

357. E. Actueel. 358. E. *viz.* oghte. 361. sinnes] E. sinne. 363. E. Hn. Cm. in the botme.

it lasse than god, yet is it venial sinne ; / and deddly sinne, whan the love of any thing weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of god, or more. / ‘ Deedly sinne,’ as seith seint Augustin, ‘ is, whan a man turneth his herte fro god, which that is verray sovereyn bountee, that may nat chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thing that may chaunge and flitte’ ; / and certes, that is every thing, save god of hevене. For sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to god with al his herte, un-to a creature, certes, as muche of his love as he yeveth to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro god ; / and therefore doth he sinne. For he, that is dettour to god, ne yeldeth nat to god al his dette, 370 that is to seyn, al the love of his herte. /

§ 22. Now sith man understondeth generally, which is venial sinne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of sinnes whiche that many a man per-aventure ne demeth hem nat sinnes, and ne shryveth him nat of the same thinges ; and yet nathelees they been sinnes. / Soothly, as thise clerkes wryten, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than suffyseth to the sustenance of his body, in certein he dooth sinne. / And eek whan he spekeþ more than nedeth, it is sinne. Eke whan he herkneth nat benignely the compleint of the povre. / Eke whan he is in hele of body and wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, withouten cause resonable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite. / Eke whan he useth his wyf, withouten sovereyn desyr of engendrure, to the honour of god, or for 375 the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body. / Eke whan he wol nat visite the sike and the prisoner, if he may. Eke if he love wyf or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requyreth. Eke if he flatere or blandishe more than him oghte for any necessitee. / Eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povre. Eke if he apparilleth his mete more deliciously than nede is, or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse. / Eke if he tale vanitees at chirche or at goddes service, or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folye or of vileinye ; for he shal yelden acountes of it at the day of dome. / Eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do

---

367. E. wexeth (*for* weyeth). 369. E. as he yeueth of his loue. 371. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. hem (*for* him). 374. E. hym oghte (*for* othere folk). 376. E. Hn. blandise. 377. Hl. body (*for* mete). E. Cm. om. it. 378. Hl. talke of (*for* tale). 379. Hn. Hl. acounte.

things that he may nat perfourne. Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, misseyeth or scorneth his neighebores. / Eke whan he hath any wikked suspencion of thing, ther he ne woot of it no soothfastnesse. / These things and mo with-oute nombre been sinnes, 380 as seith seint Augustin. /

Now shal men understonde, that al-be-it so that noon erthely man may eschue alle venial sinnes, yet may he refreyne him by the brenninge love that he hath to oure lord Iesu Crist, and by preyeres and confession and othere gode werkes, so that it shal but litel greve. / For, as seith seint Augustin: 'if a man love god in swiche manere, that al that evere he doth is in the love of god, and for the love of god verrailly, for he brenneth in the love of god: / loke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anoyeth or greveth, so muche anoyeth a venial sinne un-to a man that is parfit in the love of Iesu Crist.' / Men may also refreyne venial sinne by receyvinge worthily of the precious body of Iesu Crist; / by receyvinge eek of holy water; by almesdede; 385 by general confession of *Confiteor* at masse and at complin; and by blessinge of bisshopes and of preestes, and by othere gode werkes. /

#### Explicit secunda pars Penitentie.

#### Sequitur de Septem Peccatis Mortalibus et eorum dependenciis circumstanciis et speciebus.

§ 23. Now is it bihovely thing to telle whiche been the deedly sinnes, this is to seyn, chieftaines of sinnes; alle they renne in o lees, but in diverse maneres. Now been they cleped chieftaines for-as-muche as they been chief, and springers of alle othere sinnes. / Of the roote of these sevene sinnes thanne is Pryde, the general rote of alle harmes; for of this rote springen certain braunches, as Ire, Envye, Accidie or Slewthe, Avarice or Coveitise (to commune understandinge), Glotonye, and Lecherye. / And everich of these chief sinnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as shal be declared in hir chapitres folwinge. /

#### De Superbia.

§ 24. And thogh so be that no man can outrely telle the

---

382. E. restreyne (*for* refreyne); see 385. 386. E. *om.* by *before* othere.  
HEADING. So in E.; but E. adds De Superbia, which should come at the head of § 24, as in Hn. 387. Hl. springers; Hn. sprynge; E. Pt. Ln. sprynge.

nombre of the twigges and of the harmes that cometh of Pryde, yet  
 390 wol I shewe a partie of hem, as ye shul understonde. / Ther is In-  
 obedience, Avauntinge, Ipocrisie, Despyt, Arrogance, Impudence,  
 Swellinge of herte, Insolence, Elacion, Impacience, Strif, Con-  
 tumacie, Presumpcion, Irreverence, Pertinacie, Veyne Glorie; and  
 many another twig that I can nat declare. / Inobedient, is he that  
 disobeyeth for despyt to the comandements of god and to hise  
 sovereyns, and to his goostly fader. / Avauntour, is he that  
 bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon. /  
 Ipocrite, is he that hydeth to shewe him swiche as he is, and  
 sheweth him swiche as he noght is. / Despitous, is he that hath  
 desdeyn of his neighebore, that is to seyn, of his evene-cristene, or  
 395 hath despyt to doon that him oghte to do. / Arrogant, is he that  
 thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him that he hath noght,  
 or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise desertes; or elles he  
 demeth that he be that he nis nat. / Impudent, is he that for his  
 pride hath no shame of hise sinnes. / Swellinge of herte, is whan  
 a man reiroyseth him of harm that he hath doon. / Insolent, is he  
 that despyseth in his Iugement alle othere folk as to regard of his  
 value, and of his conning, and of his speking, and of his bering. /  
 Elacion, is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne  
 400 felawe. / Impacient, is he that wol nat been y-taught ne under-  
 nome of his vyce, and by stryf werreieth trouthe witingly, and def-  
 fendeth his folye. / *Contumax*, is he that thurgh his indignacion  
 is agayns everich auctoritee or power of hem that been hise sover-  
 eyns. / Presumpcion, is whan a man undertaketh an emprise  
 that him oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do; and that is  
 called Surquidrie. Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour there-  
 as hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be revered. / Pertinacie, is  
 whan man deffendeth his folye, and trusteth to muchel in his owene  
 wit. / Veyne glorie, is for to have pompe and delyt in his tem-  
 405 porel hynesse, and glorifie him in this worldly estaat. / Ianglinge,  
 is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille,  
 and taken no kepe what they seye. /

§ 25. And yet is ther a privee spece of Pryde, that waiteth first  
 to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth than that

---

390. E. Hn. *om.* 2nd the. 391. Pt. III. Imprudence; E. Hn. Impudence.  
 E. Hn. Pt. Inpatience; *rest imperfect here.* 395. E. *om.* 2nd his. 401.  
 Ln. Hl. Impacient; *rest Inpatient (or imperfect).* Pt. III. vices. 403. E.  
 and this is. E. Hn. surquidie. 404. E. hise folies. 405. E. temporeel.



other is, per-aventure ; and eek he waiteth or desyreth to sitte, or elles to goon above him in the wey, or kisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offering biforn his neighebores, / and swiche semblable thinges ; agayns his duetee, per-aventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in swich a proud desyr to be magnified and honoured biforn the peple. /

§ 26. Now been ther two maneres of Pryde ; that oon of hem is with-inne the herte of man, and that other is with-oute. / Of whiche soothly thise forseide thinges, and mo than I have seyde, apertenen to pryde that is in the herte of man ; and that othere speses of pryde been with-oute. / But natheles that oon of thise <sup>410</sup> speses of pryde is signe of that other, right as the gaye leefsel atte taverne is signe of the wyn that is in the celer. / And this is in manye thinges : as in speche and contenance, and in outrageous array of clothing ; / for certes, if ther ne hadde be no sinne in clothing, Crist wolde nat have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. / And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that precious clothing is coupable for the derthe of it, and for his softenesse, and for his strangenesse and degysinesse, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinat scantnesse of it. / Allas ! may men nat seen, as in oure dayes, the sinful costlewe array of clothinge, and namely in to muche superfluitee, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse ? / 415

§ 27. As to the firste sinne, that is in superfluitee of clothinge, which that maketh it so dere, to harm of the peple ; / nat only the cost of embroudinge, the degyse endentinge or barringe, oundinge, palinge, windinge, or bendinge, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee ; / but ther is also costlewe furringe in hir gounes, so muche pounsoninge of chisels to maken holes, so muche dagginge of sheres ; / forth-with the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gounes, trailinge in the dong and in the myre, on horse and eek on fote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailing is verrailly as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is yeven to the povre ; to greet

410. So E. Hn. III. ; *perhaps read* and that other spece of pryde is ; Pt. Ln. and ther-to other spices of pride bene. 411. Pt. Ln. Hl. spices. Hn. leuesel ; Hl. leuesselle ; Pt. leuesell ; Ln. leusal. 414. Pt. disgisinesse ; Ln. Hl. disgisinesse. or] E. and. 416. E. om. that is. 417. Hn. Pt. enbrawdunge. E. om. or bef. barringe. E. owndyng. 418. E. pownsonyng ; Hn. pownsonyng ; Ln. pounseinge ; Hl. pounsyng. Pt. chisels ; E. Hn. chisel ; rest chiseles (cheseles). 419. E. men ; wommen.

damage of the forseide povre folk. / And that in sondry wyse :  
 this is to seyn, that the more that clooth is wasted, the more it  
 420 costeth to the peple for the scantnesse ; / and forther-over, if so be  
 that they wolde yeven swich pounsoned and dagged clothing to  
 the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hir estaat, ne suffi-  
 sant to bete hir necessitee, to kepe hem fro the distemperance of  
 the firmament. / Upon that other syde, to spcken of the horrible  
 disordinat scantnesse of clothing, as been thise cutted sloppes or  
 hainselins, that thurgh hir shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful  
 membres of man, to wikked entente. / Allas ! somme of hem  
 shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horrible swollen membres,  
 that semeth lyk the maladie of hirnia, in the wrappinge of hir  
 hoses ; / and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hindre  
 part of a she-ape in the fulle of the mone. / And more-over, the  
 wrecched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh the degysinge,  
 in departinge of hir hoses in whyt and reed, semeth that half hir  
 425 shameful privee membres weren flayn. / And if so be that they  
 departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whyt and blak, or whyt  
 and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth ; / thanne semeth it,  
 as by variance of colour, that half the partie of hir privee membres  
 were corrupt by the fyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or by other  
 swich meschaunce. / Of the hindre part of hir buttokes, it is ful  
 horrible for to see. For certes, in that partie of hir body ther-as  
 they purgen hir stinkinge ordure, / that foule partie shewe they to  
 the peple proudly in despyt of honestetee, the which honestetee  
 that Iesu Crist and hise freendes observede to shewen in hir  
 lyve. / Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, god woot, that  
 though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire,  
 430 yet notifie they in hir array of atyr likerousnesse and pryde. / I  
 sey nat that honestetee in clothinge of man or womman is un-  
 covenable, but certes the superfluitee or disordinat scantitee of  
 clothinge is reprevable. / Also the sinne of aornement or of  
 apparaille is in things that apertenen to rydinge, as in to manye  
 delicat horses that been holden for delyt, that been so faire, fatte,  
 and costlewe ; / and also to many a vicious knave that is sustened

---

421. E. powsoned ; Hn. pownsonyd ; Pt. pounsoned ; Ln. Hl. pounsed.  
 422. E. haynselyns ; Hn. hanselyns ; Ln. hanslynes ; Pt. hanselynes ; Hl.  
 anslets ; Harl. 1758, haunseleyns. 425. *All but E. om. the bef. degysinge.*  
 E. flaync. 429. E. honestitee (*twice*) ; Hn. honestetec ; *rest* honeste ; *so in*  
 431, 436. 430. E. *om.* as. 432. Pt. anornement ; Hl. here ornament.

by cause of hem; in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and brydles covered with precious clothing and riche, barres and plates of gold and of silver. / For which god seith by Zakarie the prophete, 'I wol confounde the ryderes of swiche horses.' / This folk taken litel reward of the rydinge of goddes sone of hevene, and of his harneys whan he rood up-on the asse, and ne hadde noon other harneys but the povre clothes of hise disciples; ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on other beest. / I speke this for the sinne of superfluitee, and nat for 435 reasonable honestete, whan reson it requyreth. / And forther, certes pryde is greetly notified in holdinge of greet meinee, whan they be of litel profit or of right no profit. / And namely, whan that meinee is felonous and damageous to the peple, by hardnesse of heigh lordshipe or by wey of offices. / For certes, swiche lordes sellen thanne hir lordshipe to the devel of helle, whanne they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meinee. / Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenen the thefte of hir hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites. / 440 Thilke manere of folk been the flies that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the careyne. Swiche forseide folk stranglen spiritually hir lordshipes; / for which thus seith David the prophete, 'wikked deeth mote come up-on thilke lordshipes, and god yeve that they mote descenden in-to helle al doun; for in hir houses been iniquitees and shrewednesses,' and nat god of hevene. / And certes, but-if they doon amendement, right as god yaf his benison to Laban by the service of Iacob, and to Pharao by the service of Ioseph, right so god wol yeve his malison to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servants, but-if they come to amendement. / Pryde of the table appereth eek ful ofte; for certes, riche men been cleped to festes, and povre folk been put away and rebuked. / Also in excesse of diverse metes and drinkes; and namely, swiche manere bake metes and dish-metes, brenninge of wilde fyr, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wast; so that it is abusion for to thinke. / 445 And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of ministralcie, by whiche a man is stired the more to delyces of luxurie, /

440. E. sustenyng; Hn. sustenen; Cm. Hl. susteyne. 442. E. vp; Hn. vp on; Hl. vpon; Pt. Ln. on. E. al doun (*twice*); Hn. adown (*twice*); Cm. al doun (*once*). 443. All MSS. *transpose* Laban and Pharao. E. seruauntz.

if so be that he sette his herte the lasse up-on oure lord Iesu Crist, certein it is a sinne ; and certainly the delycles mighte been so grete in this caas, that man mighte lightly falle by hem in-to deedly sinne. / The especes that sourden of pryde, soothly whan they sourden of malice ymaged, avysed, and forncast, or elles of usage, been deedly synnes, it is no doute. / And whan they sourden by freletee unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawen ayein, al been they grevouse sinnes, I gesse that they ne been nat deedly. / Now mighte men axe wher-of that Pryde sourdeth and springeth, and I seye : somtyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, and som-tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som-tyme of  
450 the goodes of grace. / Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outhur in goodes of body or in goodes of soule. / Certes, goodes of body been hele of body, as strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrye, franchise. / Goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharp understandyng, subtil engin, vertu naturel, good memorie. / Goodes of fortune been riches, highe degrees of lordshipes, preisinges of the peple. / Goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaille, benignitee, vertuous contemplacion,  
455 withstandinge of temptacion, and semblable thinges. / Of whiche forseyde goodes, certes it is a ful greet folye a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. / Now as for to speken of goodes of nature, god woot that som-tyme we han hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit. / As, for to speken of hele of body ; certes it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte encheson of the siknesse of oure soule ; for god woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemy to the soule : and therefore, the more that the body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. / Eke for to pryde him in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye ; for certes, the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and ay the more strong that the flesh is, the sorier may the soule be : / and, over al this, strengthe of body and worldly hardinesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and  
460 meschaunce. / Eek for to pryde him of his gentrye is ful greet folye ; for ofte tyme the gentrye of the body binimeth the gentrye of the soule ; and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o moder ; and alle we been of o nature roten and corrupt, both riche and povre. /

---

448. Pt. Ln. Hl. especes. 449. E. *om.* 1st sodeinly. 452. E. gentries ; Hl. Pt. gentrye ; *rest* gentrye ; *see* 461. 453. E. naturel. 454. E. Ln. richesse. 455. E. spirituel. 460. *So in all.*

For sothe, o manere gentrye is for to preise, that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Cristes child. / For truste wel, that over what man sinne hath maistrie, he is a verray cherl to sinne. /

§ 28. Now been ther generale signes of gentillesse ; as eschewing of vyce and ribaudye and servage of sinne, in word, in werk, and contenance ; / and usinge vertu, curteisye, and clenness, and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure ; for thilke that passeth mesure is folye and sinne. / Another is, to remembre him 465 of bountee that he of other folk hath receyved. / Another is, to be benigne to hise goode subgetis ; wherfore, as seith Senek, 'ther is no-thing more covenable to a man of heigh estaat than debonairetee and pitee. / And therefore these flyes that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir king, they chesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith he may stinge.' / Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to attayne to heighe vertuose thinges. / Now certes, a man to pryde him in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folye ; for thilke yiftes of grace that sholde have turned him to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth him to venim and to confusion, as seith seint Gregorie. / Certes also, who-so 470 prydeh him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool ; for som-tyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caitif and a wrecche er it be night : / and somtyme the richesse of a man is cause of his deeth ; somtyme the delycles of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. / Certes, the commendacion of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste ; this day they preyse, tomorwe they blame. / God woot, desyr to have commendacion of the peple hath caused deeth to many a bisy man. /

#### Remedium contra peccatum Superbie.

§ 29. Now sith that so is, that ye han understonde what is pryde, and whiche been the speses of it, and whennes pride sourdeth and springeth ; / now shul ye understonde which is the 475 remedie agayns the sinne of pryde, and that is, humilitee or mekenesse. / That is a vertu, thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of him-self, and holdeth of him-self no prys ne deyntee as in regard of hise desertes, consideringe evere his freletee. / Now

467. E. Cm. om. as.      469. E. man ; rest a man.      470. E. yifte ; rest yiftes.      N.B. Section 470 follows 474 in Hn. Pt. ; see note.

been ther three maneres of humilitee ; as humilitee in herte, and another humilitee in his mouth ; the thridde in hise werkes. / The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres : that oon is, whan a man holdeth him-self as noght worth biforn god of hevene. Another is, whan he ne despyseth noon other man. / The thridde is, whan he rekketh nat thogh men holde him noght worth. 480 The ferthe is, whan he nis nat sory of his humiliacion. / Also, the humilitee of mouth is in foure thinges : in attempree speche, and in humblesse of speche, and whan he biknoweth with his owene mouth that he is swich as him thinketh that he is in his herte. Another is, whan he preiseth the bountee of another man, and nothing ther-of amenuseth. / Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres : the firste is, whan he putteth othere men biforn him. The seconde is, to chese the loweste place over-al. The thridde is, gladly to assente to good conseil. / The ferthe is, to stonde gladly to the award of hise sovereyns, or of him that is in hyer degree ; certein, this is a greet werk of humilitee./

#### Sequitur de Inuidia.

§ 30. After Pryde wol I speken of the foule sinne of Envye, which is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of other mannes prosperitee ; and after the word of seint Augustin, it is sorwe of other mannes wele, and Ioye of othere mennes harm. / This foule sinne is platly agayns the holy goost. Al-be-it so that every sinne is agayns the holy goost, yet nathelees, for as muche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the holy goost, and Envye comth proprely of malice, therefore it is proprely agayn the bountee of the holy 485 goost. / Now hath malice two spesce, that is to seyn, hardnesse of herte in wikkednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blind, that he considereth nat that he is in sinne, or rekketh nat that he is in sinne ; which is the hardnesse of the devel. / That other spece of malice is, whan a man werreyeth trouthe, whan he woot that it is trouthe. And eek, whan he werreyeth the grace that god hath yeve to his neighebores ; and al this is by Envye. / Certes, thanne is Envye the worste sinne that is. For soothly, alle othere sinnes been som-tyme only agayns o special vertu ; / but certes, Envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns alle goodnesses ; for it is

482. E. *om.* good. 485. E. *om.* foule. E. *om.* 1st and 3rd goost. 486. Cm. hardynesse (*twice*). 487. E. speche (*for spesce*); Hn. spece; *rest* spice. E. malice (*and so* Selden MS., *rightly*); *rest* enuye.

sory of alle the bountees of his neighebores ; and in this manere it is divers from alle othere sinnes. / For wel unnethe is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delyt in itself, save only Envye, that evere hath in itself anguish and sorwe. / The speses of Envye 490 been thise : ther is first, sorwe of other mannes goodnesse and of his prosperitee ; and prosperitee is kindly matere of Ioye ; thanne is Envye a sinne agayns kinde. / The seconde spece of Envye is Ioye of other mannes harm ; and that is proprely lyk to the devel, that evere reioyseth him of mannes harm. / Of these two speses comth bakbyting ; and this sinne of bakbyting or detraction hath certeine speses, as thus. Som man preiseth his neighebores by a wikke entente ; / for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende. Alwey he maketh a ‘but’ atte laste ende, that is digne of more blame, than worth is al the preisinge. / The seconde spece is, that if a man be good and dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbyter wol turne all thilke goodnesse up-so-doun to his shrewed entente. / The thridde is, to amenuse the bountee of 495 his neighebores. / The fourthe spece of bakbyting is this ; that if men speke goodnesse of a man, thanne wol the bakbyter seyn, ‘parfey, swich a man is yet bet than he’ ; in dispreisinge of him that men preise. / The fiftte spece is this ; for to consente gladly and herkne gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This sinne is ful greet, and ay encreseth after the wikked entente of the bakbyter. / After bakbyting cometh grucching or murmuracion ; and somtyme it springeth of impacience agayns god, and somtyme agayns man. / Agayns god it is, whan a man gruccheth agayn the peynes of helle, or agayns poverté, or los of catel, or agayn reyn or tempest ; or elles gruccheth that shrewes han prosperitee, or elles for that goode men han adversitee. / And alle these thinges 500 sholde men suffre paciently, for they comen by the rightful Iugement and ordinance of god. / Som-tyme comth grucching of avarice ; as Iudas gruccheth agayns the Magdaleyne, whan she enoynte the heved of oure lord Iesu Crist with hir precious oynement. / This maner murmure is swich as whan man gruccheth of goodnesse that him-self dooth, or that other folk doon of hir owene catel. / Som-tyme comth murmure of pryde ; as whan Simon the Pharisee gruccheth agayn the Magdaleyne, whan she approached to Iesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hir sinnes. /

497. parfey] E. pardee.  
enoynte; Cm. Hl. anoynted;

500. E. om. or after catel.

502. E. Hn.

Pt. ennoynted.

And somtyme grucching sourdeth of Envye; whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was privee, or bereth him on hond  
 505 thing that is fals. / Murmure eek is ofte amonges servaunts, that grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon lefeful thinges; / and, for-as-muche as they dar nat openly withseye the comaundements of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure prively for verray despyt; / whiche wordes men clepen the develes *Pater-noster*, though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere *Pater-noster*, but that lewed folk yeven it swich a name. / Som tyme grucching comth of ire or prive hate, that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare. / Thanne cometh eek bitterness of herte; thurgh which bitterness every good dede  
 510 of his neighebor semeth to him bitter and unsavory. / Thanne cometh discord, that unbindeth alle manere of frendshipe. Thanne comth scorninge, as whan a man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebor, al do he never so weel. / Thanne comth accusinge, as whan man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lyk to the craft of the devel, that waiteth bothe night and day to accusen us alle. / Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh which a man anoyeth his neighebor prively if he may; / and if he noght may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous prively, or empoysone or sleen hise bestes, and semblable thinges. /

#### Remedium contra peccatum Inuidie.

§ 31. Now wol I speke of the remedie agayns this foule sinne of Envye. First, is the love of god principal, and loving of his neighebor as him-self; for soothly, that oon ne may nat been with-  
 515 oute that other. / And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebo-  
 re thou shalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes alle we have o fader fleshly, and o moder, that is to seyn, Adam and Eve; and eek o fader esprituel, and that is god of hevene. / Thy neighebo-  
 re artow holden for to love, and wilne him alle goodnesse; and therefore seith god, 'love thy neighebo-  
 re as thy-self,' that is to seyn, to salvacion bothe of lyf and of soule. / And more-over, thou shalt love him in word, and in benigne amonest-  
 inge, and chastysinge; and conforten him in hise anoyes, and preye

506. E. scrvauntz. Cm. leful; Pt. Hl. leeful. 507. E. comaundementz.  
 511. Cm. scornynge as whanne a man sekyth occasioun to anoyen his; rest  
 scornynge of his (*merely*). 515. this] E. the. love] E. louynge. 516. E.  
 esprituel. 517. E. om. bothe.



for him with al thyn herte. / And in dede thou shalt love him in swich wyse, that thou shalt doon to him in charitee as thou woldest that it were doon to thyn owene persone. / And therefore, thou ne shalt doon him no damage in wikked word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by entysing of wikked ensample. / Thou shalt nat desyren his wyf, ne none of hise <sup>520</sup> thinges. Understood eek, that in the name of neighebor is comprehended his enemy. / Certes man shal loven his enemy by the comandement of god ; and soothly thy frend shaltow love in God. / I seye, thyn enemy shaltow love for goddes sake, by his comandement. For if it were reson that a man sholde haten his enemy, for sothe god nolde nat receiven us to his love that been hise enemys. / Agayns three manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym, he shal doon three thinges, as thus. / Agayns hate and rancour of herte, he shal love him in herte. Agayns chyding and wikkede wordes, he shal preye for his enemy. And agayn the wikked dede of his enemy, he shal doon him bountee. / For Crist seith, <sup>525</sup> ‘loveth youre enemys, and preyeth for hem that speke yow harm ; and eek for hem that yow chacen and pursewen, and doth bountee to hem that yow haten.’ Lo, thus comaundeth us oure lord Iesu Crist, to do to oure enemys. / For soothly, nature dryveth us to loven oure freendes, and parfey, oure enemys han more nede to love than oure freendes ; and they that more nede have, certes, to hem shal men doon goodnesse ; / and certes, in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Iesu Crist, that deyde for hise enemys. / And in-as-muche as thilke love is the more grevous to perfourne, in-so-muche is the more gretter the merite ; and therefore the lovinge of oure enemy hath confounded the venim of the devel. / For right as the devel is disconfited by humilitee, right so is he wounded to the death by love of oure enemy. / Certes, <sup>530</sup> thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venim of Envye fro mannes herte. / The speses of this pas shullen be more largely in hir chapitres folwinge declared. /

### Sequitur de Ira.

§ 32. After Envye wol I discryven the sinne of Ire. For soothly, who-so hath envye upon his neighebor, anon he wole comunly

520. E. entissyng. 521. E. Hn. Vnderstood. 524. wronges] E. thinges.  
525. E. om. the. 529. Ln. III. parfome ; Pt. perfourme. 532. E. paas ;  
Hl. part ; rest pas.

finde him a matere of wratthe, in word or in dede, agayns him to whom he hath envye. / And as wel comth Ire of Pryde, as of Envye ; for soothly, he that is proude or envious is lightly wrooth. /

§ 33. This sinne of Ire, after the discryving of seint Augustin,  
 535 is wikked wil to been avenged by word or by dede. / Ire, after the philosophre, is the fervent blood of man y-quiked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to him that he hateth. / For certes the herte of man, by eschaufinge and moevinge of his blood, wexeth so trouble, that he is out of alle Iugement of resoun. / But ye shal understonde that Ire is in two maneres ; that oon of hem is good, and that other is wikked. / The gode Ire is by Ialousye of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse and agayns wikkednesse ; and therfore seith a wys man, that ‘ Ire is bet than pley.’ / This Ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitterness ; nat wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the misdede of the man ; as seith the prophete David,  
 540 *Irascimini et nolite peccare.* / Now understandeth, that wikked Ire is in two maneres, that is to seyn, sodeyn Ire or hastif Ire, withouten avisement and consentinge of resoun. / The mening and the sens of this is, that the resoun of man ne consente nat to thilke sodeyn Ire ; and thanne it is venial. / Another Ire is ful wikked, that comth of felonye of herte avysed and cast biforn ; with wikked wil to do vengeance, and therto his resoun consenteth ; and soothly this is deedly sinne. / This Ire is so displesant to god, that it troubleth his hous and chaceth the holy goost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth the lyknesse of god, that is to seyn, the vertu that is in mannes soule ; / and put in him the lyknesse of the devel, and binimeth the man fro god that is his rightful  
 545 lord. / This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel ; for it is the develes fourneys, that is eschaufed with the fyr of helle. / For certes, right so as fyr is more mighty to destroyen erthely things than any other element, right so Ire is mighty to destroyen alle spirituel things. / Loke how that fyr of smale gledes, that been almost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been touched with brimstoon ; right so Ire wol everemo quiken agayn, whan it is touched by the pryde that is covered in mannes herte. / For certes fyr ne may nat comen out of no-thing, but-if it were first in the same thing naturelly ; as fyr is drawen out of flintes

---

533. Hn. Pt. Ln. *om.* a *bef.* matere. 547. E. spiritueel. 549. E. naturelly.

with steel. / And right so as pryde is ofte tyme matere of Ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of Ire. / Ther is a maner 550 tree, as seith seint Isidre, that whan men maken fyr of thilke tree, and covere the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fyr of it wol lasten al a yeer or more. / And right so fareth it of rancour ; whan it is ones conceyved in the hertes of som men, certein, it wol lasten peraventure from oon Estre-day unto another Estre-day, and more. / But certes, thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of god al thilke while. /

§ 34. In this forseide develes fourneys ther forgen three shrewes : Pryde, that ay bloweth and enceseth the fyr by chyd-inge and wikked wordes. / Thanne stant Envye, and holdeth the hote iren upon the herte of man with a peire of longe tonges of long rancour. / And thanne stant the sinne of contumelie or 555 stryf and cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by vileyns reprevinges. / Certes, this cursed sinne anoyeth bothe to the man him-self and eek to his neighebor. For soothly, almost al the harm that any man dooth to his neighebor comth of wratthe. / For certes, outrageous wratthe doth al that evere the devel him comaundeth ; for he ne spareth neither Crist, ne his swete mooder. / And in his outrageous anger and Ire, allas ! allas ! ful many oon at that tyme feleth in his herte ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist and of alle hise halwes. / Is nat this a cursed vice ? Yis, certes. Allas ! it binimeth from man his wit and his resoun, and al his debonaire lyf espirituel that sholde kepen his soule. / Certes, it binimeth 560 eek goddes due lordshipe, and that is mannes soule, and the love of hise neighebores. It stryveth eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveth him the quiete of his herte, and subverteth his soule. /

§ 35. Of Ire comen thise stinkinge engendrures : first hate, that is old wratthe ; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath loved ful longe. / And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighebor, in body or in catel. / Of this cursed sinne of Ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel, that homicyde, that is manslaughter, is in dyverse wyse. Som manere of homicyde is spirituel, and som is bodily. / Spirituel manslaughter is in six

---

551. E. fire.      553. E. in (*for* al).      554. E. encesseth.      555. E. toonges.      558. Hl. *om.* swete.      560. E. espirituel.      562. E. *om.* that he hath loved.      564, 565. E. spirituel.

things. First, by hate; as seint Iohn seith, 'he that hateth his  
 565 brother is homicyde.' / Homicyde is eek by bakbytinge; of  
 whiche bakbyteres seith Salomon, that 'they han two swerdes with  
 whiche they sleen hir neighebores.' For soothly, as wikke is to  
 binime his good name as his lyf. / Homicyde is eek, in yevinge  
 of wikked conseil by fraude; as for to yeven conseil to areysen  
 wrongful custumes and taillages. / Of whiche seith Salomon,  
 'Leon rorynge and bere hongry been lyke to the cruel lordshipes,'  
 in withholdinge or abregginge of the shepe (or the hyre), or of the  
 wages of servaunts, or elles in usure or in withdrawinge of the  
 almesse of povre folk. / For which the wyse man seith, 'fedeth  
 him that almost dyeth for hunger'; for soothly, but-if thou fede  
 him, thou sleest him; and alle these been deedly sinnes. / Bodily  
 manslaughtre is, whan thow sleest him with thy tonge in other  
 570 him conseil to sleen a man. / Manslaughtre in dede is foure  
 maneres. That oon is by lawe; right as a Iustice dampneth him  
 that is coupable to the death. But lat the Iustice be war that he  
 do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delyt to spille blood,  
 but for kepinge of rightwisenesse. / Another homicyde is,  
 that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth another in  
 his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon otherwise escape from  
 his owene death. / But certainly, if he may escape withouten  
 manslaughtre of his adversarie, and sleeth him, he doth sinne,  
 and he shal bere penance as for deedly sinne. / Eek if a man,  
 by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which  
 he sleeth a man, he is homicyde. / Eek if a womman by negli-  
 gence overlyeth hir child in hir sleping, it is homicyde and  
 575 deedly sinne. / Eek whan man destourbeth concepcion of a  
 child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drinkinge  
 venemouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or  
 sleeth a child by drinkes wilfully, or elles putteth certeine  
 material thinges in hir secree places to slee the child; / or elles  
 doth unkindely sinne, by which man or womman shedeth hir  
 nature in manere or in place ther-as a child may nat be con-  
 ceived; or elles, if a womman have conceyved and hurt hir-self,

---

565. Pt. III. an homicide. 566. E. the (*for 2nd* they). 568. E. crueel.  
 III. I.n. schipe. E. vsures. 570. Hl. *om.* him *before* conseil. 572. Hl. him  
 (*for* in his). 576. E. Cm. venenouse; Hl. venenous. Hl. place. 577.  
 -self] E. child.

and sleeth the child, yet is it homicyde. / What seye we eek of wommen that mordren hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicyde. / Homicyde is eek if a man approacheth to a womman by desir of lecherye, thurgh which the child is perissed, or elles smyteth a womman witingly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle these been homicydes and horrible deedly sinnes. / Yet comen ther of Ire manye mo sinnes, as wel in word as in thoght and in dede; as he that arreteth upon god, or blameth god, of thing of which he is him-self gilty; or despyseth god and alle hise halwes, as doon these cursede hasardours in diverse contrees. / This cursed sinne doon they, when 580 they felen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of god and of hise halwes. / Also, when they treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter, thilke sinne is so greet, that unnethe may it been relesed, but that the mercy of god passeth alle hise werkes; it is so greet and he so benigne. / Thanne comth of Ire attrayng; when a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his sinne, / than wole he be angry and answeren hokerly and angrily, and deffenden or excusen his sinne by unstedfastnesse of his flesh; or elles he dide it for to holde companye with hise felawes, or elles, he seith, the fend entyced him; / or elles he dide it for his youthe, or elles his complexioun is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certein age; or elles, he seith, it cometh him of gentillesse of hise auncestres; and semblable things. / Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, 585 that they ne wol nat delivere hem-self. For soothly, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his sinne may nat been delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely biknoweth his sinne. / After this, thanne cometh swering, that is expres agayn the comandement of god; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of Ire. / God seith: 'thou shalt nat take the name of thy lord god in veyn or in ydel.' Also oure lord Iesu Crist seith by the word of seint Mathew: '*Nolite iurare omnino* : / ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevене, for it is goddes trone; ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet; ne by Ierusalem, for it is the citee of a greet king; ne by thyn heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak. / But seyeth by youre word, "ye, ye," and "nay, nay"; and what

577. is it] E. it is. 582. E. releessed. 585. E. compleccioun. 588. Christchurch MS. *Nolite—omnino*; and in margin of E.; rest om. 589. Ln. throne.

590 that is more, it is of yvel,' seith Crist. / For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so sinfully, in dismembinge of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body. For certes, it semeth that ye thinke that the cursede Iewes ne dismembred nat y-nough the precieuse persone of Crist, but ye dismembre him more. / And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of god in youre swering, as seith Ieremye *quarto capitulo*, '*Jurabis in veritate, in iudicio et in iusticia*: thou shalt kepe three condicions; thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse.' / This is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth; for every lesinge is agayns Crist. For Crist is verray trouthe. And think wel this, that every greet swerere, nat compelled lawefully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whyl he useth swich unleveful swering. / Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, when thou art constreyned by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe. / Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye ne for favour, ne for mede, but for rightwisnesse; for declaracioun of it to the worship of god and  
595 helping of thyne evene-cristene. / And therefore, every man that taketh goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and liveth agayns Cristes livinge and his techinge, alle they taken goddes name in ydel. / Loke eek what seint Peter seith, *Actuum quarto capitulo*, '*Non est aliud nomen sub celo*,' &c. 'Ther nis noon other name,' seith seint Peter, 'under hevene, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved;' that is to seyn, but the name of Iesu Crist. / Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith seint Paul *ad Philipenses secundo*, '*In nomine Iesu*, &c.: that in the name of Iesu every knee of heavenly creatures, or erthely, or of helle sholden bowe'; for it is so heigh and so worshipful, that the cursede feend in helle sholde tremblen to heren it y-nempned. / Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despyse him more boldely than dide the cursede Iewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth whan he hereth his name. /

§ 36. Now certes, sith that swering, but-if it be lawefully doon,

592. E. (*in margin*) *Jurabis—iusticia*; Chr. (*in text*); *rest om.* 593. Hl. wonder (*for wounde*!). 595. E. and for declaracioun; Chr. for declaracioun; Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. for declarynge. 597. Cm. c<sup>o</sup>; Hl. ca<sup>o</sup> (i. e. *capitulo*); *rest om.* 599. E. horribly.

is so highly deffended, muche worse is forswering falsly, and yet nedeless./

600

§ 37. What seye we eek of hem that delyten hem in swering, and holden it a gentrie or a manly dede to swere grete othes? And what of hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse nat to swere grete othes, al be the cause nat worth a straw? Certes, this is horrible sinne. / Sweringe sodeynly with-oute avysement is eek a sinne. / But lat us go now to thilke horrible swering of adiuracioun and coniuracioun, as doon this false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacins ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle, or in a fyr, or in a shulder-boon of a sheep. / I can nat seye but that they doon cursedly and damnably, agayns Crist and al the feith of holy chirche. /

§ 38. What seye we of hem that bileven in divynailes, as by flight or by noyse of briddes, or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkinge of dores, or crakkinge of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse? / 605 Certes, al this thing is deffended by god and by al holy chirche. For which they been acursed, til they come to amendement, that on swich filthe setten hir bileve. / Charmes for woundes or maladye of men, or of bestes, if they taken any effect, it may be peraventure that god suffreth it, for folk sholden yeve the more feith and reverence to his name. /

§ 39. Now wol I speken of lesinges, which generally is fals significacioun of word, in entente to deceyven his evene-cristene. / Som lesinge is of which ther comth noon avantage to no wight: and som lesinge turneth to the ese or profit of o man, and to disese and damage of another man. / Another lesinge is for to saven his lyf or his catel. Another lesinge comth of delyt for to lye, in which delyt they wol forge a long tale, and peynten it with alle circumstaunces, where al the ground of the tale is fals. / Som lesinge 610 comth, for he wole sustene his word; and som lesinge comth of recchelesnesse, with-outen avysement; and semblable thinges. /

§ 40. Lat us now touche the vyce of flateringe, which ne comth nat gladly but for drede or for coveitise. / Flaterye is generally wrongful preisinge. Flatereres been the develes norices, that

601. E. it (*for* this). 603. E. Nigromanens. 604. E. damnably. 605. Cm. Pt. dyuynalis. Hl. crakking; Ln. crakkeynge; E. Cm. Cp. Pt. crakynge. 607. E. Pt. *om.* may. 609. E. and (*for* or); Pt. either. 610. Selden, Pt. lesinge is; *rest om.* is. *All but* Selden, Pt. Ln. *om.* 2nd Another lesinge.

norissen hise children with milk of losengerie. / For sothe, Salomon seith, that 'flaterie is wors than detraccioun.' For som-tyme detraccion maketh an hautein man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraccion; but certes flaterye, that maketh a man to enhauncen his herte and his contenance. / Flatereres been the develes enchauntours; for they make a man to wene of him-self  
 615 be lyk that he nis nat lyk. / They been lyk to Iudas that bitraysed [god; and thise flatereres bitraysen] a man to sellen him to his enemy, that is, to the devel. / Flatereres been the develes chapelleyens, that singen evere *Placebo*. / I rekene flaterye in the vyces of Ire; for ofte tyme, if o man be wrooth with another, thanne wol he flateren som wight to sustene him in his querele. /

§ 41. Speke we now of swich cursinge as comth of irous herte. Malisoun generally may be seyde every maner power or harm. Swich cursinge bireveth man fro the regne of god, as seith seint Paul. / And ofte tyme swich cursinge wrongfully retorneth agayn to him that curseth, as a brid that retorneth agayn to his owene  
 620 nest. / And over alle thing men oghten eschewe to cursen hir children, and yeven to the devel hir engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certes, it is greet peril and greet sinne. /

§ 42. Lat us thanne speken of chydinge and reproche, whiche been ful grete woundes in mannes herte; for they unsowen the semes of frendshipe in mannes herte. / For certes, unnethes may a man pleyntly been accorded with him that hath him openly revyled and repreved in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly sinne, as Crist seith in the gospel. / And tak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighebor, outhere he repreveth him by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as 'mesel,' 'croked harlot,' or by som sinne that he dooth. / Now if he repreve him by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the repreve to Iesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of god, and by his suffrance, be it  
 625 meselrie, or maheym, or maladye. / And if he repreve him uncharitably of sinne, as, 'thou holour,' 'thou dronkelewe harlot,' and so forth; thanne aperteneth that to the reioysinge of the devel, that evere hath Ioye that men doon sinne. / And certes, chydinge may nat come but out of a vileyns herte. For after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. / And ye shul understonde

615. E. the (*for* they). 616. All 7 MSS. *om.* god . . . bitraysen. E. hise. 618. E. flarie (*for* flaterye). 623. E. in disclaundre; *rest* and desclaundred. 624. E. taak. 625. Ln. mayme; Cm. Pt. maym. 626. E. *om.* thou holour.



that loke, by any wey, whan any man shal chastyse another, that he be war from chydinge or reprevinge. For trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fyr of angre and of wratthe, which that he sholde quenche, and per-aventure sleeth him which that he mighte chastyse with benignitee. / For as seith Salomon, 'the amiable tonge is the tree of lyf,' that is to seyn, of lyf espirituel: and sothly, a deslavee tonge sleeth the spirites of him that repreveth, and eek of him that is repreved. / Lo, what seith seint Augustin: 'ther is no-thing so lyk the develes child as he that ofte chyde.' Seint Paul seith eek: 'I, servant of god, bihove nat to chyde.' / And how that chydinge be a vileyns<sup>630</sup> thing bitwixe alle manere folk, yet it is certes most uncovenable bitwixe a man and his wyf; for there is nevere reste. And therefore seith Salomon, 'an hous that is uncovered and droppinge, and a chydinge wyf, been lyke.' / A man that is in a droppinge hous in many places, though he eschewe the droppinge in o place, it droppeth on him in another place; so fareth it by a chydinge wyf. But she chyde him in o place, she wol chyde him in another. / And therefore, 'bette is a morsel of breed with Ioye than an hous ful of delyces, with chydinge,' seith Salomon. / Seint Paul seith: 'O ye wommen, be ye subgetes to youre housbondes as bihoveth in god; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.' *Ad Colossenses, tertio.* /

§ 43. Afterward speke we of scorninge, which is a wikked sinne; and namely, whan he scorneth a man for hise gode werkes. / For certes, swiche scorneres faren lyk the foule tode,<sup>635</sup> that may nat endure to smelle the sote savour of the vyne whanne it florisseth. / Thise scorneres been parting felawes with the devel; for they han Ioye whan the devel winneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. / They been adversaries of Iesu Crist; for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salvacion of soule. /

§ 44. Speke we now of wikked conseil; for he that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour. For he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheless, yet is his wikked conseil first agayn him-self. / For, as seith the wyse man,

---

628. or] E. and. 629. E. espirituel. Hn. deslaue; Cm. Ln. Hl. dislaue; Pt. disselaue. 630. Cm. Selden, behoue; *rest* byhoueth (!). 632. E. manye. 634. E. *om.* as . . . god. E. *Colonienses*; Cm. *Coloniens*; Hn. Pt. *Colonisenses*; Ln. *Clonicenses*; Hl. *Colocenses*. 639. E. *om.* 2nd for.

every fals livinge hath this propertee in him-self, that he that  
 640 wole anoye another man, he anoyeth first him-self. / And men  
 shul understonde, that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk,  
 ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially  
 to muchel hir owene profit, ne to muche worldly folk, namely, in  
 conseilinge of soules. /

§ 45. Now comth the sinne of hem that sowen and maken  
 discord amonges folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth outrely ;  
 and no wonder is. For he deyde for to make concord. / And  
 more shame do they to Crist, than dide they that him crucifyede ;  
 for god loveth better, that frendshipe be amonges folk, than he  
 dide his owene body, the which that he yaf for unitee. Therefore  
 been they lykned to the devel, that evere been aboute to maken  
 discord. /

§ 46. Now comth the sinne of double tonge ; swiche as speken  
 faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihinde ; or elles they maken  
 semblant as though they speke of good entencioun, or elles in  
 game and pley, and yet they speke of wikked entente. /

§ 47. Now comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is  
 645 defamed ; certes, unnethe may he restore the damage. /

Now comth manace, that is an open folye ; for he that ofte  
 manaceth, he threteth more than he may perforce ful ofte  
 tyme. /

Now cometh ydel wordes, that is with-uten profit of him that  
 speketh tho wordes, and eek of him that herkneth tho wordes.  
 Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelees, or with-uten  
 entente of naturel profit. / And al-be-it that ydel wordes been  
 som tyme venial sinne, yet sholde men douten hem ; for we shul  
 yeve rekeninge of hem bifore god. /

Now comth Ianglinge, that may nat been withoute sinne.  
 And, as seith Salomon, 'it is a sinne of apert folye.' / And  
 therefore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed him how that men  
 sholde plesse the peple ; and he answerde, 'do many gode werkes,  
 650 and spek fewe Iangles.' /

After this comth the sinne of Iaperes, that been the develes  
 apes ; for they maken folk to laughe at hir Iaperie, as folk doon at

---

640. *All* lyuyng (levyng, leueyng) ; *after which* Selden (*alone*) adds man.  
 Selden, Ln. Hl. this ; *rest* his. 641. E. Hn. *om.* ne of folk. 643. E.  
 been ; Hl. ben (*before* aboute) ; *rest* is. 644. E. speeke (*1st time*) ; Hn. Hl.  
 speke ; Cm. spoke ; Pt. speken ; Ln. spake. 647. E. natureel.

the gaudes of an ape. Swiche Iaperes deffendeth seint Paul. / Loke how that vertuouse wordes and holy conforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist; right so conforten the vileyns wordes and knakkes of Iaperis hem that travaillen in the service of the devel. / Thise been the sinnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of Ire and of othere sinnes mo. /

**Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire.**

§ 48. The remedye agayns Ire is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude, that is Debonairetee; and eek another vertu, that men callen Pacience or Suffrance. /

§ 49. Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stringes and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne skippe nat out by angre ne by Ire. / Suffrance suffreth <sup>655</sup> swetely alle the anoyaunces and the wronges that men doon to man outward. / Seint Ierome seith thus of debonairetee, that 'it doth noon harm to no wight, ne seith; ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn, he ne eschaufeth nat agayns his resoun.' / This vertu som-tyme comth of nature; for, as seith the philosophre, 'a man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire and tretable to goodnesse; but whan debonairetee is enformed of grace, thanne is it the more worth.' /

§ 50. Pacience, that is another remedye agayns Ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to him. / The philosophre seith, that 'pacience is thilke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee and every wikked word.' / This vertu maketh a man <sup>660</sup> lyk to god, and maketh him goddes owene dere child, as seith Crist. This vertu disconfiteth thyn enemy. And therfore seith the wyse man, 'if thou wolt venquisse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre.' / And thou shalt understonde, that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thinges, agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciencies. /

§ 51. The firste grevance is of wikkede wordes; thilke suffrede Iesu Crist with-outen grucching, ful patiently, whan the Iewes despysed and repreved him ful ofte. / Suffre thou therfore patiently; for the wyse man seith: 'if thou stryve with a

---

651. Hl. Pt. Ln. Suche iapes. 652. E. *adds* wordes (*after* holy). 654. Cm. (*only*) that Ihon de Bonania clepith debonayrete. 659. E. Ln. it is a; *rest* is a.

fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, algate thou shalt have no reste.' / That other grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently, whan he was despoyled of al that he hadde in this  
 665 lyf, and that nas but hise clothes. / The thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful patiently in al his passioun. / The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes. Wherefore I seye, that folk that maken hir servants to travaillen to grevously, or out of tyme, as on halydayes, soothly they do greet sinne. / Heer-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar up-on his blissed shulder the croys, up-on which he sholde suffren despitous deeth. / Heer may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, noght only Cristen men been pacient for love of Iesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdurable; but certes, the olde payens, that nevere were Cristene, commendedden and useden the vertu of pacience. /

§ 52. A philosophre up-on a tyme, that wolde have beten his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was greetly amoved,  
 670 and broghte a yerde to scourge the child; / and whan this child saugh the yerde, he seyde to his maister, 'what thenke ye to do?' 'I wol bete thee,' quod the maister, 'for thy correccion.' / 'For sothe,' quod the child, 'ye oghten first correcte youre-self, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' / 'For sothe,' quod the maister al wepinge, 'thou seyst sooth; have thou the yerde, my dere sone, and correcte me for myn inpacience.' / Of Pacience comth Obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist. / And understond wel that obedience is perfit, whan that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good herte entierly, al that he  
 675 sholde do. / Obedience generally, is to perfourne the doctrine of god and of his sovereyns, to whiche him oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse. /

#### Sequitur de Accidia.

§ 53. After the sinnes of Envie and of Ire, now wol I speken of the sinne of Accidie. For Envye blindeth the herte of a man,

---

668. E. baar. Cm. Ln. cros. 669. Hl. Pt. Ln. guerdoun; E. Cm. ger-  
 doun; Hn. gerdon. E. perdurale. 670. Hn. scourge; E. scourge with;  
 rest scoure(!). 671. Cm. Hl. to do; E. do. Pt. Ln. what wil ye do.  
 677. Selden, Pt. Ln. sinnes; rest synne. E. om. a after herte of. E. wrawful;  
 Pt. wrowe; rest wrawe.

and Ire troubleth a man ; and Accidie maketh him hevvy, thoughtful, and wrawe. / Envye and Ire maken bitternesse in herte ; which bitternesse is moder of Accidie, and binimeth him the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is Accidie the anguiss of a trouble herte ; and seint Augustin seith : ‘it is anoy of goodnesse and Ioye of harm.’ / Certes, this is a dampnable sinne ; for it doth wrong to Iesu Crist, in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon. / But Accidie dooth no swich diligence ; he dooth alle thing with anoy, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse and unlust ; for which the book seith : ‘acursed be he that doth the service of god negligently.’ / Thanne is Accidie enemy to everich 680  
estaat of man ; for certes, the estaat of man is in three maneres. / Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam biforn that he fil into sinne ; in which estaat he was holden to wirche, as in herynge and adouringe of god. / Another estaat is the estaat of sinful men, in which estaat men been holden to laboure in preyinge to god for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wole graunte hem to arysen out of hir sinnes. / Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence ; and certes, to alle these thinges is Accidie enemy and contrarie. For he loveth no businesse at al. / Now certes, this foule sinne Accidie is eek a ful greet enemy to the lyfode of the body ; for it ne hath no purveance agayn temporel necessitee ; for it forsloweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by recchelesnesse. /

685

§ 54. The fourthe thing is, that Accidie is lyk to hem that been in the peyne of helle, by-cause of hir slouthe and of hir hevynesse ; for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may neither wel do ne wel thinke. / Of Accidie comth first, that a man is anoyed and encombred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that god hath abhominacion of swich Accidie, as seith seint Iohan. /

§ 55. Now comth Slouthe, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce. For soothly, Slouthe is so tendre, and so delicat, as seith Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce, and therefore he shendeth al that he dooth. / Agayns

678. E. Hl. *om.* a. E. troubled. 683. E. *om.* the. 685. sinne] E. swyn.  
E. temporel (*for* temporel). 687. E. *om.* as . . . Iohan. 688. E. delicaat.

this roten-herted sinne of Accidie and Slouthe sholde men exercise hem-self to doon gode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon ; thinkinge that oure lord Iesu Crist quytheth every good dede, be it never so lyte. / Usage of labour is a greet thing ; for it maketh, as seith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde sinwes ; and Slouthe maketh hem  
690 feble and tendre. / Thanne comth drede to biginne to werke any gode werkes ; for certes, he that is enclined to sinne, him thinketh it is so greet an empryse for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, / and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevouse and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith seint Gregorie. /

§ 56. Now comth wanhope, that is despeir of the mercy of god, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede ; imagininge that he hath doon so muche sinne, that it wol nat availen him, though he wolde repenten him and forsake sinne : / thurgh which despeir or drede he abaundoneth al his herte to every maner sinne, as seith seint Augustin. / Which dampnable sinne, if that it continue un-to his ende, it  
695 is cleped sinning in the holy gost. / This horrible sinne is so perilous, that he that is despeired, ther nis no felonye ne no sinne that he douteth for to do ; as shewed wel by Iudas. / Certes, aboven alle sinnes thanne is this sinne most displeasent to Crist, and most adversarie. / Soothly, he that despeireth him is lyk the coward champioun recreant, that seith creant withoute nede. Allas ! allas ! nedeles is he recreant and nedeles despeired. / Certes, the mercy of god is evere redy to every penitent, and is aboven alle hise werkes. / Allas ! can nat a man bithinke him on the gospel of seint Luk, 15., where-as Crist seith that ‘as wel shal ther be Ioye in hevене upon a sinful man that doth penitence,  
700 as up-on nynety and nyne rightful men that neden no penitence ?’ / Loke forther, in the same gospel, the Ioye and the feste of the gode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was returned to his fader. / Can they nat remembren hem eek, that, as seith seint Luk *xxiii<sup>o</sup> capitulo*, how that the thief that was hanged

---

691. E. anye. 696. E. sheweth. 698. E. *om.* that seith . . . recreant. Hl. recreant (*for* creant). 700. E. a man nat ; Pt. a man not. Hl. as vp-on ; *rest* than vp-on. Hl. Selden, nynety and nyne ; *rest* 90 and 19 (!). 702. *All but* Seld. Ln. *om.* capitulo. Seld. Pt. Ln. on me.

bisyde Iesu Crist, seyde: 'Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest in-to thy regne?' / 'For sothe,' seyde Crist, 'I seye to thee, to-day shaltow been with me in Paradys.' / Certes, ther is noon so horrible sinne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist. / Allas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeired, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. / Thanne 705 cometh Sompnolence, that is, sluggy slombringe, which maketh a man be hevy and dul, in body and in soule; and this sinne comth of Slouthe. / And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe; but-if ther were cause resonable. / For soothly, the morwe-tyde is most covenable, a man to seye his preyeres, and for to thinke on god, and for to honoure god, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist. / Lo! what seith Salomon: 'who-so wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal finde.' / Thanne cometh Negligence, or recchelesnesse, that rekketh of no-thing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm, certes, Negligence is the norice. / Negligence ne doth no fors, whan he shal doon 710 a thing, whether he do it weel or baddely. /

§ 57. Of the remedie of these two sinnes, as seith the wyse man, that 'he that dredeth god, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon.' / And he that loveth god, he wol doon diligence to plesse god by his werkes, and abaundone him-self, with al his might, wel for to doon. / Thanne comth ydelnesse, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at him at discovert, by temptacion on every syde. / This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vileyns thoghtes, and of alle Iangles, truffles, and of alle ordure. / Certes, the hevене is yeven to hem 715 that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that 'they ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men,' that is to seyn, in purgatorie. / Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but-if they doon penitence. /

§ 58. Thanne comth the sinne that men clepen *Tarditas*, as whan a man is to latrede or taryinge, er he wole turne to god; and

706. E. Seld. sloggy; Ln. slogge. 707. E. *om.* the morwe. 711. E. wheither. 715. Hl. tryffles; Seld. trifflis. 718. Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. so (*for* to). E. Cm. laterede; Hl. Seld. latrede; Pt. lattred; Ln. latred.

certes, that is a greet folye. He is lyk to him that falleth in the dich, and wol nat aryse. / And this vyce comth of a fals hope, that he thinketh that he shal live longe; but that hope faileth ful ofte. /

§ 59. Thanne comth Lachesse; that is he, that whan he binneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it and stinten; as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of him  
 720 na-more kepe, anon as they finden any contrarie or any anoy. / These been the newe shepherdes, that leten hir sheep witingly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. / Of this comth poverte and destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thinges. Thanne comth a manere coldnesse, that freseth al the herte of man. / Thanne comth undevoicioun, thurgh which a man is so blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swiche langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in holy chirche, ne here ne thinke of no devocioun, ne travaille with hise handes in no good werk, that it nis him unsavory and al apalled. / Thanne wexeth he slow and slombry, and sone wol be wrooth, and sone is enclined to hate and to envye. / Thanne comth the sinne of worldly sorwe, swich as is cleped *tristicia*, that  
 725 sleeth man, as seint Paul seith. / For certes, swich sorwe werketh to the death of the soule and of the body also; for ther-of comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lyf. / Wherefore swich sorwe shorteth ful ofte the lyf of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kinde. /

#### Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

§ 60. Agayns this horrible sinne of Accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called *Fortitudo* or Strength; that is, an affecciou thurgh which a man despyseth anoyous thinges. / This vertu is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dar withstonde mightily and wysely kepen him-self fro perils that been wikked, and wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel. / For it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as Accidie abateth it and maketh it feble. For this *Fortitudo* may endure by long  
 730 suffraunce the travailles that been covenable. /

---

722. E. spiritueel; temporeel. E. Pt. of a man. 723. E. om. so. blent] Ln. blonte; Hl. blunt. 724. E. slough (*for* slow). 725. Cm. swich as; Hl. such as; E. which as. 727. E. Cm. of man; Seld. of men; *rest* of a man. 728. E. anoyouse; Cm. noyouse; *rest* noyous. 729. E. Cm. vigerous. 730. E. fieble. Hl. conuenables.



§ 61. This vertu hath manye speces ; and the firste is cleped Magnanimittee, that is to seyn, greet corage. For certes, ther bihoveth greet corage agains Accidie, lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. / This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thinges and grevouse thinges, by hir owene wil, wysely and resonably. / And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man more by queyntise and by sleighte than by strengthe, therfore men shal withstonden him by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun. / Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith, and hope in god and in hise seintes, to acheve and acomplie the gode werkes in the whiche he purposeth fermely to continue. / Thanne comth seuretee or sikernesse ; and that is, whan a man ne douteth no travaille in tyme cominge of the gode werkes that a man hath bigonne. / Thanne comth Magnificence, that is to 735 seyn, whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bigonne ; and that is the ende why that men sholde do gode werkes ; for in the acomplissinge of grete goode werkes lyth the grete guerdoun. / Thanne is ther Constaunce, that is, stablenesse of corage ; and this sholde been in herte by stedefast feith, and in mouth, and in beringe, and in chere and in dede. / Eke ther been mo speciale remedies agains Accidie, in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the Loyes of hevене, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wole yeve him might to perfourne his gode entente. /

#### Sequitur de Auaricia.

§ 62. After Accidie wol I speke of Avarice and of Coveitise, of which sinne seith saint Paule, that 'the rote of alle harmes is Coveitise': *Ad Timotheum, sexto capitulo.* / For soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in it-self and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of god, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of worldly thinges. /

740

§ 63. Avarice, after the descripcion of saint Augustin, is likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thinges. / Som other folk seyn, that Avarice is, for to purchacen manye erthely thinges, and nothing yeve to hem that han nede. / And understand, that Avarice ne stant nat only in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science

731. E. Magnificence (*by error*; *with* Of Magnanimittee *in the margin*).

732. E. wesely (*for* wysely). 736. E. *om.* that he hath bigonne. E. *gerdoun.*

737. E. chiere. 739. Pt. *Capitulo*; *rest om.* 743. E. vnderstood.

and in glorie, and in every manere of outrageous thing is Avarice and Coveitise. / And the difference bitwixe Avarice and Coveitise is this. Coveitise is for to coveite swiche thinges as thou hast nat; and Avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, with-oute rightful nede. / Soothly, this Avarice is a sinne that is ful dampnable; for al holy writ curseth it, and speketh  
 745 agayns that vyce; for it dooth wrong to Iesu Crist. / For it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun; / and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Iesu Crist, and dooth more observance in kepinge of his tresor than he dooth to service of Iesu Crist. / And therefore seith seint Paul *ad Ephesios, quinto*, that 'an avaricious man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.' /

§ 64. What difference is bitwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man, but that an ydolastre, per aventure, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? For certes, every florin in his cofre is his mawmet. / And certes, the sinne of Mawmetrye is the firste thing that God deffended in the ten  
 750 comaundments, as bereth witnessse *Exodi, capitulo xx<sup>o</sup>*: / 'Thou shalt have no false goddes bifore me, ne thou shalt make to thee no grave thing.' Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his tresor biforn god, an ydolastre, / thurgh this cursed sinne of Avarice. Of Coveitise comen these harde lordshipes, thurgh whiche men been distreyned by tailages, custumes, and cariages, more than hir duetee or resoun is. And eek they taken of hir bonde-men amerciments, whiche mighten more resonably ben cleped extorcions than amerciments. / Of whiche amerciments and raunsoninge of bondemen, somme lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful; for-as-muche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn. / But certes, these lordshipes doon wrong, that bireven hir bonde-folk thinges that they nevere gave hem: *Augustinus de Civitate, libro nono*. / Sooth is, that the condicioun of thraldom and the firste cause of thraldom is for  
 755 sinne; *Genesis, quinto*. /

§ 65. Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature. / Wherefore these lordes ne sholde nat muche glorifyen hem in hir lordshipes, sith that by naturel condicion they been nat

748. E. Hl. *om.* in *after* is; Pt. hath more hope in his thraldome; Ln. is thral. *No MS. has the precise reading given; but it is clear that in has been dropped.* 752. E. Amercimentz (*twice*); whice (*sic*). 753. E. temporeel.

lordes of thralles ; but for that thraldom comth first by the desert of sinne. / And forther-over, ther-as the lawe seith, that temporel godes of bonde-folk been the godes of hir lordshipes, ye, that is for to understonde, the godes of the emperour, to deffenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. / And therefore seith Seneca : ‘ thy prudence sholde live benignely with thy thralles.’ / Tilke that thou clepest thy thralles been goddes peple ; for humble folk been Cristes freendes ; they been contubernial with the lord. /

760

§ 66. Think eek, that of swich seed as cherles springeth, of swich seed springen lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. / The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thy cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plyt. / Every sinful man is a cherl to sinne. I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wyse with thy cherles, that they rather love thee than drede. / I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is ; and skile it is, that men do hir devoir ther-as it is due ; but certes, extorcions and despit of youre underlinges is dampnable. /

§ 67. And forther-over understond wel, that these conquerours or tiraunts maken ful ofte thralles of hem, that been born of as royal blood as been they that hem conqueren. / This name 765 of thraldom was nevere erst couth, til that Noe seyde, that his sone Canaan sholde be thral to hise bretheren for his sinne. / What seye we thanne of hem that pilen and doon extorcions to holy chirche? Certes, the swerd, that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he sholde deffenden holy chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it ; and who so dooth, is traitour to Crist. / And, as seith seint Augustin, ‘ they been the develes wolves, that stranglen the sheep of Iesu Crist’ ; and doon worse than wolves. / For soothly, whan the wolf hath ful his wombe, he stinteth to strangle sheep. But soothly, the pilours and destroyours of goddes holy chirche ne do nat so ; for they ne stinte nevere to pile. / Now, as I have seyde, sith so is that sinne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus ; that tilke tyme that al this world was in sinne, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subieccioun. / But certes, sith the tyme 770 of grace cam, god ordeyned that som folk sholde be more heigh

757. E. natureel ; *om.* for. 758. E. temporeel. 765. E. vnderstood ; tirauntz. 767. to (1)] E. in.

in estaat and in degree, and som folk more lowe, and that everich sholde be served in his estaat and in his degree. / And therfore, in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hir thralles free out of thraldom. And therfore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord. / The Pope calleth him-self servant of the servaunts of god ; but for-as-muche as the estaat of holy chirche ne mighte nat han be, ne the commune profit mighte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but-if god hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree and som men lower : / therfore was sovereyntee ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hir underlinges or hir subgets in resoun, as ferforth as it lyth in hir power ; and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde. / Wherfore I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves, that devouren the possessiouns or the catel of povre folk wrongfully, with-outen  
775 mercy or mesure, / they shul receyven, by the same mesure that they han mesured to povre folk, the mercy of Iesu Crist, but-if it be amended. / Now comth deceite bitwixe marchant and marchant. And thow shalt understonde, that marchandyse is in two maneres ; that oon is bodily, and that other is goostly. That oon is honeste and lefevel, and that other is deshoneste and unlefevel. / Of thilke bodily marchandyse, that is lefevel and honeste, is this ; that, there-as god hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to him-self, thanne is it honeste and lefevel, that of habundaunce of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is more nedy. And therfore, ther mote been marchants to bringen fro that o contree to that other hire marchandyses. / That other marchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesinges and false othes, is cursed and dampna-  
780 ble. / Espirituel marchandyse is proprely Symonye, that is, ententif desyr to byen thing esprituel, that is, thing that aperteneth to the seintuarie of god and to cure of the soule. / This desyr, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, al-be-it that his desyr ne take noon effect, yet is it to him a deedly sinne ; and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. / Certes, Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yifte that god hadde yeven, by the holy goost, to seint Peter and to

771. E. lough ; *om.* and in his degree. 774. E. subgetz. 777. Ed. 1550, two ; *MSS.* manye. 781. E. Espiritueel (*twice*). 782. E. irreguleer. 783. E. temporeel.

the apostles. / And therfore understand, that bothe he that selleth and he that byeth thinges espirituel, been cleped Symonials; be it by catel, be it by procuringe, or by fleshly preyere of hise freendes, fleshly freendes, or espirituel freendes. / Fleshly, in two maneres; as by kinrede or othere freendes. Soothly, if they praye for him that is nat worthy and able, it is Symonye if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther nis noon. / 785

That other manere is, whan a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem, only for wikked fleshly affeccion that they have un-to the persone; and that is foul Symonye. / But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges espirituel un-to hir servants, it moot been understonde that the service moot been honeste, and elles nat; and eek that it be with-outen bargayninge, and that the persone be able. / For, as seith Seint Damascie, 'alle the sinnes of the world, at regard of this sinne, arn as thing of noght'; for it is the gretteste sinne that may be, after the sinne of Lucifer and Antecrist. / For, by this sinne, god forleseth the chirche, and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that been nat digne. / For they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Iesu Christ and destroyen his patri-  
moine. / By swiche undigne preestes and curates han lewed men 790

the lasse reverence of the sacraments of holy chirche; and swiche yeveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten in-to the chirche the develes owene sone. / They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen to the wolf that stranglenth hem. And therfore shul they nevere han part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of hevene. / Now comth hasardrye with hise apurtenaunces, as tables and raffles; of which comth deceite, false othes, chydinges, and alle ravines, blaspheminge and reneyinge of god, and hate of hise neighebores, wast of godes, misspendinge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughtre. / Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been with-outen greet sinne whyles they haunte that craft. / Of avarice comen eek lesinges, thefte, fals witnessse, and false othes. And ye shul understonde that these been grete sinnes, and expres agayn the comaundements of god, as I have seyde. / 795

Fals witnessse is in word and eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighebores goode name by thy fals witnessing, or

784. E. vnderstood; beyeth; espiritueel. 791. E. sacramentz. 793. Hl. raueynes; Pt. ravanys; Cm. rauynesse; Ln. rauynges. 794. E. Cm. *om.* whyles . . . craft.

bireven him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnessing; whan thou, for ire or for mede, or for envye, berest fals wisse, or accusest him or excusest him by thy fals wisse, or elles excusest thy-self falsly. / Ware yow, questmongeres and notaries ! Certes, for fals witnessing was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. / The sinne of thefte is eek expres agayns goddes heste, and that in two maneres, corporel and espirituel. / Corporel, as for to take thy neighebores catel agayn his wil, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure. / By steling eek of false enditements upon him, and in borwinge of thy neighebores catel, in entente nevere to payen it agayn, and semblable things. / Espirituel thefte is Sacrilege, that is to seyn, hurtinge of holy things, or of thinges sacred to Crist, in two maneres ; by reson of the holy place, as chirches or chirche-hawes, / for which every vileyns sinne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places. Also, they that withdrawen falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche. / And pleynly and generally, sacrilege is to reven holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place. /

#### Relevacio contra peccatum Avaricie.

§ 68. Now shul ye understonde, that the relevinge of Avarice is misericorde, and pitee largely taken. And men mighten axe, why that misericorde and pitee is relevinge of Avarice? / Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man ; for he delyteth him in the kepinge of his tresor, and nat in the rescowinge ne relevinge of his evene-cristene. And therefore speke I first of misericorde. / Thanne is misericorde, as seith the philosophre, a vertu, by which the corage of man is stired by the misese of him that is miseded. / Up-on which misericorde folweth pitee, in parfourninge of charitable werkes of misericorde. / And certes, thise thinges moeven a man to misericorde of Iesu Crist, that he yaf him-self for oure gilt, and suffred death for misericorde, and forgaf us oure originale sinnes ; / and therby relessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amenused the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and atte laste

798. E. heeste ; om. that ; corporel. Hl. Pt. Ln. and ; rest or. E. espirituel.  
 799. Hl. Corporel ; rest om. 801. E. Espirituel. TITLE. Hl.  
 Remedium (for Relevacio). 806. Cm. Ln. sterid.

the blisse of hevne. / The speses of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to yeve and to foryeven and relesse, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his evene-cristene, and eek to chastyse there as nede is. / Another manere of 810 remedie agayns Avarice is resonable largesse; but soothly, here bihoveth the consideracioun of the grace of Iesu Crist, and of his temporel goodes, and eek of the godes perdurables that Crist yaf to us; / and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgon al that he hath, save only that he hath despended in gode werkes. /

§ 69. But for-as-muche as som folk been unmesurable, men oghten eschue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast. / Certes, he that is fool-large ne yeveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel. Soothly, what thing that he yeveth for veyne glorie, as to minstrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath sinne ther-of and noon almesse. / Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yifte of his good no-thing but sinne. / He is 815 lyk to an hors that seketh rather to drinken drovy or trouble water than for to drinken water of the clere welle. / And for-as-muchel as they yeven ther as they sholde nat yeven, to hem aperteneth thilke malisoun that Crist shal yeven at the day of dome to hem that shullen been dampned. /

#### Sequitur de Gula.

§ 70. After Avarice comth Glotonye, which is expres eek agayn the comandement of god. Glotonye is unmesurable appetyt to ete or to drinke, or elles to doon y-nogh to the unmesurable appetyt and desordeynee coveityse to eten or to drinke. / This sinne corrupped al this world, as is wel shewed in the sinne of Adam and of Eve. Loke eek, what seith seint Paul of Glotonye. / 'Manye,' seith seint Paul, 'goon, of whiche I have ofte seyde to yow, and now I seye it wepinge, that they been the enemys of the croys of Crist; of whiche the ende is deeth, and of whiche hir wombe is hir god, and hir glorie in confusioun of hem that so saveren erthely thinges.' / He that is usaunt to this sinne of Glotonye, he ne 820 may no sinne withstonde. He moot been in servage of alle vyces, for it is the develes hord ther he hydeth him and resteth. / This

811. E. temporeel. 813. E. oughten. 816. Seld. droupy (*for drovy*).  
820. Pt. Ln. thei; *rest om.* Hl. Pt. Ln. saueren; *rest deuouren.* 821. E.  
hoord.

sinne hath manye speses. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therefore, whan a man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is deedly sinne. / But soothly, whan that a man is nat wont to strong drinke, and peraventure ne knoweth nat the strengthe of the drinke, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he sodeynly caught with drinke, it is no deedly sinne, but venial. / The seconde spece of Glotonye is, that the spirit of a man wexeth al trouble; for dronkenesse bireveth him the discrecioun of his wit. / The thridde spece of Glotonye is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful manere of  
 825 etinge. / The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempred. / The fifthe is, foryetelnesse by to muchel drinkinge; for which somtyme a man foryeteth er the morwe what he dide at even or on the night biforn. /

§ 71. In other manere been distinct the speses of Glotonye, after seint Gregorie. The firste is, for to ete biforn tyme to ete. The seconde is, whan a man get him to delicat mete or drinke. / The thridde is, whan men taken to muche over mesure. The fourthe is curiositee, with greet entente to maken and appaillen his mete. The fifthe is, for to eten to gredily. / Thise been the fyve fingres of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to  
 830 sinne. /

#### Remedium contra peccatum Gule.

§ 72. Agayns Glotonye is the remedie Abstinence, as seith Galien; but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Augustin wole, that Abstinence be doon for vertu and with pacience. / Abstinence, he seith, is litel worth, but-if a man have good wil ther-to, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charitee, and that men doon it for godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevене. /

§ 73. The felawes of Abstinence been Attemperaunce, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges: eek Shame, that eschueth alle deshonestee: Suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drinks, ne dooth no fors of to outrageous appaillinge of mete. / Mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslavee appetyt of etinge:

---

823. Cm. woned.

827. Cm. forsetefulnesse.

828. E. delicaat.



Sobrenesse also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke: / Sparinge also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softly; wherefore som folk stonden of hir owene wil, to eten at the lasse leyser. /

835

### Sequitur de Luxuria.

§ 74. After Glotonye, thanne comth Lecherie; for thise two sinnes been so ny cosins, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe. / God woot, this sinne is ful displesaunt thing to god; for he seyde himself, 'do no lecherie.' And therefore he putte grete peynes agayns this sinne in the olde lawe. / If womman thral were taken in this sinne, she sholde be beten with staves to the deeth. And if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones. And if she were a bisshoppes doghter, she sholde been brent, by goddes comandement. / Forther over, by the sinne of Lecherie, god dreynte al the world at the diluge. And after that, he brente fyve citees with thonder-leyt, and sank hem in-to helle. /

§ 75. Now lat us speke thanne of thilke stinkinge sinne of Lecherie that men clepe Avoutrie of wedded folk, that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. / Seint Iohn seith, <sup>840</sup> that avoutiers shullen been in helle in a stank brenninge of fyr and of brimston; in fyr, for the lecherie; in brimston, for the stink of hir ordure. / Certes, the brekinge of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was makid of god him-self in paradys, and confermed by Iesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew in the gospel: 'A man shal lete fader and moder, and taken him to his wyf, and they shullen be two in o flesh.' / This sacrament bitokneth the knittinge togidre of Crist and of holy chirche. / And nat only that god forbad avoutrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat coveite thy neighebores wyf. / In this heeste, seith seint Augustin, is forboden alle manere coveitise to doon lecherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the gospel: that 'who-so seeth a womman to coveitise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hir in his herte.' / Here may ye seen <sup>845</sup> that nat only the dede of this sinne is forboden, but eek the desyr to doon that sinne. / This cursed sinne anoyeth grevousliche

---

835. E. delicaat. 838. Cm. stonys; Ln. stones; Hl. stoones (*for* staues).  
 839. Pt. Ln. diluve; Hl. diluue (*for* diluge). E. thonder-leyt; Hl. -layt; *rest*  
 -light. 841. Pt. in fuyre for lechery in bremstone; Hl. In fuyr for the  
 lecherie in brimston; Ln. for licherye in brimstone (*om.* in fyr); E. Cm. *omit.*

hem that it haunten. And first, to hir soule ; for he oblygeth it to sinne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable. / Un-to the body anoyeth it greuously also, for it dreyeth him, and wasteth, and shent him, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the feend of helle ; it wasteth his catel and his substaunce. / And certes, if it be a foul thing, a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thing whan that, for swich ordure, wommen dispenden up-on men hir catel and substaunce. / This sinne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir gode fame, and al hir honour ; and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel ; for ther-by winneth 850 he the moste partie of this world. / And right as a marchant delyteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avantage of, right so delyteth the feend in this ordure. /

§ 76. This is that other hand of the devel, with fyve fingres, to cacche the peple to his vileinye. / The firste finger is the fool lookinge of the fool womman and of the fool man, that sleeth, right as the basilicok sleeth folk by the venim of his sighte ; for the coveitise of eyen folweth the coveitise of the herte. / The seconde finger is the vileyns touchinge in wikkede manere ; and ther-fore seith Salomon, that who-so toucheth and handleth a womman, he fareth lyk him that handleth the scorioun that stingeth and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his enveniminge ; as who-so toucheth warm pich, it shent hise fingres. / The thridde, is foule 855 wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. / The fourthe finger is the kissinge ; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brenninge ovene or of a fourneys. / And more fooles been they that kissen in vileinye ; for that mouth is the mouth of helle : and namely, thise olde dotardes holours, yet wol they kisse, though they may nat do, and smatre hem. / Certes, they been lyk to houndes ; for an hound, whan he comth by the roser or by othere [bushes], though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenance to pisse. / And for that many man weneth that he may nat sinne, for no likerousnesse that he doth with his wyf ; certes, that opinion is fals. God woot, a man may sleen him-self with his owene knyf, and make him-selven dronken of his owene tonne. / Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thing that he loveth

848. Pt. Ln. drieth. 853. Hl. as a basiliskoc. 857. Hl. dotard fooles holours. Cm. and smatere hem thow they may nat doon. 858. Tyrwhitt has bushes ; E. Seld. Ln. beauteis ; Cm. beauteis ; Hl. beautes ; Pt. bewtees.

biforn god, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. / Man 860  
 sholde loven his wyf by discrecioun, paciently and atemprely ;  
 and thanne is she as though it were his suster. / The fifthe finger  
 of the develes hand is the stinkinge dede of Lecherie. / Certes,  
 the fyve fingres of Glotonie the feend put in the wombe of a man,  
 and with hise fyve fynGRES of Lecherie he gripeth him by the  
 reynes, for to throwen him in-to the fourneys of helle ; / ther-as  
 they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and  
 wepinge and wailinge, sharp hunger and thurst, and grimnesse of  
 develes that shullen al to-trede hem, with-outen respit and with-  
 outen ende. / Of Lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse spesces ;  
 as fornicacioun, that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat  
 maried ; and this is deedly sinne and agayns nature. / Al that is 865  
 enemy and destruccioun to nature is agayns nature. / Parfay,  
 the resoun of a man telleth eek him wel that it is deedly sinne,  
 for-as-muche as god forbad Lecherie. And seint Paul yeveth  
 hem the regne, that nis dewe to no wight but to hem that doon  
 deedly sinne. / Another sinne of Lecherie is to bireve a mayden  
 of hir maydenhede ; for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a  
 mayden out of the hyste degree that is in this present lyf, / and  
 bireveth hir thilke precious fruit that the book clepeth ‘the hundred  
 fruit.’ I ne can seye it noon other weyes in English, but in Latin  
 it highte *Centesimus fructus*. / Certes, he that so dooth is cause of  
 manye damages and vileinyes, mo than any man can rekene ;  
 right as he som-tyme is cause of alle damages that bestes don in  
 the feeld, that breketh the hegge or the closure ; thurgh which he  
 destroyeth that may nat been restored. / For certes, na-more may 870  
 maydenhede be restored than an arm that is smiten fro the body  
 may retourne agayn to waxe. / She may have mercy, this woot I  
 wel, if she do penitence ; but nevere shal it be that she nas  
 corrupt. / And al-be-it so that I have spoken somewhat of  
 Avoutrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to Avoutrie,  
 for to eschue that foule sinne. / Avoutrie in Latin is for to seyn,  
 approchinge of other mannes bed, thurgh which tho that whylom  
 weren o flessch abaundone hir bodyes to othere persones. / Of  
 this sinne, as seith the wyse man, folwen manye harmes. First,  
 brekinge of feith ; and certes, in feith is the keye of Cristendom. / 875  
 And whan that feith is broken and lorn, soothly Cristendom stant

---

869. After *fructus*, III. *addis* secundum Ieronimum contra Iouinianum.

veyn and with-outen fruit. This sinne is eek a thefte ; for thefte generally is for to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certes, this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir housbonde and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hir ; and steleth hir soule fro Crist, and yeveth it to the devel. / This is a fouler thefte, than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice ; for thise Avoutiers breken the temple of god spiritually, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is, the body and the soule, for which Crist shal destroyen hem, as seith Seint Paul. / Soothly of this thefte douted gretly Ioseph, whan that his lordes wyf preyed him of vileinye, whan he seyde, ‘lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world ; ne no-thing of hise things is out of my power, but only ye that been  
880 his wyf. / And how sholde I thanne do this wikkednesse, and sinne so horribly agayns god, and agayns my lord? God it forbede.’ Allas ! al to litel is swich trouthe now y-founde ! / The thridde harm is the filthe thurgh which they breken the comandement of god, and defoulen the auctour of matrimoine, that is Crist. / For certes, in-so-muche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so muche is it gretter sinne for to breken it ; for god made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of Innocence, to multiplye man-kinde to the service of god. / And therefore is the brekinge ther-of more grevous. Of which brekinge comen false heires ofte tyme, that wrongfully occupyen folkes heritages. And therefore wol Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevене, that is heritage to gode folk. / Of this brekinge comth eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or sinnen with hir owene kinrede ; and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be lykned to a commune gonge, where-as men purgen  
885 hir ordure. / What seye we eek of putours that liven by the horrible sinne of putrie, and constreyne wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hir bodily puterie, ye, somtyme of his owene wyf or his child ; as doon this baudes? Certes, thise been cursede sinnes. / Understond eek, that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comandements bitwixe thefte and manslaughtre ; for it is the gretteste thefte that may be ; for it is thefte of body and of soule. / And it is lyk to homicyde ; for it kerveth a-two and

---

881. III. Pt. horribly ; E. Cm. horrible. 882. E. Actour (*error for*  
Auctour). 884. E. III. *om.* ther-of. E. ocupien. 887. E. Vnderstood.  
E. Pt. Ln. III. Seld. gladly ; Cm. *om.* E. comandementz.

breketh a-two hem that first were maked o flesh, and therfore, by the olde lawe of god, they sholde be slayn. / But natheless, by the lawe of Iesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avoutrie, and sholde han been slayn with stones, after the wil of the Iewes, as was hir lawe: 'Go,' quod Iesu Crist, 'and have na-more wil to sinne'; or, 'wille na-more to do sinne.' / Soothly, the vengeaunce of avoutrie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but-if so be that it be destourbed by penitence. / Yet been ther mo speses of this cursed sinne; as 890 whan that oon of hem is religious, or elles bothe; or of folk that been entred in-to ordre, as subdekne or deken, or preest, or hospitaliers. And evere the hyer that he is in ordre, the gretter is the sinne. / The thinges that gretly agreggen hir sinne is the brekinge of hir avow of chastitee, whan they receyved the ordre. / And forther-over, sooth is, that holy ordre is chief of al the tresorie of god, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee; to shewe that they been ioyned to chastitee, which that is most precious lyf that is. / And thise ordred folk been specially tytled to god, and of the special meynee of god; for which, whan they doon deedly sinne, they been the special traytours of god and of his peple; for they liven of the peple, to preye for the peple, and whyle they been suche traitours, hir preyers availen nat to the peple. / Preestes been aungeles, as by the dignitee of hir misterye; but for sothe, seint Paul seith, that 'Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light.' / 895 Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly sinne, he may be lykned to the aungel of derknesse transformed in the aungel of light; he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungel of derknesse. / Swiche preestes been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kinges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. / Belial is to seyn 'with-uten Iuge'; and so faren they; hem thinketh they been free, and han no Iuge, na-more than hath a free bole that taketh which cow that him lyketh in the toun. / So faren they by wommen. For right as a free bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree. / These preestes, as seith the book, ne conne nat the misterie of preesthode to the peple, ne god ne knowe they nat; they ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the book,

891. Pt. III. or deken; Ln. & deken; Cm. dekene; E. *om.* 894. E. meignee; Ln. III. meyne. E. Cm. *om.* to preye . . . to the peple; *the clause occurs in Pt. Ln. Selden, and partly in Hl.* 897. Seld. Pt. Ln. Hl. Belye (*for Helye*); Cm. Belyal. 900. Cm. helde; *rest* holde.

of soden flesh that was to hem offred, but they toke by force the  
 900 flesh that is rawe. / Certes, so thise shrewes ne holden hem nat  
 apayed of rosted flesh and sode flesh, with which the peple fedden  
 hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw flesh of folkes  
 wyves and hir doghtres. / And certes, thise wommen that  
 consenten to hir harlotrie doon greet wrong to Crist and to holy  
 chirche and alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven alle  
 thise him that sholde worshippe Crist and holy chirche, and preye  
 for cristene soules. / And therfore han swiche preestes, and hir  
 lemmanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al  
 the court cristen, till they come to amendement. / The thridde  
 spece of avourie is som-tyme bitwixe a man and his wyf; and  
 that is whan they take no reward in hir assemblinge, but only to  
 hire fleshly delyt, as seith seint Ierome; / and ne rekken of no-  
 905 thing but that they been assembled; by-cause that they been  
 married, al is good y-nough, as thinketh to hem. / But in swich  
 folk hath the devel power, as seyde the aungel Raphael to Thobie;  
 for in hir assemblinge they putten Iesu Crist out of hir herte, and  
 yeven hem-self to alle ordure. / The fourthe spece is, the assem-  
 blee of hem that been of hire kinrede, or of hem that been of  
 oon affinitee, or elles with hem with whiche hir fadres or hir  
 kinrede han deled in the sinne of lecherie; this sinne maketh  
 hem lyk to houndes, that taken no kepe to kinrede. / And  
 certes, parentele is in two maneres, outhere goostly or fleshly;  
 goostly, as for to delen with hise godsibbes. / For right so as he  
 that engendreth a child is his fleshly fader, right so is his godfader  
 his fader espirituel. For which a womman may in no lasse sinne  
 assemblen with hir godsib than with hir owene fleshly brother. /  
 The fifthe spece is thilke abhominable sinne, of which that no  
 man unnethe oghte speke ne wryte, nathelees it is openly reherced  
 910 in holy writ. / This cursednesse doon men and wommen in  
 diverse entente and in diverse manere; but though that holy writ  
 speke of horrible sinne, certes, holy writ may nat been defouled,  
 na-more than the sonne that shyneth on the mixen. / Another  
 sinne aperteneth to lecherie, that comth in slepinge; and this  
 sinne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem  
 that been corrupt; and this sinne men clepen pollucioun, that

903. E. cristiene; Hl. cristian; Cm. cristene; rest cristen. 908. Pt. Ln.  
 Parentela; Hl. parenteal. 909. E. espiritueel. 911. Pt. myxen; Cm.  
 myxene; E. Mixne; Seld. Ln. mexen; Hl. dongehul. 912. E. Poluciouu.

comth in foure maneres. / Somtyme, of languissinge of body ; for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man. Somtyme of infermetee ; for the feblesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh mencion. Som-tyme, for surfeet of mete and drinke. / And somtyme of vileyns thoghtes, that been enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe ; which may nat been with-oute sinne. For which men moste kepen hem wysely, or elles may men sinnen ful greuously. /

**Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie.**

§ 77. Now comth the remedie agayns Lecherie, and that is, generally, Chastitee and Continence, that restreyneth alle the desordeyne moevings that comen of fleshly talentes. / And <sup>915</sup> evere the gretter merite shal he han, that most restreyneth the wikkede eschaufinges of the ordure of this sinne. And this is in two maneres, that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee of widwehode. / Now shaltow understonde, that matrimoine is leefful assemblinge of man and of womman, that receyven by vertu of the sacrement the bond, thurgh which they may nat be departed in al hir lyf, that is to seyn, whyl that they liven bothe. / This, as seith the book, is a ful greet sacrement. God maketh it, as I have seyde, in paradys, and wolde him-self be born in mariage. / And for to halwen mariage, he was at a weddinge, where-as he turned water in-to wyn ; which was the firste miracle that he wroughte in erthe biforn hise disciples. / Trewe effect of mariage clenseth fornicacioun and replenisseth holy chirche of good linage ; for that is the ende of mariage ; and it chaungeth deedly sinne in-to venial sinne bitwixe hem that been y-wedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that been y-wedded, as wel as the bodies. / This is verrey mariage, that was establised by god er <sup>920</sup> that sinne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right point in paradys ; and it was ordeyned that o man sholde have but o womman, and o womman but o man, as seith Seint Augustin, by manye resouns. /

§ 78. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche. And that other is, for a man is heved of a womman ; algate, by ordinaunce it sholde be so. / For if a womman had no men

912. E. Cm. iij; rest iiij. 913. Pt. feblesse ; E. fieblesse ; Cm. febillesse ; Ln. Hl. febleness. 914. Cm. muste (for moste). E. greously (!). 917. E. boond. 921. E. Cm. om. This is. E. natureel. 923. E. no (for mo) before men.

than oon, thanne sholde she have mo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn god ; and eek a womman ne mighte nat plesse to many folk at ones. And also ther ne sholde nevere be pees ne reste amonges hem ; for everich wolde axen his owene thing. / And forther-over, no man ne sholde knowe his owene engendrure, ne who sholde have his heritage ; and the womman sholde been the lasse biloved, fro the time that she were conioynt to many men. /

§ 79. Now comth, how that a man sholde bere him with his wyf ; and namely, in two thinges, that is to seyn in suffraunce and  
925 reverence, as shewed Crist whan he made first womman. / For he ne made hir nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe. / For ther-as the womman hath the maistrie, she maketh to mucche desray ; ther neden none ensamples of this. The experience of day by day oghte suffyse. / Also certes, god ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe ; for she can nat paciently suffre : but god made womman of the rib of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe un-to man. / Man sholde bere him to his wyf in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith seint Paul : that ‘ a man sholde loven his wyf as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it.’ So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede. /

§ 80. Now how that a womman sholde be subget to hir hous-  
930 bonde, that telleth seint Peter. First, in obedience. / And eek, as seith the decree, a womman that is a wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witnessse with-oute leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord ; algate, he sholde be so by resoun. / She sholde eek serven him in alle honestee, and been attempree of hir array. I wot wel that they sholde setten hir entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hir queyntise of array. / Seint Ierome seith, that wyves that been apparailled in silk and in precious purpre ne mowe nat clothen hem in Iesu Crist. What seith seint Iohn eek in this matere? / Seint Gregorie eek seith, that no wight seketh precious array but only for veyne glorie, to been honoured the more biforn the peple. / It is a greet folye, a  
935 womman to have a fair array outward and in hir-self be foul inward. /

---

927. Hl. *disaray* ; Pt. Ln. *disaraye*.      931. E. Cm. that is wyf ; Hl. that is a wif.      935. Cm. Pt. *be* ; Hl. *to ben* ; Ln. *bue* ; E. *om.*



A wyf sholde eek be mesurable in lokinge and in beringe and in laughinge, and discreet in alle hir wordes and hir dedes. / And aboven alle worldly thing she sholde loven hir housbonde with al hir herte, and to him be trewe of hir body ; / so sholde an housbonde eek be to his wyf. For sith that al the body is the housbondes, so sholde hir herte been, or elles ther is bitwixe hem two, as in that, no parfit mariage. / Thanne shal men understonde that for three thinges a man and his wyf fleshly mowen assemble. The firste is in entente of engendrure of children to the service of god, for certes that is the cause fynal of matrimoine. / Another cause is, to yelden everich of hem to other the dette of hir bodies, for neither of hem hath power over his owene body. The thridde is, for to eschewe lecherye and vileinye. The ferthe is for sothe deedly sinne. / As to the firste, it is meritorie ; the seconde also ; for, as <sup>940</sup> seith the decree, that she hath merite of chastitee that yeldeth to hir housbonde the dette of hir body, ye, though it be agayn hir lykinge and the lust of hir herte. / The thridde manere is venial sinne, and trewely scarsly may ther any of these be with-oute venial sinne, for the corrupcion and for the delyt. / The fourthe manere is for to understonde, if they assemble only for amorous love and for noon of the forseide causes, but for to accomplice thilke brenninge delyt, they rekke nevere how ofte, sothly it is deedly sinne ; and yet, with sorwe, somme folk wol peynen hem more to doon than to hir appetyt suffyseth. /

§ 81. The seconde manere of chastitee is for to been a clene widewe, and eschue the embracings of man, and desyren the embracinge of Iesu Crist. / These been tho that han been wyves and han forgoon hir housbondes, and eek women that han doon lecherie and been releved by Penitence. / And certes, if that a <sup>945</sup> wyf coude kepen hir al chaast by licence of hir housbonde, so that she yeve nevere noon occasion that he agilte, it were to hire a greet merite. / These manere women that observen chastitee moste be clene in herte as well as in body and in thoght, and mesurable in clothinge and in contenance ; and been abstinent in etinge and drinkinge, in spekinge, and in dede. They been the vessel or the boyste of the blissed Magdelene, that fulfillleth holy chirche of good odour. / The thridde manere of chastitee is

941. E. *om.* merite of chastitee.  
be . . . mesurable.

942. E. *om.* of.

947. E. *om.* moste

virginitee, and it bihoveth that she be holy in herte and clene of body ; thanne is she spouse to Iesu Crist, and she is the lyf of angeles. / She is the preisinge of this world, and she is as thise martirs in egalitee ; she hath in hir that tonge may nat telle ne herte thinke. / Virginitee baar oure lord Iesu Crist, and virgine  
950 was him-selve. /

§ 82. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, specially to withdrawn swiche thinges as yeve occasion to thilke vileinye ; as ese, etinge and drinkege ; for certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is to withdrawe the fyr. / Slepinge longe in greet quiete is eek a greet norice to Lecherie. /

§ 83. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, that a man or a womman eschue the companye of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted ; for al-be-it so that the dede is withstonden, yet is ther greet temptacioun. / Soothly a whyt wal, al-though it ne brenne noght fully by stikinge of a candele, yet is the wal blak of the leyt. / Ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger than Sampson, and holier than Daniel, and  
955 wyser than Salomon. /

§ 84. Now after that I have declared yow, as I can, the sevene dedly sinnes, and somme of hir branches and hir remedies, soothly, if I coude, I wolde telle yow the ten comandements. / But so heigh a doctrine I lete to divines. Natheles, I hope to god they been touched in this tretice, everich of hem alle. /

### De Confessione.

§ 85. Now for-as-muche as the second partie of Penitence stant in Confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I seye, seint Augustin seith : / sinne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveiten agayn the lawe of Iesu Crist ; and this is for to sinne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by thy fyve wittes, that been sighte, heringe, smellinge, tastinge or savouringe, and felinge. / Now is it good to understonde that that agreggeth  
960 muchel every sinne. / Thou shalt considere what thou art that doost the sinne, whether thou be male or femele, yong or old, gentil or thral, free or servant, hool or syk, wedded or sengle, ordred or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer ; / if she be of

---

954. E. leyt ; Pt. Ln. leyte ; Cm. lyght.      960. Pt. Hl. the circumstances that ; Ln. the circumstance that (*for* that that).      961. E. seculer.

thy kinrede, bodily or goostly, or noon ; if any of thy kinrede have sinned with hir or noon, and manye mo thinges. /

§ 86. Another circumstaunce is this ; whether it be doon in fornicacioun, or in avoutrie, or noon ; incest, or noon ; mayden, or noon ; in manere of homicyde, or noon ; horrible grete sinnes, or smale ; and how longe thou hast continued in sinne. / The thridde circumstaunce is the place ther thou hast do sinne ; whether in other mennes hous or in thyn owene ; in feeld or in chirche, or in chirche-hawe ; in chirche dedicat, or noon. / For if the chirche be halwed, and man or womman spille his kinde in-with that place by wey of sinne, or by wikked temptacion, the chirche is entredited til it be reconciled by the bishop ; / and the 965  
preest that dide swich a vileinye, to terme of al his lyf, he sholde na-more singe masse ; and if he dide, he sholde doon deedly sinne at every tyme that he so songe masse. / The fourthe circumstaunce is, by whiche mediatours or by whiche messagers, as for entycement, or for consentement to bere companye with felawshipe ; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wil go to the devel of helle. / Wherfore they that eggen or consenten to the sinne been parteners of the sinne, and of the dampnacioun of the sinner. / The fifthe circumstaunce is, how manye tymes that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how ofte that he hath falle. / For he that ofte falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of god, and encresseth his sinne, and is unkinde to Crist ; and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, / and the latter aryseth, and is the more eschew for to 970  
shryven him, namely, to him that is his confessour. / For which that folk, whan they falle agayn in hir olde folies, outhur they forleten hir olde confessours al outrely, or elles they departen hir shrift in diverse places ; but soothly, swich departed shrift deserveth no mercy of god of hise sinnes. / The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man sinneth, as by whiche temptacioun ; and if him-self procure thilke temptacioun, or by the excytinge of other folk ; or if he sinne with a womman by force, or by hir owene assent ; / or if the womman, maugree hir heed, hath been afforced, or noon ; this shal she telle ; for coveitise, or for poverté, and if it was hir procuringe, or noon ; and swiche manere harneys. / The seventhe

---

964. E. dedicaat.      965. E. Cm. om. til . . . bishop.      967. wil] E. shal.  
968. dampnacioun] E. Cm. temptacioun.      970. E. fieble.      973. Pt. Ln.  
Hl. whiche ; rest om.

circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his sinne, or how  
 975 that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hir. / And the same  
 shal the man telle pleynty, with alle circumstaunces ; and whether  
 he hath sinned with comune bordel-wommen, or noon ; / or  
 doon his sinne in holy tymes, or noon ; in fasting-tymes, or noon ;  
 or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte ; / and hath, per-aventure,  
 broken ther-fore his penance enioyed ; by whos help and  
 whos conseil ; by sorcerie or craft ; al moste be told. / Alle these  
 thinges, after that they been grete or smale, engreggen the con-  
 science of man. And eek the preest that is thy Iuge, may the  
 better been avysed of his Iugement in yevinge of thy penaunce,  
 and that is after thy contricioun. / For understond wel, that after  
 tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by sinne, if he wole  
 come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by penitence and  
 980 shrifte and satisfacioun ; / and namely by the two, if ther be a  
 confessour to which he may shryven him ; and the thridde, if he  
 have lyf to parfournen it. /

§ 87. Thanne shal man looke and considere, that if he wole  
 maken a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure  
 condiciouns. / First, it moot been in sorweful bitternesse of herte,  
 as seyde the king Ezekias to god : ‘ I wol remembre me alle the  
 yeres of my lyf in bitternesse of myn herte.’ / This condicioun  
 of bitternesse hath fyve signes. The firste is, that confessioun  
 moste be shamefast, nat for to covere ne hyden his sinne, for he  
 hath agilt his god and defouled his soule. / And her-of seith  
 seint Augustin : ‘ the herte travaillith for shame of his sinne’ ;  
 and for he hath greet shamefastnesse, he is digne to have greet  
 985 mercy of god. / Swich was the confession of the publican, that  
 wolde nat heven up hise eyen to hevене, for he hadde offended  
 god of hevене ; for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the  
 mercy of god. / And ther-of seith seint Augustin, that swich  
 shamefast folk been next foryevenesse and remissioun. / Another  
 signe is humiltee in confessioun ; of which seith seint Peter,  
 ‘ Humbleth yow under the might of god.’ The hond of god is  
 mighty in confession, for ther-by god foryeveth thee thy sinnes ;  
 for he allone hath the power. / And this humiltee shal been in  
 herte, and in signe outward ; for right as he hath humiltee to god

---

983. *All* Ezekiel ; *read* Ezekias (Isaiah xxxviii. 15). 985. E. ther-of ; *rest*  
 her-of. 986. E. Ln. puplican.

in his herte, right so sholde he humble his body outward to the preest that sit in goddes place. / For which in no manere, sith that Crist is sovereyn and the preest mene and mediatour bitwixe Crist and the sinnere, and the sinnere is the laste by wey of resoun, / 990 thanne sholde nat the sinnere sitte as heighe as his confessour, but knele biforn him or at his feet, but-if maladie destourbe it. For he shal nat taken kepe who sit there, but in whos place that he sitteth. / A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and comth for to axe mercy and maken his accord, and set him down anon by the lord, men wolde holden him outrageous, and nat worthy so sone for to have remissioun ne mercy. / The thridde signe is, how that thy shrift sholde be ful of teres, if man may ; and if man may nat wepe with hise bodily eyen, lat him wepe in herte. / Swich was the confession of seint Peter ; for after that he hadde forsake Iesu Crist, he wente out and weep ful bitterly. / The fourthe signe is, that he ne lette nat for shame to shewen his confessioun. / Swich was the confessioun of the Magdelene, that ne 995 spared, for no shame of hem that weren atte feste, for to go to oure lord Iesu Crist and biknowe to him hir sinnes. / The fifthe signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the penaunce that him is enioyned for hise sinnes ; for certes Iesu Crist, for the giltes of a man, was obedient to the deeth. /

§ 88. The seconde condicion of verray confession is, that it be hastily doon ; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde, evere the lenger that he taried to warisshe him-self, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deeth ; and eek the wounde wolde be the wors for to hele. / And right so fareth sinne, that longe tyme is in a man unshewed. / Certes, a man oghte hastily shewen hise sinnes for manye causes ; as for drede of deeth, that cometh ofte sodenly, and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place ; and eek the drecching of o synne draweth in another ; / and eek the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther he is fro 1000 Crist. And if he abyde to his laste day, scarsly may he shryven him or remembre him of hise sinnes, or repenten him, for the grevous maladie of his deeth. / And for-as-muche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Iesu Crist, whanne he hath spoken, he shal crye to Iesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herkne him. / And understond that this condicioun moste han foure thinges.

Thy shrift moste be purveyed bifore and avysed ; for wikked haste doth no profit ; and that a man conne shryve him of hise sinnes, be it of pryde, or of envye, and so forth of the speses and circumstances ; / and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the greetnesse of hise sinnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in sinne ; / and eek that he be contrit of hise sinnes, and in stedefast purpos, by the grace of god, nevere eft to falle in sinne ; and eek that he drede and countrewaite him-self, that he flee the  
 1005 occasiouns of sinne to whiche he is enclnyed. / Also thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy sinnes to o man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another ; that is to understonde, in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede ; for it nis but stranglinge of thy soule. / For certes, Iesu Crist is entierly al good ; in him nis noon inperfeccioun ; and therfore outhere he foryeveth al parfitly or never a deel. / I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitaunder for certein sinne, that thou art bounde to shewen him al the remenaunt of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast be shriven to thy curat, but-if it lyke to thee of thyn humilitee ; this is no departinge of shrifte. / Ne I seye nat, ther-as I speke of divisioun of confessioun, that if thou have lycence for to shryve thee to a discreet and an honeste preest, where thee lyketh, and by lycence of thy curat, that thou ne mayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy sinnes. / But lat no blotte be bihinde ; lat no sinne  
 1010 been untold, as fer as thou hast remembraunce. / And whan thou shalt be shriven to thy curat, telle him eek alle the sinnes that thou hast doon sin thou were last y-shriven ; this is no wikked entente of divisioun of shrifte. /

§ 89. Also the verray shrifte axeth certeine condiciouns. First, that thou shryve thee by thy free wil, nocht constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thinges ; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free wil he confesse his trespas ; / and that noon other man telle his sinne but he him-self, ne he shal nat nayte ne denye his sinne, ne wratthe him agayn the preest for his amonestinge to leve sinne. / The seconde condicioun is, that thy shrift be lawful ; that is to seyn, that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that hereth thy confessioun, been verrailly in the feith of holy chirche ; / and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Iesu Crist, as

Caym or Iudas. / And eek a man moot accusen him-self of his <sup>1015</sup> owene trespass, and nat another ; but he shal blame and wyten him-self and his owene malice of his sinne, and noon other ; / but natheles, if that another man be occasioun or entycer of his sinne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his sinne is aggregated, or elles that he may nat pleynly shryven him but he telle the persone with which he hath sinned ; thanne may he telle ; / so that his entente ne be nat to bakbyte the persone, but only to declaren his confessioun. /

§ 90. Thou ne shalt nat eek make no lesinges in thy confessioun ; for humilitee, per-aventure, to seyn that thou hast doon sinnes of whiche that thou were nevere guilty. / For Seint Augustin seith : if thou, by cause of thyn humilitee, makest lesinges on thy-self, though thou ne were nat in sinne biforn, yet artow thanne in sinne thurgh thy lesinges. / Thou most eek shewe thy sinne by thyn <sup>1020</sup> owene propre mouth, but thou be wexe doumb, and nat by no lettre ; for thou that hast doon the sinne, thou shalt have the shame therfore. / Thou shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to covere the more thy sinne ; for thanne bigylestow thy-self and nat the preest ; thou most tellen it pleynly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible. / Thou shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseilte thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause, but only for the doute of Iesu Crist and the hele of thy soule. / Thou shalt nat eek renne to the preest sodeynly, to tellen him lightly thy sinne, as who-so telleth a Iape or a tale, but avysely and with greet devocioun. / And generally, shryve thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte thou aryse by confessioun. / And thogh thou shryve <sup>1025</sup> thee offer than ones of sinne, of which thou hast be shriven, it is the more merite. And, as seith seint Augustin, thou shalt have the more lightly relesing and grace of god, bothe of sinne and of peyne. / And certes, ones a yere atte leeste wey it is laweful for to been housled ; for certes ones a yere alle thinges renovellen. /

**Explicit secunda pars Penitencie ; et sequitur tercia  
pars eiusdem, de Satisfaccione.**

§ 91. Now have I told you of verray Confessioun, that is the seconde partie of Penitence. /

---

1021. Cm. Pt. wexe ; E. Hl. woxe. 1023. E. om. 2nd thee. 1028. E. toolde.

The thridde partie of Penitence is Satisfaccioun; and that stant most generally in almesse and in bodily peyne. / Now been ther three manere of almesses; contricion of herte, where a man offreth himself to god; another is, to han pitee of defaute of hise neighbores; and the thridde is, in yevinge of good conseil goostly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely in sustenance of  
 1030 mannes fode. / And tak keep, that a man hath need of these things generally; he hath need of fode, he hath nede of clothing, and herberwe, he hath nede of charitable conseil, and visitinge in prisone and in maladie, and sepulture of his dede body. / And if thou mayst nat visite the nedeful with thy persone, visite him by thy message and by thy yiftes. / These been generally almesses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporel riches or discrecioun in conseilinge. Of these werkes shaltow heren at the day of dome. /

§ 92. These almesses shaltow doon of thyne owene propre thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou mayst; / but natheles, if thou mayst nat doon it prively, thou shalt nat forbere to doon almesse though men seen it; so that it be nat doon for thank of  
 1035 the world, but only for thank of Iesu Crist. / For as witnesseth Seint Mathew, *capitulo quinto*, 'A citee may nat been hid that is set on a montayne; ne men lighte nat a lanterne and put it under a bussel; but men sette it on a candle-stikke, to yeve light to the men in the hous. / Right so shal youre light lighten bifore men, that they may seen youre gode werkes, and glorifie youre fader that is in hevене.' /

§ 93. Now as to speken of bodily peyne, it stant in preyeres, in wakinges, in fastinges, in vertuose techinges of orisouns. / And ye shul understonde, that orisouns or preyeres is for to seyn a pitous wil of herte, that redresseth it in god and expresseth it by word outward, to remoeven harmes and to han thinges espirituel and durable, and somtyme temporel thinges; of whiche orisouns, certes, in the orisoun of the *Pater-noster*, hath Iesu Crist enclosed most thinges. / Certes, it is privileged of three thinges in his dignitee, for which it is more digne than any other preyere; for  
 1040 that Iesu Crist him-self maketh it; / and it is short, for it sholde be coud the more lightly, and for to withholden it the more esily in herte, and helpen him-self the offer with the orisoun; /

1031. Hl. keep; Pt. Ln. kepe; E. Cm. om.      1033. E. temporeel.      1039. E. espiritueel; temporele.



and for a man sholde be the lasse wery to seyen it, and for a man may nat excusen him to lerne it, it is so short and so esy ; and for it comprehendeth in it-self alle gode preyeres. / The exposicioun of this holy preyre, that is so excellent and digne, I bitake to thise maistres of theologie ; save thus muchel wol I seyn : that, whan thou prayest that god sholde foryeve thee thy giltes as thou foryevest hem that agilten to thee, be ful wel war that thou be nat out of charitee. / This holy orisoun amenuseth eek venial sinne ; and therfore it aperteneth specially to penitence. /

§ 94. This preyre moste be trewely seyð and in verry feith, and that men preye to god ordinatly and discreetly and devoutly ; and alwey a man shal putten his wil to be subget to the wille of god. / This orisoun moste eek been seyð with greet humblesse <sup>1045</sup> and ful pure ; honestly, and nat to the anoyauce of any man or womman. It moste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. / It avayleth eek agayn the vyces of the soule ; for, as seith seint Ierome, ‘ By fastinge been saved the vyces of the flesh, and by preyre the vyces of the soule.’ /

§ 95. After this, thou shalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakinge ; for Iesu Crist seith, ‘ waketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun.’ / Ye shul understanden also, that fastinge stant in three thinges ; in forberinge of bodily mete and drinke, and in forberinge of worldly Iolitee, and in forberinge of deedly sinne ; this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen him fro deedly sinne with al his might. /

§ 96. And thou shalt understanden eek, that god ordeyned fastinge ; and to fastinge appertenen foure thinges. / Largenesse <sup>1050</sup> to povre folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angry ne anoyed, ne grucche for he fasteth ; and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure ; that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth. /

§ 97. Thanne shaltow understonde, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techinge, by word or by wrytinge, or in ensample. Also in weringe of heyres or of stamin, or of haubergcons on hir naked flesh, for Cristes sake, and swiche manere penances. / But war thee wel that swiche manere penances on thy flesh ne make nat thyn herte bitter or angry or anoyed of thy-self ; for better is to caste

1047. vyces (3)] E. vertues ; Cm. vertu. 1051. E. espiritueel. 1052. or by] E. and by. 1053. nat . . . bitter] E. Cm. thee nat.

away thyn heyre, than for to caste away the sikernesse of Iesu Crist. / And therefore seith seint Paul: 'Clothe yow, as they that been chosen of god, in herte of misericorde, debonairetee, suffraunce, and swich manere of clothinge'; of whiche Iesu Crist is more apayed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes. /

§ 98. Thanne is disciplyne eek in knockinge of thy brest, in  
1055 scourginge with yerdes, in knelinges, in tribulacions; / in suffringe  
patiently wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient  
suffraunce of maladies, or lesinge of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of  
child, or othere freendes. /

§ 99. Thanne shaltow understonde, whiche thinges destourben  
penaunce; and this is in foure maneres, that is, drede, shame, hope,  
and wanhope, that is, desperacion. / And for to speke first of  
drede; for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce; /  
ther-agayns is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penaunce is but  
short and litel at regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and  
so long, that it lasteth with-outen ende. /

§ 100. Now again the shame that a man hath to shryven him,  
and namely, thise ypocrites that wolden been holden so parfite  
1060 that they han no nede to shryven hem; / agayns that shame,  
sholde a man thinke that, by wey of resoun, that he that hath nat  
been ashamed to doon foule thinges, certes him oghte nat been  
ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessiouns. / A man  
sholde eek thinke, that god seeth and woot alle hise thoghtes and  
alle hise werkes; to him may no thing been hid ne covered. /  
Men sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at  
the day of dome, to hem that been nat penitent and shriven in this  
present lyf. / For alle the creatures in erthe and in helle shullen  
seen apertly al that they hyden in this world. /

§ 101. Now for to speken of the hope of hem that been negligent  
1065 and slowe to shryven hem, that stant in two maneres. / That oon  
is, that he hopeth for to live longe and for to purchacen muche  
richesse for his delyt, and thanne he wol shryven him; and, as he  
seith, him semeth thanne tymely y-nough to come to shrifte. /  
Another is, surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. / Agayns  
the firste vyce, he shal thinke, that oure lyf is in no sikernesse;  
and eek that alle the richesesses in this world ben in aventure, and  
passen as a shadwe on the wal. / And, as seith seint Gregorie,

1053. sikernesse] Pt. Ln. III. swetnesse. 1058. weneth] E. demeth. 1059.  
E. crueel; peynes. 1061. ashamed (1)] E. shamed. 1065. E. om. the.

that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of god, that nevere shal the peyne stinte of hem that nevere wolde withdrawn hem fro sinne, hir thanks, but ay continue in sinne; for thilke perpetuel wil to do sinne shul they han perpetuel peyne. /

§ 102. Wanhope is in two maneres: the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist; that other is that they thinken, that they ne mighte nat longe persevere in goodnesse. / The firste wanhope 1070 comth of that he demeth that he hath sinned so greetly and so ofte, and so longe leyn in sinne, that he shal nat be saved. / Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thinke, that the passion of Iesu Crist is more strong for to unbinde than sinne is strong for to binde. / Agayns the seconde wanhope, he shal thinke, that as ofte as he falleth he may aryse agayn by penitence. And thogh he never so longe have leyn in sinne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven him to mercy. / Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thinke, that the feblesse of the devel may no-thing doon but-if men wol suffren him; / and eek he shal han strengthe of the help of god, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list. / 1075

§ 103. Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruit of penaunce; and, after the word of Iesu Crist, it is the endeles blisse of hevене, / ther Ioye hath no contrariouste of wo ne grevaunce, ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; ther-as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; ther-as is the blisful companye that reioysen hem everemo, everich of othes Ioye; / ther-as the body of man, that whylom was foul and derk, is more cleer than the sonne; ther-as the body, that whylom was syk, freele, and feble, and mortal, is inmortal, and so strong and so hool that ther may no-thing apeyren it; / ther-as ne is neither hunger, thurst, ne cold, but every soule replenissed with the sighte of the parfit knowinge of god. / This blisful regne may men purchace by poverte espirituel, and the glorie by lownesse; the plentee of Ioye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortificacion of sinne. / 1080

1069. E. perpetuel (*twice*).  
om. deeth and.

1078. E. fieble.

1080. E. espirituel;

Here taketh the makere of this book his leve.

§ 104. Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretis or rede, that if ther be any thing in it that lyketh hem, that ther-of they thanken oure lord Iesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. / And if ther be any thing that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unconninge, and nat to my wil, that wolde ful fayn have seyde bettere if I hadde had conninge. / For oure boke seith, 'al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine'; and that is myn entente. / Wherefore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of god, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes: / —and namely, of my translacions and endytinges of worldly  
 1085 vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns: / as is the book of Troilus; The book also of Fame; The book of the nynetene Ladies; The book of the Duchesse; The book of seint Valentynes day of the Parlement of Briddes; The tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sounen in-to sinne; / The book of the Leoun; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance; and many a song and many a lecherous lay; that Crist for his grete mercy foryeve me the sinne. / But of the translacion of Boece de Consolacione, and othere bokes of Legendes of seintes, and omelies, and moralitee, and devocioun, / that thanke I oure lord Iesu Crist and his blisful moder, and alle the seintes of hevене; / bisekinge hem that they from hennes-forth, un-to my lyves ende, sende me grace to biwayle my giltes, and to studie to the salvacioun of my soule:— and graunte me grace of verray penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun to  
 1090 doon in this present lyf; / thurgh the benigne grace of him that is king of kinges and preest over alle preestes, that boghte us with the precious blood of his herte; / so that I may been oon of hem  
 1092 at the day of dome that shulle be saved: *Qui cum patre, &c.*

Here is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Iesu Crist have mercy. Amen.

## APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

## THE TALE OF GAMELYN.

**L**ITHETH, and lesteneth · and herkeneth aright,  
 And ye schulle heere a talking · of a doughty knight;  
 Sire Iohan of Boundys · was his righte name,  
 He cowde of norture y-nough · and mochil of game.  
 Thre sones the knight hadde · that with his body he wan;      5  
 The eldest was a moche schrewe · and sone he bigan.  
 His bretheren loved wel here fader · and of him were agast,  
 The eldest deserved his fadres curs · and had it at the last.  
 The goode knight his fader · livede so yore,  
 That deth was comen him to · and handled him ful sore.      10  
 The goode knight cared sore · syk ther he lay,  
 How his children scholde · liven after his day.  
 He hadde ben wyde-wher · but non housbond he was,  
 Al the lond that he hadde · it was verrey purchas.  
 Fayn he wolde it were · dressed among hem alle,      15  
 That ech of hem hadde his part · as it mighte falle.  
 Tho sente he in-to cuntre · after wyse knightes,  
 To helpe delen his londes · and dresen hem to-rightes.  
 He sente hem word by lettres · they schulden hye blyve,  
 If they wolde speke with him · whyl he was on lyve.      20  
 Tho the knightes herden · syk that he lay,  
 Hadde they no reste · nother night ne day,  
 Til they comen to him · ther he lay stille  
 On his deth-bedde · to abyde goddes wille.  
 Than seyde the goode knight · syk ther he lay,      25  
 ‘Lordes, I you warne · for soth, withoute nay,  
 I may no lenger liven · heer in this stounde;

N. B.—Hl. = Harleian MS. no. 7334 (taken as the foundation of the text); Harl. = Harleian MS. no. 1758; Cp. = MS. Corp. Chr. Coll. Oxford; Ln. = Lansdowne MS. no. 851; Pt. = Petworth MS.; Rl. = MS. Royal 18 c. ii; Sl. = MS. Sloane, no. 1685. Note that Cp. and Ln. are next in value to Hl., and often agree with it as against the rest.

1. Cp. lesteneth; Sl. Ln. listeneth; Hl. lestneth. Cp. herkeneth; Rl. Sl. herkenyth; Hl. herkneth. 2. Cp. schulle; Ln. schullen; Hl. schul. Hl. a talkyng; rest om. 3. Hl. right; rest om.; read righte. 4. Hl. ynough; rest om. 5. Cp. hadde; Rl. Sl. Pt. Ln. had; Hl. om. 14. Cp. Rl. hadde; Hl. had (and in l. 16). 15. Cp. Ln. wolde; Hl. wold. Hl. amonges; rest among; see l. 36. 16. Hl. might. 17. Cp. Sl. Rl. Pt. Ln. sente; Hl. sent. So in l. 19, where the MSS. wrongly have sent. 21. Hl. ther; rest that. 27. Hl. Cp. lengere; Ln. longer; rest lenger.

For thurgh goddes wille · deth draweth me to grounde.<sup>7</sup>  
 Ther nas non of hem alle · that herde him aright,  
 That they ne hadden reuthe · of that ilke knight, 30  
 And seyde, ‘sir, for goddes love · ne dismay you nought;  
 God may do bote of bale · that is now y-wrought.’  
 Than spak the goode knight · syk ther he lay,  
 ‘Boote of bale god may sende · I wot it is no nay;  
 But I byseke you, knightes · for the love of me, 35  
 Goth and dresseth my lond · among my sones three.  
 And sires, for the love of god · deleth hem nat amis,  
 And forgetith nat Gamelyn · my yonge sone that is.  
 Taketh heed to that on · as wel as to that other;  
 Selde ye see ony eyr · helpen his brother.’ 40  
 Tho leete they the knight lyen · that was nought in hele,  
 And wenten in-to counsel · his londes for to dele;  
 For to delen hem alle · to oon, that was her thought,  
 And for Gamelyn was yongest · he schulde have nought.  
 Al the lond that ther was · they dalten it in two, 45  
 And leeten Gamelyn the yonge · withoute londe go,  
 And ech of hem seyde · to other ful lowde,  
 His bretheren mighte yeve him lond · whan he good cowde.  
 Whan they hadde deled · the lond at here wille,  
 They comen ayein to the knight · ther he lay ful stille, 50  
 And tolden him anon-right · how they hadden wrought;  
 And the knight ther he lay · lyked it right nought.  
 Than seyde the knight · ‘by seynt Martyn,  
 For al that ye have y-doon · yit is the lond myn;  
 For goddes love, neyhebours · stondesth alle stille, 55  
 And I wil dele my lond · right after my wille.  
 Iohan, myn eldeste sone · schal have plowes fyve,  
 That was my fadres heritage · whyl he was on lyve;  
 And my middeleste sone · fyve plowes of lond,  
 That I halp for to gete · with my righte hond; 60  
 And al myn other purchas · of londes and leedes,  
 That I biquethe Gamelyn · and alle my goode steedes.  
 And I biseke yow, goode men · that lawe conne of londe,  
 For Gamelynes love · that my queste stonde.<sup>7</sup>  
 Thus dalte the knight · his lond by his day, 65  
 Right on his deth-bedde · syk ther he lay;  
 And sone aftirward · he lay stoon-stille,  
 And deyde whan tyme com · as it was Cristes wille.

29. Sl. Cp. Ln. herde; Hl. herd. 30. Harl. Pt. ne; *rest om.* 36. Hl. thre. 37. Hl.  
 And sires; *rest om.* sires. 44. Hl. schuld; Cp. scholde. 46. Pt. londe; Ln. lande;  
*rest lond.* 48. Hl. might; *read* mighte. 50. Hl. come azein; *rest omit* azein, and *read*  
 comen, camen, comen. 51. Hl. anon right; *rest* anon, anoon. 56. Hl. Pt. *om.* right.  
 59. Hl. fyf; *rest* fyue; *see l.* 57. 60. *Read* righte; *MSS.* right. 61. Ln. and of ledes.  
 64. Cp. bequeste. 66. Hl. bed; Cp. bedde; *see l.* 24.

And anon as he was deed · and under gras y-grave,  
 Sone the elder brother · gyled the yonge knave ; 70  
 He took into his hond · his lond and his leede,  
 And Gamelyn himselfe · to clothen and to feede.  
 He clothed him and fedde him · yvel and eek wrothe,  
 And leet his londes for-fare · and his houses bothe,  
 His parkes and his woodes · and dede nothing wel ; 75  
 And seththen he it aboughte · on his faire fel.  
 So longe was Gamelyn · in his brotheres halle,  
 For the strengest, of good wil · they doutiden him alle ;  
 Ther was non ther-inne · nowther yong ne old,  
 That wolde wraththe Gamelyn · were he never so bold. 80  
 Gamelyn stood on a day · in his brotheres yerde,  
 And bigan with his hond · to handlen his berde ;  
 He thoughte on his londes · that layen unsawe,  
 And his faire okes · that down were y-drawe ;  
 His parkes were y-broken · and his deer bireved ; 85  
 Of alle his goode steedes · noon was him bileved ;  
 His howses were unhiled · and ful yvel dight ;  
 Tho thoughte Gamelyn · it wente nought aright.  
 Afterward cam his brother · walkinge thare,  
 And seyde to Gamelyn · ‘is our mete yare?’ 90  
 Tho wraththed him Gamelyn · and swor by goddes book,  
 ‘Thou schalt go bake thy-self · I wil nought be thy cook !’  
 ‘How ? brother Gamelyn · how answerest thou now ?  
 Thou spake never such a word · as thou dost now.’  
 ‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘now me thinketh neede, 95  
 Of alle the harmes that I have · I tok never ar hcede.  
 My parkes ben to-broken · and my deer bireved,  
 Of myn armure and my steedes · nought is me bileved ;  
 Al that my fader me biquath · al goth to schame,  
 And therfor have thou goddes curs · brother by thy name!’ 100  
 Than bispak his brother · that rape was of rees,  
 ‘Stond stille, gadeling · and hold right thy pees ;  
 Thou schalt be fayn for to have · thy mete and thy wede ;  
 What spekest thou, Gamelyn · of lond other of leede?’  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · the child that was ying, 105  
 ‘Cristes curs mot he have · that clepeth me gadeling !  
 I am no worse gadeling · ne no worse wight,  
 But born of a lady · and geten of a knight.’  
 Ne durste he nat to Gamelyn · ner a-foote go,  
 But clepide to him his men · and seyde to hem tho, 110

69. Hl. And anon ; *rest om.* And. 71. Hl. as his (*for* and his). 73. Hl. fed ; *rest*  
 fedde. 76. Cp. aboughte ; Ln. abouhte ; *rest* abought, abowght. 79, 80. Rl. Sl. old,  
 bold ; *rest* olde, bolde. 83. Ln. bouhte ; *rest om.* the final e ; see l. 88. 85. Hl.  
 byreued ; *rest om.* by-. 103. Rl. Sl. Pt. Harl. *om.* for. 109. Hl. durst ; Cp. durste ;  
 Ln. dorste.

'Goth and beteth this boy \* and reveth him his wit,  
 And lat him lerne another tyme \* to answe're me bet.'  
 Thanne seyde the child \* yonge Gamelyn,  
 'Cristes curs mot thou have \* brother art thou myn!  
 And if I schal algate \* be beten anon, 115  
 Cristes curs mot thou have \* but thou be that oon!  
 And anon his brother \* in that grete hete  
 Made his men to fette staves \* Gamelyn to bete.  
 Whan that everich of hem \* a staf hadde y-nome,  
 Gamelyn was war anon \* tho he seigh hem come ; 120  
 Tho Gamelyn seigh hem come \* he loked over-al,  
 And was war of a pestel \* stood under a wal ;  
 Gamelyn was light of foot \* and thider gan he lepe,  
 And drof alle his brotheres men \* right on an hepe.  
 He loked as a wilde lyoun \* and leyde on good woon ; 125  
 Tho his brother say that \* he bigan to goon ;  
 He fley up in-til a loft \* and schette the dore fast ;  
 Thus Gamelyn with the pestel \* made hem alle agast.  
 Some for Gamelynes love \* and some for his eye,  
 Alle they drowe by halves \* tho he gan to pleye. 130  
 'What! how now?' seyde Gamelyn \* 'evel mot ye thee!  
 Wil ye biginne contek \* and so sone flee?'  
 Gamelyn soughte his brother \* whider he was flowe,  
 And saugh wher he loked \* out at a windowe.  
 'Brother,' sayde Gamelyn \* 'com a litel ner, 135  
 And I wil teche thee a play \* atte bokeler.'  
 His brother him answerde \* and swor by seynt Richer,  
 'Why! the pestel is in thin hond \* I wil come no neer :  
 Brother, I wil make thy pees \* I swere by Cristes ore ;  
 Cast away the pestel \* and wraththe thee no-more.' 140  
 'I mot neede,' sayde Gamelyn \* 'wraththe me at oones,  
 For thou wolde make thy men \* to breke myne boones,  
 Ne hadde I had mayn \* and might in myn armes,  
 To have y-put hem fro me \* they wolde have do me harmes.'  
 'Gamelyn,' sayde his brother \* 'be thou nought wroth, 145  
 For to seen thee have harm \* it were me right loth ;  
 I ne dide it nought, brother \* but for a fonding,  
 For to loken if thou were strong \* and art so ying.'  
 'Com a-doun than to me \* and graunte me my bone  
 Of thing I wil thee aske \* and we schul saughte sone.' 150  
 Doun than cam his brother \* that fikil was and fel,

112. Cp. lere ; Hl. Ln. leren ; *rest* lerne. 119. Hl. a staf had ; *rest* hadde (had) a staf.  
 120. Hl. anon ; *rest om.* 121. Hl. seyh. 123. Hl. of foot ; *rest om.* 124. Hl. Ln. on ;  
*rest* sone on. 128. Hl. the ; *rest* his. 129, 130. Hl. ey3e, pley3e ; *rest* eye, pleye. 131.  
 Hl. how ; *rest om.* 133. MSS. omit final e in soughte. 137. Hl. Rycher. 138.  
 Hl. Whil. 140, 146, 150, &c. Hl. the. 143. Cp. hadde I had ; Hl. had I hadde. 144.  
 Hl. he ; *rest* thei. 148. Harl. Ln. if ; Pt. wher ; *rest* or. 150. Hl. Cp. Ln. Of ; Harl.  
 Of oo ; Rl. Of a ; Sl. Of o ; Pt. Of oon. 151, 152. Ln. fel, pestel ; *rest* felle, pestelle.



And was swithe sore · agast of the pestel.  
 He seyde, 'brother Gamelyn · aske me thy boone,  
 And loke thou me blame · but I graunte sone.'  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · 'brother, y-wis, 155  
 And we schulle ben at oon · thou most me graunte this :  
 Al that my fader me biquath · whyl he was on lyve,  
 Thou most do me it have · yif we schul nat stryve.'  
 'That schalt thou have, Gamelyn · I swere by Cristes ore!  
 Al that thy fader thee biquath · though thou woldest have more ; 160  
 Thy lond, that lyth laye · ful wel it schal be sowe,  
 And thyn howses reysed up · that ben leyd so lowe.'  
 Thus seyde the knight · to Gamelyn with mowthe,  
 And thoughte eek of falsnes · as he wel couthe.  
 The knight thoughte on tresoun · and Gamelyn on noon, 165  
 And wente and kiste his brother · and, when they were at oon,  
 Allas ! yonge Gamelyn · nothing he ne wiste  
 With which a false tresoun · his brother him kiste !  
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth your tonge,  
 And ye schul heere talking · of Gamelyn the yonge. 170  
 Ther was ther bisyden · cryed a wrastling,  
 And therfor ther was set up · a ram and a ring ;  
 And Gamelyn was in good wil · to wende therto,  
 For to preven his might · what he cowthe do.  
 'Brother,' seyde Gamelyn · 'by seynt Richer, 175  
 Thou most lene me to-night · a litel courser  
 That is freisch to the spore · on for to ryde ;  
 I most on an erande · a litel her bisyde.'  
 'By god !' seyde his brother · 'of steedes in my stalle  
 Go and chese thee the best · and spare non of alle 180  
 Of steedes or of coursers · that stonden hem bisyde ;  
 And tel me, goode brother · whider thou wolt ryde.'  
 'Her bisyde, brother · is cryed a wrastling,  
 And therfor schal be set up · a ram and a ring ;  
 Moche worschip it were · brother, to us alle, 185  
 Might I the ram and the ring · bring home to this halle.'  
 A steede ther was sadeled · smertely and skeet ;  
 Gamelyn did a paire spores · fast on his feet.  
 He sette his foot in the styrop · the steede he bistrood,

154. Hl. I ; *rest* I it. 157. Hl. whil. 161. Hl. Cp. laye ; Rl. leie ; Sl. leye ; Pt. Ln. ley. 164. Cp. þoughte ; *rest om. final e.* Hl. eek ; *rest om.* Hl. Cp. Ln. of ; *rest on.* 165. *For* knight, Hl. *wrongly has* king. MSS. *omit e in* thoughte. 166. Pt. Harl. wente ; *rest* went. Hl. kist ; *rest* kissed ; *see l.* 168. 169. Rl. lysteneth ; Cp. lesteneth ; Pt. listeneth ; Hl. lestneth. 171. Hl. wrastlyng ; Cp. wrasteling ; Rl. wrasteinyng ; Pt. wrastelinge. 172. Hl. sette (*wrongly*) ; *see l.* 184. 173. Hl. good wil ; Ln. wil ; *rest* wille. 177. Hl. Pt. spore ; *rest* spores. 178. Hl. byside ; *so in* 183. 179. Hl. seyde ; *rest have final e.* 180. Hl. the the. 181. *For* coursers, Hl. *wrongly has* course. 183. Pt. wrasteling ; Ln. war-steling ; *rest* wrastlyng, wrastlynge. 184. Hl. vp ; *rest om.* 189. Hl. set ; Ln. sete ; *rest* sette. Hl. *om.* 1st the.

And toward the wrasteling · the yonge child rood. 190  
 Tho Gamelyn the yonge · was ride out at the gat,  
 The false knight his brother · lokked it after that,  
 And bisoughte Iesu Crist · that is heven king,  
 He mighte breke his nekke · in that wrasteling.  
 As sone as Gamelyn com · ther the place was, 195  
 He lichte doun of his steede · and stood on the gras,  
 And ther he herd a frankeleyn · wayloway singe,  
 And bigan bitterly · his hondes for to wringe.  
 ‘Goode man,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘why makestow this fare?  
 Is ther no man that may · you helpe out of this care?’ 200  
 ‘Allas!’ seyde this frankeleyn · ‘that ever was I bore!  
 For tweye stalworthe sones · I wene that I have lore;  
 A champion is in the place · that hath y-wrought me sorwe,  
 For he hath slayn my two sones · but-if god hem borwe. 205  
 I wold yeve ten pound · by Iesu Crist! and more,  
 With the nones I fand a man · to handelen him sore.’  
 ‘Goode man,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘wilt thou wel doon,  
 Hold myn hors, whyl my man · draweth of my schoon,  
 And help my man to kepe · my clothes and my steede,  
 And I wil into place go · to loke if I may speede.’ 210  
 ‘By god!’ sayde the frankeleyn · ‘anon it schal be doon;  
 I wil my-self be thy man · and drawn of thy schoon,  
 And wende thou into the place · Iesu Crist thee speede,  
 And drede not of thy clothes · nor of thy goode steede.’  
 Barfoot and ungert · Gamelyn in cam, 215  
 Alle that weren in the place · beede of him they nam,  
 How he durste aunte him · of him to doon his might  
 That was so doughty champion · in wrastling and in fight.  
 Up sterte the champion · rapely and anoon,  
 Toward yonge Gamelyn · he bigan to goon, 220  
 And sayde, ‘who is thy fader · and who is thy sire?  
 For sothe thou art a gret fool · that thou come hire!’  
 Gamelyn answerde · the champion tho,  
 ‘Thou knewe wel my fader · whyl he couthe go,  
 Whyles he was on lyve · by seint Martyn! 225  
 Sir Iohan of Boundys was his name · and I Gamelyn.’  
 ‘Felaw,’ seyde the champion · ‘al-so mot I thryve,  
 I knew wel thy fader · whyl he was on lyve;  
 And thyselv, Gamelyn · I wil that thou it heere,

191. Hl. ride; *rest* riden, reden. Hl. Ln. at the; Cp. Pt. atte; *rest* at. *All* gate (wrongly); *and* thate (for that) in next line. 192. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 194. Pt. wrestelinge; *rest* wrastlyng, wrastlinge, wrestlinge. 197, 198. Hl. syng, wryng. 206. Cp. handelen; Hl. handil. 211. Hl. anon; *rest om.* 213. Hl. Cp. Ln. the place; *rest om.* the. Hl. the. 217. Hl. Pt. durst; *rest* durste, dorste. 218. *All but* Hl. *ins.* a *bef.* champion. 219. Hl. raply and; *rest* rapely (omitting and). 222. Rl. Harl. Sl. here. 224, 225. Hl. whil, Whiles. 227. Hl. al; *rest om.*

Whyll thou were a yong boy · a moche schrewe thou were.' 230  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · and swor by Cristes ore,  
 'Now I am older woxe · thou schalt me finde a more!  
 'By god!' sayde the champioun · 'welcome mote thou be!  
 Come thou ones in myn hond · schalt thou never thee.'  
 It was wel withinne the night · and the moone schon, 235  
 Whan Gamelyn and the champioun · togider gonne goon.  
 The champioun caste tornes · to Gamelyn that was prest,  
 And Gamelyn stood stille · and bad him doon his best.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the champioun,  
 'Thou art faste aboute · to bringe me adoun; 240  
 Now I have y-proved · many tornes of thyne,  
 Thow most,' he seyde, 'proven · on or two of myne.'  
 Gamelyn to the champioun · yede smertely anon,  
 Of all the tornes that he cowthe · he schewed him but oon,  
 And caste him on the lefte syde · that three ribbes to-brak, 245  
 And ther-to his oon arm · that yaf a gret crak.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · smertely anoon,  
 'Schal it be holde for a cast · or elles for noon?'  
 'By god!' seyde the champioun · 'whether that it be,  
 He that cometh ones in thin hand · schal he never thee!' 250  
 Than seyde the frankeleyn · that had his sones there,  
 'Blessed be thou, Gamelyn · that ever thou bore were!'  
 The frankeleyn seyde to the champioun · of him stood him noon eye,  
 'This is yonge Gamelyn · that taughte thee this p'eye.'  
 Agein answerd the champioun · that lyked nothing wel, 255  
 'He is a lither mayster · and his pley is right fel;  
 Sith I wrastled first · it is y-go ful yore,  
 But I was nevere in my lyf · handeled so sore.'  
 Gamelyn stood in the place · allone withoute serk,  
 And seyde, 'if ther be eny mo · lat hem come to werk; 260  
 The champioun that peyned him · to werke so sore,  
 It semeth by his continaunce · that he wil no-more.'  
 Gamelyn in the place · stood as stille as stoon,  
 For to abyde wrasteling · but ther com noon;  
 Ther was noon with Gamelyn · wolde wrastle more, 265  
 For he handled the champioun · so wonderly sore.  
 Two gentil-men ther were · that yemed the place,  
 Comen to Gamelyn · (god yeve him goode grace!)  
 And sayde to him, 'do on · thyn hosen and thy schoon,

232. Hl. fynd; *rest* fynde, finde. 234. Hl. the. 236. Hl. gon to; Cp. Ln. gonne;  
*rest* gon. 242. Hl. tuo. 243. Hl. Ln. smartly; Rl. Pt. smertely; *see l.* 187. 245. *All*  
*kast or kest. All left, lift; read* lefte. Hl. thre. 247. Hl. smertly; *see l.* 243. 249.  
 253, 260. Hl. seyde; *rest have final e.* 250. Hl. Ln. comes; *rest* cometh; *read it as*  
*comth.* 254. Hl. the. 255. Hl. welle. 256. Hl. a lither; Cp. oure alther; *rest*  
*alther. For fel, all have felle or felle.* 258. Hl. Cp. Ln. my; *rest* in my. Rl. Pt. Ln.  
 handeled; Hl. Sl. Cp. handled. 260. Hl. eny; *rest om.* 267. ther were that] Pt. that;  
*rest om.*

For sothe at this tyme · this feire is y-doon.' 270  
 And than seyde Gamelyn · 'so mot I wel fare,  
 I have nought yet halven-del · sold up my ware.'  
 Tho seyde the champioun · 'so brouke I my sweere,  
 He is a fool that ther-of byeth · thou sellest it so deere.'  
 Tho sayde the frankeleyn · that was in moche care, 275  
 'Felaw,' he seyde · 'why lakkest thou his ware ?  
 By seynt Iame in Galys . that many man hath sought,  
 Yet it is to good cheep · that thou hast y-bought.'  
 Tho that wardeynes were · of that wrasteling  
 Come and broughte Gamelyn · the ram and the ring, 280  
 And seyden, 'have, Gamelyn · the ring and the ram,  
 For the beste wrasteler · that ever here cam.'  
 Thus wan Gamelyn · the ram and the ring,  
 And wente with moche Ioye · home in the morning.  
 His brother seiþ wher he cam · with the grete rowte, 285  
 And bad schitte the gate · and holde him withoute.  
 The porter of his lord · was ful sore agast,  
 And sterte anon to the gate · and lokked it fast.  
 Now litheth, and lesteneth · bothe yonge and olde,  
 And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn the bolde. 290  
 Gamelyn come ther-to · for to have comen in,  
 And thanne was it y-schet · faste with a pin ;  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · 'porter, undo the yat,  
 For many good mannes sone · stondesth ther-at.'  
 Than answerd the porter · and swor by goddes berde, 295  
 'Thow ne schalt, Gamelyn · come into this yerde.'  
 'Thow lixt,' sayde Gamelyn · 'so browe I my chin !'  
 He smot the wiket with his foot · and brak away the pin.  
 The porter seyþ tho · it might no better be,  
 He sette foot on erthe · and bigan to flee. 300  
 'By my faith,' seyde Gamelyn · 'that travail is y-lore,  
 For I am of foot as light as thou · though thou haddest swore.'  
 Gamelyn overtook the porter · and his teene wrak,  
 And gerte him in the nekke · that the bon to-brak,  
 And took him by that oon arm · and threw him in a welle, 305  
 Seven fadmen it was deep · as I have herd telle.  
 Whan Gamelyn the yonge · thus hadde pleyd his p'ay,  
 Alle that in the yerde were · drewen hem away ;  
 They dredden him ful sore · for werkes that he wroughte,  
 And for the faire company · that he thider broughte. 310

273. Hl. brouk ; Cp. Ln. brouke ; Pt. broke. 274. Hl. beyeth ; rest byeth, bieth. 279.  
 Pt. wrasteling ; Ln. warsteling ; Rl. wrastlinge ; rest wrastlyng. 282. Cp. beste ; Hl. Ln.  
 best ; rest om. ll. 281, 282. 287. Hl. ful ; rest om. 288. Rl. Harl. sterte ; rest stert.  
 289. Hl. lesteneth ; Pt. listneþ ; rest lesteneth, listenythe, listeneth, lysteneyth. Pt. Ln.  
 songe ; rest yong, song. 293. All yate, gate ; and in the next line ther-ate. 295. Hl.  
 berd. 300. and] Hl. Cp. he. 304. Hl. Cp. gert ; rest girt. 306. Hl. Cp. fadmen ; Pt.  
 fadme ; Rl. Sl. fadame ; Ln. fapem ; Harl. fadome.

Gamelyn yede to the gate · and leet it up wyde ;  
 He leet in alle maner men · that gon in wolde or ryde,  
 And seyde, ‘ye be welcome · withouten eny greeve,  
 For we wiln be maistres heer · and aske no man leve.  
 Yestirday I lefte’ · seyde yonge Gamelyn, 315  
 ‘In my brother seller · fyve tonne of wyn ;  
 I wil not that this compaignye · parten a-twinne,  
 And ye wil doon after me · whyl eny sope is thrinne,  
 And if my brother grucche · or make foul cheere,  
 Other for spense of mete or drink · that we spenden heere, 320  
 I am oure catour · and bere oure aller purs,  
 He schal have for his grucching · seint Maries curs.  
 My brother is a niggoun · I swer by Cristes ore,  
 And we wil spende largely · that he hath spared yore ;  
 And who that maketh grucching · that we here dwelle, 325  
 He schal to the porter · into the draw-welle.’  
 Seven dayes and seven night · Gamelyn held his feste,  
 With moche mirth and solas · that was ther, and no cheste ;  
 In a little toret · his brother lay y-steke,  
 And sey hem wasten his good · but durste he not speke. 330  
 Erly on a morning · on the eighte day,  
 The gestes come to Gamelyn · and wolde gon here way.  
 ‘Lordes,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wil ye so hyë ?  
 Al the wyn is not yet dronke · so brouke I myn yë.’  
 Gamelyn in his herte · was he ful wo, 335  
 Whan his gestes took her leve · from him for to go ;  
 He wolde they had lenger abide · and they seyde ‘nay,’  
 But bitaughte Gamelyn · god, and good day.  
 Thus made Gamelyn his feest · and broughte it wel to ende,  
 And after his gestes · toke leve to wende. 340  
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth youre tonge,  
 And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn the yonge ;  
 Herkeneth, lordinges · and lesteneth aright,  
 Whan alle gestes were goon · how Gamelyn was dight.  
 Al the whyl that Gamelyn · heeld his mangerye, 345  
 His brother thoughte on him be wreke · with his treccherye.  
 Tho Gamelyns gestes · were riden and y-goon,  
 Gamelyn stood allone · frendes had he noon ;  
 Tho after ful soone · withinne a litel stounde,

312. Hl. maner men; *rest om.* Hl. *has and in*; *rest om.* Hl. Rl. Pt. wold; Cp. Ln. wolde. 317. Hl. that; *rest om.* 318. Hl. while. Hl. thrynne; Cp. thrinne; Sl. Pt. þer-inne; Ln. þere-inne. 323. Hl. nyggoun; Rl. Sl. nygon; Pt. nigon; Cp. Ln. negon. 328. Hl. myrth and; *rest om.* Hl. that was; *rest om.* that (*as being understood*). 330. Hl. Cp. durst; *rest dorst.* 334. Hl. y-dronke; *rest omit y-*. Pt. Ln. brouke; Rl. browke; Hl. brouk. 335. Hl. he; *rest om.* 337. Hl. wold. Hl. lenger abide; *rest dwelled lenger.* 339. Pt. feest; Hl. fest. MSS. brought, broght. 340. Hl. gestys; *see l.* 326. Hl. took; Ln. had take; Cp. toke; Sl. to (*sic*); *rest toke.* 341. Hl. lestneth; Pt. listen; *rest lesteneth, iistenyth.* 343. Hl. herkaeth; *rest Herkeneth, Herkenyth, Harkeneth.* 346. MSS. thought.

Gamelyn was y-taken · and ful harde y-bounde. 350  
 Forth com the false knight · out of the soleer,  
 To Gamelyn his brother · he yede ful neer,  
 And sayde to Gamelyn · ‘who made thee so bold  
 For to stroye my stoor · of myn houshold?’  
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wratthe thee right nought, 355  
 For it is many day y-gon · siththen it was bought;  
 For, brother, thou hast y-had · by seynt Richer,  
 Of fiftene plowes of lond · this sixtene yer,  
 And of alle the beestes · thou hast forth bred,  
 That my fader me biquath · on his deth-bed; 360  
 Of al this sixtene yeer · I yeve thee the prow,  
 For the mete and the drink · that we have spende now.  
 Thanne seyde the false knight · (evel mot he thee!)  
 ‘Herkne, brother Gamelyn · what I wol yeve thee;  
 For of my body, brother · heir geten have I noon, 365  
 I wil make thee myn heir · I swere by seint Iohan.  
 ‘*Par ma foy!*’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘and if it so be,  
 And thou thenke as thou seyst · god yelde it thee!’  
 Nothing wiste Gamelyn · of his brotheres gyle;  
 Therefore he him bigy’led · in a litel whyle. 370  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde he · ‘o thing I thee telle;  
 Tho thou threwe my porter · in the draw-welle,  
 I swor in that wratthe · and in that grete moot,  
 That thou schuldest be bounde · bothe hand and foot;  
 Therefore I thee biseche · brother Gamelyn, 375  
 Lat me nought be forsworen · brother art thou myn;  
 Lat me binde thee now · bothe hand and feet,  
 For to holde myn avow · as I thee biheet.’  
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘al-so mot I thee!  
 Thou schalt not be forsworen · for the love of me.’ 380  
 Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte · mighte he nat stonde,  
 Til they hadde him bounde · bothe foot and honde.  
 The false knight his brother · of Gamelyn was agast,  
 And sente aftir feteres · to feteren him fast.  
 His brother made lesinges · on him ther he stood, 385  
 And tolde hem that comen in · that Gamelyn was wood.  
 Gamelyn stood to a post · bounden in the halle,  
 Tho that comen in ther · lokede on him alle.  
 Ever stood Gamelyn · even upright;

350. Hl. I-take; *rest* taken. Cp. Ln. harde; *rest* hard. 351. Cp. Rl. Ln. false; *rest*  
 fals. Hl. selleer; Cp. sellere; Ln. selere; *rest* solere (*rightly*; cf. toret in l. 329). 360.  
 Pt. dethes; *rest* deth; *see* l. 24. 363. Rl. Sl. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 365. Hl. Cp.  
 Ln. geten heir (heer, here); *rest* heir (heire, here) geten. 367. Hl. sayd; *rest* have finale.  
 376. Hl. forsworn; *but see* l. 380. 381. Hl. might; *read* mighte; *rest* vary. 382. Sl.  
 Ln. hadde; Cp. hadden; *rest* had, hadd. 383. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 384. Cp.  
 sente; Sl. sende; *rest* sent. 386. Hl. Rl. told; Ln. tolden; *rest* tolde. 388. Hl. ther;  
*rest* om. Cp. lokeden; *rest* loked; *read* lokede.

But mete ne drink had he non · neither day ne night. 390  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘brother, by myn hals,  
 Now I have aspyed · thou art a party fals;  
 Had I wist that tresoun · that thou haddest y-founde,  
 I wolde have yeve thee strokes · or I had be bounde!’  
 Gamelyn stood bounden · stille as eny stoon; 395  
 Two dayes and two nightes · mete had he noon.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that stood y-bounde stronge,  
 ‘Adam spenser · me thinkth I faste to longe;  
 Adam spenser · now I byseche thee,  
 For the mochel love · my fader loved thee, 400  
 If thou may come to the keyes · lese me out of bond,  
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free lond.’  
 Thanne seyde Adam · that was the spencer,  
 ‘I have served thy brother · this sixtene yeer,  
 If I leete thee goon · out of his bour, 405  
 He wolde say afterward · I were a traytour.’  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so brouke I myn hals!  
 Thou schalt finde my brother · atte laste fals;  
 Therfor, brother Adam · louse me out of bond,  
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free lond.’ 410  
 ‘Up swich a forward’ · seyde Adam, ‘y-wis,  
 I wil do therto · al that in me is.’  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘al-so mot I thee,  
 I wol holde thee covenant · and thou wil me.’  
 Anon as Adames lord · to bedde was y-goon, 415  
 Adam took the keyes, and leet · Gamelyn out anon;  
 He unlokked Gamelyn · bothe handes and feet,  
 In hope of avauncement · that he him biheet.  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘thanked be goddes sonde!  
 Now I am loosed · bothe foot and honde; 420  
 Had I now eten · and dronken aright,  
 Ther is noon in this hous · schulde binde me this night.’  
 Adam took Gamelyn · as stille as ony stoon,  
 And ladde him in-to spence · rapely and anon,  
 And sette him to soper · right in a privee stede, 425  
 He bad him do gladly · and Gamelyn so dede.  
 Anon as Gamelyn hadde · eten wel and fyn,  
 And therto y-dronke wel · of the rede wyn,  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘what is now thy reed?  
 Wher I go to my brother · and girde of his heed?’ 430  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘it schal not be so.  
 I can teche thee a reed · that is worth the two.

394. Hl. the; *rest om.*      400, 405, 432. *All the (for thee).*      407. Hl. brouk; Cp. Pt. Ln. brouke.  
 414. Hl. Sl. hold; *rest holde, halde.*      *After wil Cp. ins. lose, and Harl. helpe.*  
 417. Hl. hand; Cp. handes; *rest hondes.*      424. Hl. Cp. rapely and; *rest om.*  
 and.      430. Hl. Wher; Ln. Where; Cp. For; *rest Or.*

I wot wel for sothe · that this is no nay,  
 We schul have a mangery · right on Soneday ;  
 Abbotes and priours · many heer schal be, 435  
 And other men of holy chirche · as I telle thee ;  
 Thow schalt stonde up by the post · as thou were hond-fast,  
 And I schal leve hem unloke · away thou may hem cast.  
 Whan that they have eten · and wasschen here hondes,  
 Thow schalt biseke hem alle · to bring thee out of bondes ; 440  
 And if they wille borwe thee · that were good game,  
 Then were thou out of prisoun · and I out of blame ;  
 And if everich of hem · say unto us ‘ nay,’  
 I schal do an other · I swere by this day !  
 Thow schalt have a good staf · and I wil have another, 445  
 And Cristes curs have that oon · that faileth that other !’  
 ‘ Ye, for gode !’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘ I say it for me,  
 If I fayle on my syde · yvel mot I thee !  
 If we schul algate · assoile hem of here sinne,  
 Warne me, brother Adam · whan I schal biginne.’ 450  
 ‘ Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘ by seynte Charite,  
 I wil warne thee biforn · whan that it schal be ;  
 Whan I twinke on thee · loke for to goon,  
 And cast away the feteres · and com to me anoon.’  
 ‘ Adam,’ seide Gamelyn · ‘ blessed be thy bones ! 455  
 That is a good counseil · yeven for the nones ;  
 If they werne me thanne · to bringe me out of bendes,  
 I wol sette goode strokes · right on here lendes.’  
 Tho the Sunday was y-come · and folk to the feste,  
 Faire they were welcomed · both leste and meste ; 460  
 And ever atte halle-dore · as they comen in,  
 They caste their eye · on yonge Gamelyn.  
 The false knight his brother · ful of trechery,  
 Alle the gestes that ther were · atte mangery,  
 Of Gamelyn his brother · he tolde hem with mouthe 465  
 Al the harm and the schame · that he telle couthe.  
 Tho they were served · of messes two or three,  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘ how serve ye me ?  
 It is nought wel served · by god that al made !  
 That I sitte fasting · and other men make glade.’ 470  
 The false knight his brother · ther that he stood,  
 Tolde alle his gestes · that Gamelyn was wood ;

434. Ln. sonondaye ; Hl. and rest sonday ; read sonnenday or soneday. 437. Pt. Ln. Harl. bound fast ; rest hond-fast *rightly*. 438. All but Hl. ins. that bef. away. 439. Hl. waïsschen ; rest wasschen, wasshen. 443. Hl. vnto ; rest to. 450. Hl. I ; rest we. 453. Ln. twynke ; Hl. Cp. twynk ; rest wynke, winke, wynk. 456. Hl. 3eyung ; Cp. yeuyng ; rest yeuen, 3enen, or 3iuen. 457. Hl. thanne ; rest om. 460. Hl. lest ; Cp. leste. 461. This is Zupitza's emendation ; MSS. as they atte halle dore comen in. 463. Cp. Ln. false ; rest fals. 464. Hl. wer ; rest were. 467. or] Hl. other. 471. Ln. false ; rest fals.



And Gamelyn stood stille · and answerde nought,  
 But Adames wordes · he held in his thought.  
 Tho Gamelyn gan speke · dolfully with-alle 475  
 To the grete lordes · that saten in the halle :  
 ‘Lordes,’ he seyde · ‘for Cristes passiou, n,  
 Helpeth bringe Gamelyn · out of prisoun.’  
 Than seyde an abbot · sorwe on his cheeke!  
 ‘He schal have Cristes curs · and seynte Maries ecke, 480  
 That thee out of prisoun · beggeth other borwe,  
 But ever worthe hem wel · that doth thee moche sorwe.’  
 After that abbot · than spak another,  
 ‘I wold thin heed were of · though thou were my brother!  
 Alle that thee borwe · foule mot hem falle!’ 485  
 Thus they seyden alle · that weren in the halie.  
 Than seyde a priour · yvel mot he thryve!  
 ‘It is moche scathe, boy · that thou art on lyve.’  
 ‘Ow!’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so brouke I my bon!  
 Now I have aspyed · that freendes have I non. 490  
 Cursed mot he worthe · bothe fleisch and blood,  
 That ever do priour · or abbot ony good!’  
 Adam the spencer · took up the cloth,  
 And loked on Gamelyn · and say that he was wroth ;  
 Adam on the pantrye · litel he thoughte, 495  
 But two goode staves · to halle-dore he broughte,  
 Adam loked on Gamelyn · and he was war anoon,  
 And caste away the feteres · and he bigan to goon :  
 Tho he com to Adam · he took that oo staf,  
 And bigan to worche · and goode strokes yaf. 500  
 Gamelyn cam in-to the halle · and the spencer bothe,  
 And loked hem aboute · as they had be wrothe ;  
 Gamelyn sprengeth holy-water · with an oken spire,  
 That some that stode upright · fellen in the fire.  
 There was no lewed man · that in the halle stood, 505  
 That wolde do Gamelyn · eny thing but good,  
 But stood bisyden · and leet hem bothe werche,  
 For they hadde no rewthe · of men of holy cherche ;  
 Abbot or priour · monk or chanoun,  
 That Gamelyn overtok · anon they yceden down. 510  
 Ther was non of hem alle · that with his staf mette.  
 That he ne made him overthrowe · and quitte him his dette.  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘for seynte Charite,  
 Pay large liverye · for the love of me,

478. *All but* Hl. *ins.* to *bef.* bringe. 486. Hl. seyde ; Pt. Ln. Harl. seiden. Hl. were ; Cp. Ln. weren. 488. *All but* Hl. *ins.* sorwe and *bef.* scathe. 489. Hl. brouk ; *rest* brouke, browke, broke. 495, 496. MSS. thought, brought ; *against grammar.* 498. Ln. keste ; *rest* cast. 504. Ln. fellen ; *rest* felle, fell. 505. Hl. lewede ; Pt. Ln. lewe ; *rest* lewed, lewid. 507. Hl. besyde ; Rl. by-siden ; Sl. bisiden ; Cp. besyden. 512. Pt. Ln. ne ; *rest om.* Hl. him ; *rest* hem (*twice*). Sl. Cp. quitte ; Hl. quyt.

\*\*\*

And I wil kepe the dore · so ever here I masse! 515  
 Er they ben assoyled · there shal noon passe.<sup>2</sup>  
 ‘Dowt thee nought,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘whyl we ben in-feere,  
 Kep thou wel the dore · and I wol werche heere;  
 Stere thee, good Adam · and lat ther noon flee,  
 And we schul telle largely · how many that ther be.’ 520  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘do hem but good;  
 They ben men of holy chirche · draw of hem no blood,  
 Save wel the croune · and do hem non harmes,  
 But brek bothe her legges · and siththen here armes.’  
 Thus Gamelyn and Adam · wroughte right fast, 525  
 And pleyden with the monkes · and made hem agast.  
 Thider they come ryding · Iolily with swaynes,  
 And hom ayen they were y-lad · in cartes and in waynes.  
 Tho they hadden al y-don · than seyde a gray frere,  
 ‘Allas! sire abbot · what dide we now heere?’ 530  
 Tho that we comen hider · it was a cold reed,  
 Us hadde ben better at home · with water and with breed.<sup>3</sup>  
 Whyl Gamelyn made ordres · of monkes and frere,  
 Ever stood his brother · and made foul chere;  
 Gamelyn up with his staf · that he wel knew, 535  
 And gerte him in the nekke · that he overthrew;  
 A litel above the girdel · the rigge-bon to-barst;  
 And sette him in the feteres · ther he sat arst.  
 ‘Sitte ther, brother’ · sayde Gamelyn,  
 ‘For to colen thy blood · as I dide myn.’ 540  
 As swithe as they hadde · y-wroken hem on here foon,  
 They askeden watir · and wisschen anoon,  
 What some for here love · and some for here awe,  
 Alle the servants served hem · of the beste lawe.  
 The scherreve was thennes · but a fyve myle, 545  
 And al was y-told him · in a litel hyle,  
 How Gamelyn and Adam · had doon a sory rees,  
 Bouden and y-wounded men · ayein the kinges pees;  
 Tho bigan sone · stryf for to wake,  
 And the scherref was aboute · Gamelyn for to take. 550  
 Now lytheth and lesteneth · so god yif you good fyn!  
 And ye schul heere good game · of yonge Gamelyn.  
 Four and twenty yonge men · that heelden hem ful bolde,  
 Come to the schirref · and seyde that they wolde  
 Gamelyn and Adam · fetten, by her fay; 555  
 The scherref yaf hem leve · soth as I you say;

516. Hl. schan; *rest* shal, schal. 520. Hl. Cp. Ln. *om.* that. 531. Hl. *om.* we.  
 532. Hl. Pt. Ln. *omit* second with. 536. Cp. gerte; *rest* gert, girt, gerd. 540. Hl. colyn;  
 Cp. coole; Ln. coly; *rest* colen. 543. Rl. Sl. Pt. Harl. *insert* her (here) *before* awe;  
 Hl. Cp. Ln. *omit.* 545. Hl. a; *rest om.* 550. *I supply* was; *the two* Cambridge MSS.  
*have* come; *which the rest omit*; see ll. 240, 785. 551. Hl. *lestneth*; Cp. *lesteneth*. Hl.  
 goode. 555. Rl. Sl. Pt. Harl. by her (here) fay; Cp. be way; Hl. Ln. away.

They hyeden faste · wold they nought bilinne,  
 Til they come to the gate · ther Gamelyn was inne.  
 They knocked on the gate · the porter was ny,  
 And loked out at an hol · as man that was sly. 560  
 The porter hadde biholde · hem a litel whyle,  
 He loved wel Gamelyn · and was adrad of gyle,  
 And leet the wicket stonden · y-steke ful stille,  
 And asked hem withoute · what was here wille.  
 For al the grete company · thanne spak but oon, 565  
 ‘Undo the gate, porter · and lat us in goon.’  
 Than seyde the porter · ‘so brouke I my chin,  
 Ye schul sey your erand · er ye comen in.’  
 ‘Sey to Gamelyn and Adam · if here wille be,  
 We wil speke with hem · wordes two or thre.’ 570  
 ‘Felaw,’ seyde the porter · ‘stond there stille,  
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn · to witen his wille.’  
 In wente the porter · to Gamelyn anoon,  
 And seyde, ‘Sir, I warne you · her ben come your foon ;  
 The scherreves meyne · ben atte gate, 575  
 For to take you bothe · schule ye nat scape.’  
 ‘Porter,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so moot I wel thee !  
 I wil allowe thee thy wordes · whan I my tyme see ;  
 Go agayn to the yate · and dwel with hem a whyle,  
 And thou schalt see right sone · porter, a gyle. 580  
 Adam,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘looke thee to goon ;  
 We have foo-men atte gate · and frendes never oon ;  
 It ben the schirrefes men · that hider ben y-come,  
 They ben swore to-gidere · that we schul be nome.’  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘hye thee right blyve, 585  
 And if I faile thee this day · evel mot I thryve !  
 And we schul so welcome · the scherreves men,  
 That some of hem schul make · here beddes in the fen.’  
 Atte posterne-gate · Gamelyn out wente,  
 And a good cart-staf · in his hand he hente ; 590  
 Adam hente sone · another gret staf  
 For to helpe Gamelyn · and goode strokes yaf.  
 Adam felde tweyne · and Gamelyn felde three,  
 The other setten feet on erthe · and bigonne flee.  
 ‘What?’ seyde Adam · ‘so ever here I masse ! 595  
 I have a draught of good wyn ! · drink er ye passe !’  
 ‘Nay, by god !’ sayde thay · ‘thy drink is not good,  
 It wolde make mannes brayn · to lyen in his hood.’  
 Gamelyn stood stille · and loked him aboute,

563. Hl. y-steke ; *rest om.* 573. Cp. Ln. Harl. wente ; *rest went.* 576. Cp. schulle ; Hl. schul. Hl. na (*for* nat) ; *rest not, nouht.* 588. Hl. den ; Pt. fenne ; *rest fen.* 589. Cp. Ln. wente ; *rest went.* 594. Hl. fle ; *rest to fle (flee).*

And seih the scherreve come · with a gret route. 600  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘what be now thy reedes?  
 Here cometh the scherreve · and wil have oure heedes.’  
 Adam sayde, ‘Gamelyn · my reed is now this,  
 Abyde we no lenger · lest we fare amis :  
 I rede that we to wode goon · ar that we be founde, 605  
 Better is us ther loos · than in town y-bounde.’  
 Adam took by the hond · yonge Gamelyn ;  
 And everich of hem two · drank a draught of wyn,  
 And after took her cours · and wenten her way ;  
 Tho fond the scherreve · nest, but non ay. 610  
 The scherreve lighte adoun · and went in-to the halle,  
 And fond the lord y-fetered · faste with-alle.  
 The scherreve unfetered him · sone, and that noon,  
 And sente after a leche · to hele his rigge-boon.  
 Lete we now this false knight · lyen in his care, 615  
 And talke we of Gamelyn · and loke how he fare.  
 Gamelyn in-to the woode · stalkede stille,  
 And Adam the spenser · lykede ful ille ;  
 Adam swor to Gamelyn · by seynt Richer,  
 ‘Now I see it is mery · to be a spencer, 620  
 That lever me were · keyes for to bere,  
 Than walken in this wilde woode · my clothes to tere.’  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘dismaye thee right nought ;  
 Many good mannes child · in care is y-brought.’  
 And as they stooede talking · bothen in-feere, 625  
 Adam herd talking of men · and ncyh, him thought, they were.  
 Tho Gamelyn under the woode · lokede aright,  
 Sevenc score of yonge men · he saugh wel a-dight ;  
 Alle satte atte mete · in compas aboute.  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘now have we no doute, 630  
 After bale cometh boote · thurgh grace of god almight ;  
 Me thinketh of mete and drink · that I have a sight.’  
 Adam lokede tho · under woode-bowgh,  
 And whan he seyh mete · he was glad y-nough ;  
 For he hopede to god · for to have his deel, 635  
 And he was sore alonged · after a good meel.  
 As he seyde that word · the mayster outlawe  
 Saugh Gamelyn and Adam · under woode-schawe.  
 ‘Yonge men,’ seyde the maister · ‘by the goode roode,  
 I am war of gestes · god sende us non but goode ; 640

602. Hl. comth ; *rest* cometh. 603. *So* Hl. ; *rest* sayde to. 606. Hl. vs ; *rest om.*  
 608. Hl. tuo ; *rest om.* 609. Hl. coursers ; *but see l. 617.* 611. Hl. adoun ; *rest* down.  
 614. Hl. sent ; Cp. Sl. sente. 615. Cp. Ln. false ; *rest* fals. 618. Cp. likede ; Ln. loked ;  
*rest* liked. 621. Hl. for ; *rest om.* 625. Hl. And ; *rest om.* 627, 642. Hl. loked. 627.  
 Hl. the ; *rest om.* 640. Cp. Pt. Harl. sende ; *rest* send. Hl. non but ; *rest om.*

Yonder ben two yonge men · wonder wel a-dight,  
 And paraventure ther ben mo · who-so lokede aright.  
 Ariseth up, ye yonge men · and fetteth hem to me ;  
 It is good that we witen · what men they be.'

Up ther sterten sevene · fro the diner, 645  
 And metten with Gamelyn · and Adam spenser.  
 Whan they were neyh hem · than seyde that oon,  
 'Yeldeth up, yonge men · your bowes and your floon.'  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that yong was of elde,  
 'Moche sorwe mot he have · that to you hem yelde ! 650  
 I curse non other · but right my-selve ;  
 They ye fette to yow fyve · thanne ye be twelve !'  
 Tho they herde by his word · that might was in his arm,  
 Ther was non of hem alle · that wolde do him harm,  
 But sayde unto Gamelyn · mildely and stille, 655  
 'Com afore our maister · and sey to him thy wille.'  
 'Yonge men,' sayde Gamelyn · 'by your lewte,  
 What man is your maister · that ye with be ?'  
 Alle they answerde · withoute lesing,  
 'Oure maister is y-crowned · of outlawes king.' 660  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'go-we in Cristes name ;  
 He may neyther mete nor drink · werne us, for schame.  
 If that he be hende · and come of gentil blood,  
 He wol yeve us mete and drink · and doon us som good.'  
 'By seynt Iame !' seyde Adam · 'what harm that I gete, 665  
 I wil aunte to the dore · that I hadde mete.'  
 Gamelyn and Adam · wente forth in-feere,  
 And they grette the maister · that they founde there.  
 Than seide the maister · king of outlawes,  
 'What seeke ye, yonge men · under woode-schawes ?' 670  
 Gamelyn answerde · the king with his croune,  
 'He moste needes waïke in woode · that may not walke in towne.  
 Sire, we walke not heer · noon harm for to do,  
 But-if we meete with a deer · to scheete ther-to,  
 As men that ben hungry · and mow no mete finde, 675  
 And ben harde bistad · under woode-linde.'  
 Of Gamelynes wordes · the maister hadde routhe,  
 And seyde, 'ye schal have y-nough · have god my trouthe !'  
 He bad hem sitte ther adoun · for to take reste ;  
 And bad hem ete and drinke · and that of the beste. 680  
 As they sete and eeten · and dronke wel and fyn,

643. Hl. 3e; *rest om.*      652. Hl. Cp. They; Rl. Thei; Sl. Ln. Though.      654. Hl. alle; *rest om.*      655. Hl. sayd; *rest adl e.*      Hl. vnto; *rest to.*      663. Hl. heende; Cp. kynde; *rest hende.*      664. Hl. an (*for 1st and*).      665. Hl. seyde; Ln. seid; *rest adl e.*      666. Hl. aunte; *rest aventure me.*      Hl. Cp. Ln. to the dore; *rest om.*      673. Hl. for; *rest om.*      674. Hl. with; *rest om.*      679. Hl. ther; *rest om.*      Hl. adoun; *rest down.*      681. Hl. sete and; *rest om.*

Than seyde that oon to that other · ‘this is Gamelyn.’  
 Tho was the maister outlawe · in-to counseil nome,  
 And told how it was Gamelyn · that thider was y-come. 685  
 Anon as he herde · how it was bifalle,  
 He made him maister under him · over hem alle.  
 Within the thridde wyke · him com tyding,  
 To the maister outlawe · that tho was her king,  
 That he schulde come hom · his pees was y-mad;  
 And of that goode tyding · he was tho ful glad. 690  
 Tho seyde he to his yonge men · ‘soth for to telle,  
 Me ben comen tydinges · I may no lenger dwelle.’  
 Tho was Gamelyn anon · withoute taryng,  
 Maad maister outlawe · and crowned here king. 695  
 Tho was Gamelyn crowned · king of outlawes,  
 And walked a whyle · under woode-schawes.  
 The false knight his brother · was scherreve and sire,  
 And leet his brother endite · for hate and for ire.  
 Tho were his bonde-men · sory and nothing glad,  
 When Gamelyn her lord · ‘wolves-heed’ was cryed and maad;  
 And sente out of his men · wher they might him finde, 701  
 For to seke Gamelyn · under woode-linde,  
 To telle him tydinges · how the wind was went,  
 And al his good reved · and his men schent.  
 Whan they had him founde · on knees they hem sette, 705  
 And a-doun with here hood · and here lord grette;  
 ‘Sire, wraththe you nought · for the goode roode,  
 For we have brought you tydinges · but they be nat goode.  
 Now is thy brother scherreve · and hath the baillye,  
 And he hath endited thee · and ‘wolves-heed’ doth thee crye.’ 710  
 ‘Allas!’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘that ever I was so slak  
 That I ne hadde broke his nekke · tho I his rigge brak!  
 Goth, greteth hem wel · myn housbondes and wyf,  
 I wol ben atte nexte schire · have god my lyf!’  
 Gamelyn com wel redy · to the nexte schire, 715  
 And ther was his brother · bothe lord and sire.  
 Gamelyn com boidelich · in-to the moot-halle,  
 And putte a-doun his hood · among the lordes alle;  
 ‘God save you alle, lordinges · that now here be!  
 But broke-bak scherreve · evel mot thou thee! 720  
 Why hast thou do me · that schame and vilonye,  
 For to late endite me · and ‘wolves-heed’ me crye?’

682. Hl. seyde; *rest auld e.* Hl. Pt. Ln. that oon . . . other; *rest* on to an other. 683,  
 690. Hl. tho; *rest om.* 689. Hl. I-made; Cp. Sl. maad; *rest* made. 694. Cp. Maad;  
*rest* Made (*badly*). Cp. Ln. here; *rest* her. 697. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 699. Rl. Sl.  
 glad; *rest* glade, gladd. 700. Sl. Cp. maad; *rest* made, maade. 703. Hl. how; *rest*  
*om.* 704. *So* Hl. Cp. Ln.; *rest* and alle his. 712. Hl. *om.* 2nd l. 713. Hl. hem; *rest om.*  
 Harl. boþe housbonde; *rest* myn housbondes. 715. Hl. came; *see* l. 717. 718. Rl. Sl.  
 Cp. putte; *rest* put. 719. Hl. alle; *rest om.* 722. Hl. me; *rest* do me.

Tho thoughte the false knight · for to ben awreke,  
 And leet take Gamelyn · moste he no more speke;  
 Might ther be no more grace · but Gamelyn atte laste 725  
 Was cast in-to prisoun · and fetered ful faste.  
 Gamelyn hath a brother · that highte sir Ote,  
 As good a knight and hende · as mighte gon on foote.  
 Anon ther yede a messenger · to that goode knight,  
 And tolde him al-togidere · how Gamelyn was dight. 730  
 Anon as sire Ote herde · how Gamelyn was a-dight,  
 He was wonder sory · was he no-thing light,  
 And leet sadle a steede · and the way he nam,  
 And to his tweyne bretheren · anon-right he cam.  
 ‘Sire,’ seyde sire Ote · to the scherreve tho, 735  
 ‘We ben but three bretheren · schul we never be mo;  
 And thou hast y-primoned · the beste of us alle;  
 Swich another brother · yvel mot him bifalle!’  
 ‘Sire Ote,’ seide the false knight · ‘lat be thy curs;  
 By god, for thy wordes · he schal fare the wurs; 740  
 To the kinges prisoun · anon he is y-nome,  
 And ther he schal abyde · til the Iustice come.’  
 ‘Parde!’ seyde sir Ote · ‘better it schal be;  
 I bidde him to maynpris · that thou graunte him me  
 Til the nexte sitting · of deliveraunce, 745  
 And thanne lat Gamelyn · stande to his chaunce.’  
 ‘Brother, in swich a forward · I take him to thee;  
 And by thy fader soule · that thee bigat and me,  
 But-if he be redy · whan the Iustice sitte,  
 Thou schalt bere the Iuggement · for al thy grete witte.’ 750  
 ‘I graunte wel,’ seide sir Ote · ‘that it so be.  
 Let deliver him anon · and tak him to me.’  
 Tho was Gamelyn delivered · to sire Ote his brother,  
 And that night dwellede · that on with that other.  
 On the morn seyde Gamelyn · to sire Ote the hende, 755  
 ‘Brother,’ he seide, ‘I moot · for sothe, from thee wende,  
 To loke how my yonge men · leden here lyf,  
 Whether they liven in loye · or elles in stryf.’  
 ‘By god!’ seyde sire Ote · ‘that is a cold reed,  
 Now I see that al the cark · schal fallen on myn heed; 760  
 For when the Iustice sitte · and thou be nought y-founde,

723. Cp. thoughte the false; *rest* thought the fals. 724. MSS. most, *the e being elided*.  
 725, 726. Rl. Sl. Cp. laste, faste; *rest* last, fast. 728. Hl. Cp. heende; *rest* hende. 729.  
 Hl. ther; *rest om.* 730. Hl. Cp. told; *rest* tolde. 734. Hl. anon right; Ln. ful sone;  
*rest* right sone. 737. Rl. Cp. heste; *rest* best. 739. Pt. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 741. Hl.  
 anon; *rest om.* 744. Hl. Cp. maympris. Hl. Sl. Ln. graunt; *rest* graunte. Hl. him;  
 Cp. Ln. to; *rest om.* 747. Hl. forthward; *rest* forward. 749. Hl. if; *rest om.* 754.  
 Hl. Cp. dwelleden; Ln. dwelden; *rest* dwellide, dwellid, dwelled. 755. Hl. Cp. heende;  
 Rl. hynde; *rest* hende. 761, 766. MSS. sitte, *except* Hl. sitt in l. 766. *Here sitte is subj.;*  
*but in l. 766 sit = sitteth.*

I schal anon be take · and in thy stede y-bounde.<sup>7</sup>  
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘dismaye thee nought,  
 For by seint Iame in Gales · that many man hath sought,  
 If that god almighty · holde my lyf and wit, 765  
 I wil be ther redy · whan the Iustice sit.’  
 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn · ‘god schilde thee fro schame ;  
 Com whan thou seest tyme · and bring us out of blame.’  
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth you stille,  
 And ye schul here how Gamelyn · hadde al his wille. 770  
 Gamelyn wente ayein · under woode-rys,  
 And fond there pleyng · yonge men of prys.  
 Tho was yong Gamelyn · glad and blithe y-nough,  
 Whan he fond his mery men · under woode-bough.  
 Gamelyn and his men · talkeden in-fecere, 775  
 And they hadde good game · here maister to hceere ;  
 They tolden him of aventures · that they hadde founde,  
 And Gamelyn hem tolde ayein · how he was fast y-bounde.  
 Whyl Gamelyn was outlawed · hadde he no cors ;  
 There was no man that for him · ferde the wors, 780  
 But abbotes and priours · monk and chanoun ;  
 On hem left he no-thing · whan he mighte hem nom.  
 Whyl Gamelyn and his men · made merthes ryve,  
 The false knight his brother · yvel mot he thryve !  
 For he was fast aboute · bothe day and other, 785  
 For to hyre the quest · to hangen his brother.  
 Gamelyn stood on a day · and, as he biheeld  
 The woodes and the schawes · in the wilde feeld,  
 He thoughte on his brother · how he him beheet  
 That he wolde be redy · whan the Iustice seet ; 790  
 He thoughte wel that he wolde · withoute delay,  
 Come afore the Iustice · to kepen his day,  
 And seide to his yonge men · ‘dighteth you yare,  
 For whan the Iustice sitte · we moote be thare,  
 For I am under borwe · til that I come, 795  
 And my brother for me · to prisoun schal be nome.’  
 ‘By seint Iame!’ seyde his yonge men · ‘and thou rede therto,  
 Ordeyne how it schal be · and it schal be do.’  
 Whyl Gamelyn was coming · ther the Iustice sat,  
 The false knight his brother · foryat he nat that, 800  
 To huyre the men on his quest · to hangen his brother ;  
 Though he hadde nought that oon · he wolde have that other.

765. Hl. hold ; Rl. hold me ; *rest* holde me. 765, 766. Hl. witt, sitt. 769. Hl. lesteneth ;  
 Cp. lesteneth ; Rl. Pt. listeneth. 770. Rl. Sl. Cp. hadde ; *rest* had. Hl. Pt. al ; *rest* em.  
 771. Hl. azein ; *rest* om. 773. Hl. Cp. Ln. songe ; *rest* yong. 774. Hl. mery ; *rest* om.  
 775. Hl. talked ; Rl. Pt. talkeden ; Sl. talkiden. 777. Sl. Cp. Ln. hadde ; Rl. hade ;  
*rest* had. 782. MSS. might ; *the e being elided*. 784. Cp. false ; *rest* fals. 789. Hl.  
 thought ; *see l.* 791. 794. Hl. sitt. 800. Cp. Ln. false ; *rest* fals.



Tho cam Gamelyn · fro under woode-rys,  
 And broughte with him · his yonge men of prys.  
 ‘I see wel,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘the Iustice is set;                   805  
 Go afor, Adam · and loke how it spet.’  
 Adam wente into the halle · and loked al aboute,  
 He seyh there stonde · lordes grete and stoute,  
 And sir Ote his brother · fetered wel fast;  
 Tho went Adam out of halle · as he were agast.                   810  
 Adam said to Gamelyn · and to his felawes alle,  
 ‘Sir Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-halle.’  
 ‘Yonge men,’ seide Gamelyn · ‘this ye heeren alle;  
 Sire Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-halle.  
 If god yif us grace · wel for to doo,                   815  
 He schal it abegge · that broughte him ther-too.’  
 Thanne sayde Adam · that lokkes hadde hore,  
 ‘Cristes curs mote he have · that him bond so sore!  
 And thou wilt, Gamelyn · do after my reed,  
 Ther is noon in the halle · schal bere away his heed.’           820  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘we wiln nought don so,  
 We wil slee the giltif · and lat the other go.  
 I wil into the halle · and with the Iustice speke;  
 On hem that ben giltif · I wil ben awreke.  
 Lat non scape at the dore · take, yonge men, yeme;           825  
 For I wil be Iustice this day · domes for to deme.  
 God spede me this day · at my newe werk!  
 Adam, com on with me · for thou schalt be my clerk.’  
 His men answereden him · and bade him doon his best,  
 ‘And if thou to us have neede · thou schalt finde us prest;   830  
 We wiln stande with thee · whyl that we may dure,  
 And but we werke manly · pay us non hure.’  
 ‘Yonge men,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so mot I wel thee!  
 As trusty a maister · ye schal finde of me.’  
 Right there the Iustice · sat in the halle,                   835  
 In wente Gamelyn · amonges hem alle.  
 Gamelyn leet unfetere · his brother out of bende.  
 Thanne seyde sire Ote · his brother that was hende,  
 ‘Thou haddest almost, Gamelyn · dwelled to longe,  
 For the quest is oute on me · that I schulde honge.’           840  
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so god yif me good rest!  
 This day they schuln ben hanged · that ben on thy quest;  
 And the Iustice bothe · that is the Iugge-man,

804. Hl. his; *rest om.* 805, 806. MSS. sette, spette (*wrongly*). 807. Cp. wente; *rest*  
 went. 808. Hl. gret; *rest grete.* 811. Hl. felaws; *rest felawes, felowes.* 816. Ln.  
 brouht it; Hl. *om.* it; *rest* it broughte; *but read* broughte him. 818. Rl. Sl. Pt. mote;  
 Ln. mot; Hl. Cp. most. 819. Cp. reed; Hl. red; *rest rede.* 822. Hl. Pt. lat; *rest* late.  
 826. for to *in* MS. Camb. Mm. 2. 5; *rest om.* for. 828. Hl. on; *rest om.* 829. Rl. bade;  
*rest bad.* 837. Hl. beende; Cp. Pt. Ln. bende. 838. Hl. Cp. heende; *rest hende.*  
 843. Hl. *om.* the. Hl. Iugges; *rest Iugge, Iuge.*

And the scherreve bothe · thurgh him it bigan.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the Iustise, 845  
 ‘Now is thy power y-don · thou most nedes arise;  
 Thow hast yeven domes · that ben yvel dight,  
 I wil sitten in thy sete · and dresen hem aright.’  
 The Iustice sat stille · and roos nought anoon;  
 And Gamelyn clevede · [a-two] his cheeke-boon; 850  
 Gamelyn took him in his arm · and no more spak,  
 But threw him over the barre · and his arm to-brak.  
 Durste non to Gamelyn · seye but good,  
 For ferd of the company · that withoute stood.  
 Gamelyn sette him down · in the Iustices seet, 855  
 And sire Ote his brother by him · and Adam, at his feet.  
 Whan Gamelyn was y-set · in the Iustices stede,  
 Herkneeth of a bourde · that Gamelyn dede.  
 He leet fetre the Iustice · and his false brother,  
 And dede hem come to the barre · that oon with that other. 860  
 Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doon · hadde he no reste,  
 Til he had enquered · who was on the queste  
 For to deme his brother · sir Ote, for to honge;  
 Er he wiste which they were · him thoughte ful longe.  
 But as sone as Gamelyn · wiste wher they were, 865  
 He dede hem everichone · feteren in-feere,  
 And bringen hem to the barre · and sette hem in rewe;  
 ‘By my faith!’ seyde the Iustice · ‘the scherreve is a schrewe!’  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · to the Iustise,  
 ‘Thou hast y-yeve domes · of the wors assise; 870  
 And the twelve sisours · that weren of the queste,  
 They schul ben hanged this day · so have I good reste!’  
 Thanne seide the scherreve · to yonge Gamelyn,  
 ‘Lord, I crye the mercy · brother art thou myn.’  
 ‘Therefore,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘have thou Cristes curs, 875  
 For, and thou were maister · yit I schulde have wors.’  
 For to make short tale · and nought to tarie longe,  
 He ordeyned him a queste · of his men so stronge;  
 The Iustice and the scherreve · bothe honged hye,  
 To weyven with the ropes · and with the winde drye; 880  
 And the twelve sisours · (sorwe have that rekke!)  
 Alle they were hanged · faste by the nekke.  
 Thus ended the false knight · with his treccherye,

845. Cp. Thanne; *rest* Than. 850. *I supply* a-two. 851. Hl. arm; *rest* armes. 854.  
 Rl. Harl. ferd; Pt. feerd; Hl. Cp. fered; Ln. ferde. 855. MSS. sete. 857. stede] Hl.  
 Rl. Cp. sete (*wrongly*). 859. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 861. Cp. hadde; Rl. hade; Hl.  
 had (*2nd time*). 861, 862. Hl. rest, quest; *see ll.* 871, 872. 864. Hl. Cp. Ln. he; Rl. Pt.  
 him; Harl. (1758) hym. 866. Cp. feteren; Hl. fetere. 872. Hl. *om.* good. 877. Hl.  
 tarie; *rest om.* 878. Rl. Pt. Harl. quest; *rest* queste. 879. Cp. bep; *rest* bothe, both.  
 880. Hl. *om.* the before ropes. Hl. Rl. Cp. wynd; *rest* wynde, winde. 883. Cp. Ln. false;  
*rest* fals.

That ever hadde y-lad his lyf · in falsnes and folye.  
 He was hanged by the nekke · and nought by the purs; 885  
 That was the meede that he hadde · for his fadres curs.  
 Sire Ote was eldest · and Gamelyn was ying,  
 They wenten with here frendes · even to the king;  
 They made pees with the king · of the best assise.  
 The king loved wel sir Ote · and made him Iustise. 890  
 And after, the king made Gamelyn · bothe in est and west,  
 Chief Iustice · of al his free forest;  
 Alle his wighte yonge men · the king foryaf here gilt,  
 And sitthen in good office · the king hem hath y-pilt.  
 Thus wan Gamelyn · his lond and his leede, 895  
 And wrak him of his enemys · and quitte hem here meede;  
 And sire Ote his brother · made him his heir,  
 And siththen wedded Gamelyn · a wyf bothe good and feyr;  
 They liveden to-gidere · whyl that Crist wolde,  
 And sithen was Gamelyn · graven under molde. 900  
 And so schal we alle · may ther no man flee:  
 God bringe us to the Ioye · that ever schal be!

---

884. Cp. hadde; Ln. hade; *rest* had. 885. Hl. Pt. nek; *rest* necke, nekke. 886. Rl. Cp. hadde; *rest* had. 888. Hl. They; *rest om.* Hl. freendes. Hl. euen to; Rl. Harl. and passeden to; Pt. and passed to; Cp. and passed with; Ln. and pesed with. 892. Hl. al; *rest om.* 896. Cp. Pt. quitte; Hl. quyt. 902. Ln. bringe; *rest* bryng, bring.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD  
BY VIVIAN RIDLER  
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY







# OXFORD BOOKS

## THE VISION OF WILLIAM CONCERNING PIERS THE PLOWMAN

In three parallel texts, together with Richard the Redeless, by WILLIAM LANGLAND  
Edited by W. W. SKEAT. 1886. Two volumes. Pp. 1216

## THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOHN GOWER

Edited by G. C. MACAULAY. 1899-1902. English Works. Two volumes. Pp. 1352

## THE COMPLETE WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Edited by F. N. ROBINSON. 1933. Pp. 1174, with a frontispiece

### GEOFFREY CHAUCER

By J. L. LOWES. 1934. Pp. 210

### THE LAY OF HAVELOK THE DANE

Edited by W. W. SKEAT. Second edition revised by K. SISAM

### THE PARLEMENT OF FOULES

An interpretation

By J. A. W. BENNETT. Pp. 228, with 2 plates

### CHAUCER'S WORLD

Compiled by EDITH RICKERT. Edited by CLAIR C. OLSON and M. M. CROW  
Illustrations selected by MARGARET RICKERT. 1948. Pp. 478, with 35 plates  
(Columbia Univ. Press)

### CHAUCER AND THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

By H. S. BENNETT. (*Oxford History of English Literature: Vol. II, Part 1*)  
1947. Pp. 336

### FOURTEENTH CENTURY VERSE AND PROSE

Edited by KENNETH SISAM. 1921. With a Glossary by J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
1921. Pp. 340

### SECULAR LYRICS OF THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

Edited by R. H. ROBBINS. Pp. 390

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

[811314 4/8/63]