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Death and Liffe:  
an alliterative Poem



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# DEATH AND LIFE:

An Alliterative Poem

Edited with Introduction and Notes

By

JAMES HOLLY HANFORD,

*Associate Professor of English in the University of North Carolina*

and

JOHN MARCELLUS STEADMAN, JR.,

*Instructor in English in the University of North Carolina*

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Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando;  
Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus.

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CHAPEL HILL

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# DEATH AND LIFFE:

## An Alliterative Poem

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### PREFACE

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A new edition of this unique and beautiful alliterative poem has long been felt to be a desideratum. The Hales-Furnivall reprint of Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, published in 1868, where *Death and Liffe* is edited by Professor Skeat, is out of print, and Arber's modernization of the piece in the *Dunbar Anthology* is of little use for scholarly purposes. No other reprint exists, though an edition was promised some years ago by Professor Gollancz as a future number of his excellent series, *Select Early English Poems*. The present edition aims to make the poem accessible with a somewhat more extensive critical apparatus than falls within the scope of Professor Gollancz's plan. The publication, since the Hales-Furnivall reprint, of various important alliterative poems, with further studies of the alliterative style and meter, and the accumulated comment of several scholars, notably York Powell, Brotanek, Holthausen, and Miss Edith Scamman, have made possible a fuller illustration of *Death and Liffe* and a more accurate account of its literary relations than have heretofore been given.

The poem is well worth study, both from the scholarly and from the purely literary point of view. There are few finer things in the whole range of Middle-English poetry. The author has brought to his didactic theme a lofty imagination and a sense of poetic phrase which make *Death and Liffe* rank high even among the most powerful productions of the alliterative school. Its noble solemnity and religious fervor are touched with a romantic grace, and the subject is handled with the artistry of a poet bred in the traditions of such matchless works as *Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Pearl*. The unusual combination of conventional materials gives to the work an exceptional degree of originality, a fact which has been somewhat obscured by undue insistence on the author's debt to *Piers Plowman*. Unfortunately the text of *Death and Liffe* is corrupt beyond the powers of a modern editor to restore, or even, in some places, to explain. Originally written in the archaic diction affected by writers of the alliterative school, the piece was copied by a scribe or scribes to whom many of the expressions were unintelligible. The latest copyist, moreover, was very careless. As a result the manuscript is a chaos of modernization and sheer blunder. A striking example is the line

& I ffayrlye befell, so fayre me bethought,

which would seem to be a scribe's "translation" of some such original as the following:

& a fayrlye befell, of fayrie me thought.

The present editors, while correcting some obvious errors, have thought it unwise to attempt any such restoration of the poem as was recommended by York Powell. Many of his suggestions have, however, been incorporated in the notes. In general the introductory sections on language and meter and the vocabulary are the work of Dr. Steadman; the discussions of the debate form, the theme and the sources are by Professor Hanford. For the conclusions as to date and for the textual and literary notes we are jointly responsible, though the work of collation has been chiefly borne by Dr. Steadman. We have used a rotograph facsimile of the manuscript and have been able to correct several errors in the Hales-Furnivall reprint, notably the omission of line 447.

J. H. H.,  
J. M. S., Jr.

Chapel Hill, June 5, 1918.

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## INTRODUCTION

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### I. THE MANUSCRIPT

*Death and Liffe* is preserved in the famous Percy Folio ms., "a long narrow folio volume containing 195 Sonnets, Ballads, Historical Songs, and Metrical Romances, either in the whole or in part, for many of them are extremely mutilated and imperfect."<sup>1</sup>

The transcripts seem to have been made about 1650 by one person, who often grew so weary of his labor as to write without due regard to the meaning of his copy.

*Death and Liffe*, standing between *The Turk in Linen* and *Adam Bell*, occupies pages 384-390 of the ms.

### II. THE LANGUAGE

#### A. Phonology and Inflections.

##### *Short Vowels*

O. E. *a* gives *a* in this poem: *asketh*, 5, *haue*, 15, *fareth*, 22, *naked*, 91, *art*, 129, *care*, 131.

O. E. *a/n* gives *an* in the majority of cases, and, less often, *on*: *rann*, 4, 218, *manye*, 23, *hangeth*, 66, *standeth*, 82, 257, *hand*, 96; but *wrongfully*, 15, *long*, 162, *rouge*, 138.

O. E. *æ* gives *a* regularly: *that*, 1, etc., *was*, 26, *what*, 35, *brake*, 265.

O. E. *æg* appears regularly as *ai* or *ay*: *layd*, 71, *may*, 181, *braynes*, 265, *maydens*, 215, 437, *slaine*, 219, *day*, 244.

O. E. *e* appears usually as *e*, often as *ea*, and rarely as *ee*: *necke*, 91, *her*, *quelleth*, 213, *wretch*, 233, *helpe*, 242, *tell*, 85; *freake*, 161, 176, *speake*, 220; *deere*, 427. In *feild*, 319, we have *ei*, but in *feild*, 64, *ee*.

O. E. *e/r*. appears as *ar* in *clarkes*, 85, etc. (but *clearkes*, 8), *marde*, 141, 243.

O. E. *eg* appears as *ai*: *sayth*, 221, *way*, 308, *fraine*, 130.

O. E. *i* appears as *i*, *y*. See lines 1, 5, 15, 17, 21, 54, 74, etc.

O. E. *o* gives *o*: *body*, 6, *word*, 5, *hope*, 19, *god*, 20, *gold*, 62.

O. E. *u* gives *oo*: *doore*, 10, *wood*, 39; or *o*: *loue*, 69, 107, *some*, 262, *sonne*, 18; and *u* only in *rudd*, 66.

O. E. *u/nd* appears as *ound*: *ground*, 3, *mound*, 377.

O. E. *-ug*, appears as *ou*: *fowles*, 81.

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<sup>1</sup>Preface to the first American edition of Percy's *Reliques*, Phil., 1823, page x.

## Long Vowels

O. E. *ā* becomes *ō* usually, but sometimes *ōō*: *both*, 11, *holy*, 19, *ghost*, 19, *glode*, 28, *hore*, 31, *drove*, 3, *more*, 47; *brood*, 25 (beside *brode*, 63). In monosyllables: *noc*, 11, *loc*, 183, *woe*, 140, the spelling *oe* is common.

O. E. *āw* appears as *ōu*, *ōw*: *know*, 47, *soule*, 2, 236, *nought*, 9.

O. E. *æ* (Mercian *ē*) appears as *ea* in *bræth*, 34, *leadeth*, 124, *feare*, 130, *weapen*, 171, *deale*, 263; as *ce* in *sleepe*, 35, *deeds*, 103, *weeds*, 185, *beere*, 331.

O. E. *æg* appears as *ay*, *ai*: *gray*, 73, etc.

O. E. *ē* gives *ēē* usually: *keene*, 10, *sweete*, 23, *greene*, 26, *deeme*, 87, *speede*, 117; and, less often, *ē*: *breme*, 74, etc. In *neighed*, 137 (from O. M. *genegan*) the spelling *ei* occurs.

O. E. *i* appears regularly as *i*, *ȳ*. See lines 4, 10, 12, 73, 215, 181, etc.

O. E. *ō* appears as *ōō* or, less often, as *ō*: *booke*, 16, *blood*, 4, *looke*, 29, *flood*, 113, *sooth*, 120, *others*, 6, etc. In the monosyllable *doe* the spelling *oe* is common. Cf. the development of O. E. *ā*.

O. E. *ō/h* and *ō/g* give *ou*: *bowes*, 23.

O. E. *ū* appears regularly as *ou*, *ow*: *south*, 50, *mouth*, 67, etc., *doune*, 195, *how*, 368. The *ō* in *selcothes*, 182, is unusual.

## Diphthongs

O. E. *ea* appears as *o* in *bold*, 7, *behold*, 139, *dolve*, 275, *old*, 422, *told*, 391; as *a* in *all*, 12, 203, etc., *barnes*, 81, 242, *walled*, 207; and as *ea* in *bearnas*, 90, 110, 144, 424. *Welder*, 125, is unusual.

O. E. *eo* appears as *o* in *world*, 5, 117, *workes*, 17, *worth*, 248; as *a* in *hart*, 7, 18, 128, *carved*, 156, 247; and as *ea* in *earth*, 7, 11, *heaven*, 59, 135, *learned*, 179, 302. *Erles*, 53, and *burnes* (verb), 165, show *e* and *u*.

O. E. *ēa* regularly gives *ea*: *death*, 10, *greaten*, 17, *leaves*, 25, *stream*, 27, *beames*, 92, 407, etc.; but *e* in *red*, 4, *nere*, 148.

O. E. *ēo* gives *ee* in *freelye*, 18, *deepe*, 38, *decree*, 53, 254, *see*, 162, etc., *trees*, 194, *feend*, 236, *leeds*, 339; *ea* in *deare*, 424; and *e* in *lere*, 170.

## Consonants

O. E. *sc* appears regularly as *sh*, and *hw* as *wh*.

## Inflections

## Verb

Present Indicative: 1<sup>st</sup> person, *-e* or no ending.

2<sup>nd</sup> person, *-est*, ten times.

*-es*, four times (299, 363, 366).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Es* for *est* is found in the superlatives *riches* and *comlyes*.



Singular:	-s, twice (239, 370).
	-eth, five times (243, 288, 296, 297, 300).
3d person,	-eth, fifty-three times.
	-es, six times (9, 198, 220, 230, etc.).
Plural:	-en without exception.

Present participle: -ing.

Past participle: -en usually; -e; and no ending.

Present infinitive: Usually no ending, occasionally -e; -en (17, 392).<sup>3</sup>

## B. Dialect

Students of *Death and Liffe* have called the dialect of the poem Midland or Northern.<sup>4</sup> Since the poem shows a mixed dialect, this difference of opinion is perfectly intelligible. Furnivall believes that the language of the scribe of the Percy Folio ms. was that of Lancashire, which, unfortunately for our study, was itself a mixed dialect. The mixture of dialect may be due, then, either to the scribe of the Percy Folio or to an earlier scribe. In a poem that has been copied we know not how many times dialect mixture will almost always result. The mixture here between Northern and Midland we regard as due to the insertion of Northern forms by a scribe copying a Midland copy of the poem. This impression, of course, cannot be proved with any degree of certainty, and it is possible that York Powell is right in attributing the Midland characteristics to a Midland scribe. But since the basis of the language of the poem as we now have it is North Midland, we conclude that the Northern forms are due to one of the scribes. The conclusion

<sup>3</sup> See summary of Luick's discussion of the metre of the poem, pp. 259-60.

<sup>4</sup> Skeat (*Percy Folio* ms. III, 49 ff.) says that *D. & L.* and *Sc. F.* are written in the same dialect. Schipper (*op. cit.*, 96) and Luick (*op. cit.*, 608 and 612) believe that both poems are written in the Midland Dialect. But York Powell (*Eng. Stud.*, VII, 97 ff.), Schumacher (*op. cit.*, p. 11) and Holthausen (*Anglia Beiblatt*, XXIII, 157 ff.) are of the opinion that the original dialect of the poem was Northern. It is difficult to tell from the present state of the language whether the two poems are written in the same dialect. There are, however, some differences in the language of the two pieces that cast doubt on the correctness of Skeat's theory: (1) *O. E.* gives *e* regularly in *Sc. F.*, *e*, *ea*, and *ee* in *D. & L.*; (2) *niiged*, *Sc. F.* 171, is a late spelling for *M. E. ē*; (3) *wi*, *wy*, *wight*, in *D. & L.* appears as *way* in *Sc. F.*, 114; (4) the vocabulary of *Sc. F.* is more Northern than that of *D. & L.*

that the dialect of the poem is North Midland is based on the following evidence:

1. There are no Southern characteristics.
2. Common to North Midland and Northern are O. E.  $\bar{a} > \bar{a}$  and  $\bar{o}$ ; the retention of  $\bar{y} < \text{O. E. } \bar{y} < \bar{u}/i, j$ ; the infinitive in *e* or *-*; and the confusion of *a*, *e*, and *o/r*.
3. Northern are the past participle in *-en*; the infinitive without ending (usually); and *-es* (ten cases) in the third person singular of the present indicative.
4. Characteristic of Midland are *-eth* in the third person singular of the present indicative (fifty-three cases); *-en* in the third plural indicative; the participle without exception in *ing(e)*; *sh* < O. E. *sc* and *wh* < O. E. *hw*;  $\bar{o}/r < \text{O. E. } \bar{a}/r$ ; *o* < O. E. *ea/ld* and the absence or *sco* and *scho* < O. E. *sēo*.

### C. Vocabulary

In respect to vocabulary *Death and Liffe* is very similar to the alliterative poems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The majority of the words are derived from Anglo-Saxon (79%), the Romance and Norse elements being much smaller (Romance 14.2%, Norse 6.6%). Many of the words are to be found in the other alliterative poems of this school. For example, the words listed by Skeat as peculiar to *Death and Liffe* and *Scottish Feilde* occur in practically all of the alliterative poems after *Piers Plowman*.<sup>5</sup> As will be seen from the notes on alliterative phrases, the language of *Death and Liffe* is thoroughly conventional and entirely in line with the traditions of the alliterative school.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Leeds, Parl. Wm. Troy, Morte Arthure; frekes, bearnes, segges, Parl., Wm., Tr. M. A.; weld, Wm., Tr., M. A.; keyre, Parl., Wm., Tr., M. A.; ding, Parl., Tr. Nay*, which Skeat takes as the equivalent of *nor* in *D. & L.* 33 and 443, is the only word that is peculiar to *D. & L.* and *Sc. F.* But in *Sc. F.* the word clearly means *not*, while in *D. & L.* it may mean *nay* or *nor*. It will be noted that the word occurs in lines which are identical in *D. & L.* A comparison of the vocabulary of *D. & L.* with the glossaries of other alliterative poems shows that *D. & L.* has 22 words (leaving out of consideration the familiar and common words) in common with *Parl.*, 29 with *Wm.*, 37 with *M. A.*, and 40 with *Troy*.

<sup>6</sup> The difficulties in determining the meaning of some of the words in the poem are discussed in the textual notes or in the glossary. Some of the words listed may be miswritings of the copyist. Others are certainly correct writings of words which are rare and unusual.

## III. THE DATE

Criteria for dating *Death and Liffe* with any degree of definiteness are almost wholly wanting. The extreme lateness of the manuscript makes the usual linguistic tests of uncertain value, and the poem contains no historical allusions which might afford a clew. Certain inference may, however, be drawn from its literary relations. Bishop Percy speaks of the piece as having been for aught that appears written as early as, if not before, the time of Langland, though he elsewhere suggests a common authorship with the sixteenth century *Scotish Feilde*, a poem written in the same general style and meter, which happens also to have been included in the Folio Manuscript. Subsequent commentators have agreed that *Death and Liffe* is later than *Piers Plowman*. The connection between the two works is obvious and a close examination of the parallels (see below, p. 248) will be found to establish pretty firmly the conclusion that it is the *Death and Liffe* author who is the debtor. The borrowings are from the B or C version, probably from C, though the evidence is somewhat contradictory. We are safe, therefore, in assuming that *Death and Liffe* was composed after 1377 (B) or 1386-1399 (C).

Percy's suggestion as to identity of authorship with *Scotish Feilde* was taken up by Skeat, who concludes that *Death and Liffe* was written not far from 1513, a date established for *Scotish Feilde* by the battle of Flodden Field in that year. Skeat's argument, based on a supposedly "remarkable similarity in the style, diction, and rhythm of the two poems," is entirely inconclusive. It is effectively disposed of by Miss Edith Scamman<sup>1</sup> in an extended consideration of the subject, the main points of which may be here given, together with some additional observations.

1. The metrical similarities are no greater than is to be expected in two poems of the alliterative tradition. There are indeed some important distinctions in metrical usage which led Luick, on this ground alone, to deny the common authorship of *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde*. (See pp. 259-260.)

2. The use in both pieces of such words as "frekes," "bearnnes,"

<sup>1</sup>"The Alliterative Poem: *Death and Liffe*," *Radeliffe Studies in English and Comparative Literature*.

"segges," as equivalent of men and of peculiar words like "weld," "keyre," "ding," is unimportant, since these and similar phrases are a part of the conventional and archaic vocabulary employed by all writers of the alliterative tradition. (See above, p. 228). The use of "nay" for "ne" or "nor" is more unusual, but the word occurs only twice in *Death and Liffe* (for "nor," 433, 443), and once in *Scotish Feilde* (for "not," 81). If any importance is to be attached to this point the use in *Scotish Feilde* may be explained as due to the author's knowledge of *Death and Liffe*.

3. The parallel lines and phrases to which Skeat has pointed as evidence of common authorship lose their significance in view of a wider survey of the poems in the alliterative group; the parallels cited by Skeat being in almost every case alliterative commonplaces. (See notes to lines 24, 172, 185, 436, etc.). In any case these parallels can prove only that the *Scotish Feilde* poet was familiar with *Death and Liffe*.

4. Linguistic differences between the two are sufficiently marked to cast doubt on Skeat's hypothesis. (See above, p. 227).

5. In general *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde* bear but little resemblance to each other. The first is a vision allegory, embodying a debate, the work of a serious-minded poet steeped in mediæval literary traditions and possessed of exceptional imaginative power; the second a chronicle of contemporary events, by a gentleman (cf. line 416), vigorously written, but less archaic in form and entirely lacking in the poetic fervor and elevation of *Death and Liffe*. Professor Manly<sup>2</sup> is entirely right in feeling its author to have been incapable of the excellence of our poem. Further discussion of Skeat's conjecture is unnecessary in view of the fact that it has not seriously commended itself to any later student of the poem. It was based, no doubt, on the circumstance that these two alliterative poems happened to occur together in the Percy Manuscript, and a more mature consideration of the matter would probably have led Skeat to change his view.

A second attempt to fix the date of *Death and Liffe* in the sixteenth century is made by Miss Scamman in the article already cited. She finds in the poem an apparent imitation of certain passages describing Nature in Dunbar's *The Golden Targe* (93 ff.) and *The Thistle and the Rose* (73 ff.), and a general similarity

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. II, p. 46.

of theme with such poems as *The Lament for the Makaris*. She therefore concludes that the piece was written shortly after 1503, the date of *The Thistle and the Rose*. The true explanation of the parallels between the description of Liffe in our poem and those of Dame Nature in Dunbar, lies, however, not in Miss Scamman's theory of direct borrowing, but in the use of a common source, viz., the widely known *De Planctu Naturæ* of Alanus de Insulis. The relation of *Death and Liffe* to this poem is discussed in detail below. As to the theme of the inevitability and the destructive might of Death, we need go no further than the passages in *Piers Plowman* which the *Death and Liffe* author may be shown to have used. Indeed, one is embarrassed with riches in endeavoring to find sources for the use of this motive in *Death and Liffe*. Miss Scamman's conclusion as to date must therefore be rejected.

From the linguistic standpoint it is difficult to believe that *Death and Liffe* is as late as 1500. Despite the modernization of spelling, as in such words as "ghost," "doubt," the language of the poem appears to belong rather to the fifteenth than to the sixteenth century. A comparison of the phonology with that of *Winnere and Wastoure* and of *Emaré* forbids the conclusion that these poems and *Death and Liffe* are two hundred and fifty years apart in date. In literary form *Death and Liffe* holds very closely, as will be shown, with the older poems of the alliterative school, and it seems likely that its author was nearer to them in point of time than the poet of *Scotish Feilde*. Recent scholarly opinion has inclined to the middle of the fifteenth century as a probable period for the origin of *Death and Liffe*. Thus Luick (*op. cit.*, p. 612) observes that the style is "für das sechzehnte jahrhundert in hohem grade alterthümlicher." On metrical grounds he concludes that *Death and Liffe* probably originated at a time when the final *-e* was sometimes still pronounced in poetry (i. e., in the fifteenth century).<sup>3</sup> Schneider, after a comparative study of the metre of the two poems, infers that the final *-e* was much more often pronounced in *Death and Liffe* than in *Scotish Feilde* and believes that it was composed some fifty years earlier, circa 1450.<sup>4</sup> Our own study of *Death and Liffe* inclines us to the opinion that the

\* See also Luick's treatment of the *ur : w* alliteration in *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde*.

<sup>4</sup> *Bonner Beiträge*, XII, 109 ff.



poem is before 1450 rather than after that date. Further comment on this subject will be found in the sections on language and meter, and on the theme and sources.

#### IV. THE DEBATE FORM

The conflictus or debate, of which, as we have already remarked, *Death and Liffe* is to be regarded as an example, is the joint product of the mediæval love of allegory and of the habit of controversy and disputation fostered by the discipline of the schools. The literary type is widespread and ill-defined, springing up not in mediæval Europe alone, but spontaneously in various times and places. Thus there was in the ancient *synkrisis* substantially the same phenomenon<sup>1</sup> and allegorical disputes, often identical in theme with those of the Middle Ages, exist in large numbers in Persian and Arabian Literature.<sup>2</sup> The mediæval debate has, however, a history of its own, developing certain traditional characteristics which are clearly traceable in *Death and Liffe*.

The term debate has been used to cover a great variety of more or less contentious dialogues, whether between real or fictitious individuals or between personified abstractions. The distinguishing feature of the class of debates to which *Death and Liffe* belongs is the clear cut opposition of two ideals or principles or points of view, expressed in a dialogue between typical or abstract figures who are themselves the embodiment of that for which they contend. The disputants may be typical persons, as a Christian and a Jew; animals, birds or objects; or finally mere abstractions, as Vice and Virtue, Wisdom and Folly, the World and Religion, Death and Life. The schematic mind of the Middle Ages, tending as it did to see things in black and white and prone to find everywhere opposites, antipathies, and contrasts, provided such materials in rich abundance. The debate is partly a *jeu d'esprit*, the work of pedagogues and scholastic philosophers on a half holiday, or of

<sup>1</sup> See Miss Margaret Waites' article, "Some Aspects of the Ancient Allegorical Debate," in Radcliffe *Studies in English and Comparative Literature*, also Otto Hense, *Die Synkrisis in der antiken Litteratur*, and Hirzel, *Der Dialog*.

<sup>2</sup> Moriz Steinschneider, "Rangstreit-Literatur," *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akad.*, Phil.-Hist. Kl., 155 (4), 1907-8.



students amusing themselves with clever parodies of their serious intellectual occupations; it is partly, also, the fruit of a sincere endeavor of the mediæval man to represent imaginatively the great dualisms of existence and to proclaim the triumph of one or another principle in the eternal warfare of ideals. Hence, while many debates are trivial and wearisome, their cleverness having long since lost its point, others, like the Debate of the Body and the Soul, and the present one of Death and Life, are among the deepest and most powerful expressions of the mediæval spirit.

Since the contestants are personified principles or causes their discussion tends to resolve itself into a strife for superiority, but while the question is usually one of relative merit other issues may be involved. In the Debate of the Body and the Soul, for example, the contest hinges on the question of which one is responsible for the sins of man. Sometimes the point lies in the mutual rights of the two antagonists, and in such debates the contest is commonly conceived of as a legal one. The issue in *Death and Liffe* is fundamentally one of relative power and right. Liffe complains that Death is wantonly trampling down her children. Death boasts of her superior might, and also, after the more usual fashion of the debate, defends her utility in the scheme of things. Finally Liffe proclaims her eternal victory over the enemy through Christ. There is also in our poem the customary appeal to a judge, in this case God, who sends Countenance to restrain the ravages of Death, and the very common combination with the debate of the dream or vision setting. For the origin of these and other conventions we must review briefly the early history of the *genre* in mediæval literature.

The formal tradition of the mediæval debate begins in the neo-Latin poetry of the Carolingian renaissance. The materials for debate, expressed in forms which tend to approximate to the later mediæval type, and which did, as a matter of fact, often come to fuse with it, were already common enough, deriving from classical, Christian, and Teutonic sources. Chief of these were the rhetorical comparisons, contrasts and encomia which were familiar as literary exercises in the late Roman and early mediæval schools; didactic allegories like the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius and the theological dialogue between the four daughters of God; philosophical and polemical dialogue, particularly those in which

the Christian faith is defended against paganism, judaism, and other heresies; and lastly flytings and other types of popular dialogue. The establishment of a fairly definite literary form for the embodiment of the numerous contrasts and rivalries inherent in mediæval life and thought was, however, due to the determining influence of the classical pastoral, revived by Alcuin and his followers in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>3</sup> In the typical debates of this period the characters—Winter and Summer, Truth and Falsehood, the Lily and the Rose—contend in amœbæan strains with obvious reminiscences in their style and setting of the Virgilian eclogue. From these poems a definite tradition can be traced to the host of Latin conflictuses in the twelfth century, and, through them, to the debates which flourished in the vernacular literatures throughout the Middle Ages and well into modern times. In the Carolingian debates the dialogue is given with a simple narrative introduction like that in the pastoral, describing the contestants and telling of their meeting. In the eleventh century the author first appears as auditor of the dispute<sup>4</sup> and the innovation made way for a more elaborate introduction recounting his experience. The debate thus becomes an "adventure" and is inevitably brought into association, as a second step, with the literature of vision. No discussion of the mediæval vision as an independent literary tradition is deemed necessary here, the subject having been extensively dealt with by many scholars. General allegories in vision form of course long antedate the earliest mediæval debates. The first instances of formal debates with vision introduction are the *Visio Fulberti*, the Latin original of the Debate of the Body and the Soul and, with a fuller development of the setting, the *Goliæ Dialogus inter Aquam et Vinum*,<sup>5</sup> both of the twelfth century. The judge, already present in the Carolingian debates as a figure borrowed from the eclogue (in the *Conflictus Veris et Hiemis* he is called Palaemon), is represented in most of the later disputations, appeal being made to

<sup>3</sup> See Hanford, "Classical Pastoral and Medieval Debate" in *The Romantic Review*, vol. II, nos. 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Conflictus Ovis et Lini*, ascribed to Hermannus Contractus, Haupt's *Zeitschrift*, vol. XI, pp. 215-238.

<sup>5</sup> See Hanford, "The Medieval Debate between Wine and Water," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XXVIII, 3.

some neutral third person, often the author himself, or to a higher power, as in the case of *Death and Liffe*.

In the Latin conflictus of the twelfth century we have also for the first time the introduction into the debate of themes and motives drawn from the system of courtly love. The earlier disputations had been wholly learned and academic. The new strain of romantic allegory appears in the well-known *Altercatio Phyllidis et Floræ*,<sup>6</sup> a poem in which the amatory controversy of the relative merits of the clerical and the knightly lover is completely assimilated to the traditional debate type, but with an elaboration of the descriptive and narrative machinery which, as in *Death and Liffe* and the vernacular debates generally, leaves the actual verbal disputation simply one incident in a series of romantic and allegorical events. The opening is an ornate description of springtime, a feature which became common in the Latin and vernacular disputes. The contestants are vividly characterized. They argue their cases warmly, and at length agree to submit the question to Cupid. The last half of the piece contains an account of their journey to the court of Love, where the God hears their cause and submits it to his judges, Use and Nature, who declare in favor of the clerk, thereby betraying very clearly the authorship of the composition. The *Altercatio* was widely known and imitated, and it is to be counted a chief influence in the later vernacular debate. The court of Love materials and the consequent extension of the allegory appear also in *Nummus et Amor*, a work of perhaps even earlier date than the *Altercatio* but apparently of little influence.<sup>7</sup> In the *Altercatio Ganymedis et Helenæ*<sup>8</sup> the dispute takes place on Olympus, not in the court of Cupid but in that of Mother Nature, a personage who, as we shall see, plays an important though disguised rôle in *Death and Liffe*. The poem is a vision with the conventional description of spring.

<sup>6</sup> See Oulmont, *Les Débats du Clerc et du Chevalier*, Paris, 1911, for the texts and an extended study of this debate and its numerous imitations.

<sup>7</sup> Extracts are printed from the twelfth century Tegernsee MS. in the *Sitzungsberichte* of the Munich Akademie, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 873, 685 ff. This very important document in the history of the Court of Love allegory has been passed over in silence by both Neilson and Langlois. As a debate it is a distant forerunner of *Winnere and Wastoure*.

<sup>8</sup> Edited by Wattenbach, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, XVIII, 124 ff.

With the extension of the narrative elements in the debate there goes also a change in the character of the dialogue. The earliest Latin disputations are under the domination of the pastoral form and the alternate speeches of the contestants are short and of equal length after the manner of the Virgilian eclogue. This is true also of some of the twelfth century poems, but in others, as, for example, the *Visio Fulberti*, the *Phyllis et Flora*, and in the vernacular debates generally, the dialogue tends to lose its amœbean character, the arguments becoming long, argumentative and without definite correspondences.

In the twelfth and thirteenth century Latin pieces we have, then, all the essential features of the fully developed allegorical debate, which became popular toward the end of the Middle Ages in France and England. The shift in emphasis from scholastic argument to picture and romantic story was inevitably carried still further, and various other motives, such as the allegorical tournament, adapted from the *Psychomachia* and from the romances themselves, are added. In *Hueline et Aiglantine*, a French imitation of *Phyllis et Flora*, there is an extension of the account of the trial before Cupid. Bird advocates plead on either side, and champions, the nightingale for the knights and the parrot for the clerks, engage in combat. Similar developments are illustrated in the English Debate of Heart and Eye,<sup>9</sup> a fifteenth century version from the French. In these debates the courtly, romantic, and amatory elements predominate; the more serious didactic debates derive their materials rather from moral allegory, satire, and theology. Their authors, however, especially in the fifteenth century, tend to follow the program set by the amatory disputes and are often more or less affected by their spirit. Thus in *Winnere and Wastoure*, a fourteenth century poem, which as we shall show is very closely related to *Death and Liffe*, we have the descriptive and narrative machinery developed at the expense of the debate proper, which nevertheless remains central in the work. There is an extended vision and springtime introduction, the appeal to a judge, and the elements, at least, of an allegorical tournament in the description of the accoutrements of the two contestants and their rival armies. These features are substantially

<sup>9</sup> Discussed by me in *Modern Language Notes*, June, 1911. The text is given by Miss Eleanor Hammond, *Anglia*, xxxv, 235 ff.

repeated in our poem. It remains to consider the debate theme of *Death and Liffe* and to indicate the specific influences under which the piece took form.

## V. THE THEME

### A. The Coming of Death and the Debate of the Living and the Dead

In substance the alliterative *Death and Liffe* obviously belongs to the vast body of mediæval literature which has for its theme the inevitableness and the destructive might of Death, a topic of which the Middle Ages never wearied and upon which the authors of the period exhausted their powers of rhetoric and imagination. The conception of Death as the irresistible foe of mortality is, of course, universal. Classical literature contributed its part to the mediæval stream, as in Horace's

Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
Regumque turris.

But the chief source was naturally scripture, with its many texts embodying the warning of the inevitability of Death and the uncertainty of its hour.<sup>1</sup> Such motives are elaborated in mediæval literature, with growing insistence on Death's hostility and appalling voraciousness. Characteristic embodiments in English are such poems as *Erthe upon Erthe*,<sup>2</sup> *Death*,<sup>3</sup> *The Enemies of Man*,<sup>4</sup> *The Signs of Death*.<sup>5</sup> One of the commonest of mediæval formulæ for the universality of death is the *ubi sunt*, wherein the author reviews all classes of mankind, conceiving them as leveled alike by the scythe of the grim destroyer. Often enough the *ubi sunt* is boastfully pronounced by Death himself, as in *Cursor Mundi*, 330 ff., a passage which is paralleled in Death's enumeration of his conquests in *Death and Liffe*. A special development of this motive, which brings us nearer to the present poem, is the Dance of Death, and its probable original in literature and art, the

<sup>1</sup> *E. g.*, *Psalms* 88, 49; *Ecclesiastes* 3, 19; *Romans* 5, 12; 1 *Thessalonians* 5, 2; *James* 4, 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglia*, *xxvi*, 216; *E. E. T. S.*, *CXLI*.

<sup>3</sup> *E. E. T. S.*, *XLIX*, 168.

<sup>4</sup> *Englische Studien*, *IX*, 440.

<sup>5</sup> *E. E. T. S.*, *CXVII*.



Dialogue or Debate of the Three Living Men and the Three Dead Men. The source of the legend is oriental. In a sixth century Arabian poem the poet and a king are passing some graves, when they hear the dead call out to the monarch: "What you are, we were: what we are, you shall be." A thirteenth century French poem by Baudoin de Condé gives the standard form of the legend. Three Living Men express one after another their terror at the sight of the Dead. Then the Dead, in order, address the Living:

noies quel sommes,  
Tel serés-vous; et tel comme ore estes, fumes.<sup>6</sup>

Sometimes the Living and Dead speak alternately. The reduction of the indefinite number of Dead in the Arabian legend to three involved making the Living Men representatives of Youth, Middle Age, and Old Age, thus enforcing the moral that Death comes alike at all periods of mortal life. In one form or another this theme had a tremendous popularity. The innumerable dialogues of Death and Life found in all languages are mostly fragments of it. Young men and old, man and woman, peasant, pope, and prince, with one voice record the vain protest against dissolution and receive the same grim answer from the cadavers or skeletons which are their other selves.<sup>7</sup>

The Dance of Death or the *danse macabre* is but a grotesque extension of the Three Dead Men and the Three Living Men.<sup>8</sup> It appears first in the fifteenth century, in the form of a series of art representations of men and women of all classes, each led to the sepulchre by a skeleton. The designs are accompanied by texts similar to those already discussed.

The protest of living things and the blind ruthlessness of the destroyer are evidently the motivating ideas of our debate. It is unlikely that the *danse macabre* conception was present in the author's mind, since the great development of this motive was later than the probable date of *Death and Life*. He must, however,

<sup>6</sup> Montaiglon, *L'Alphabet de la Mort de Hans Holbein*, Paris, 1856.

<sup>7</sup> For examples see Montaiglon, *Recueil de Poésies*, v, 60 ff.; D'Ancona, *Teatro Italiano*, I, 550; Steinschneider, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> This is the view of Künstle, *Die Legende der drei Lebenden und der drei Toten, und der Totendanz*; but see Hammond, *Latin Texts of the Dance of Death*, *Modern Philology*, VIII, 399.



have known plenty of examples of the *Trois morts* dispute and the material would have come to him also through *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, where its influence is palpable. One important point of difference, however, is to be noted between the present debate and that of the *Trois morts*. In the latter it is not Life and Death who hold converse but the living and the dead. The Dead, however, easily become representatives of Death itself. In the Dance of Death, for example, the skeleton came to be interpreted as a personification of Death, and not merely as a mortal relic of humanity. The Living Men, moreover, are types of human life, and in some cases their place is taken by an abstraction, who still preserves the rôle of helpless victim. Thus the *Zwiesgesprach zwischen dem Leben und dem Tode*<sup>9</sup> proves upon examination to be simply a *Trois morts* dispute with the personifications. So also in the *Débat et Procès de Nature et de Jeunesse*, Nature is Death and Youth a type of all who live.<sup>10</sup>

The conception of death as a skeleton, which through the influence of the Dance of Death, became universal in the fifteenth century, was long antedated by other forms of the personification. To these we may now turn in explanation of the grisly figure who in our poem smites Life's children in the dust. Throughout the literature of death there is a strong tendency to allegory and personification. Thus in Horace the *Atra Cura* sits behind the horseman as he rides. In scripture the most vivid representation is in *Revelations*, 6, 8: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him." The mediæval figures of Death are infinitely varied. Sometimes it is a youth, sometimes a man, sometimes a beast. The weapon is a bow, or lance, or scythe, or sword. The idea of Death's sovereignty is often suggested by a crown. Occasionally the figure is a woman, as in the representations of the crucifixion (See below, p. 243), in the *Three Enemies of Man*, and in *Death and Liffe*.<sup>11</sup> The associa-

<sup>9</sup> Freybe, *Das Memento Mori*, Gotha, 1909, 86 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Le Débat des Deux Demoyelles*, Paris, 1825.

<sup>11</sup> See J. L. Wessely, *Die Gestalten des Todes und Des Teufels in der darstellenden Kunst*; Th. v. Frimmel, *Beiträge zu einer Ikonographie des Todes in Mittheil. der k. k. Centralcomm. zur Erforsch. u. Erhalt der Baudenkmale*, N. F., XIII-XVII (1887-1891); Kraus, *Geschichte der Christlichen Kunst*, II, 446-7.

tion of Death with Satan led to the adoption of many grotesque and horrible characteristics from the current demonology. This influence is particularly evident in *Death and Liffe*, where the "long tushes" and the neb of the nose reaching to the navel betray the hellish origin of the conception, while the leanness of the body and the deathly hue of the face suggest the cadaver. More specifically, however, the description of Dame Death in our poem was written under the influence of a considerable tradition of monsters and grisly ghosts in the poetry of the alliterative revival (See below, p. 254 and in the notes to lines 151 ff.).

It is unnecessary to allude further to the mediæval representations of the assaults of the monster Death on human kind. The subject constitutes, as is well known, one of the standard themes of the morality play. In the *Pride of Life* the action approximates a debate. The King of Life, boasting of his power and flattered by Strength and Hele, sets out to conquer death, but finds that he must share the lot of all mortality. It is important to note that the development of these plays and the great popularity of the Dance of Death fall together in the fifteenth century. There can be no question that the close of the Middle Ages saw an enormous increase in the emphasis on the idea of death and particularly on its more horrible aspects. Male<sup>12</sup> notes that the grewsome image of death does not appear frequently in mediæval art until the end of the fourteenth century. "Ce cadavre qui sort du tombeau pour nous enseigner non pas la néante mais le serieux de la vie, violà un personnage tout nouveau dans l'art. Le XIII siècle ne nous offre rien de pareil." The change is indicated in the different spirit in which death is represented in the *Trois Morts* and the *danse macabre*.

"Dans le dit des trois morts et des trois vifs la mort se presente, sans doute, sous un aspect redoutable. Mais, au fond, elle est plein de clémence. Elle parle rudement aux grands de ce monde mais elle leur laisse un delai; elle ne met pas sa main seche sur leur épaule. Elle a été suscitée par Dieu pour émouvoir le pécheur, non pas pour le frapper. Dans la Danse macabre, au contraire, toute idée de pitié disparaît.

This new emphasis, Male believes, results from the efforts of the mendicant friars to terrify the multitudes. The great pestilences

<sup>12</sup> *L'Art religieux*, 375 ff.

of the fourteenth century are also to be counted as an influence in burning on the consciousnesses of artists and poets the image of mortality. The vision of destruction in *Death and Liffe*, echoing and amplifying as it does similar materials in *Piers Plowman* (See below, p. 247) is in harmony, therefore, with the dominant temper of the literature of the late fourteenth and of the fifteenth centuries. The contemporary works of Lydgate are full of reflections on dissolution,<sup>13</sup> death and change being indeed his principal themes; echoes of the *Trois morts* dispute are to be found in Henryson<sup>14</sup>; and Dunbar's poetry is steeped in the grotesque horror of the tomb. The elaborate didactic allegories of the time almost invariably introduce Death in a rôle similar to that played by him in the Moralities.<sup>15</sup>

The representation of Death in our poem as a demon rather than as a skeleton is an archaic feature and points to fourteenth century tradition as a primary influence in the author's conception.

#### B. The Conflict of Death and Life and the Victory of Life.

In the materials we have thus far considered the might of Death stands alone and unopposed. The protests of mortal creatures are weak and impotent. Life is a helpless victim, rather than a worthy antagonist of Death. The conception of an opposition between two great principles of Death and Life, in which the latter is not only coequal with its enemy but ultimately triumphant over him, in other words, the real debate of Death and Life may, I believe, be traced to two widely divergent sources, each contributing material of considerable importance in mediæval literature, and blending, in our poem, in a truly curious and characteristic fashion. The first of these is to be found in the popular consciousness, inherited from pagan times, of a titanic struggle pervading all nature, and in the primitive faith which sees the life principle temporarily obscured but never wholly conquered—perishing, so far as the eye can see, from the face of the earth in winter but

<sup>13</sup> His *Dance of Machabree* is the most important English text of the *Dance of Death*.

<sup>14</sup> *The Reasoning betwixt Deth and Man*, *Scottish Text Society*, III, 134.

<sup>15</sup> See Lydgate's *Assembly of the Gods*, stanzas 84 ff.; Hawes' *The Pastime of Pleasure*, and especially his *Example of Virtue*.

welling up eternal in the spring. The record of this belief is written in primitive myth and ritual, and it survives the stage of civilization which gave it birth in innumerable folk customs and in the themes and motives of popular literature. The ancient ceremony of the expulsion of Winter or Death, a central theme of mediæval folk-drama,<sup>16</sup> supplied the materials for the earliest of mediæval debates, *The Conflictus Veris et Hiemis*, to which allusion has already been made, and contention poems on the same subject, popular in essence, however much they may be transformed by literary and academic influences, are common in all the European languages.<sup>17</sup> It is no mere accident that this contest of Winter and Summer heads the list, in time and perhaps also in popularity, of mediæval debate literature. The motive, indeed, pervades the whole debate tradition. In poem after poem we may recognize the same opponents, altered in name only and in external character. Thus Spring, or the vital principle, reappears as Youth in contrast to Age; as Wine, representing the untrammelled joy of living, in contrast to Water, the symbol of asceticism; as the Flower in contrast to the Leaf; as the Nightingale, the bird of spring and youth and merriment, in contrast to the Owl, stern apostle of Winter and the mortification of the flesh. The sympathies of the author are, of course, not always on the side of the vital as opposed to the ascetic principle. A large number of mediæval debates are to be regarded as single combats in the great battle between the virtues and the vices; and here it is inevitably the stricter ideal which is championed against the more liberal, or the more spiritual against the more material. But even when the author officially swears allegiance to religion and asceticism, he is sometimes wont to allow the Devil's advocate to plead with a dangerous eloquence. In the Goliardic pieces the graceless poet openly espouses the Devil's cause. From one point of view these expressions are due simply to the welling up of human instinct against an abnormal asceticism; but the championship of the life principle in its various hypostases undoubtedly derived support also from a literary tradition deeply grounded in primitive culture and religion.

<sup>16</sup> See E. K. Chambers, *The Mediæval Stage*, vol. I, Book II.

<sup>17</sup> See Uhland's essay on the folk-drama of the seasons, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, 17 ff.

Thus did instinctive mediæval faith in life maintain itself unorthodoxly against a whole theological and moralistic artillery of *memento mori*'s. Meanwhile Christian theology provided, in salvation, the triumph won for mankind by Christ's sacrifices upon the cross, its own transcendent weapon against death. It was indeed partly with a view to heightening this triumph that the terrible power of the destroyer was magnified. Already in Scripture there is implicit the conception of a mighty struggle: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. *Ero mors tua o mors.*" (*Hosea*, 13, 14) "So that when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall he bring to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory," (*I Corinthians*, 15, 54). The rendering of this struggle in terms of concrete allegory was, for the Middle Ages, inevitable. As early as the ninth century the essential motive of our debate in its theological aspect is neatly formulated in the *Victimæ paschali*, an Easter sequence ascribed to Wipo of Burgundia, known in the liturgy throughout the Middle Ages and still retained, it is said, in the Roman missal.

Mors et vita duello confluxere mirando;  
Dux vitæ mortuus regnat vivus.<sup>18</sup>

Similar expressions are not uncommon in the hymns.

The allegory of the Death and Life conflict on the cross is embodied also in a widespread theme of Christian art. The two figures, Life and Death, appear together beside that of Christ in representations of the crucifixion, Life crowned on the right, Death falling or standing with broken lance upon the left. Life is generally represented as a female figure; Death as a man, a woman, a beast, or (in the fifteenth century) a skeleton. Their positions are connected with the general symbolism which made the right of the cross a token of eternal life, the left of death and damnation.<sup>19</sup> The representations are accompanied by texts based on scriptural passages.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Daniel, *Thesaurus Hymnologicus*, II, 95.

<sup>19</sup> Durandus, *Rationale*, Lib. VII, cap. xlv: *Per sinistram enim mortalitas, per dextram immortalitas designatur, secundum illud: Leva ejus sub capite meo, et dextera ejus amplexabitur me.*

<sup>20</sup> For example, in an eleventh century illumination: "*Mors devicta peris*



The employment of this motive in art is antecedent to the developed allegorical debate of Death and Life, and is to be counted one of the chief formative elements in its development. A similar relation exists between the disputation of Church and Synagogue and the allegorical figures of the Church in triumph and the Synagogue in defeat, also found in mediæval portrayals of the crucifixion. Meanwhile other elements are contributed by the apocryphal Harrowing of Hell, interpreted in the mediæval accounts as an allegorical combat between Christ and Satan. The struggle for the salvation of man's soul finally merges into the general battle of the Virtues and the Vices, with Christ engaged in a perpetual warfare against Satan, Sin, and Death.

We have, then, two distinct aspects of the conflict of Death and Life, each receiving allegorical embodiment throughout the Middle Ages; namely, the opposition of the life principle to Death as a physical fact, and the triumph of Eternal Life over both natural death and the "secunda mors," or the death of the soul. These two motives are combined in *Death and Liffe*. The exultant boast of Death and the vision of destruction are, as we have already seen, an embodiment of the general theme of the coming of Death to all mankind. Lady Liffe, in this aspect, is one with the King of Life in the morality or with the Lord of Life in *Piers Plowman*, though the poet's viewpoint is different in that his sympathies are on the side of the lovely knights and ladies who must fall before Death's falchion, while he represents Death herself, not as God's chastening instrument, but as a ruthless alien power who brings to a sudden conclusion the innocent joy of mortal life. But Lady Liffe in the earlier part of the poem is obviously something more than a simple type of all that lives and is subject to the power of Death. Instead of playing the rôle of a helpless victim, like the frail creatures who surround her, she is herself a power, a goddess—exempt from chance and change. She is, indeed, a symbol of the vital principle itself, which animates all nature and gives life and joy to all created things. She opposes the might of Death, not by arms, but by a challenge of her right, and by an appeal

*qui Christum vincere gestis.*" A full treatment of the Life and Death motive in art is given by P. Weber, *Geistliches Schauspiel und kirchliche Kunst*, 63 ff.



to the high King of Heaven, who quickly bids Death cease from her ravages among Life's children. Still, in her words to Dame Death, Liffe can do little more than protest and vaguely threaten. To Death's recitation of her conquests there is no effective reply, until she is betrayed by her arrogance into adding to them the name of Christ:

Have not I lusted gentlye with Iesu of heauen?  
He was frayd of my fface in ffreshest of time.  
Yett I knocked him on the crosse & carued throughe his hart.

Then suddenly the whole aspect of the contest changes. The "witless words" of Death afford Liffe the opportunity for a triumphant answer. Out of her own mouth is Death condemned. For Life in Christ has been victorious over Death. At this point the earlier pagan conception of Life merges into the theological and Christian. Henceforth she is eternal Life, salvation, the conqueror of Death and Satan. She was upon the cross with Christ, her bower "bigged forever" in his heart. In that great battle she had beaten Death forever, and, following her to Hell, had redeemed from thence Death's captives. In this part of the allegory Liffe becomes for the time a mere abstraction. The author has difficulty even in keeping the figure of speech which distinguishes her from Christ himself. But at the close of the poem she again becomes the kindly Lady "with lookes so gay," caring for her children, raising them from the earth where they lie slain, and hying over the hills with her winsome troop. The two divergent conceptions are here beautifully blended. The vital spirit which pervades all nature has become one with God, and the yearning faith in its permanence, darkened by the compelling phenomenon of death, is illumined and fortified by the idea of the resurrection. The poet has thus transcended the narrow bounds of mediæval ascetic thought, in which all material things are evil and nature itself an ally of Death and Hell, and has unconsciously and half accidentally adopted the more modern point of view, constructing out of purely mediæval materials a work which constitutes a dim prophecy of the Renaissance.

## VI. IMMEDIATE SOURCES

A. *Piers Plowman*. That the author of *Death and Liffe* was acquainted with *The Vision of Piers Plowman* and derived from that work much of the essential material of his poem is beyond question. Skeat went so far as to say that he wrote in imitation of *Piers Plowman*, and Manly does not hesitate to class *Death and Liffe* among those works which continued the *Piers Plowman* tradition into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is the purpose of the present discussion to define in some detail the extent and the limits of this debt.

The central motive of the theological conflict is embodied in a passage contained in the B and C versions, in which Life contends with Death and triumphs through the resurrection.

'Ho shal louste with Iesus,' quath ich · 'Iewes, other scribes?'  
 'Nay,' quath Faith, 'bote the feond · and Fals-dom-to-deye.  
 Deith seith he wol for-do · and a-down brynge  
 Al that lyueth other loketh · a londe and a watere.  
 Lyf seith that he lyeth · and hath leyde hus lyf to wedde,  
 That for al Deth can do · with-inne thre dayes,  
 To walke and fecche fro the feonde · Peers frut the Plouhman,  
 And legge hit ther hym lyketh · and Lucifer bynde,  
 And forbete and bringe adoun · bale and deth for euere;  
*O mors, ero mors tua.*

And dede men for that deon · comen oute of deope graues,  
 And tolden why that tempest · so longe tyme dured.  
 'For a byter bataile' · the dede bodey seyde,  
 'Lyf and Deth in this deorknesse · her on for-doth that other,  
 Ac shal no wigt wite witerliche · ho shal haue mastrye,  
 Er Soneday, a-boute sonne-rysyng' · and sank with that til erthe.<sup>1</sup>

The conception of an actual debate between the powers of Life and Death is here clearly implied, and though the general theme is, as we have seen, a common one, verbal similarities<sup>2</sup> would appear to render it quite certain that the motive of the second half of *Death and Liffe* was suggested primarily by the above quoted passage. In both *Piers Plowman* and *Death and Liffe* the account of the

<sup>1</sup> C, Passus XXI, 26-35 and 64-70. Cf. B, Passus XVIII, 29-36 and 62-68.

<sup>2</sup> See notes to line 345.

battle on the cross culminates in the triumphant descent into Hell. The resemblance between the two is on the whole confined to well established features which had become traditional in the numerous narrative and dramatic renderings of this part of the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, the biblical original of the legend. These are the cry "*attolite portas*" at the entrance; the light which proceeds from Christ; the confusion of the demons; the binding of Lucifer; and the rescue of the Hebrew captives. The description in *Death and Liffe* is at once briefer and more picturesque. The author has omitted the preliminary debate between the Daughters of God and sacrificed the lengthy theological discussions, emphasizing the idea of a dramatic conflict and adding such touches as that of Lucifer hurling fiends on the fire in his fury. He has, moreover, assimilated the whole to the allegory of Death and Life. Skeat's implication that the two passages are substantially identical gives a wrong impression. There are, however, a few detailed parallels which confirm the conclusion that the account in *Death and Liffe* is primarily based on that in *Piers Plowman*. (See notes to lines 404 ff.)

In like manner the author of *Death and Liffe* seems to have drawn material for the description of Death's destructive assaults upon the children of Liffe from the later account in *Piers Plowman* of the ravages of Death, who is represented as coming in the train of Antichrist, accompanied by Disease and Old Age, against Lyf, here conceived, not as Everlasting Life, but as a type of sinful man.<sup>3</sup> Definite proof that the author of *Death and Liffe* has this part of *Piers Plowman* in mind is afforded by the figure of Sir Comfort (Cf. *Death and Liffe*. 177-8), who in the passage referred to is summoned by "the lord that lyued after lust" to bear his banner against Death. The association of Death with the seven deadly sins explains the presence in *Death and Liffe* of Pride, who precedes the steps of Death as a sort of herald (Cf. 157 and 183).

A further parallel between *Death and Liffe* and *Piers Plowman* is to be found in the introductory visions. Conventional as the materials are, the parallels are sufficiently close to warrant the conclusion that the *Death and Liffe* author followed in outline the first twenty lines of the Prologue. The allegorical map of *Death*

<sup>3</sup> C. Passus XXIII, 69 ff. Cf. B. Passus xx, 68 ff.

*and Liffe* is modelled after that in the earlier work, and verbal similarities are closer and more numerous in the visions than elsewhere in the two poems. (See notes.) The *Piers Plowman* vision, with its simple and logical allegory, is plainly the original. Thus the "field full of folk," suggested by *Matthew* 13, 38 ("The field is the world"), ceases in *Death and Liffe* to be a representation of all mankind and becomes a particular chivalric gathering, though traces of the original conception persist in the phrase "all the world full of wealth" and in the presence of swains as well as knights in *Death and Liffe*. So also the allegorical tower and dungeon are transmuted into a whole panorama of towns and castles, and in general the description of the landscape in *Death and Liffe* is much elaborated. The more essential inspiration for this part of the poem comes, as a matter of fact, from an altogether different source. (See section C, below.)

*B. De Planctu Naturae.* It will be apparent from the above comparison that the author of our poem, however much he may have depended on *Piers Plowman* for his material, has but little in common with the stern moralist of that great work. His treatment of the motives which he appropriates reflects a widely different point of view. Thus even the coming of Death, handled by the author of the B version with the grim satisfaction of the mediæval preacher, is rendered in *Death and Liffe* with a poetic and imaginative rather than with a moral emphasis, and much the same may be said of the treatment of the crucifixion and the Harrowing of Hell. These elements, moreover, are neither the most characteristic nor the most attractive portions of the poem. It is in the conception of the lovely Lady Liffe, not in her theological aspect, but as the winsome being who invigorates all earthly things with her smile, that the charm and freshness of the piece chiefly reside. And for this conception there is no satisfactory counterpart in *Piers Plowman*. Lyf, the type of corrupt mortality ripening toward destruction, who in Passus XXIII is assailed by Deth and Elde, obviously has no relation to the "*alma Venus genetrix*" of *Death and Liffe*. Nor is she, as Skeat maintains, the Lady Anima of the Vision of Dowel in Passus XI, though the relationship here is somewhat closer. Anima in *Piers Plowman*, is represented, according to the conventional allegory, as a lady dwelling in the castle of the body. The senses are enclosed in the castle "for loue

of the lady Anima that Lyf is ynempned," a detail suggestive of the affection which all creatures have for Lady Liffe. Here, however, the resemblance stops. The allegorical being of Lady Anima is confined within the pinfold of the body, while Lady Liffe is a deity, the *magna parens* of living things. Her abode is on that new Olympus, where the mediæval deities of pagan mythology—Venus, Fortune, Dame Nature and many others—hold their state. Enough has already been said of her character and function to show with which one of the divinities she is to be associated; her own words, addressed to the destroyer Death, betray her origin:<sup>4</sup>

& as a theefe in a rout thou throngeth them to death,  
that neither Nature, nor I ffor none of thy deeds  
may bring up our bearnes.<sup>5</sup>

Dame Liffe is, indeed, but a hypostasis of Dame Nature, a being to whom the Middle Ages had given vivid reality as the embodiment of God's creative power. Closer examination of the Anima passage in *Piers Plowman* will reveal the source from which the author of *Death and Liffe* may have derived the first suggestion for a transferal to Life of the attributes of Nature. The castle of Anima was made by Kind. "What sort of thing is this Kind?" asks the poet.

'Kynde is a creator,' quath Wit · 'of alle kyne thynges,  
Fader and formour · of al that forth groweth,  
The which is god grettest · that gynnyng hadde neuere,  
Lord of lyf and of lyght · of lysse and of payne  
Angeles and alle thyng · aren at hus wil;  
Man is hym most lyk · of members and of face,  
And semblable in soule to god · bote yf synne hit make.'

Having once adopted, from the hint afforded in this passage, the idea of associating the figures of Life and Nature, the *Death and Liffe* poet did not rely on *Piers Plowman* for the details of his picture. He turned rather to the richer image of Nature in the well-known *De Planctu Naturæ* of Alanus de Insulis,<sup>6</sup> a work

<sup>4</sup> The following discussion is adapted from my article, "Dame Nature and Lady Liffe," *Modern Philology*, xv, 5, 313.

<sup>5</sup> *Death and Liffe*, 251-253.

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted in Wright's *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets*, vol. 1. My quotations are from the English translation by Douglas M. Moffat, *Yale Studies in English*.



which had furnished Jean de Meung, Chaucer, and many others with the materials of their descriptions of the Goddess of Kind.

Natura, with Alanus, is the parent of living things. Like Lady Liffe, she appears to the poet in a vision, radiant and goddess-like, crowned with a heavenly diadem. Her neck and breasts are described in terms closely paralleled in the debate. Special emphasis is laid throughout the work on her love function, a characteristic which reappears in the picture of Lady Liffe. At the approach of Natura the instinct of life and love springs up in all things. "The earth, lately stripped of its adornments by the thieving winter, through the generosity of spring donned a purple tunic of flowers." So also as Liffe draws near

Blossomes & burgens breathed ffull sweete,  
flowers ffourished in the frith where shee fforth stapedd,  
& the grasse *that* was gray greened belue.

The similarity of detail at this point in the two descriptions leaves no doubt that the author of *Death and Liffe* is following the account of *De Planctu*. In both poems the fish express their joy; in both the trees bend their branches in honor of the goddess' approach.

These lowered their leaves and with a sort of bowed veneration, as if they were bending their knees, offered her their prayers.

[*De Planctu*, Prose II.]

The boughes eche one  
they lowted to that Ladye & layd forth their branches.

[*Death and Liffe*, 69-70.]

Even more conclusive is the following. The garment of Nature is allegorically described by Alanus after the model of Boethius, whose *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* he is following throughout. It is ever changing, elusive to the eye, and of a supernatural substance. Similarly the author of *Death and Liffe*, quite unintelligibly, except on the hypothesis that he is echoing Alanus, invests his goddess in a mysterious mantle.

In kirtle & mantle  
of goodlyest greene that ever groome wore  
ffor the kind of that cloth can noe clarke tell.

Indeed, the whole passage describing the approach of Liffe (*Death and Liffe*, 57-141) is but an elaboration of suggestions in



*De Planctu Naturæ*. In the subsequent narrative of the poet's meeting with Lady Liffe there is also a general similarity with Alanus' work, but these elements are more connectional.

In view of the substantial identity of Lady Liffe and Alanus' Natura it becomes unnecessary to resort, as Skeat does, to vaguer parallels with the descriptions in *Piers Plowman* of Lady Meed and Holichurche. The atmosphere which surrounds these figures is quite different from that which surrounds Lady Liffe. The latter is obviously close akin to the Venus of mediæval love allegory; her host is a kind of Court of Love, recruited from among the well-known names of romantic story, and, in the case of the abstractions, from the traditions of the *Romance of the Rose*. The materials of this part of the debate reveal in the poet a source of inspiration very different from the sombre earnestness of *Piers Plowman*.

C. *Winnere and Wastoure* and *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*. A survey of the romantic poetry of the alliterative revival affords abundant evidence of the *Death and Liffe* author's wider range. The recurrence in the poem of phrases not found in *Piers Plowman* but common in other poems of the alliterative school shows the poet to have been well versed in the alliterative tradition. In style and meter *Death and Liffe* is really much closer to such works as the *Morte Arthure* than it is to *Piers Plowman*. To two poems, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* and *Winnere and Wastoure*,<sup>7</sup> which are among the earliest products of the alliterative revival, the relation of *Death and Liffe* is particularly close. All three poems conform to the type of the fully developed allegorical debate, having the vision setting and the elaborately developed narrative and descriptive machinery. The opening visions have several common features which are wanting in *Piers Plowman*, and there are some

<sup>7</sup> Edited by Gollancz, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, Roxburghe Club Publications, 1897; *The Parlement* is reprinted by Gollancz in *Select Early English Poems*. The three alliterative debates are described together by Professor W. H. Schofield as illustrating certain conventional features of the mediæval vision in his article "The Nature and Fabric of the Pearl," *P. M. L. A.*, xix, 195 ff. Miss Scamman, *op. cit.*, points out the structural similarity of *Death and Liffe* and *Winnere*, giving numerous parallels in alliterative phraseology in these poems and in *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*.

striking resemblances of detail.<sup>8</sup> In all three the land of streams and birds and flowers in which the poet is wandering is richly described. Despite their apparent unlikeness the principal figures in the three debates have, moreover, an essential kinship. Thus Middle Elde and Youth, the former expressly pictured as a money-getter, the latter a spender, are Winnere and Wastoure; and Winnere and Wastoure, in turn, suggest in their qualities and relation to each other Death and Liffe. Liffe complains that Death destroys all that she labors to produce, as Winnere reproaches Wastoure with wasting through pride what he himself wins through will. Old Age, moreover, in *The Parlement* speaks as Death's messenger, employing many of the conventional motives repeated in *Death and Liffe*. Winnere, Wastoure, and Liffe are accompanied by armies of typical and allegorical figures.<sup>9</sup> In both *Death and Liffe* and *Winnere and Wastoure* appeal is made before the debate begins to a higher power (the King in *Winnere*, God in *Death and Liffe*); and in both a messenger is sent to put a stop, in one case to the conflict, in the other to the ravages of Death. Finally the authors of all three poems show a considerable predilection for romance. The worthies listed as Death's conquests in *The Parlement* by Old Age are practically recapitulated in Death's boast in *Death and Liffe*. From this comparison it will appear that in its general structure *Death and Liffe* approximates very closely to *Winnere and Wastoure*, while in its essential theme and in details of expression it is rather nearer to *The Parlement*. The resemblances in either case are too striking and fundamental to be the result of accident. Since

<sup>8</sup> See notes.

<sup>9</sup> Winnere addresses Wastoure in terms which would be equally applicable to the Death and Life dispute:

Bot this felle false thefe þat byfore ȝowe standes  
Thynkes to stryke or he styntt and stroye me for ever.

(*W. and W.*, 228).

Winnere and Death express hatred of their opponents in similar language:

Ȝit harde sore es myn and harmes me more  
Ever to see in my syghte that I in soul hate. (*W. and W.*, 454).  
Therefore, liffe, thou me leaue. I loue thee but a little;  
I hate thee and thy houshold, and thy hyndes all!

(*D. and L.*, 277).

*Winnere and Wastoure* can be definitely dated not much later than 1350, i. e., before the earliest version of *Piers Plowman*, and since there is no reason to contest Gollancz' opinion that *Winnere* and *The Parlement* are by the same author we must conclude that the *Death and Liffe* poet was acquainted with both poems and used them almost as extensively as he did *Piers Plowman*. Presumably he knew other poems of the alliterative school as well. Something of a case could be made out for the *Awntyrs of Arthure*. (See notes to lines 151, 159, 165, 175, 196, 340).

The foregoing analysis of the various motives and influences traceable in *Death and Liffe* warrants a somewhat more specific account of the genesis and literary character of the poem than has hitherto been given.

The author, living probably in the fifteenth century, is first of all an inheritor of the rich tradition of the earlier alliterative revival. His acquaintance with this literature in its more romantic and imaginative aspects is reflected in his free use of the highly poetic vocabulary of the school, which enables him to achieve a style more vivid and colorful than that of *Piers Plowman* or *Scottish Feilde*. The atmosphere of the piece bears evidence of contact with the galaxy of poems which have been indiscriminately ascribed to Huchowne of the Awle Ryale. In reality, however, the *Death and Liffe* author stands apart from the writers of this school; he is one of the after-born and has never been admitted to the deeper mysteries of their chivalric order. There is in his poem, to be sure, the fresh breath of springtime in wood and field; he beholds the same visionary landscape, conventional in form but permeated with a real sense of the "beauty and bliss" of nature. He has, too, their somewhat sober sympathy with the brighter and happier side of life—with knights and lovely ladies in the trappings of romance, with the birds that sing amid the boughs, and with the fish that swim gaily in the element. Yet he has, on the other hand, nothing of the technique of chivalry—no hunting scene, no feast in Arthur's hall, no elaborate description of armorial bearings or equipment. In all this his poem differs markedly not only from *Gawain and the Green Knight*, but also from *The Parlement* and *Winnere*. Its catalogue of romance heroes shows no such intimate feeling for the stories as is apparent in the

corresponding passage in *The Parlement*. Our poet sees romance, as it were, from a distance and without participating, like the Gawain poet, in its inner life. His temperament and the spirit of his time inclined him rather to allegory, in that form which combines didacticism with romance—*The Court of Love* and the *Romance of the Rose*. He is possessed also of the deeper moral and religious consciousness of his age, sees Death as the inevitable counterpart of romance and joy, and salvation joining issue with and triumphant over Death. It was natural, therefore, that he should have been attracted, among the alliterative poems, particularly by *Winnere and Wastoure*, with its stately and picturesque didactic allegory, and by *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, in which a sermon on death and dissolution is made a means for the introduction, with obvious sympathy on the part of the author, of the richly varied matter of mediæval romance. Designing to compose an allegorical work after the model of these poems the author of *Death and Liſſe* found new but kindred materials in *Piers Plowman* in the war of Death on mankind and in the spiritual triumph over Death of Eternal Life in Christ. The account in *Piers Plowman* of the ravages of physical death fell in with the sermon of *Elde* in *The Parlement* and with the general current of the moralizing literature of the fifteenth century. But the personification in *Piers Plowman* lacked vividness, and in elaborating the picture the poet turned to the earlier images of Death in mediæval literature, particularly, it may be, to the description of the ugly ghost in the *Awntyrs of Arthure*. The opposing concept of Life as a type of corrupt and sinful man and the correlative sense of Death as God's instrument of punishment were out of accord with the poet's partisan sympathies. He found, however, in the winsome Lady Anima the hint for a more fitting allegorical counterpart of the grisly horror, and the passage in which she is associated with Kind suggested a new opportunity for poetic elaboration, the materials for which were ready at hand in Alanus. Life, as the hypostasis of Dame Nature, thus becomes the heroine, and with her is associated the idea of Venus and her gentle troupe of followers from the realms of love allegory and romantic fiction. Death henceforth is a hateful intruder and her theological defeat a fitting punishment. The result is a poem of peculiar charm, an unquestionable work of art, sufficiently distinct in spirit and effect

from the work of the great romantic writers of the *Gawain* group and from that of the serious moralists and social reformers who followed in the wake of "Langland." The author's name, if we could know it, would perhaps stand first, in actual poetic merit, among the English writers of the fifteenth century, and it would be not the least memorable in the great but shadowy list of those poets who found in the ancient Teutonic verse form a more powerful instrument for poetic expression than they could possibly have found in the glib octosyllabics of French romance or the broken down heroic couplet of the fifteenth century disciples of Chaucer.

## VII. METRE

*Death and Liffe* is written in that modified alliterative verse which appeared in Middle English during the second quarter of the fourteenth century and which continued for about two hundred years. The lengthening of short vowels in accented syllables and the loss of final *-e* caused this verse to differ in many respects from Old English poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The line is divided by a sense-pause into two halves, each of which contains at least two accented syllables.<sup>2</sup> These half lines are bound together, in most cases, by alliteration. According to the number and the position of the alliterative words, the lines may be classified according to the following types:

I. Two alliterative words in the first half line with one in the second: *a a / a x* or *a a / x a*. This is the normal line in *Death and Liffe*;<sup>3</sup> three hundred and forty-three out of the 459 lines in the poem are of this type. For examples, see ll. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, etc.

<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion of the Middle English alliterative poetry, see J. Schipper, *A History of English Versification*, Oxford, 1910, Chapter IV; Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, London, 1906, I, 100 ff.; K. Luick, "Die Englische Stabreimzeile im XIV, XV, und XVI Jahrhundert," *Anglia*, XI, 393-443 and 553-618; and K. Schumacher, "Studien über den Stabreim in der mittelleng. Alliterationsdichtung," *Bonner Studien*, XI (1914).

<sup>2</sup> Since the sense-pause generally coincides with the end of the line, there are fewer run-on lines than in Old English poetry.

<sup>3</sup> I have examined *Scottish Feilde*, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, and *William of Palerne* (the first 450 lines) for the purpose of comparing the metre of these poems with that of *D. & L. Sc. F.* has 420 ll., *The Parle-*



II. Two alliterative words in each half line,<sup>4</sup> a a / a a. This type is a slight variant of I.

III. Three alliterative words in the first half line with one or two in the second: a a a / a (a). The frequent occurrence of this type of line—with three alliterative words in the first half—convinces me that the triple alliteration was consciously sought after.<sup>5</sup>

IV. One alliterative word in the first half line with two in the second:<sup>6</sup> a x / a a. This type is the inverted form of I.

V. One alliterative word in each half line:<sup>7</sup> x a / x a or x a / a x or a x / a x.

VI. Double alliteration:<sup>8</sup> a a / b b. Skeat (*Percy Folio* 1, 216, note to *Scotish Feilde*, line 75) regards this type as debased since each half line is independent in its alliteration. Furnivall admits the presence of lines of this type, but he points out that in some cases, as in ll. 74-76 of *Scotish Feilde*, the alliteration is carried over from line to line. Thus the first half line of type a a / b b may form a triplet with the two halves of the preceding line and the second a triplet with the two halves of the following line. An examination of the lines in *Death and Liffe* with double alliteration shows that Furnivall was right in admitting this as a new type of alliterative line. See *Death and Liffe*, 130, 159, 209, for variations of this run-on alliterative line. But contrast lines 30, 184, 207, 262, 276, 354, 457. In *Scotish Feilde* there are four examples of run-on alliteration: 75, 85, 368 and 392.

VII. Transverse alliteration:<sup>9</sup> a b / a b.

VIII. Introverted alliteration:<sup>10</sup> a b / b a.

*ment* 665, and *D. & L.* 459. For the first type of line the results are as follows: *D. & L.*, 343, *Sc. F.*, 123, *Parl.* 564, and *Wm.*, 397.

<sup>4</sup> *D. & L.*, 1 (line 122); *Sc. F.*, 11, *Parl.*, 6, *Wm.*, 0.

<sup>5</sup> *D. & L.*, 41 (1, 3, 10, etc.), *Sc. F.* 16, *Parl.* 29, *Wm.* 3.

<sup>6</sup> *D. & L.*, 7 (18, 173, 192, 211, 221, 258, 295), *Sc. F.* 6, *Parl.* 3, *Wm.* 2.

<sup>7</sup> *D. & L.*, 16 (40, 69, 349, 372, 411, 447, etc.), *Sc. F.* 21, *Parl.* 5, *Wm.* 11.

<sup>8</sup> *D. & L.*, 11 (30, 130, 159, 184, 207, 262, 276, etc.), *Sc. F.* 12, *Parl.* 2, *Wm.* 4.

<sup>9</sup> *D. & L.*, 2 (95, 160), *Sc. F.* 1, *Parl.* 0, *Wm.* 3. In *D. & L.* there are no occurrences of the types a a b / a b and a a / a b b, which occur a few times in *Sc. F.* and *Parl.*

<sup>10</sup> *D. & L.*, 1 (285), *Sc. F.* 4, *Parl.* 0, *Wm.* 2. There are no examples in *D. & L.* of a b b / a or of a a b / b, types which occur, though very rarely, in *Parl.* and *Sc. F.*

IX. Vocalic alliteration. This type is very common in all the poems of this school.<sup>11</sup>

X. Alliteration in the first half line only: <sup>12</sup> a a / x or a a a / x.

XI. Lines without alliteration.<sup>13</sup> It is impossible to tell whether lines without alliteration are due to corruptions of the text or to the failure of the author to compose alliterative lines. In the case of *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde* some of these lines are obviously due to careless copying. Again it is significant that *Parlement*, which is relatively free from scribal errors, contains not a single example of a non-alliterative line.

The presence of such a great number of types of alliteration shows that the "rules" were followed less closely in this poem, and in other poems of this school, than in the Old English alliterative verse. The author was apparently satisfied if he succeeded in binding his half lines together by any sort of alliteration. He allows himself many poetic licenses in the manner of binding the half lines together.

In the first place, the alliteration sometimes falls upon an unstressed word, as in lines 194, 209, 245, 262, 314, 322. Sometimes the attributive adjective takes the accent, sometimes the noun. In the combination of verb plus prepositional adverb either the verb or the preposition may take the accent. In one case, line 211, both are accented.

Again, in verbal compounds either the prefix or the root may bear the alliteration. In the great majority of cases (16), however, the root of the word bears the alliteration. The prefix bears the alliteration in lines 128 and 406.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *D. & L.*, 11 (19, 57, 104, 185, etc.), *Sc. F.* 10, *Parl.* 46, *Wm.* 5. Vocalic alliteration becomes rarer in the fifteenth century. Schumacher, p. 5, discusses this type in *D. & L.* See also pp. 62 and 351.

<sup>12</sup> *D. & L.*, 15 (2, 38, 92, 121, 156, 168, 291, etc.), *Sc. F.* 28, *Parl.* 6, *Wm.* 17. A slight change in some of these lines would make them conform to the normal type. In the case of some of the proposed emendations of York Powell, Holthausen, and Brotanek, the change seems justified by a comparison with other lines. But in the majority of cases the changes are so radical as to involve a rewriting of these lines to make them conform to the normal line. The presence of type X, however, in the poems of this school is not due, I think, to the errors of the copyists, but rather to the authors themselves.

<sup>13</sup> *D. & L.*, 6, (150, 153, 171, 307, 417, 421), *Sc. F.* 6, *Parl.* 0, *Wm.* 7.

<sup>14</sup> Even in *Edgelong and everlasting*, the alliteration is on *l*, and in line

Moreover, the author of *Death and Liffe* admits many alliterations upon sounds only approximately the same, such as *w:wr* (269), *k:kn* (47, 51, 100, 118, etc.), and *j:g* (331), *s:sch* (400), *sh:st* (370), *k:qu* 357.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the number of unaccented syllables in the arsis or in anacrusis varies considerably. A comparison of *Death and Liffe* with *The Destruction of Troy* shows that the regularity of the metre in the latter is not to be found in our poem.<sup>16</sup> It is probable, therefore, that the author of *Death and Liffe* was imitating a form of verse which he understood only imperfectly. In view of these facts, therefore, it is extremely hazardous to attempt to emend the unusual or imperfect lines in order to make them conform to the more rigid requirements of Old English alliterative verse or even to the requirements of the early Middle English alliterative poems. The attempts of York Powell, Holthausen, and Brotanek to normalize the imperfectly alliterating lines in *Death and Liffe* involve such radical changes in the poem as to constitute a rewriting of most of the difficult passages.<sup>17</sup> Such changes are based on the assumption that the author's copy of the poem was entirely regular in metre. But such an assumption,

152 the alliteration is (*v*)*glyest—ghosts—gone*. This false division of a word is seen also in (*E*)*menyduse*, *Parl.* 342, 359, (*Ec*)*clesiastes—clerke—(de)clares*, 638. There is no difference between *D. & L.* and the other poems of this school in respect to the alliteration of compound words.

<sup>15</sup> Such combinations were evidently perfectly permissible, however, according to the "rules" of this school. In *Parl.*, which, like *D. & L.*, is comparatively strict in this respect, I find only *k:kn*, *s:sh*, and *w:wh*. *Sc. F.* and *Wm.* are more lax. In *Sc. F.* I find *w:v*, *sk:k*, *sk:k:kn*, *g:j*, *g:k*, and *sq:sw:sn*; in *Wm.* *k:ch*, *k:kn*, *w:v*, *w:wh*, *s:sh*. See also Schumacher, pp. 44, 54, and 62.

<sup>16</sup> I find it impossible to make the lines of *D. & L.* conform to the types given by Luick, *Anglia* XI, 404, as characteristic of *The Destruction of Troy*. For example, *breathed ffull sweete*, 23, may be scanned / x x / (*A*<sub>1</sub>) or / x x / x (*A*) according to the pronunciation of the final -e; and *with their bright Leaues*, 25, as x x / / (*C*<sub>1</sub>) or as x x / / x (*B*). Since there is no apparent regularity in the number of unaccented syllables in the arsis, the metrical evidence does not help us to determine whether final -e was pronounced in this poem.

<sup>17</sup> York Powell, "Notes on Death and Life," *Eng. Stud.*, VII, 97 ff.; Holthausen, "Zu Death and Life," *Anglia Beiblatt*, XXIII, 157 ff.; Brotanek, review of Arber's *Dunbar Anthology*, *Anglia Beiblatt*, XIII, 176-7.

I think, is entirely unwarranted. The divergencies from the older alliterative types are so numerous and so varied that we must assume that almost any sort of alliteration was allowed, provided only that there was some semblance of alliteration. For a discussion of some<sup>18</sup> of these proposed emendations see notes to lines 19, 28, 30, 46, 95, 130, 153, 156, 221, 239, 285, 311, 321 and 352.

Because of a similarity in metrical structure, Percy believed that *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde* were by the same author.<sup>19</sup> Skeat advances as one of his arguments for common authorship the "remarkable similarity in the style, diction, and rhythm of the two poems."<sup>20</sup>

The comparison that has been made between these two poems shows that they are similar in metre, but that they are by no means remarkably similar. There is, of course, a close similarity between all the poems of this school, but this similarity is best explained by imitation and by common traditions, and not by identity of authorship. Luick's discussion<sup>21</sup> of the relation between *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde* is well worth summarizing.

1. In *Death and Liffe* there are fewer cases of sonorous final syllables than in *Scotish Feilde* (49% : 66%).

2. Short half lines are more numerous in *Death and Liffe* (19, 46, 158, 237, 244, etc.).

3. "Very striking for the sixteenth century, in my opinion, is the infinitive ending *-en* in line 392: *to kithen his strenght*. Although this form is not certainly confirmed by the metre as the author's form, it is nevertheless protected."

4. The alliteration *ryde:reschew:wrought* (215) at first sight would point to a late date of composition. But since *wr* elsewhere always alliterates only with *w* (15, 221, 233, 269, 296), this

<sup>18</sup> I have not attempted to discuss all of these proposed emendations, but have limited myself to one or two of each type. Each emendation discussed represents a whole group of proposed emendations.

<sup>19</sup> "It is in the same measure as the Ballad of *Liffe & Death*, which from a similitude of style, seems to have been written by the same author." (Cited in the Hales-Furnivall edition of the Percy Folio MS., I, 199, fn.)

<sup>20</sup> *Percy Folio MS.*, ed. Hales-Furnivall, III, 49.

<sup>21</sup> *Anglia*, XI, 608-613.

single instance of the *r:wr* alliteration may be explained as the mistake of the copyist or as a forced rhyme. In *Scotish Feilde*, however, in spite of the equal length of the two poems, *wr* only once alliterates with *w* (*wende:will:wrought*, 70), the usual alliteration being *wr:r*.<sup>22</sup> Since *w* is not pronounced in *Scotish Feilde* this poem must be later than *Death and Liffe*.

5. "I think, therefore, that the two poems are not by the same author, but that *Death and Liffe* is older than *Scotish Feilde* and belongs to a fifteenth century follower of Langley. Perhaps it even belongs to a time when *-e* still had its value in the poetic language."<sup>23</sup>

6. *Death and Liffe* was well known to the author of *Scotish Feilde*.

7. Both poems are greatly influenced by the traditions of the older poetry of the fourteenth century (especially by *The Destruction of Troy*). This influence of the older alliterative poetry is seen in the vocabulary, in the alliterative formulas, and in the archaic style. Many alliterative combinations and many traditions proper only to the fourteenth century appear in *Death and Liffe* and *Scotish Feilde* and are to be explained by the author's imitation of the older alliterative poetry.

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<sup>22</sup> Luick explains this one exception by the fact that the *wr:w* combination is due to a later metathesis of *worked*, the author's original.

<sup>23</sup> Luick gives no evidence to support this important statement. See note to page 227.



## DEATH & LIFFE

2 fitts

[I]

Christ, Christen King, *that* on the crosse tholed,  
 hadd paines & passyons to deffend our soules,  
 giue vs grace on the ground the greatlye to serve  
 for *that* royall red blood *that* rann ffrom thy side;  
 & take away of thy winne word as the world asketh, 5  
*that* is richer of renowne, rents or others.  
 For boldnesse of body nor blytheness of hart,  
 coninge of clearkes ne cost vpon earth,  
 but all wasteth away & worthes to nought,  
 when Death driueth att the doore with his darts keene. 10  
 Then noe truse can be taken, noe treasure on earth;  
 but all lordshipps be lost & the liffe both.  
 If thou haue pleased the Prince *that* paradise weldeth  
 there is noe bearne borne *that* may thy blisse recon.  
 But if thou haue wrongffully wrought & will not amend, 15  
 thou shalt byterlye bye or else the booke ffayleth.  
 Therefore begin in God to greaten our workes,  
 & in his ffaythffull Sonne *that* ffreelye him ffolloweth,  
 in hope of the Holy Ghost *that* yeeld shall neuer.  
 God *that* is gracyous & gouerne[th] vs all 20  
 bringe vs into blisse, *that* brought vs out of ball.  
 Thus ffared I through a ffryth were fflowers were manye,

In the textual notes P. stands for Percy, Sk. for Skeat, F. for Furnivall, Po. for Powell, Br. for Brotanek, and Holt. for Holthausen. Modern usage is followed in punctuation and capitalization.

1. The lines of *Death and Liffe* are written short up to line 87 of the text. From that point on the lines are written long, with no pause-marks in the MS.

10. MS. *doere*?—F.

20. MS. *gouerne*.

bright bowes in the banko breathed ffull sweete,  
 the red rayling roses, the riches of fflowers,  
 land broad on their bankes with their bright leaues, 25  
 & a riner *that* was rich runn ouer the greene  
 with still sturring streames *that* streamed ffull bright.  
 Over the glittering ground as I there glode,  
 methought itt lenthened my liffe to looke on the bankes.  
 Then among the fayre flowers I settled me to sitt 30  
 vnder a huge hawthorne *that* hore was of blossomes;  
 I bent my backe to the bole & blenched to the streames.  
 Thus prest I on apace vnder the greene hawthorne.  
 ffor breme of the birds & breath of the fflowers,  
 & what for waching & wakinge & wandering about 35  
 in my seate where I sate I sayed a sleepe;  
 lying edgelong on the ground, list all my seluen,  
 deepe dreames and dright droue mee to hart.  
 Methought walking *that* I was in a wood stronge,  
 vpon a great mountaine where mores were large, 40  
*that* I might see on euerye side 17 miles,  
 both of woods & wasts & walled townes,  
 comelye castles & cleare with caruen towers,  
 parkes & pallaces & pastures ffull many,  
 all the world full of welth vunlye to behold. 45  
 I sett me downe softlye and sayd these words:  
 "I will not kere out of kythe before I know more."  
 & I wayted me about wonders to know  
 & [a] ffayrlye beffell soe fayre me bethought:  
 I saw on the south syde a seemelye sight 50

24. *Riches* for *richest*—P. and Po. But Cf. *comlyes*, 202, and *cs* for *est* in the second person singular indicative of the verb.

25. *Land*. See Glossary.

37. *List* for *lift*, left alone? Sk. See note.

45. *Vunlye*, forte winlye, i. e., pleasantly, jucunde. Lye—P. *viewlye?*—F. The ms. reading is certainly not *winlye*; we read *vunlye*. See Glossary.

49. ms. *I = it?*—P. York Powell suggests that *I* should be *a*.

50. F reads *saw*. *Saw* and *saye* are the two forms of the preterit of *see*. Cf. lines 151, 211.

of comelye knights full keene & knights ffull noble,  
 princes in the presse proudlye attyred,  
 dukes *that* were doughtye & many deere erles,  
 sweeres & swaynes, *that* swarmed ffull thicke.  
 There was neither hill nor holte nor haunt there beside 55  
 but itt was planted ffull of people, the plaine and the roughe.  
 There ouer *that* oste estward I looked  
 into a boolish banke, the brightest of other,  
*that* shimered and shone as the sheere heauen  
 throughe the light of a Ladye *that* longed therin. 60  
 Shee came cheereing ffull comlye with companye noble,  
 vpon cleare clothes, were all of cleare gold,  
 layd brode vpon the bent with brawdres ffull riche,  
 before *that* ffayre on the ffeeld where shee fforth passed.  
 Shee was brighter of her blee then was the bright sonn, 65  
 her rudd redder then the rose *that* on the rise hangeth,  
 meekely smiling with her mouth & merry in her lookes,  
 euer laughing for loue as she like wold;  
 & as shee came by the bankes the boughes eche one  
 they lowted to *that* Ladye & layd forth their branches. 70  
 Blossomes & burgens breathed ffull sweete,  
 fflowers fflourished in the frith where she fforth stepedd,  
 & the grasse *that* was gray greened beliuē.  
 Breame birds on the boughes busilye did singe  
 & all the wild in the wood winlye the ioyed. 75  
 Kings kneeled on their knees knowing *that* Ladye,  
 & all the princes in the presse & the proud dukes,  
 barrons & bachelours all they bowed ffull lowe;  
 all *profrereth* her to please, the pore and the riche.  
 Shee welcometh them ffull winlye with wordes ffull hend, 80  
 both barnes & birds, beastes & fowles.

Then *that* lowly Ladye, on land where schee standeth,  
*that* was comelye cladd in kirtle & mantle

61. *Companye*. Only half of the *n* in the MS.

82. *Lowly* = *lously*—P. and Po. But *v* and *w* are confused in this poem.  
 Cf. *vunlye*, 45, and see note.

of goodlyest greene *that* euer groome ware,  
 for the kind of *that* eloth can noe elarke tell; 85  
 & shee the most gracyous groome *that* on the ground longed;  
 of her druryes to deeme to dull be my witts,  
 & the price of her [perrie] can no p[erson] tell,  
 & the colour of her kirtle was earuen ffull lowe,  
*that* her blisfull breastes bearnes might behold, 90  
 with a naked necke *that* neighed her till,  
*that* gaue light on the land as beames of the sunn.  
 All the *kings* christened with their cleere gold  
 might not buy *that* ilke broche *that* buckeled her mantle,  
 & the crowne on her head was earuen in heauen, 95  
 with a scepter sett in her hand of selcoth gemmes.  
 Thus louelye to looke vpon on land shee abydeth.  
 Merry were the meanye of men *that* shee had,  
 blyth bearnes of blee bright as the sunn:  
 Sir Comfort *that* knight when the court dineth, 100  
 Sir Hope & Sir Hind, yee sturdye beene both,  
 Sir Liffe & Sir Likinge & Sir Lone alsoe,  
 Sir Cunninge & Sir Curtesye *that* curteous were of deeds,  
 & Sir Honor ouer all vnder her seluen,  
 a stout man & a staleworth, her steward I-wisse. 105  
 She had ladyes of loue longed her about:  
 Dame Mirth & Dame Meekenes & Dame Mercy the hynd,  
 Dallyance & Disport, 2 damsells ffull sweete,  
 with all beawtye [&] blisse bearnes to behold.  
 There was minstrelsy made in full many a wise, 110

88. Some word, probably a word beginning with *p*, has obviously been omitted by the copyist. "It is surely the word *perrie*, precious stones, never missed in describing ladies."—Sk. This reading is very probable. See note.

*P* = *Person*—*P*. The word is just as likely to be *Prince*, a word frequently used in this poem.

90. *Might*. The *m* has a short extra stroke at the beginning which makes it resemble an imperfect *nn*.

103. *Cunninge*, one stroke too few in the ms.—F. The last *n* lacks a stroke or this stroke coincides with the first stroke of the *g*.

109. *ð* has certainly been omitted after *beawtye*. Cf. l. 242.

who-soe had craft or cuninge kindlye to shoue,  
 both of birds & beastes & bearnes in the leaues;  
 & ffishes of the flood ffaine of her were;  
 birds made merrie with their mouth, as they in mind cold.  
 Tho I was moued with *that* mirth that maruell mee thought; 115  
 what woman *that* was that all the world lowted,  
 I thought speedilye to spye, speede if I might.

Then I kered to a knight, Sir Comfort the good,  
 kneeling low on my knees curteouslye him prayسد.  
 I willed him of his worshipp to witt me the sooth 120  
 of yonder *Ladye* of loue & of her royall meanye.  
 Hee cherished me cheerlye by cheeke & by chin,  
 & sayd, " Certes, my sonne, the sooth thou shalt knowe.  
 This is my Lady Dame Liffe *that* leadeth vs all;  
 shee is worthy & wise, the welder of ioye, 125  
 greatlye gouerneth the ground & the greene grasse.  
 Shee hath ffostered & ffed thee sith thou was ffirst borne,  
 & yett beffore thou wast borne shee bred in thy hart.  
 Thou art welcome, I-wisse, vnto my winn Ladye.  
 If thou wilt wonders witt feare not to ffaine 130  
 & I shall kindlye thee ken, care thou noe more."  
 Then I was fearfull enoughe & ffaythffullye thought  
*that* I shold long with Dame Liffe & loue her for euer;  
 there shall no man vpon mold my mind from her take  
 for all the glitteringe gold vnder the god of heauen. 135

Thus in liking this liuinge (the longer the more)  
 till *that* it neighed neere noone & one hower after  
 there was rydinge & revell *that* ronge in the bankes;  
 all the world was full woe winne to behold.  
 Or itt turned from 12 till 2 of the clocke 140  
 much of this melodye was maymed & marde.  
 In a nooke of the north there was a noyse hard  
 as itt had beene a horne, the highest of others,  
 with the biggest bere *that* euer bearne wist,

117-119. These lines are incorrectly written as four lines in the MS.

136. F. emends *Longer* to *Longed*. But see Glossary and note.



& the burlyest blast *that* euer blowne was 145  
 throughe the rattlinge rout runge ouer the ffeelds;  
 the ground gogled for greeffe of *that* grim dame.  
 I went nere out of my witt for wayling care.  
 Yett I bode on the bent & boldlye looked;  
 once againe into the north mine eye then I cast. 150  
 I there saye a sight was sorrowfull to behold,  
 one of the vglyest ghosts *that* on the earth gone.  
 There was no man of this sight but hee was affrayd,  
 soe grislye & great & grim to behold.  
 & a quintfull queene came quakinge before, 155  
 with a carued crowne on her head, all of pure gold,  
 & shee the ffoulest ffreake *that* formed was euer,  
 both of hide & hew & heare alsoe.  
 Shee was naked as my nayle both aboue & belowe;  
 shee was lapped about in linenn breeches; 160  
 a more fearffull face no freake might behold,  
 for shee was long & leane & lodlye to see.  
 There was noe man on the mold soe mightye of strenght  
 but a looke of *that* Lady & his liſſe passed.  
 Her eyes farden as the fyer *that* in the furnace burnes; 165  
 they were hollow in her head with full heauye browes;  
 her cheekes were leane, with lipps full side,  
 with a maruelous mouth full of long tushes,  
 & the nebb of her nose to her navell hanged,  
 & her lere like the lead *that* latelye was beaten. 170  
 Shee bare in her right hand & vnrid weapon,  
 a bright burnisht blade all bloody beronen,  
 & in the left hand, like the legg of a grype,  
 with the talents *that* were touchinge & teenfull enoughe.  
 With *that* shee burnisht vp her brand & bradd out her geere; 175

151. *Saye*. F. reads *saw*, but the MS. certainly has *saye*. See line 50 and textual note.

165. *Her*. MS. *his* is probably due to attraction from the preceding line. The pronouns in this poem are greatly confused. Cf. lines 192, 322, 393, etc.

171. & for *an*—P.

& I for feare of *that* freake ffell in a swond.  
 Had not Sir Comfort come & my care stinted,  
 I had beene slaine with *that* sight of *that* sorrowfull Ladye.  
 Then he lowted to me low & learned me well;  
 sayd, " Be thou not abashed, but abyde there a while; 180  
 here may thou sitt & see selclothes ffull manye.  
 Yonder damsell is Death *that* dresseth her to smyte.  
 Loe, Pryde passeth before & the price beareth,  
 many sorrowffull souldiers following her fast after:  
 both Enuye & Anger, in their yerne weeds, 185  
 Morninge & Mone, Sir Mis[c]heefe his fflere,  
 Sorrow & Sicknesse & Siking in Hart;  
 all *that* were lothinge of their liffe were lent to her court.  
 When she draweth vp her darts & dresseth her to smite,  
 there is no groome vnder God may garr her to stint. 190  
 Then I blushed to *that* bearne & balefullye looked;  
 [s]he stepped forth barefooted on the bents browne,  
 the greene grasse in her gate she grindeth all to powder,  
 trees tremble for ffeare & tipen to the ground,  
 leaues lighten downe lowe & leauen their might, 195  
 fowles faylen to fflie when the heard wapen,  
 & the ffishes in the fflood ffaylen to swimme  
 ffor dread of Dame Death *that* dolefullye threateth.  
 With *that* shee hyeth to the hill & the heard ffindeth;  
 in the roughest of the rout shee reacheth forth darts. 200  
 There shee fell att the first flappe 1500  
 of comelyes queenes with crowne & kings full noble;  
 proud princes in the presse prestlye shee quellethe;

186. MS. *Misheefe*. F. prints *Mis[c]heefe*.

188. *Lent*, led?—P. MS. *letit*, or a *t* crossed through for the first stroke of an *n*—F. I read the MS. as *let*—undotted *i*—*t*, or better, as *lent*, with *n* written over a *t*. See Glossary.

192. MS. *he* for *she*—P. Cf. lines 165 and 393. *He*, of course, may be feminine, but since this is the only occurrence of the form in the poem, we think it more likely that the copyist has miswritten the original *she*. See note.

197. MS. *Swimme* is possibly a miswriting for *swimme*.

of dukes *that* were doughtye shee dang out the braynes;  
 merry maydens on the mold shee mightilye killethe; 205  
 there might no weapon them warrant nor no walled towne;  
 younge children in their craddle they dolefullye dyen;  
 shee spareth ffor no specyaltye but spilleth the gainest;  
 the more woe shee worketh more mightye shee seemeth.

When my Lady Dame Liffe looked on her deeds 210  
 & saw how dolefullye shee dunge downe her people,  
 shee cast vp a crye to the hye King of heauen.  
 & he hearkneth itt hendlye in his hye throne;  
 he called on Countenance & bade his course take,  
 " Ryde thou to the reschew of yonder wrought Ladye." 215  
 Hee was bowne att his bidd & bradd on his way,  
*that* wight as the wind *that* wappeth in the skye.  
 He ran out of the rainebow through the ragged clowds  
 & light on the land where the lords [lay] slaine,  
 & vnto dolefull Death he dresses him to speake; 220  
 sayth, " Thou wrathefull *Queene, that* euer woe worketh,  
 cease of thy sorrow thy soueraigne comandeth,  
 & let thy burnished blade on the bent rest,  
*that* my Lady Dame Liffe her likinge may haue."  
 Then Death glowed & gran for gryme of her talke, 225  
 but shee did as shee dained, durst shee noe other;  
 shee pight the poynt of her sword in the plaine earth,  
 & with a looke full layeth shee looked on the hills.

Then my Ladye Dame Liffe shee looketh full gay,  
 kyreth to Countenance & him comelye thanks, 230  
 kissed kindlye *that knight*, then carped she no more;  
 but vnto dolefull Death she dresseth her to speake;  
 sayth: " Thou woefull wretch, weaknesse of care,  
 bold birth full of bale, bringer of sorrowe,  
 dame daughter of the devill, Death is thy name: 235  
 but if thy fare be thy fairer the feend haue thy soule.

218. *Rainebow*. The *w* is made over a *y* in the MS.—F.

219. Some word, probably a word beginning with *l*, has been omitted by the scribe. We adopt F's emendation.

Coudest thou any cause ffind, thou kaitiffe wretch,  
 that neither reason nor wright may raigne with thy name?  
 Why kills thou the body *that* neuer care rought?  
 The grasse nor the greene trees greeued the neuer, 240  
 but come fforth in their kinds Christyans to helpe,  
 with all beawtye & blisse *that* barne might devise.  
 But of my meanye thou marreth marveild I haue  
 how thou dare doe them to death, eche day soe manye,  
 & the handy worke of him *that* heauen weldeth. 245  
 How keepeth thou his comandements, thou kaytiffe retch!  
 Wheras banely hee them blessed & biddeth them thrive,  
 waxe fforth in the wor[l]d & worth vnto manye,  
 & thou lett them of their leake with thy lidded turnes.  
 But with wondering & with woe thou waiteth them full yorne, 250  
 & as a theefe in a rout thou throngeth them to death,  
*that* neither Nature nor I ffor none of thy deeds  
 may bring vp our bearnes, their bale thee betyde.  
 But-if thou blinn of *that* bine thou buy must full deere;  
 they may vary the weeke *that* euer thou wast fformed." 255  
 Then Death dolefully drew vp her browes,  
 armed her to answer & vpright shee standeth,  
 & sayd: "O louely Liffe, cease thou such wordes.  
 Thou payneth thee with pratinge to pray me to cease.  
 Itt is reason & right *that* I may rent take, 260  
 thus to kill of the kind both *kings* & dukes,  
 loyall ladds & liuelye, of ilke sort some;  
 all shall drye with the dints *that* I deale with my handa.  
 I wold haue kept the comandement of the hye King of heauen,  
 but the bearne itt brake *that* thou bred vp ffirft 265  
 when Adam & Eue of the earth were shapen,

242. *ms. harme.* "The alliteration requires *b*; and *h* is continually miswritten for *b*. It should be *barne* = *bearne* (265)"—Sk. So also Po.

248. *ms. word* for *world*—Po.

250. *Wondering*, only half of the last *n* in the *ms.*

251. *ms. then* for *them*.

259. The *t* of *pratinge* is written over the *s* in the *ms.* F. reads *prasinge*.

266. The *e* of *Eue* has a tag on the end like an *r*—F.

& were put into paradice to play with their selues,  
 & were brought into blisse, bidd if the wold.  
 He warned them nothing in the world but a wretched branche  
 of the ffayntiest ffruit *that* euer in ffrith grew. 270  
 Yett his bidding they brake, as the booke recordeth.  
 When Eue fell to the ffruite with ffingars white  
 & plucked them of the plant & poysoned them both,  
 I was ffaine of *that* ffray, my ffawchyon I gryped  
 & delt Adam such a dint *that* hee dolue euer after. 275  
 Eue & her ofspring I hitt them I hope;  
 for all the musters *that* they made I mett with them once.  
 Therefore, Liffe, thou me leaue, I loue thee but a litle;  
 I hate thee & thy houshold & thy hyndes all.  
 Mee gladdeth not of their glee nor of their gay lookes; 280  
 att thy dalliance & thy disport noe dayntye I haue;  
 thy ffayre liffe & thy ffairenesse ffeareth me but litle;  
 thy blisse is my bale breuelye of others,  
 there is no game vnder heauen soe gladlye I wishe  
 as to haue a slapp with my ffawchyon att thy fayre state." 285

## [II]

Then Liffe on the land ladylike shee speaks:  
 sayth, " These words thou hast wasted, wayte thou no other;  
 shall thy bitter brand neuer on my body byte.  
 I am grounded in God & grow for euermore;  
 but to these men of the mold marvell methinketh 290  
 in whatt hole of thy hart thou thy wrath keepeth.  
 Where ioy & gentlenesse are ioyned together

269. *Wretched*. The *r* is written over some other letter.

283. *Breuelye*. *Bremelye*?—P. The fourth letter may be an *u*, but is more likely *u*, as F. reads it.

286. The scribe has bracketed lines 286-291 and has written "2 fitt" in the margin.

292. The *i* of *ioyned* has an accent on it as if for a *c*—F.



betweene a wight & his wiffe & his winne children,  
 & when ffaith & fellowship are ffasted ffor aye,  
 loue & charitye, *which* our Lord likethe, 295  
 then thou waleth them with wracke & wratheffully beginneth;  
 vncurteouslye thou cometh, vnknowne of them all,  
 & lacheth away the land *that* the lord holdeth,  
 or woryes his wiffe or walts downe his children.  
 Mikle woe thus thou waketh where mirth was before. 300  
 This is a deed of the devill, Death, thou vset.  
 But if thou leaue not thy lake & learne thee a better,  
 thou wilt lach att the last a lothelich name."  
 "Doe away, damsell," quoth Death; "I dread thee nought.  
 Of my losse *that* I losse lay thou noe thought; 305  
 thou prouet mee full prestlye of many *proper* thinge;  
 I haue not all kinds soe ill as thou me vpbraydest.  
 Where I wend on my way the world will depart,  
 bearnes wold be ouer bold bales ffor to want,  
 the 7 sinnes for to serue & sett them full euer, 310  
 & giue no glory vnto God, *that* sendeth vs all grace.  
 If the dint of my dart deared them neuer,  
 to lett them worke all their will itt were litle ioy.  
 Shold I for their fayrnesse their ffoolishnes allowe?  
 My Liffe (giue thou me leaue), noe leed vpon earth 315  
 but I shall master his might, mauger his cheekes,  
 as a conquerour keene, biggest of other,  
 to deale dolefull dints & doe as my list;  
 for I fayled neuer in fight but I the ffeild wan,  
 sith the ffirst ffreake *that* formed was euer, 320  
 & will not leaue till the last bee on the beere layd.  
 But sitt sadlye, thou Liffe, & the soothe thou shalt know.  
 If euer any man vpon mold any mirth had,  
*that* leaped away with thee, Liffe, & laughed me to scorne,

293. *a wight*, MS. *his wight*, probably by attraction from the following *his*. So also Po.

315. The parentheses are in the MS.

322. MS. *thy Liffe*. *Thy* for *thou*—P. Cf. lines 165, 192, and 393.

but I dang them with my dints vnto the derffe earthe. 325  
 Both Adam & Eue & Abell I killed,  
 Moyses & Methasula & the meeke Aronn,  
 Iosua & Ioseph & Iacob the smoothe,  
 Abraham & Isace & Esau the roughe;  
 Samuell, for all his ffiggers, I slew with my hands, 330  
 & Ionathan, his gentle sonne, in Gilboa hills;  
 David dyed on the dints *that* I delt off;  
 soe did Salomon, his sonne, *that* was sage holden,  
 & Alexander alsoe, to whom all the world lowted;  
 in the middest of his mirth I made him to bow; 335  
 the hye honor *that* he had helped him but litle.  
 When I swang him on the swire to swelt him behoued.  
 Arthur of England & Hector the keene,  
 both Lancelott & Leonades, with other leeds manye,  
 & Gallaway the good *Knight* & Gawaine the hynde, 340  
 & all the rowte I rent ffrom the round table;  
 was none soe hardye nor soe hye, soe holy nor soe wicked,  
 but I burst them with my brand & brought them assunder.  
 How shold any wight weene to winn me on ground?  
 Haue not I iusted gentlye with Iesu of heauen? 345  
 He was frayd of my fface in ffreshest of time.  
 Yett I knocked him on the crosse & carued throughe his hart."  
 & with *that* shee cast of her crowne & kneeled downe lowe  
 when shee minned the name of *that* noble Prince.  
 Soe did Liffe vpon land & her leeds all, 350  
 both of heauen & of earth & of hell ffeends;  
 all they lowted downe lowe their Lord to honor.  
 Then Liffe kneeled on her knees with her crowne in her hand,  
 & looketh vp a long while towards the hye heauen;  
 she riseth vpp rudlye & dresseth her to speake; 355

355. *Rudlye*. For *radyle*, A. S. *radlice*, quickly, speedily?—F. Po. and Holt. emend to *radlye*. The tips of the *u* are close together and the second letter, therefore, may be read as an imperfect *a*. Both *radlye* and *rudlye* are often used in alliteration with *rise*. *Rudlye rise*, although not quite so common as *radlye rise*, is perfectly intelligible.

shee calleth to her companye & biddeth them come neere,  
 both kings and queenes & comelye dukes:  
 " Worke wiselye by your witts my words to heare,  
*that* I speake ffor your speed & spare itt noe longer."  
 Then shee turneth to them & talketh these words: 360  
 she sayth, " Dame Death, of thy deeds now is thy doome shapen  
 through thy wittles words *that* thou hast carped,  
 which thou makest with thy mouth & mightylye avowes.  
 Thou hast blowen thy blast breemlye abroad;  
 how hast thou wasted this world sith wights were first, 365  
 euer murthered & marde, thou makes thy avant.  
 Of one point lett vs proue or wee part in sunder:  
 how didest thou iust att Ierusalem with Iesu my Lord?  
 Where thou deemed his deat[h] in one dayes time,  
 there was thou shamed & shent & stripped ffor aye. 370  
 When thou saw the King come with the crosse on his shoulder,  
 on the top of Caluarye thou camest him against;  
 like a traytour vntrew, treason thou thought.  
 Thou layd vpon my leege Lord lotheliche hands,  
 sithen beate him on his body & buffeted him rightlye, 375  
 till the railing red blood ran from his sides;  
 sith rent him on the rood with ffull red wounds.  
 To all the woes *that* him wasted (I wott not ffew),  
 tho deemedst to haue beene dead & dressed for euer.  
 but, Death, how didst thou then with all thy derffe words, 380  
 when thou prickedst att his pappe with the poynt of a speare,  
 & touched the tabernackel of his trew hart  
 where my bower was bigged to abyde for euer?

356. MS. *thenn*.

364. *Breemlye* is Percy's suggestion. The MS. has *breenlye* or *breitlye* (undotted *i*). The word is therefore *breemlye* or *breulye*. Since the alliterative group *blow-blast-breemlye* is so common, we read *breemlye* with P., Po., and F.

369. MS. *deat*. F. prints *deat[h]*.

376. *Sides*. F. prints *s[i]des*. But the *i* is dotted. The imperfect letter is *d*, which lacks the first stroke.

379. *Tho*. See note.

When the glory of his godhead glented in thy face,  
 then was thou feard of this fare in thy false hart; 385  
 then thou hyed into hell hole, to hyde thee belive;  
 thy fawchon flew out of thy fist, soe fast thou thee hyed.  
 Thou durst not blushe once backe, for better or worse,  
 but drew thee downe ffull in *that* deepe hell,  
 & bade them barre bigglye Belzebub his gates. 390  
 Then the told them tydands *that* teened them sore,  
 how *that King* came to kithen his strenght,  
 & how [he] had beaten thee on thy bent & thy brand taken,  
 with euerlasting Liffe *that* longed him till.  
 Then the sorrow was ffull sore att Sathans hart; 395  
 hee threw ffeends in the ffyer, many ffell thousands;  
 & Death, thou dange itt on whilest thou dree might;  
 for ffalte of thy ffawchyon, thou fought with thy hand.  
 Bost this neuer of thy red deeds, thou ravished bitche!  
 Thou may shrinke for shame when thou the sooth heares. 400  
 Then I leapt to my Lord *that* caught me vpp soone,  
 & all wounded as hee was, with weapon in hand,  
 he fastened ffoote vpon earth & ffollowed thee ffast  
 till he came to the caue *that* cursed was holden.  
 He abode before Barathron *that* bearne while he liked, 405  
*that* was euer merke as midnight with mourni[n]ge & sorrowe;  
 he cast a light on the land as beames on the sunn.  
 Then cryed *that King* with a cleere stenen,  
 ‘ Pull open your ports, you princes within;  
 here shall come in the *King* crowned with ioy, 410  
 which is the hiest burne, in battell to smite.’  
 There was ffleringe of ffeends throughe the fyer gaynest,  
 hundreds hurled on heapes in holes about.  
 The broad gates all of brasse brake all in sunder  
 & the *King* with his crosse came in before. 415

393. MS. *he* for *she*. Cf. lines 165, 192, and 322.

400. The Hales-Furnivall text inadvertently omits the second *thou*.

401. *that* is written over the abbreviation for *and*.

406. MS. *mournige*.

He leapt vnto Lucifer *that* Lord himselfe;  
 then he went to the tower where chaynes were manye,  
 & bound him soe biglye *that* hee for bale rored.  
 Death, thou daredst *that* day & durst not be seene  
 ffor all the glittering gold vnder god himseluen. 420  
 Then to the tower hee went where chanes are many;  
 hee tooke Adam & Eue out of the old world,  
 Abraham & Isaac & all *that* hee wold,  
 David & Danyell & many deare bearnes  
*that* were put into prison & pained ffull long. 425  
 Hee betooke me the treasure *that* neuer shall haue end,  
*that* neuer danger of death shold me deere after.  
 Then wee wenten fforth winlye together  
 & left the dungeon of devills & thee, Death, in the midst.  
 & now thou prickes ffor pride, praising thy seluen. 430  
 Therefore bee not abashed, my barnes soe deere,  
 of her ffauchyon soe ffeirce nor of her ffell words.  
 Shee hath noe might, nay no meane, no more you to greeue,  
 nor on your comelye corsses to clapp once her hands.  
 I shall looke you ffull liuelye, & latche ffull well 435  
 & keere yee ffurther of this kithe aboue the cleare skyes.  
 If yee [loue] well the Ladye *that* light in the mayden,  
 & be christened with creame & in your creede beleuee,  
 haue no doubt of yonder Death, my deare children,  
 for yonder is damned with devills to dwell, 440  
 where is wondering & woe & wayling ffor sorrow.  
 Death was damned *that* day, daring ffull still.  
 Shee hath no might, nay no maine, to meddle with yonder ost,  
 against euerlasting Liffe *that* Ladye soe true."  
 Then my Lady Dame Liffe with lookes soe gay, 445

437. Some word has been omitted by the scribe. P. suggests *serue* or *loue*. We supply *loue*, as Po. and F. suggest.

440. The Hales-Furnivall text supplies *death* after *yonder*. But since *yonder* is used absolutely, *death* is not necessary for the meaning, the alliteration, or the metre.

445. *With*. The scribe wrote *vp* and then added *th* without changing the *vp* to *w*. *Vpon* is never abbreviated in this poem.



*that* was comelye cladd with kirtle and mantle,  
 shee crosses the companye with her cleare ffingers.  
 All the dead on the ground doughtilye shee rayseth  
 fairer by 2 ffold then they before were. [450  
 With *that* shee hyeth ouer the hills with hundreds ffull manye.  
 I wold have ffollowed on *that* faire, but no further I might;  
 what with wandering & with woe I waked beliue.  
 Thus fared I throw a ffrith in a ffresh time,  
 where I sayd a sleepe in a slade greene.  
 There dreamed I the dreame with dread all befrighted. 455  
 But hee *that* rent all was on the rood riche itt himseluen.  
 & bringe vs to his blisse with blessings enowe!  
 Therto, Iesu of Ierusalem, grant vs thy grace,  
 & saue there our howse holy for euer! Amen.

ffinis.

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446. *Kirtle*. MS. *christall*. Cf. ll. 83 and 89.

447. This line was accidentally omitted in the H.-F. text.

450. *Manye*. The *n* is imperfect in the MS.

452. *Wandering*. There is only one stroke for the last *n* in the MS., or the first stroke of the *g* is written over part of the *n*.

455. *With*. MS. *which*.

## NOTES

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P. = Percy (notes recorded in the Folio ms. and reprinted in the Hales-Furnivall edition), Sk. = Skeat (notes in the Hales-Furnivall edition), F. = Furnivall (*ibid.*), Po. = York Powell (*Eng. Stud.*, vii, 97-101), Br. = Brotanek (*Anglia Beiblatt*, xiii, 176-177), Holt. = Holthausen (*Anglia Beiblatt*, xxiii, 157-159). The quotations from *Piers Plowman* are from the C version.

1 ff. Cf. *The Crowned King*, 1:

Crist, crowned kyng that on cros didest.

A similar invocation is to be found in *Morte Arthure*.

2. *hadd paines*. Po., Br., and Holt. read "hard paines." The syntax does not demand the change.

*deffend*. Po. reads "preserve." Holt. "repair" to improve the alliteration. But the type of line without alliteration in the second half is common enough. See the section on Metre in the Introduction.

4. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 3990:

This ryalle rede blode ryne appone erthe.

5 ff. The text here is very puzzling. Perhaps the meaning is "give us grace to serve thee . . . and to take to ourselves thy joyous word, as the world, with its riches etc., demands that we should do." The phrase "as the world asketh" is a commonplace. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, I, 21:

Worchynge and wandrynge as the worlde asketh.

Also *Morte Arthure*:

werke nowe thi wirchipe as the worlde askes (2187).

6. Cf. *Parlement*, 634:

Ne ther is reches ne rent may rawnsome 3our lyves.

9. *worthes to nought*. Cf. *Parlement*, 637:

Me thynke þe wele of this werlde worthes to noghte.

13. Cf. *Scottish Feilde*, 87 and 203:

thus he promised to the prince [*that* paradise weldeth].

Also *Winnere and Wastoure*, 296:

It es plesynge to the prynce þat paradyse wroghte.

16. *thou shalt byterlye bye*. Po. reads "bye it," a suggestion which is supported by *Piers Plowman*, B III, 249 (not in C):

Shal abie it bittere or the boke lyeth!

But the verb is not always transitive. Cf. 254 and *Piers Plowman*, **xxi**, 448: Thow shalt abygge bittere.

20. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 4:

and gyffe vs grace to gye, and gouerne vs here.

21. The line is substantially repeated in *Scotish Feilde*, 421:

Iesus bring vs to blisse *that* brought vs forth of bale.

22-39. Compare the very similar description in the *Parlement*, 7-16, and in *Winnere and Wastoure*.

24. Cf. *Parlement*, 119:

Raylede alle with rede rose, richeste of floures.

Variants of this line are constantly repeated in alliterative poetry. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 624:

As the Roose in his Radness is Richest of floures;

*Morte Arthure*, 3457:

A reedde actone of rosse the richeste of floures;

and *Scotish Feilde*, 26:

rayled full of red roses and riches enowe.

28. As *I there glode*. Holt. would read "as I glode there." But the second accented syllable in the second half line sometimes bears the alliteration. Cf. 311 and see the section on Metre.

30. *I settled me to sitt*. Po. reads "I fettled me to sit" in the interests of the metre. Cf. *Parlement*, 20:

And ferkes faste to her fourme & fatills her to sitt.

But the double alliteration a a / b b is very common, there being ten other such cases in *D. & L.* See Metre, type VI.

For the expression cf. *Scotish Feilde*, 254 and 257:

at the ffoot of a fine hill they setteled them all night . . .

bidd them settle them to fight or they wold fare homeward.

The emendation *settled* > *fettled* would help the metre here as well as in *D. & L.*, but the author certainly wrote *settled*.

31. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, **xix**, 184: As hor as an hawethorn.

In *Winnere and Wastoure* the author lies down on a hill beside a hawthorn.

32. *I bent my backe to the bole*. Cf. *Parlement*, 39:

And to the bole of a birche my berselett I cowchide.

33. Powell says this line is all wrong. "The sense is 'as I looked about me for a time under the green hawthorne'; the p-words are misreadings of the scribe. The original he had before him must have had two g-words instead." The inconsistency to which Po. objects is, however, simply an instance of a characteristic confusion of expression due to the tyranny of the alliterative phrase. Cf. 37, "lying Edgelong on the ground," which

does not suit with "I bent my back to the hole." The alliteration, moreover, is perfectly correct. See note to 30.

34. Cf. *Winnere*, 44:

for din of the depe watir and dadillyng of fewllys;

*William of Palerne*, 23:

& briddes ful bremely on þe bowes singe.

36. *I sayed a sleepe*. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 679: þat all sad were on sleepe; and *Child Waters*, 30, 3-4:

For there is noe place about this house

Where I may say a sleepe.

37. *list all my seluen*. *List* is probably miswritten for *lift* = *left* as Sk. and Po. suggest.

39-45. An elaboration of *Piers Plowman*, I, 14-21. See Introduction, p. 247.

40. *vpon a great mountaine*. Schumacher (*op. cit.*) would alter *great* to *mikle*. But one alliteration in each half line is common enough in this poem, as Schumacher himself points out.

43. *comelye castles & Cleare*. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 3674:

Castelles fulle comliche, that coloured ware faire!

*Golagrus and Gowain*, 366, has a similar alliterative group.

46. *I sett me downe softlye*. Po. would emend "Then I set me downe softlye." But the half line scans easily as it stands: x' x x' x. For the type see Luick, *Anglia*, XI, 402 ff.

48. *& I wayted me about*. Cf. *Parlement*, 46: And wayttede wittily abowte; and 657:

And I wakkened therwith and waytted me vmbe,

and *Piers Plowman*, I, 16: westwarde ich waitede.

49. *Piers Plowman*, B, Prologue, 6 (not in the C text):

me bifel a ferly of fairye me thouzte,

affords a model for the emendation of this obviously corrupt line of the ms. We have followed Powell's reading in the text.

51. *& knights ffull noble*. P. suggests *kings*. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 7844:

Kyngis in his company & knyghtes full nobill.

53. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 84:

Of Dukes full doughty and of derffe Erles.

56. *the plaine and the roughe*, i. e., plain and hill. The reference is to *holte* and *hill* above, not to *people*.

57. *Estward I looked*. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, I, 14: Esteward ich byhulde.

58. *brightest of other*; i. e., the brightest of any. Cf. 317 and *Scotish Fcilde*, 48: "most peerlesse of other," and *Destruction of Troy*, 2433, 4050, and 7865.

61 ff. Skeat compares the vision of Lady Meed, *Piers Plowman*, III, 8-18. But see Introduction, p. 251.

*Cheereing ffull comlye.* Po.'s alteration, *kayringe*, is inappropriate. *Ch* commonly alliterates with *c=k*. Cf. Luick, *Anglia*, XI, 602 ff., Schumacher, *op. cit.*, and Glossary.

62. *vpon cleare clothes.* Both Sk. and Po. fail to understand the passage. The sense is "walking on bright cloths which were all of clear gold, laid broadly upon the field, etc." The relative pronoun is often omitted before *were*.

66. *her rudd redder than the rose.* Cf. *Awntyrs of Arthure*, XIII.

For my rud was raddur than rose of the ron.

70. *they lowted to that Ladye.* Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 9253: Than he lut to be lady.

71. Cf. *Parlement*, 11:

Burgons & blossoms & braunches full swete,

and *Destruction of Troy*, 2736:

burions of bowes brethit full swete.

72. *fflowers ffourished in the frith.* Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 924:

The frithez were floreschte with flourez fulle many.

78. *Barrons & bachelours.* The identical phrase occurs in *Wars of Alexander*, 155.

82. *lowly Ladye.* Probably for "lovely Ladye." So. P. and Po. Cf. 258.

83-4. *in kirtle and mantlc of goodlyest greene.* Cf. *Parlement*, 122: He was gerede alle in greene; and see the whole description of the bejewelled figure in the *Parlement* representing Youth. For a discussion of the second line and its relation to the mystic garment of Natura see Introduction, p. 250. Cf. also *Winnere and Wastoure*, 90:

This kynge was comliche clade in kirtill and mantill.

86. A similar line occurs in *Morte Arthure*, 3877:

and the graciouseste gome that vndire God lyffede.

Cf. *D. & L.*, 190, "no groome under God."

8. & *the price of her [perrie].* Sk.'s suggestion for the lacuna in the ms. is confirmed by *Parlement*, 129:

Pe price of that perry were worthe powndes full many.

The line occurs in the description of Youth and is pretty certainly the original of the line in *D. & L.* Cf. *Parlement*, 192:

The pryce of thi perrye wolde purches the londes.

92. *as beames of the sun.* The commentators are agreed that *beames* here and in line 407 is a "stupid alteration of *leames*." Sk. says "the conjecture is changed to certainty by *Scottish Feilde*, 309:



with leames full light all the land over.

95. Schumacher calls attention to the cross alliteration: a b / a b.

98 ff. Skeat thinks that Lady Liffe and her train are to be identified with Langland's Lady Anima and her attendants, Sir Seewel, Sir Seiwel, Sir Huyrewel the hende, etc. See Introduction. The *Death and Liffe* author has developed the assemblage in accordance with the traditional conception of the Court of Love.

100. *Sir Comfort that Knight*. "Sir Comfort their (or her) Chamberlain"—Po. This emendation makes the sense easier, but there is no assurance that the author did not write the line as it stands. Cf. the awkwardness of 101.

In *Piers Plowman*, XXXIII, 91, the "lord that lyuede after lust" cries out to "Comfort, a knyght" to bear his banner against death.

101. *yee sturdye been both*. *Yee* should be "that" or "who" according to Po. (i. e., the abbreviation *yt* may have been misread by the scribe). But possibly *yee* = *yea*; or the expression may stand as it is, the half line being parenthetical with a shift in point of view characteristic enough of the author's style.

109. *beawtye* [d] *blisse*. Cf. line 242.

110 ff. With this description of the effects of Lady Liffe's presence on living things compare the parallels with Alanus de Insulis' *De Planctu Naturæ*, given in the Introduction, p. 250.

112. Br. reads "both bearnes and beastes and birds in the leaues." *Of* delend.—P. But *of* = *by* and is required by the verb *made* in line 110.

116. *what woman that was*. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, II, 68: "what womman hue were."

"The failure of a poet at first to recognize his allegorical visitant had by this time (i. e., the date of *The Pearl*) become almost a convention." See Schofield, "The Nature and Fabric of the Pearl," *P. M. L. A.* XIX, 1, 179. Schofield cites as examples *Philosophia* in Boethius, *Reason* in *The Romance of the Rose*, *Holichurche* in *Piers Plowman*. We may add *Natura* in Alanus' *De Planctu*.

119. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, II, 76:

Thanne knelede ich on my knees and criede hure of grace,  
And preiede hure pytously.

Sk. infers that "praysed" should be "prayed." Cf. also *Piers Plowman*, III, 1.

122. *hee cherished me cheerlye*, i. e., Comfort fondled me lovingly.

127-8. *ffostered & ffed*. The phrase is commonplace. Cf. *Wm. of Palerne*, 243: *pei han me fostered and fed*. Also *ibid* 318 and 356, and *Winnere*, 206. The recurrence of the expression renders unimportant Skeat's parallel from the description of *Holichurche*, *Piers Plowman*, II, 73: "Ich vnderfeng the formest." The idea, "I nourished you even before your birth," points clearly to the conception in Alanus, *De Planctu*, of *Nature* as the source of man's physical life. Skeat cites also *Piers Plowman*, B, IX, 55, where it is said of Lady Anima:

Ac in the herte is hir home and hir moste reste.

Cf. C, xi, 173:

Inwitt is in the hefd as Anima in the herte.

130. Po. would read "feare not to frayne if thou wilt fferlyes wit." But see note to line 30.

131. & I shall kindlye thee ken. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 3521:

kene thou me kyndely whatte caase es be-fallene.

135. Cf. 421. Also *Scottish Feilde*, 103:

for all the gloring gold vnder the god of heauen.

136-7. *the longer the more*. We have retained the ms. reading. The Hales-Furnivall text reads "the longed." Holt. says that "I" is obviously to be substituted for "the." The passage, however, may be read as it stands: "Thus in the enjoyment of this living (the longer the more) there was riding and revel that rang in the banks till it neared to noon." Or a line may have been dropped out after 136. In any case "the longer the more" should not be altered. Cf. *The Pearl*, 180:

& ever þe lenger, þe more & more.

till that it neighed neere noone. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, and it neighed nyghe the none,

and Awntyrs of Arthure, vi:

Euyn atte the mydday this ferly con falle.

139. *Winne to behold*. "Woe to behold"—P. "The word woe in the first half line is the difficulty; may it be the A.S. *wo*, *woh*, in the original sense of bent, inclined? Or rather it's put for *wo[d]e*, mad. *Winne* is joy, pleasure."—Sk. *Winne* seems to be right. Skeat's suggestions, however, are far-fetched and the line remains a puzzle.

142. *In a nooke of the north*. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, II, 112 ff. See Introduction, p. 247. Cf. also *Piers Plowman*, XXI, 168: "Out of the nype of the north."

144. *with the biggest bere*. Cf. *Awntyrs of Arthure*, x:

The greundes were alle agast of the gryme bere.

Also *ibid.* xxvi: "with a grym bere."

147. Cf. the description of the crucifixion in *Piers Plowman*, XXI, 58 ff, especially 64:

The erthe quook and quashte as hit quyke were.

151 ff. The description of Death has its parallels in the accounts of various monsters in the alliterative poems, e.g., the bear in *Arthur's dream*, *Morte Arthure*, 774 ff:

Thanne come of *the Oryente* ewyne hyme agayne  
A blake bustous bere abwene in the clowdes  
*with* yche a pawe as a poste, and paumes fulle huge,

with pykes fulle perilous, alle plyande thame semyde,  
 Lothene and lothely, lokkes and other . . .  
 The fouleste of fegure that fourmed was euer!

Cf. also the description of the giant, 1074 ff.

Closer is the passage describing the ghost of Guinevere's mother in the *Awntyrs of Arthure*, ix:

Alle bare was the body, and blak by the bone,  
 Vmbeclusut in a cloude, in clething evyl clad;  
 Hit gaulut, hit gamurt, lyke a woman,  
 Nauthyr of hyde, nyf of heue, no hilling hit had . . .  
 Hyr enyn were holket and holle,  
 And gloet as the gledes. (cited by Miss Scamman).

Comparison should also be made with Elde in *The Parlement*, 152 ff.

153. Powell rewrites:

ther was no segge of this syht but he was sore affrayd.

This does well enough as original composition in the alliterative manner, but there is no justification for a radical treatment of the text to normalize imperfect lines. *Segge* for *man* may of course be right.

155. The "quintful queene" is Pride. Cf. 183. *Quintful* = delicate. In the account of the coming of Antichrist, *Piers Plowman*, xxii, Pride bears the banner of Antichrist and Elde and Death follow in his train. On the association of Death with the Vices see Introduction, p. 247. Envy and Anger are mentioned in 185 as attendants upon Death.

156. Cf. *Scotish Feilde*, 232:

with 3 crownes full cleare all of pure gold.

This line in *D. & L.* is a good test case for Powell's hypothesis of full alliteration in every line. He emends: "all of cleane gold." The *Scotish Feilde* poet, then, must have been a victim of the same scribal substitution. As a matter of fact, however, there are so many lines in this and other alliterative poems which have no alliteration in the second half that we must assume a loose practice on the part of their authors rather than changes due to error and substitution. See section on Metre in the Introduction.

157. & shee the ffoulest ffreake that formed was euer. "Shee" is Death, not Pride. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 781:

The fouleste of fegure that fourmede was euer!

Cf. also *D. & L.* 320 and *Morte Arthure*, 1061, 3301, for similar alliterative groups.

159-160. "Strangely enough none of the editors has noticed the contradiction between these two lines; according to line 159 Death was stark naked, according to line 160, clothed in linen. I propose:

She was naked as my nayle, but (= only) above, and belowe  
 She was lapped about in Linnen breeches"—Br.

If this is the sense there is no necessity for a change in the text. But it is to consider too curiously to consider so. The author was probably unconscious of or indifferent to the contradiction. It happens that precisely the same inconsistency occurs in *The Awntyrs of Arthure*, ix:

Alle bare was the body, and blak by the bone,  
Vmbeclusut in a cloude, in clething evyl clad.

Cf. *Piers Plowman*, II, 3:

A loueliche lady of lere in lynnyn y-clothid.

165-166. Cf. *Awntyrs of Arthure*, ix:

Her enyn were holket and holle,  
And gloet as the gledes.

170. *her lere like the lead*, i. e., the leaden hue of the cadaver.

171. & = an. — F.

172. *bloody beronen*. A favorite phrase. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 10424; *Scottish Feilde*, 31; *Parlement*, 62.

173-4. The construction is obscure. The idea is that her left hand was like a griffin's leg, with the claws coming together (touching) at the tips. Very likely the passage is corrupt, but it may be simply another instance of loose grammatical construction.

175. Cf. *The Awntyrs of Arthure*, x, where, however, the formula is used of Gawain, not of the "ugly ghost" whom he is facing:

Then this byrne braydet owte a brand.

185. *yerne*. P. interprets *promptus, cupidus*. Sk., however, is correct in explaining the word as "iron." Cf. *Scottish Feilde*, 363, "in their steele weeds"; *Golagrus and Gaucaine*, XLIV, 557: "in gleman steil wedis."

187. Cf. *William of Palerne*, 566:

What sorwes & sikingges I suffer for his sake.

190. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 572:

There is no gome vnder gode þat hym greue may.

192. *she* (MS. *he*) *stepped forth*. The confusion of pronouns here and elsewhere is probably scribal. The common gender "bearne" in the preceding line and the fact that Death is usually thought of as masculine may, however, account for the change in this case.

196 ff. The effects of Death's presence are parallel to those of Liffe's (Nature's). See above 69 ff. and note. Somewhat similar is the account of the terror occasioned by the appearance of the ghost in *The Awntyrs of Arthure*, x:

The houndes hyes to the holtes and thayre hedus hidus; . . .  
The bryddus in the boes,  
That of the gost gous,  
Thay sryken in the scoes,  
That herdus myzten hom here.

196. *when thé heard wapen*. Po. reads "when they heard her frappen." But see Glossary. *Wapens* = weapons in *Wars of Alexander*, 65. In any case "her" has probably dropped out.

207. *dolefullye dyen*. "Carefully dyen" — Po. and Schumacher. But again we have the standard type of line a a / b b. So also in 184, where Schumacher would alter "following" to "suing."

210 ff. Life's complaint of her injuries at the hands of Death is closely paralleled in *Winnere and Wastoure*, 229, where Winnere protests that the false Wastoure, is ruining the goods which he has accumulated; Winnere brandishes his brand and boasts that he will destroy the whole country.

thyntkes to strike or he styntt and stroye me for euer.

213. *& he hearkneth itt hendlye*. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 9238: She hearknet hym full hyndly.

215. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 1953:

That rode for the rescowe of 3one riche knyghttez.

216. *Hee was bowne att his bidd*. Cf. *Golagrus and Gawayn*, 330: Be bounne of your bidding.

218. *he ran out of the rainebow*. A reminiscence of the classical Iris, messenger of the gods?

219. *& light on the Land*. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 2817: ffor to light on þe londe.

221. "There is something wrong with this line; perhaps we should read 'wrecche' for 'Queene' " — Po. There are, however, many lines of this type: a x / a a. See section on Metre.

225. *for gryme*. P. suggest *forgrim*, very grim, A. S., *grim*, fury, rage. "Looked fiercely and gnashed her teeth for rage at Countenance's talk." — F. Pronominal confusion again. Cf. 165, 192, etc.

226. *but shee did as shee dained*. *Dained* = ordained, bade — Sk. "The context wants the meaning 'was told to' " — F. We interpret: "but shee (Death) did as she (Life) dained (thought proper), durst shee no other." See Glossary. Po. emends: "but shee did as he dained." Br. suggests "as she dained was."

231. *kissed kindly*, a common alliterative phrase. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 714.

233. *weaknesse of care*. "Weaknesse is entirely meaningless. Read 'worker of care' (parallel with 'bringer of sorrow,' line 234) " — Br.

238. For the very common alliteration on *reason: right* see *Destruction of Troy*, 10715, etc.

239. *why kills thou the body*. Po. would emend to "why kills thou the corse," in order to make this line regular. But see section on Metre, where this type of line is discussed.

There is perhaps a reminiscence here of *The Debate of the Body and the Soul*, where the body's innocence is defended.

254. *thou buy must full decre*. The verb is intransitive as in 16.

255. If "they" is correct, it refers to "bearnes" of 253; but perhaps it is an error for "thou" or for "thee" (Po's reading).



268. *bidd if thé wold.* Cf. *Scottish Feilde*, 116:

saies, "I am bound to goe as ye me bidd wold."

The line may be explained: "Would have been brought into bliss (of heaven) if they had petitioned it."

278. *therefore, liſſe, thou me leaue.* Perhaps *giue* has been omitted. Cf. 315.

285. *as to haue a slapp with my ffawchyon.* Po. reads: "as to haue a flapp." But the line is of a fairly common type: a b / a b.

287. *wayte thou no other.* P. says *wayte* = *wat*. For the Northern spelling *ay* for *ā* cf. *layeth*, 229. But "*wāt*" gives poor sense. The half line may be explained: "don't expect anything more," or, perhaps, as a miswriting for *wayste*, waste.

290-291. "It seems a marvel to me in what hole of thy heart thou keepest thy wrath toward the men of the earth." Holt. would read "*wra*" for "*hole*." But the alliterative expression "*hole of thy heart*" seems certainly the original.

308-9. "Where I pass, the world (i.e., worldly things and thoughts) depart. [If I did not come] men would be over bold. Wastoure makes a similar justification of his utility in *Winnere and Wastoure*. Were it not for him the poor would have nothing, etc.

310. The second half line is unintelligible.

311. "Transpose: 'that all grace us sendeth' or write, according to l. 458, 'granteth' instead of 'sendeth'."—Holt. But the last accented syllable may bear the alliteration. Moreover, type a a / a is the most common type of alliteration in this poem.

312. Cf. *Morte Arthure*, 3611:

That no dynte of no darte dere theme ne schoulde.

321. *on the beere layd.* "The alliteration demands: "layd on the beere"—Br. But see note to line 311.

325 ff. The author is pretty clearly adopting the roster of the Nine Worthies and the heroes of romance from *The Parlement*. The following names are common to both lists: Soloman, Alexander, Joshua, David, Hector, Arthur, Lancelot, Gawain, Galahad (Gallaway?).

330. *Samuel*. Read *Saul*.—P. The scribe may have misread *Saul* as the abbreviation for Samuel, *Saml*.

*ffor all his ffingers.* Po. would read *slingers*. The meaning is "Saul, in spite of the strength of his hands."

334-5. Cf. *Parlement*, 400:

bare he was dede of a drynke, as dole es to here,  
That the curssed Cassander in a cowpe hym broughte.

339. *Leonides*, i.e., Leonadas. The author is apparently not unversed in classical lore. Cf. note on 218.

340. & *Gallaway the good Knight*. Galahad, possibly. Cf. *Parlement*, 473:

Bot sir Galade the gude.

More probably, however, the author has created a new knight out of the name of Gawain's province, Galway. Cf. *Awentyrs of Arthure*, XXXIII.

341. Cf. *Golagrus and Gawain*, 520:

with the rout of the Round Tabill that wes richest.

345, 368. *iusted gentlye with Iesu*. Cf. *Piers Plowman*, XXI, 26: Ho shal Iouste with Iesus?

Also XXI, 17:

'And ho shoulde Iusten in Ierusalem?' 'Iesus,' he seide.

349. Cf. *Scotish Feilde*, 33-34:

& carryed him to Liester

& Naked into Newarke I will mine him noe more.

This quotation and others that might be cited (see *mène*, *Northern Passion*) render impossible Skeat's suggestion that *minned* = *nemned*.

351. *both of heauen and of earth*. "Can we read 'home' for 'earth'; it would suit the verse best?" — Po. But *h* freely alliterates with vowels in this poem (see lines 57, 276, 338, etc.). Again, by improving the alliteration we should destroy the meaning of the line. "Heauen and earth" is a commonplace.

378-9. *tho demedst to haue beene dead*. *Tho* = *thou*. "Deemedst [him.]" — Po. This emendation is unnecessary in view of the writer's carelessness in construction.

381 ff. The author has been unable to visualize the combat. Death appears from lines 384-388 to have retreated in haste, dropping her falchion as she ran. But in 367-8 the contest seems to have been bitter and prolonged. Death is disarmed and continues fighting with her hand. Again the literal and allegorical aspects of the crucifixion become confused.

385. *then was thou feard of this fare*. Cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 11008:

I am not ferd of þi fare, ne þi fell speche.

390. For the phrase "barre bigglye" cf. *Destruction of Troy*, 691, 6035, 10739, etc.

391. *thé told them tydands*. Percy suggests "thou toldest." The context demands "thou."

393. *& how he had beaten the on the* (MS. *thy*) *bent*.

*& how he had beaten* — Po. The MS. *shee* may, however, stand for Everlasting Life, identified with Christ.

399. *bost this neuer*. "bost thee neuer" — Po. But the meaning may be "Boast never of this (thy slaying of Jesus) among thy red deeds."

404 ff. This passage follows, in general, as Skeat has shown, the account of the Harrowing of Hell in *Piers Plowman*, XXI, 27 ff. Cf. especially the following details:

A voys loude in that light to Lucifer seide,

Princes of this palys prest unto the zates.

For here cometh with coroune the kyng of alle glorie. *P. Pl.* 274-6.

Pull open your ports you princes within!

Here shall come in King crowned with ioy. *D. & L.* 409-410.

Ac rys vp Ragamoffyn and reche me alle the barres

That Belial thy bel-syre boet with thy damme . . . .

Ar we thorw bryghtnesse be blent barre we the gates. *P. Pl.* 284-6.

& bade them barre bigglye Belzebub his gates. *D. & L.* 390.

Thow shalt abygge bittere quath god and bond hym with cheynes.

*P. Pl.* 448. Cf. *D. & L.* 417.

The *Death & Liffe* author has condensed the account by omitting the long discussion between Christ and Satan, and he has greatly heightened the picturesque and dramatic features. Various complications caused by the introduction of the allegorical figures of Truth, etc., are avoided. See Introduction, p. 247.

407. Cf. 92 and note. *On = of.*

416. *he leapt vnto Lucifer.* Cf. *Piers Plowman*, B I, 116: "Lopen out with Lucifer"; C II, 112-3: "thulke wrechede Lucifer Lopen alofte."

417. This line is perhaps out of place here. Cf. 421, Po. suggests "thanes" for "chanes" in 421, but the line as it stands there is certainly right, whereas the sense in 417 is better without it.

435-6. "I shall watch over you carefully, and do ye understand full well and turn ye further from this world to a place above the clear skies."

*Cf. Morte Arthure*, 6:

That we may kayre til hys courte, the kyngdome of hevyne,

and *Scotish Feilde*, 154: "keire wold no further."

437. *Ladye.* Perhaps for *leed* (cf. 315). But the author is identifying Christ and Eternal Life throughout the passage and "Ladye" may be right; i. e., if you love well salvation. *Liffe* speaks of herself or rather of her other self again in 444.

451. *that faire.* Cf. *pat faire*, *Destruction of Troy*, 525; *pat comly*, 552, etc.

457-9. Cf. *Parlement*, 664:

There, dere Drightyne, this daye dele vs of thi blysse,

And Marie, þat es mylde qwene, amende vs of synn;

also *Destruction of Troy*, 14044:

He bryng vs to the blisse, þat bled for our Syn.

There is no need of supposing an omitted line, as Po. does. The construction is clear. "To that end Jesus of Jerusalem grant us grace and save there (i. e., in Jerusalem) a place or a 'mansion' for us."

## GLOSSARY

*avant*, 366, boast.  
*bachelours*, 78, bachelors, aspirants to knighthood.  
*bade*, 390, ordered, bade.  
*ball*, 21, bale. This spelling occurs in *Wm. of Palerne*, 1819, and *Cursor Mundi*, 4775.  
*banely*, 247, promptly, willingly, readily.  
*Barathron*, 405, Barathrum, the abyss, hell. The first citation in *N. E. D.* is dated 1520.  
*barnes*, see *bearne*.  
*bearne*, 14, 90, 112, 242, 424, child, man, person.  
*beere*, 321, bier.  
*behoved*, 336, behooved.  
*beliue*, 73, 387, 452, quickly.  
*bent*, 63, 149, 192, 223, grassy slope, field; *thy bent*, 393, the bent. Cf. 236.  
*bere*, 144, noise, uproar.  
*beronen*, 172, overflown, surrounded.  
*betooke*, 426, delivered, committed.  
*bidd*, 268, petition, ask for; or bide (Sk). See note.  
*bigged*, 383, built.  
*biglye*, *bigglye*, 390, 418, greatly, mightily.  
*bine*, 254? This word occurs in *Floris and Blancheflour*, *Trent-ham* ms. 1010,  
 "Blancheflour seide hyne,  
 þe gilt of our dedes is moyne."  
 So far as I have been able to determine, this is the only occurrence of the word outside of *D. & L.* The context in both poems shows that the word may be an adverb. It is possible that *bine* is an ablaut form of *O. N.*

*beinn*, direct, straight, prompt. Cf. *nu beint*, just now.  
*birth*, 234, maiden, lady (*M. E. bird, burd*). I think that the scribe has confused *th* and *d* here as in *lodlye* and *lothelich*.  
*blee*, 65, 98, color, complexion.  
*blenched*, 32, turned to.  
*blinn*, 254, cease.  
*blusche*, 388, cast a glance, *blushed*, 191.  
*bode*, 149, abode, remained.  
*boolish*, 58 ? "Perhaps 'tumid,' swelling, rounded." Thus *bole* in l. 32 from *O. E. bolne*, to *swell*.—Sk.  
*both*, both; 12, also.  
*bower*, 383, bower.  
*bowes*, 23, boughs.  
*bowne*, 216, prepared, ready.  
*bradd*, 175, made a sudden motion, jerk, brandish; 216, start.  
*brake*, 265, 271, 414, broke.  
*brand*, 175, brand, sword.  
*brawders*, 63, embroideries.  
*breath*, 34, breath, odor.  
*breathed*, 23, emitted odors.  
*breme*, 34, 74, bold, fierce, boldness.  
*bremelye*, 364, boldly, fiercely, vigorously.  
*breuelye*, 283, briefly ? or for *bremelye* (Percy) ?  
*brode*, 63, broad.  
*burgens*, 71, burgeons, buds.  
*burlyest*, 145, stoutest, largest.  
*burne*, 411, man, warrior.  
*burnisht*, 175, polished, made ready.  
*but*, 9, 56, 316, but; 254, unless.  
*buy*, 254, pay for, atone for. Cf. *bye*.  
*bye*, 16, pay for, make amends. See note.

- byterlye*, 16, bitterly.  
*carped*, 231, 362, talked, chattered, complained.  
*caruen*, 43, carved.  
*certes*, 123, certainly.  
*cheereng*, 61, turning, moving. Cf. *keere*, *kere*, *kyreth*.  
*clarke*, 85, clerk. Cf. *clarkes*.  
*cleare*, 43, 62, clear, bright.  
*clarkes*, 8, clerks, learned men. Cf. *clarke*.  
*cold*, 114, could. Cf. *wold*.  
*colour*, 89, collar.  
*coninge*, 8, knowledge, skill. Cf. *cuninge*.  
*corsses*, 434, bodies.  
*cost*, 8, condition.  
*craddle*, 207, cradle.  
*creame*, 438, chrism, *cleum sacramentum*. Cf. *Gen and Ex.* 2458.  
*cuninge*, 111, knowledge, skill. Cf. *coninge*.  
*dained*, 226, deigned ? ordered ? See note.  
*dallyance*, 108, 281, dalliance, pleasure.  
*dang*, 204, 325, beat, struck. Cf. *dunge*.  
*daring*, 442, hiding.  
*daredst*, 418, hid, lay close, lurked.  
*daynty*, 281, delight.  
*deared*, 312, injured. Cf. *deere*.  
*decree*, 427, injure. Cf. *deared*.  
*derffe*, 325, hard, firm, cruel. O. E. *dearf*, Cf. *Sc. F.* 32, etc.  
*derffe*, 380, troublesome. O. E. *gedeorf*.  
*dint*, 275, blow, stroke.  
*disport*, 108, sport, disport.  
*dolue*, 275, delved.  
*doubt*, 439, fear.  
*doughtye*, 53, doughty.  
*doughtilye*, 448, doughtily.  
*dree*, 395, endure, carry through. Cf. *drye*.  
*dresscs*, 220, 182, 189, prepares.
- dright*, 38, noble, magnificent.  
*driueth*, 10, driveth.  
*druryes*, 87, love tokens, gifts, treasures.  
*drye*, 263, endure. Cf. *dree*.  
*dunge*, 211, struck, beat. Cf. *dang*.  
*durst*, 226, durst, dared.  
*edgelong*, 37, edgelong.  
*enowe*, 457, enough.  
*erles*, 53, earls.  
*faine*, 113, 274, glad, joyous.  
*faire*, 451, fair one. See note.  
*fairer*, *thy fairer*, 236, the fairer. Cf. 393.  
*falte*, 398, lack, need.  
*farden*, 165, fared, went, were.  
*fare*, 235, business, proceeding; 385, fair one (cf. *fayre*). See note to l. 385.  
*fared*, 22, fared, went.  
*fawchyon*, 274, 286, *fawchon*, 387, falchion.  
*fayleth*, 16, fail, be false.  
*fayntyest*, 270, faintest, poorest.  
*fayre*, 64, fair one; 30, 385, fair.  
*fayrlye*, 49, wonder, strange event.  
*feard*, 385, afraid.  
*feeld*, 64, *feild*, 319, field.  
*fell*, 396, cruel.  
*fell*, 201, felled.  
*fere*, 186, companion.  
*fist*, 387, hand.  
*flappe*, 201, stroke.  
*fleringe*, 412, grimacing, making wry faces. See *N.E.D.* *fleer*.  
*fraine*, 130, question, inquire.  
*frayd*, 346, afraid.  
*freake*, 157, 161, 176, 320, *man*, creature.  
*freshest*, 346, newest, earliest.  
*frith*, 72, 270, forest.  
*gainest*, 208, quickest, readiest, best.  
*Galloway*, 340. See note.  
*garr*, 190, cause.  
*gate*, 193, way, manner of going.  
*gaynest*, 412, quickest.



*geere*, 175, gear, trappings.  
*gentlye*, 345, nobly, like a gentleman.  
*glented*, 384, gleamed, shone suddenly.  
*glode*, 28, glided.  
*glowed*, 225, glowered, looked angry.  
*gogled*, 147, shook.  
*gone*, 151, walk, go.  
*gran*, 225, gnashed the teeth.  
*greateen*, 17, increase.  
*greened*, 73, turned green.  
*grislye*, 154, terrible, grim.  
*groome*, 84, 86, 190, man, creature.  
*grow*, 289, grow.  
*gryme*, 225, variant of *grim*, anger, fury. See note.  
*grype*, 173, raven.  
*gryped*, 274, gripped.  
*hart*, 7, heart.  
*heard*, 196, heard.  
*heard*, 199, herd, company.  
*heare*, 158, hair.  
*hend*, 80, prompt, gracious.  
*hendlye*, 213, graciously.  
*hew*, 158, hue.  
*hide*, 158, skin.  
*holte*, 55, hill.  
*hore*, 31, white, hoar.  
*hyeth*, 199, speedeth, hasteneth.  
*hynd*, 106, 340, gentle, courteous.  
*hyndes*, 279, hinds, servants.  
*ilke*, 94, same; 262, each.  
*i-wisse*, 104, certainly.  
*kaitiffe*, 237, caitiff.  
*keene*, 10, 51, keen, bold.  
*keere*, 436, turn. See *kere*, *kyreth*, and *cheereing*.  
*ken*, 131, show, inform.  
*kere*, 47, turn; *kcere*, 117, turned. See *keere*, *kyreth* and *cheereing*.  
*killethe*, 205, killeth. Cf. *quellethe*.  
*kind*, 85, sort, kind.  
*kindlye*, 131, 231, kindly; 111, by nature.  
*kirtle*, 83, kirtle.

*kithe*, 436, native country, region. Cf. *kythe*.  
*kithen*, 392, make known.  
*kyreth*, 230, turneth. See *keere*, *kere*, and *cheereing*.  
*kythe*, 47, see *kithe*.  
*lach*, 303, take, receive; *lacheth*, 298, taketh. See *latche*.  
*lake*, 302, see *leake*.  
*land*, 25, "leaned or layd, as in l. 63?"—F. The form *land* may be the preterit of *lenden*, remain, or it may be, as F. suggests, a miswriting for *layd*, or *leaned*.  
*lapped*, 160, wrapped.  
*latche*, 435, receive. See *lach*.  
*layeth*, 228, loathsome, deadly. This spelling occurs in *Parl.* 152. Cf. *lodlye*.  
*leake*, 249, play, sport. Cf. *lake* above and *layke*, *Parl.*, 49.  
*learned*, 179, taught.  
*leed*, 315, 339, 350, man, person.  
*leege*, 374, liege.  
*lengthened*, 29, lengthened.  
*lent*, 188, committed, entrusted.  
*Leonades*, 339, see note.  
*lere*, 170, face.  
*lidden*, 249, evil.  
*light*, 219, 437, alighted.  
*like*, 68, like, please.  
*list*, 37, see textual note.  
*lodlye*, 162, loathly. See *lothelich* and *layeth*.  
*long*, 133, abide, dwell; *longed*, 60, 86, 106, abode, remained.  
*longed*, 394, belonged to. Cf. *Sc. F.* 9.  
*longer*, *the longer the more*, 136, See note.  
*looke*, 29, look; 435, watch over, keep safe. See note.  
*losse*, 305, fame, reputation, praise.  
*losse*, 305, lost.  
*lothelich*, 303, 374, loathly. See *lodlye* and *layeth*.  
*lothinge*, 188, loathing.

- lowly, 82, lovely or lowly? See textual note.
- lowted, 70, 179, 334, 352, bowed.
- maine, 443, main, might. Cf. *meane*.
- marde, 141, marred, spoiled.
- marreth, 243, marreth.
- mauger, 316, in spite of.
- maymed, 141, maimed.
- me, 30, myself.
- meane, 434, main, might, power. Cf. *maine*.
- meanye, 243, company.
- mcrke, 406, murky, dark.
- middest, 335, midst.
- mikle, 300, much, great.
- minnd, 349, mentioned.
- mold, 134, 323, earth.
- mores, 40, maurs, high open places.
- morninge, 186, mourning.
- mourninge, 406, mourning.
- murthered, 366, murdered.
- musters, 277, displays, tricks.
- my list, 318, me list. The same confusion of *my* and *me* occurs in *Havelok* 2204, *Layamon's Brut*, 1200.
- nay, 433, 443, nay, or possibly *nay* = *ne*, nor, as Sk. suggests.
- ne, 8, nor.
- nebb, 169, point, end, beak.
- neere, 356, near, or nearer.
- neighed, 91, 137, approached.
- noe, 11, etc., no.
- nooke, 142, corner.
- on, 1, etc., on: 407, of.
- or, 140, 367, ere, before.
- ost, 443, *oste*, 57, host.
- pappe, 381, breast.
- paradice, 13, paradise.
- pight, 227, pitched, pierced.
- plaine, 56, 227, flat, even. See note to l. 56.
- ports, 409, gates.
- presse, 52, crowd.
- pratinge, 259, prattling, chattering.
- prestlye, 203, 306, readily, promptly.
- prickcs, 430, spurs, rides fast; or dresses elaborately.
- profrereth, 79, offereth, profereth.
- prouct, 306, provest.
- quakinge, 155, quaking, trembling.
- quellethe, 203, killeth. Cf. *killethe*.
- quintful, 155, proud, haughty, delicate. This spelling of *quaintful* occurs in *Wm. of P.*, 1401, and *Sir Ferumbras*, 1681, 3257.
- raigne, 238, reign.
- railinge, 376, running, flowing.
- rattlinge, 146, rattling, noisy.
- rayling, 24, ornamenting.
- reacheth, 200, extendeth, stretches forth.
- recon, 14, reckon.
- retch, 246, wretch.
- riche, 456, govern, control.
- rise, 66, twig.
- rood, 377, rood, cross.
- ronge, 138, rang. Cf. *runge*.
- roughe, 57, 200, rough.
- rought, 239, wrought.
- rout, 146, 200, crowd.
- rudd, 66, complexion.
- rudlye, 355, roughly, strongly, rudely. But see textual note.
- runn, 26, ran.
- runge, 146, rang. Cf. *ronge*.
- rydinge, 138, riding.
- sadlye, 322, seriously, still.
- sate, 36, sat.
- sayd, 454, became heavy (in sleep). Cf. *sayed*.
- sayc, 50, 151, saw. See textual note to lines 50 and 151.
- sayed, 36, became heavy (with sleep). Cf. *sayd* and see note.
- seemelye, 50, seemly.
- selcoth, 96, 181, strange thing, wonder. This spelling occurs in *Sc. F.*, 72.
- seluen, 37, self.
- sett, 310, value? See *N. E. D. set*, 91.

*shapen*, 266, shaped.  
*sheere*, 59, pure, clear.  
*shent*, 370, shamed, disgraced.  
*side*, 166, wide.  
*sides*, 376, sides.  
*sikinge*, 187, sighing.  
*sith*, 127, 318, 365, since.  
*slade*, 454, open place, valley.  
*slapp*, 285, blow, slap.  
*sonn*, 65, sun.  
*sonne*, 18, son.  
*sorrowful*, 152, sad, causing sorrow.  
*specyaltie*, 208, partiality, particular right.  
*speed*, 359, success.  
*speede*, 117, succeed.  
*spilleth*, 208, destroys.  
*staleworth*, 104, stalworth.  
*steuen*, 408, voice.  
*stinted*, 177, ceased.  
*stout*, 104, stout, proud.  
*swang*, 337, beat, struck.  
*swaynes*, 54, lads, servants.  
*sweeres*, 54, squires. Variant of the more usual *swyere*.  
*swelt*, 337, become faint, die.  
*swire*, 337, neck.  
*swond*, 176, swoon.  
*talents*, 174, talons? I find this variant of *talons* in Wright's *Dial. Dict.* See note.  
*teened*, 391, vexed, troubled.  
*teenful*, 174, troublesome.  
*the*, 3, thee.  
*the*, 391. See note.  
*the*, 75, 196, 268, they.  
*tho*, 115, then.  
*tho*, 379. See note.  
*tholed*, 1, suffered.  
*throngeth*, 251, crowds, presses.  
*thy*, 236, the. Cf. line 63.  
*till*, 91, to.  
*tipen*, 194, bend, tilt.  
*to*, 87, too.  
*touchinge*, 174, touching.  
*truse*, 11 (1) package—F., or, more probably, (2) truce. Cf. *Sc. F.*,

396: & the truce that was taken the space of 2 yeeres.  
*turnes*, 249, turns, tricks.  
*tushes*, 168, tusks.  
*tydands*, 391, tidings.  
*unrid*, 171, enormous, cruel. Variant of *unride*. See note to l. 1647 of *Guy of Warwick*, E. E. T. S. ed., pp. 371-2. The spelling without *e* occurs in *Alex.* 566, *Town. Mys.*, p. 221, E. E. T. S. ed., *Ormulum*, etc.  
*unlye*, 45, variant of *winlye*, joyfully, pleasantly. Cf. *vepan* for *wepan*, *vyrschipp*, *vreke*, etc. in Bradley-Stratmann.  
*wakinge*, 35, watching.  
*waleth*, 298, afflicteth, vexeth.  
*walts*, 299, overthrows.  
*wan*, 319, won.  
*wapen*, 196, blows (cf. *whap*)? fluttering? rustling? weapons? See note.  
*wappeth*, 217, lashes about, beats.  
*ware*, 84, wore.  
*warrant*, 206, protect.  
*wary*, 255, curse.  
*wasts*, 42, wastes.  
*wayte*, 287, await, wait for.  
*wayted* me, 48, looked around, watched. See note.  
*weaknesse*, 233, see note.  
*weene*, 344, expect.  
*weldeth*, 13, ruleth, governeth.  
*were*, 22, where. Cf. *where* for *were*. *Sc. F.*, 72.  
*whilest*, 397, whilst.  
*wight*, 217, 293, person, wight.  
*wild*, the *wild*, 75, the wild animals.  
*willed*, 120, desired.  
*winne*, 5, 293, pleasant, joyous; 139, see note.  
*winlye*, 75, 80, 428, joyously, pleasantly.  
*winn*, 129, joyous; 139.  
*winn*, 344, overcome.  
*wist*, 144, knew.

*with that*, 175, then.

*witt*, 120, show, reveal; 131, know.

*woe*, 139. See note.

*wold*, would, *like wold*, 68, would like. Cf. *cold*, could.

*wondering*, 441, wandering. Cf. l. 452.

*worshipp*, 120, honor, respect.

*worth*, 248, become, *worthes*, 9, becomes.

*wott*, 378, know.

*wright*, 238, right.

*wrought*, 15, wrought, worked.

*wrought, wrought lady*, 215,

"Wrought perhaps is the same with the Scotch *wrachit*, i. e., wretched."—P.

*yee*, 101. See note.

*yerne*, 185, iron. See note.

*yonder*, 440, yonder, that one (used absolutely). Cf. *þe ȝon* (that one) *Wm. of Palerne*, 3052. See textual note.





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