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THE  
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THE UNIVERSAL LIBRARY, now completed in sixty-three cheap shilling volumes, has included English versions of the "Iliad," of all extant plays of the Greek tragedians, and of some plays of Aristophanes, of Sanskrit fables, and of Virgil's "Æneid." It has followed the course of time with English versions of the most famous works of Dante, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Rabelais, Cervantes, Molière, as recast by English dramatists, of Goethe's "Faust" and of Schiller's Poems. It has given currency also to a series of the works of English writers, representative, as far as limits would allow, of our own literature, from Richard of Bury's "Philobiblon" to Sheridan's Plays and Emerson's Essays. In the sequence of publication variety was aimed at, but in the choice of books to be republished there was always the unity of purpose that now allows the volumes to be arranged in historical order, illustrating some of the chief epochs of European literature, and especially of English literature, in the long course of time.

THE CARISBROOKE LIBRARY, now begun, will continue the work of its predecessor, with some changes of form and method. It will include books for which the volumes of the former series did not allow sufficient room. Sometimes in the "Universal Library" a large book—Hobbes's "Leviathan," for example—was packed into small type.

In the "Carisbrooke Library" there will be no small type. The volumes will be larger; each of about four hundred and fifty pages. They will be handsome library volumes, printed with clear type upon good paper, at the price of half-a-crown, and they will be published in alternate months. In the "Universal Library" the editor's introduction to each volume was restricted to four pages, and there was no annotation. In the "Carisbrooke Library," with larger leisure and a two months' interval between the volumes, it will be possible for the editor to give more help towards the enjoyment of each book. There will be fuller introductions, and there will be notes.

Since changes of method and form in the old Library mean the beginning of a new Library with change of name, a simple change is made from the universal to the particular; from the purpose to the one who purposes; from the wide world that yields fruitage for the mind, to the small spot of earth where, if God please, in shades of evening one fruit-gatherer will find new leisure to unburthen himself of his little store.

In the "Carisbrooke Library," as in the predecessor of which it is an extension, there will be order in disorder. Variety will still be aimed at in sequence of the volumes, while the choice of books to be issued will be still guided by the desire to bring home to Englishmen, without unfair exclusion of any form of earnest thought, as far as may be, some living knowledge of their literature along its whole extent, and of its relations with the wisdom and the wit of the surrounding world.

HENRY MORLEY.

V

CONFESSIO AMANTIS.





2230M  
VII

# Tales of the Seven Deadly Sins

BEING THE

## CONFESSIO AMANTIS

OF

### JOHN GOWER

EDITED BY

HENRY MORLEY, LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
LONDON

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# INTRODUCTION.



JOHN GOWER'S book of old stories is here at last made current among Englishmen of every degree. The first way of its wider diffusion was by recitation of the story-tellers. It was their business to give pleasures of imagination to the people through their ears, when even the few who could read would also listen with enjoyment to a tale recited with dramatic energy. When the play of "Pericles" brought one of Gower's tales upon our stage in Shakespeare's time, John Gower himself was supposed to speak its Prologue in his chosen measure of eight-syllabled verse. His words then recalled to mind the old way of reciting as well as reading. The actor who, dressed as Gower, came before the people, said to them :—

“ To sing a song that old was sung,  
 From ashes ancient Gower is come ;  
 Assuming man's infirmities  
 To glad your ear and please your eyes.  
 It hath been sung at festivals,  
 On ember eves and holy ales ;  
 And lords and ladies in their lives  
 Have read it for restoratives.”

To all of us Gower may now go on to repeat other lines of the same Prologue :—

“ If you, born in these latter times,  
 When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes ;  
 And that to hear an old man sing  
 May to your wishes pleasure bring,  
 I life would wish, and that I might  
 Waste it for you, like taper light.”

For my own part, I have long wished to make it possible that

in these times his countrymen might again be pleased to hear John Gower's song.

In the few editions of these tales hitherto published, Gower's taper has burnt dimly, because they have been so presented as to blur his light. The first edition was Caxton's, printed at Westminster, and dated 1493 [by mistake for 1483]. The second edition was "Imprinted at London in Flete strete by Thomas Berthelette, Printer to the King's grace," in the year 1532. Berthelette published another edition in 1544. These were the editions of Gower's English poem read—and it was read—in the good time of Queen Elizabeth. A copy of one of Berthelette's editions was priced in a recent catalogue at £14. There was not another edition until 1810, when the "Confessio Amantis," printed from Berthelette's edition, was included, with other works, in the second of the twenty-one volumes of Chalmers's English Poets. Next came in 1857, and last of all, three handsome volumes of large print, the "Confessio Amantis of John Gower, edited and collated with the best Manuscripts by Dr. Reinhold Pauli." Dr. Pauli's edition of the text was based upon Berthelette. But there were some corrections made by reference to MSS. for supply of omissions and revision of the metre.

Here let me interpolate a word or two in hearty recognition of Dr. Reinhold Pauli's services to English Literature. He was born on the 25th of May 1823, and died on the 3rd of June 1882. He was born in Berlin, studied at Berlin and Bonn, and came to England in 1847. For several years Pauli was private secretary to Bunsen, and he did not return to Germany until 1855, after publishing here, in 1851, a study of King Alfred and his place in English History. After returning to Germany he went on with a continuation to Lappenberg's History, of which he published the first volume in 1853, the third and last in 1858. In 1857, the year in which his edition of this poem appeared, Pauli obtained a Professorship in Rostock. In 1859 he was transferred to the University of Tübingen, from which he was degraded for the independent spirit shown by him in an article on the condition of Würtemberg, and sent down to teach in the Schönthal Seminary. In 1864 he had begun a History of England since Waterloo, of

which the third and last volume appeared in 1875. In 1867 he became a Professor at Marburg, and in 1870 he went to the University of Göttingen. Pauli was essentially historian, with right qualification for his work in breadth of culture and a clear sense of the debts of the present to the past, which made him the more ready to understand our duty to the future.

Old texts of the "Confessio Amantis" often destroy the music of the verse. There are careless transpositions of words, droppings or additions of words, substitutions of later for earlier forms, and frequent omissions of the final *e* where English of Gower's time required it. There are also in all the texts destructions of sense by errors of punctuation. Dr. Pauli's edition was an improvement upon those that went before. It is not a fault, but a merit, that he was unwilling to make any change without MS. authority. Yet this fidelity obliged him to leave many broken lines. For example, recognition of the fact that in Gower's English an adjective used definitely took a final *e* at once restores to music many scores of lines that want a syllable in Caxton's, Berthelette's, and Dr. Pauli's texts. Dr. Pauli's text has also, like Caxton's and Berthelette's, now and then a full stop in what should be the middle of a sentence.

But in all these texts, and especially in Dr. Pauli's, most of the lines are right for those whose previous training has enabled them to read Old English. There is really nothing wanted but a little help to right accentuation to enable any reader, with or without previous training in Old English, to enjoy the "Confessio Amantis." Of course a fallible and mortal editor cannot avoid some slips in the line for line accentuation of a poem of 30,000 lines. I believe, however, that the reader here has Gower's song more nearly than in any former edition given as he sang it himself, nothing modernised, but rather with a few words carried back to their original form for the recovery of the right rhythm of a line. Gower's poem in this edition is so far from being jagged and unmusical that, I hope, there is not a broken line in it from first to last.

Many lines of the "Confessio Amantis" that, in the modern way of reading them, would seem to halt, run easily when read

with their own old accentuation. In the present volume this accentuation has been marked throughout, wherever it varied from that of the present day. Gower's verse, as we may now see, was, in fact, noticeable for its easy flow. His octosyllabics have some of the freedom that long afterwards gave grace and power to blank verse, by the interlacing of sentences and making frequent pauses and breaks of sense within the lines and not at their close only. Gower's frequent rhyming of words differing in sense but spelt alike we must regard now as a blemish. He found, indeed, difference enough for a rhyme between identical words of which one was used as a verb, one as a noun. But we may feel also that he does this because he is at ease, and not because he is hard pressed. He pours out his ready rhymes with animation by the thousand. He runs them into shrewd and homely couplets. He varies their dramatic effect by interlacing sentences with what Milton calls "the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another."

If this text, meant to be popular and yet not modernised, adds, as of course it must, some errors of its own, it has removed so many current errors that to the student as well as to the general reader it should bring Gower's *Story Book* much nearer home than it has been able to come hitherto. I have avoided, except in the case of manifest deviations from the first sense, all interference with the spelling of those old words which are most likely to be mangled by transcribers and printers. Names of persons were very often broken on the rack. In all the editions of the "*Confessio Amantis*," from Caxton to Pauli, the Phrygian Dares appears as *Frigidilles*; and Epicurus, obviously paired in a line with his friend Menander, is called *Epyloquorus*. In all the editions from Caxton to Pauli we read also of the plant under the star 'Cor Scorpionis,' that "His herbe is Astrology," where Astrology is a misprint for *Aristolochy*, *Aristolochia*. I have corrected one or two such errors, but have not meddled with forms of names which are as Gower may possibly himself have written them. But who was Gower?

John Gower, Chaucer's friend and fellow poet, may have been born about the year 1327. He died in the year 1408, and was

blind during the last eight years of his life. His work as a writer for the outside world was ended by his blindness in the year 1400, the year of Chaucer's death.

John Gower was a country gentleman, of the kindred of a Sir Robert Gower who lies buried in Brabourne Church, about five miles from Ashford in Kent. A manor of Kentwell in Suffolk, which had belonged to Sir Robert Gower, found its way through a series of family arrangements into the possession of John Gower the poet. John Gower acquired also a manor of Feltwell in Norfolk; a manor of Moulton in Suffolk; and lands in Kent in the parishes of Throwley and Stalesfield. He was a feoffee of the Kentish manor of Aldington; he had a rental of ten pounds out of the manor of Wigborough in Essex; and he signed a will in the year 1373 at his own house in Kent, which was at Otford by the river Darent. From 1390 until 1397, John Gower, described not as priest but as clerk, held the rectory of Great Braxted in Essex. This was within a mile of that manor of Wigborough from which he drew ten pounds a year rental.

Gower's social position gave him access to the Court. He was known personally to the King, and he held his rectory of Great Braxted as a grant from Richard the Second. He wrote *Balades* in French, which were designed chiefly for the pleasure of the Court. But he was in his own way very much of a philosopher, and liked life best in his own home with his own thoughts and friends of his own choosing. He wrote three large poems, which agreed in having Latin titles. One of them—"Speculum Meditantis"—was in French; one—"Vox Clamantis"—was in Latin; one—this our "Confessio Amantis"—was in English: these being the three languages then used by English writers.

Of Gower's French poem—"Speculum Meditantis," the Mirror of one Meditating—no copy can now be found.\* Some day, perhaps, a MS. of it will be discovered abroad in some quiet old monastic library. A description of it was given in a MS. of the English poem as "divided into twelve parts, and treating of the Vices and the Virtues, and of the various degrees of this age." It is added that the poem sought "to teach, by a right path, the way whereby a transgressed sinner ought to return to the knowledge of his Creator."

\* rediscovered  
1895 by  
G.C. Ma  
Cambridge  
title: Mir  
de l'Ōn

It may have been especially this book which caused Chaucer to attach to his friend's name the epithet which has represented during many years for many a reader almost his whole stock of knowledge about John Gower;—that he was called “moral” by Geoffrey Chaucer. John Locke four or five times in an essay on Civil Government, written just after the English Revolution, with a half playful seriousness delivered shots from Richard Hooker out of a book which Locke's opponents looked upon as one of their own great fortress guns. When doing so he took pleasure in citing his author again and again as “the judicious Hooker.” Since that time “the judicious Hooker” has kept company with “the moral Gower.”

Chaucer's adjective was very naturally used in the dedication of his *Troilus and Cressida* to two of his own intimate friends, a poet and a philosopher, John Gower and Ralph Strode.

“O morall Gower, this book I direct  
To thee and the philosophical Strode,  
To vouchen safe there need is to correct,  
Of your benignités and zeles good.”

That the friendship between Chaucer and Gower was intimate is proved by the fact that, in 1378, when Chaucer was sent with Sir Edward Berkeley to Lombardy on a political mission, he left John Gower as one of two representatives who were to act for him in his absence, appearing for him in the courts if any legal proceedings should chance to be instituted.

Gower's “*Confessio Amantis*” was not written when Chaucer in the close of *Troilus and Cressida* dedicated that poem to him; and *Troilus and Cressida* seems also to have been written earlier than Gower's Latin poem, “*Vox Clamantis*,” the Voice of One Crying. This poem was suggested by the Jack Straw Rebellion of May 1381, which began at Gower's own doors, including people who lived on estates of his own in Kent and Essex.

Now John Gower was a country gentleman averse to all violent change. His bias was conservative. He looked with no favour on the Lollards, as passages in the “*Confessio Amantis*” show, and he felt keenly the danger of a triumph of mob law. But he said in his “*Vox Clamantis*” that no blind Fortune governs the



affairs of men ; our world is as we make it ; whatever happens to us, "nos sumus in causa." The disorder in his time, however dangerous, must have its exciting causes in the life of the community, and he resolved to look through the whole framework of our social system. This he would do in a poem that should speak through Latin to the educated, boldly pointing out wrongs to be righted without shaping war-cries for the ignorant. All England would have echoed to that bold crying out on the condition of the clergy and the people if it had been heard in English, free as the Latin verses poured out with as much facility as if Gower were writing in his mother-tongue. In those verses Gower—a good orthodox Churchman—was outspoken in condemning all corruption, even that by which the Papacy was tainted. He was vigorous with calm invective of a righteous man who had wit and humour at command for use in homeliest plain speaking. "I do not," he said, "affect to touch the stars, or write the wonders of the poles ; but rather, with the common human voice that is lamenting in this land, I write the ills I see. God knows, my wish is to be useful ; that is the prayer that directs my labour. No hatred urges me. In the Voice of my Crying there will be nothing doubtful, for every man's knowledge will be its best interpreter." He prays that his verse may not be turgid ; that there may be in it no word of untruth ; that each word may answer to the thing it speaks of pleasantly and fitly ; that he may flatter in it no one, and seek in it no praise above the praise of God. "Give me that there shall be less vice and more virtue for my speaking." That is the true homeliness of the best English literature, and in that spirit he wrote the "*Confessio Amantis*."

Gower's English poem, the "*Confessio Amantis*," was, like Chaucer's "*Canterbury Tales*," a device for the stringing of a large number of stories upon some slender thread of narrative that should run through them all, in the way that had been made popular by the great recent success of Boccaccio's "*Decameron*." Gower probably had written much of the "*Confessio Amantis*" before Chaucer planned his "*Canterbury Tales*." Both poets worked sometimes on the same material ; while, now and then, Gower seems to have inspired Chaucer with a desire to tell again one of

his friend's good stories. It is difficult to know precisely when Gower's "Confessio Amantis" was first written. In its earliest form, as set forth in the Harleian MS., 3490, Gower said—without then naming as a date "the yere sixtenthe of King Richard"—that he wrote it at the request of Richard the Second. He had met the King's barge when rowing on the Thames, and Richard, having invited him on board, asked—

"That to his highé worthynesse  
Some newé thing I shuldé boke,  
That he himself it mighté lōkē  
After the forme of my writing."

Gower adds that although he had long been out of health, he did his best for the king—

"To make a boke after his heste,  
And write in such a manner wise  
Which may be wisdom to the wise,  
And play to hem that list to play."

Professor John W. Hales has reasoned that the work could only have been thus undertaken, and completed—as it is in that first form—with a loyal dedication to Richard II., at a time when Gower had yet hope in the young King. Such hope was possible only before the year 1386. In 1386 the great barons of England were active under the lead of the King's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, whom Gower in the Latin verse of a "Tripartite Chronicle" has honoured as the Swan. Richard was then compelled to establish a Regency for twelve months. Professor Hales, looking for a date before 1386, finds several allusions that suggest to him the end of 1383 and the year 1384 as the time when the poem may have been first written. Afterwards in "the yere sixtenthe of King Richard," homage to the King was struck out of the beginning and end of the poem. Bolingbroke—Henry of Lancaster—was addressed in his place, and Gower, like Langland, had turned his back upon an evil King whose deposition was the best hope of the country.

The sixteenth year of King Richard, in which Gower changed the dedication of his poem, was the year 1393. In 1393-4

Henry of Lancaster presented a collar to Gower, possibly in recognition of the dedication thus transferred to him. Gower is represented on his tomb as wearing the collar of SS with a small Swan chained; but Henry of Lancaster did not assume the Swan as his badge until after the murder of Gloucester in 1397. The collar of SS must, therefore, have been a later gift.

In 1397, the year of Gloucester's murder, for which Richard was responsible, Gower resigned his Essex rectory, and resigned the world. Being then about seventy years old, he married Agnes Groundolf in a chapel of his own, under rooms to which he retired with her for the rest of his life within the Priory of St. Mary Overies, now known as St. Saviour's, on the Southwark side of London Bridge. The old Priory was then being for the second time rebuilt, and Gower contributed so liberally to the building works that upon his death in 1408, after eleven years of residence among them—during eight of the years blind—the brethren built for him a handsome tomb, on which they carved his figure in effigy. They represented him with his head resting on the three books he had written, in French, Latin, and English. They also paid him pious honour on a painted window which another kind of piety has since destroyed. The tomb remains. The effigy upon it helps us to recall him in his habit as he lived. But in this volume his mind lives again for friendly and familiar speech among all classes of his countrymen.

In the "Confessio Amantis" Gower, of course, so chose his connecting matter that he might bring his tales into distinct groups, with each group armed for battle against one of the Seven Deadly Sins. He added one book more, based on a work popular in the Middle Ages, the "Secretum Secretorum," ascribed to Aristotle. It set forth the Duties of a King, and Gower inserted it because he was writing the poem for King Richard the Second, who was in much need of such instruction. Gower contrived also to mix with his stories much knowledge upon matters of philosophy and science. Indeed if we add all the record of what Aristotle taught Alexander to the other good doctrine of the Confessor, we have the substance of a fair education for any modern reader who does not mind being five

hundred years behind the day. The book will have for many readers an interest, apart from its tales, in its pleasant record of the kind of knowledge that a well-trained man thought worth diffusing in the latter half of the fourteenth century.

The reader to whom old English is new English will after experience of a few pages slip into Gower's music, and find his lines easier reading than some even of the good verse published in our time.

In reading aloud these differences between old and new English should be remembered :

(1) The old pronunciation of the vowels was nearer than it now is to the practice abroad, as its survival in our country dialects will help to show.

(2) Words added to our vocabulary from the Norman French were nearer to their source, and usually had their accents near the close, as they are placed in French.

(3) As a general rule a vowel at the end of a word was sounded if the next word began with a consonant, and had no separate sound if the next word began with a vowel.

(4) Verbs in 'eth,' like 'cometh,' were pronounced often, but not necessarily, without regarding the 'eth' as more of a syllable than the 'es' in comes.

(5) Where 'th' or 'v' came between two short syllables, as in whether, other, ever, there was usually an elision. In the text here given 'whether' was generally written 'where' (whe'er); in other such words the reader makes the contraction for himself. The metre tells him when to do so.

(6) The conjunction 'and' was not necessarily placed at the beginning of a clause connected by it with preceding matter. It may stand within the clause as the word 'also' does in modern English.

Some of Gower's commonest forms, like 'sigh' for saw, will become quickly familiar. Because an equivocal word like 'not' for 'ne wot'—know not—might cause a stumble now and then, I have interpreted that and other such words rather often in the footnotes, the purpose of those notes being to interrupt the text as little as possible, while enabling the eye to take in at

once the meaning of an obsolete word or form. Where the same word often recurs, the explanation is repeated often but not always: often enough, it is hoped, for the convenience of a reader who dips into the book for a tale or two, and has not yet read it through. The only modernised word is the pronoun 'thee' in a few earlier pages of the volume. It had in Gower's time, like 'me,' only one 'e.' This of course gives readers the trouble of discriminating between pronoun and article. Wherever in the early pages of the book the word 'thee' is found, the second 'e' is of my adding; but after those earlier pages I have avoided making even that slight alteration.

A few notes on the sources of Gower's Tales will be found in the Table of Contents. Of John Gower himself and of his works a fuller account than it is here possible to give will be found in the fourth volume of my "English Writers."

H. M.

CARISBROOKE, *March* 1889.



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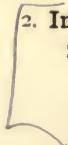
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“But certainly no word ne writeth he  
 Of thilké wicke ensample of Canacé,  
 That loved here owen brother sinfully;  
 Of all swiche curséd stories I say fy.”

*As all readers must agree with Chaucer, I omit this tale. Gower against his own habitual good sense has by some aberration of mind here made his Confessor tolerant of incest. Chaucer condemns also the repulsive incident of King Antiochus in the story of Apollonius of Tyre. But that is necessary to the tale, and Gower does not there, or anywhere else than in the Tale of Canace, confuse the boundaries of right and wrong. I have dropped, however, here and there a few honest but unwholesome lines that no reader will miss.*

*Bully  
Morley*

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## CONFESSIO AMANTIS.



# CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

## Prologue.

**O**f hem, that writen us to-fore,  
 The bokés dwelle, and we  
 therfore  
 Ben taught of that was writen tho.<sup>1</sup>  
 Forthý good is, that we also  
 In ouré time amonge us here  
 Do write of newé some matere  
 Ensampléd of the oldé wise,  
 So that it might in suche a wise,  
 Whan we be dede and ellés where,  
 Belevé<sup>2</sup> to the worldés ere  
 In timé comend after this.  
 But for men sain, and sothe it is,  
 That who that al of wisdom writ  
 It dulleth ofte a mannés wit  
 To hem that shall it allday rede,  
 For thilké cause if that ye rede  
 I woldé go the middel wey  
 And write a boke betwene the twey  
 Somwhat of lust, somewhat of lore,  
 That of the lasse or of the more  
 Som man may like of that I write.  
 And for that fewé men endite  
 In oure englisshe, I thenké make<sup>3</sup>  
 A boké for Englundés sake

<sup>1</sup> *Tho*, then.      <sup>2</sup> *Beleve*, remain.  
<sup>3</sup> This was the original form of the passage,  
 MS. Harl. 3490:  
 In our englisshe I thenké make  
 A boké for king Richardés sake,  
 To whom belongeth my legeaunce  
 With all min hertés obeisaunce  
 In all that ever a legé man  
 Unto his king may don or can,  
 So ferforth, and nie recommaunde  
 To him which all me may commaunde,

The yere sixtente of King Richárd,  
 What shall befallé here afterward  
 God wote, for nowe upon this side  
 Men seen the worlde on every side

Preiend unto the highé regne  
 Which causeth every king to regne  
 That his coroné longé stonde.  
 I thenke and have it understonde,  
 As it befell upon a tide,  
 As thing which shuldé tho betide,  
 Under the town of newé Troy,  
 Which toke of Brute his firsté joy,  
 In Themsé, whan it was flowénd,  
 As I by boté came rowénd  
 So as Fortúne her timé sette,  
 My legé lord perchaunce I mette.  
 And so befell as I came nigh  
 Out of my bote, whan he me sigh,  
 He bad me come into his barge.  
 And whan I was with him at large,  
 Amongés other thingés said  
 He hath this charge upon me laid  
 And bad me do my businesse,  
 That to his highé worthynesse  
 Some newé thing I shuldé boke,  
 That he him self it mighté loke  
 After the forme of my writing.  
 And thus upon his commaunding  
 Min herte is well the moré glad  
 To writé so as he me bad.  
 And eke my fere is well the lasse,  
 That none envié shall compassé  
 Without a resonable wite<sup>1</sup>  
 To feigne and blamé, that I write.  
 A gentil herte his tungé stilleth  
 That it malicé none distilleth  
 But préisé that is to be préised.  
 But he that hath his worde unpeised  
 And handleth out wrong any thing,  
 I pray unto the heven king  
 Fro suché tungés he me shilde.  
 And netheles this world is wilde  
 Of suche jangling, and what befallé.  
 My kingés hesté shall nought falle,  
 That I in hopé to deserve  
 His thank ne shall his will observe  
 And ellés were I nought excused.

<sup>1</sup> *Wite*, blame.

In sondry wisé so diversed,  
That it wel nigh stant all reversed.

Als for to speke of time ago,  
The causé why it chaungeth so  
It nedeth nought to specifie,  
The thing so open is at eye,  
That every man it may beholde.

And nethéles by daiés olde,  
Whan that the bokés weren lever,<sup>1</sup>

Writingé was belovéd ever  
Of hem that weren vertuous.

For here in erthe amongés us,  
If no man writé howe it stood,  
The pris of hem that weré good  
Shulde, as who saith, a great partie,  
Be lost ; so for to magnifie

The worthy princes that tho were  
The bokés shewen here and there  
Wherof the worlde ensampled is,  
And tho that diden then amis

Through tiranny and cruelté,  
Right as they stonden in degre  
So was the writinge of the werke.

Thus I which am a borel<sup>2</sup> clerke  
Purposé for to write a boke  
After the worlde that whilom toke  
Long time in oldé daiés passed.

But for men sain it is now lassed<sup>3</sup>  
In worsé plight than it was tho,

<sup>1</sup> For that thing may nought be refused

What that a king him selfé bit.<sup>4</sup>

Forthy the simplesse of my wit

I thinke if that I may availe

In his servicié to travaille,

Though I sikennesse have upon honde

And longe have had, yet woll I fonde,<sup>5</sup>

So as I madé my behesté,

To make a boke after his heste

And write in such a maner wise,

Which may be wisdomé to the wise

And play to hem that list to play.

But in proverbe I have herde say,

That who that wel his werk beginneth,

The rather a good end he winneth.

And thus the prologue of my boke

After the worlde that whilom toke,

And eke somdele<sup>6</sup> after the newe

I woll beginné for to newe.

<sup>1</sup> *Lever*, better loved.

<sup>2</sup> *Borel*, rough homes-pup.

<sup>3</sup> *Lassed*, become smaller.

<sup>4</sup> *Bit*, prays for. <sup>5</sup> *Fonde*, try.

<sup>6</sup> *Somdele*, some part.

I I thinké for to touche also  
The world which neweth every day,  
So as I can, so as I may.

Though I sikennesse have upon honde  
And longe have had, yet wol I  
fonde<sup>1</sup>

To write and do my besinesse,  
That in some part, so as I gesse,  
The wisé man may ben advised.

For this Prologue is so assised,  
That it to Wisdome all belongeth ;  
That wise man that it underfongeth  
He shal drawe into remémbrance  
The fortune of this worldés chauce,  
The which no man in his persone  
May knowé, but the God alone.

Whan the Prológue is so dispended,  
This boke shall afterward benended  
Of Lové, which doth many a wonder  
And many a wise man hath put  
under ;

And in this wise I thinke to treaté  
Towardés hem, that now be greaté,  
Betwene the vertue and the vice  
Which longeth unto this office.

But for my wittés ben to smale  
To tellen every mannés tale,  
This boke, upon amendémént,  
To stonde at his commaundémént,  
With whom min herte is of accorde,  
I sende unto min owné lorde

Which of Lancastre is Henry  
named.

The highé god hath him proclamed  
Full of knightthód and allé grace.

So wolde I now this werke embrace  
With hol truste and with hol beleve :  
God graunte I mote it well acheve.

If I shall drawe into my minde  
The timé passéd, than I finde

The worldé stode in al his welthe,  
Tho<sup>2</sup> was the life of man in helthe,  
Tho was plenté, tho was richésse,  
Tho was the fortune of prowésse,

<sup>1</sup> *Fonde*, try.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

Tho was knighthóde in pris by  
name,

Wherof the widé worldés fame  
Write in croniques is yet withholdé.<sup>1</sup>

Justfice of lawé tho was holde,  
The privelege of regalie  
Was sauf, and all the baronic  
Worshipéd was in his estate.

The citees knewen no debate,  
The people stode in obeisaunce  
Under the reule of governaunce,  
And pees, with rightwisnesse keste,  
With charité tho stode in reste,  
Of mannes herté the coráge  
Was shewéd than in the viságe.

The word was liche to the conceipte  
Withouté semblaunt of deceipte ;

Tho was there unenviéd love,  
Tho was vertúé set above,  
And vicé was put under fote.  
Now stant the crope under the  
rote,

The worlde is chaungéd overall,  
And therof moste in speciall  
That Love is falle into discorde.

And that I take into recorde  
Of every lond for his partie  
The comun vois, which may nought  
lie,

Nought upon one, but upon alle  
It is that men now clepe and calle  
And sain, that regnés ben devided,  
In stede of love is haté guided,  
The werré<sup>2</sup> wol no pees purchase,  
And lawe hath take her double  
face,

So that justfice out of the wey  
With rightwisnesse is gone away.  
And thus, to loke on every halve,<sup>3</sup>  
Men sene the soré without salve,  
Whiche al the worlde hath overtake.  
Ther is no regne of alle out take,<sup>4</sup>

For every climat hath his dele<sup>1</sup>  
After the turninge of the whele  
Which blindé Fortune overthrow-  
eth,

Wherof the certain no man knoweth.  
The heven wot what is to done.  
But we that dwelle under the mone  
Stonde in this worlde upon a  
were,<sup>2</sup>

And namély but<sup>3</sup> the power  
Of hem that ben the worldés guides,  
With good counseil on allé sides  
Ben kept upright in suche a wise,  
That Haté breké nought thassise  
Of Lové, whiche is all the chefe  
To kepe a regne out of mischefe :  
For allé reson woldé this,  
That unto him, which the' heved<sup>4</sup> is,  
The membrés buxóm shall bowe,  
And he schulde eke here trouth alowe  
With all his hert, and make hem  
chere,

For good counseil is good to here ;  
All though a man be wise him selve,  
Yet is the wisdomé more of twelvé.  
And if they stonden both in one,  
To hope it weré than anone  
That God his gracé woldé sende  
To make of thilké werre an ende,  
Whiche every day now groweth  
newe,—

And that is gretely for to rewe,  
In speciáll for Cristés sake,  
Which wolde his owné life forsake  
Amonge the men to yeven pees.<sup>5</sup>  
But nowe men tellen nethéles,  
That Love is fro the world departed,  
So stant the pees uneven parted  
With hem that liven now a daies.  
But for to loke at all assaies,  
To him, that woldé reson seche  
After the comun worldés speche.

<sup>1</sup> *Withholde*, held or kept with us.

<sup>2</sup> *Werre*, war.

<sup>3</sup> *On every halve*, on all sides.

<sup>4</sup> *Out take*, excepted.

<sup>1</sup> *Dele*, share.

<sup>2</sup> *Upon a were*, in conflict and confusion.

<sup>3</sup> *But*, unless.

<sup>4</sup> *Heved*, head.

<sup>5</sup> *To yeven pees*, to give peace.

It is to wonder of thilké werre,  
In which none wote who hath the  
werre.<sup>1</sup>

For every lond him self deceiveth  
And of disese his parte receiveth,  
And yet ne také men no kepe.<sup>2</sup>  
But thilké Lorde, whiche al may  
kepe,

To whom no conseil may be hid  
Upon the world, whiche is betid,  
Amendé that wherof men pleine  
With trewé hertés and with pleine,  
And reconcilé Love agayne,  
As he, whiche is king souverayne  
Of all the worldés governaunce,  
And of his highé purveiance  
Affermé pees bitwene the londes  
And take herecause into his hondes,  
So that the world may stande  
appesed  
And his godhede also be plesed !

Go thenke upon the daiés olde  
The life of clerkés to beholde,  
Men sain, how that they weré tho  
Ensample and reule of allé tho  
Which of wisdóm the vertue  
soughten.

Unto the God first they besoughten  
As to the substaunce of here scole,  
That they ne sholden nought before  
Her witte upon none erthly werkes,  
Whiche were ayein th'estate of  
clerkes,

And that they mighten flee the  
vice,

Which Simon hath in his office,  
Wherof he taketh golde in honde.  
For thilké time, I understonde,  
The Lumbarde madé non eschange  
The bisshoprichés for to change,  
Ne yet a letter for to sende  
For dignité ne for provende

<sup>1</sup> That war in which none knows who has  
the worse.

<sup>2</sup> No kepe, no heed.

Or cured or withouté cure,  
The chirché keie in adventuré  
Of armés and of brigantaille<sup>1</sup>  
Stood no thing than upon bataille,  
To fight or for to maké cheste<sup>2</sup>  
It thought hem thanné nought  
honéste.

But of simplese and paciéce  
They maden thanné no defence.  
The courte of worldly regalie  
To hem was thanné no bailie.  
The vain honóur was nought desired,  
Which hath the proudé herté fired.  
Humilité was tho witholde  
And pridé was a vicé holde.<sup>3</sup>  
Of holy chirché the largesse  
Yaf thanne and didé great almesse  
To pouer men that hadden nede.  
They were eke chast in word and  
dede,

Wherof the people ensample toke.  
Their lust was al upon the boke,  
Or for to preche or for to preie  
To wissé<sup>4</sup> men the righté weie  
Of such as stode of trouth unlered.  
Lo, thus was Peters bargé stered  
Of hem that thilké timé<sup>5</sup> were.  
And thus came first to mannés ere  
The feith of Criste, and allé good  
Through hem that thanné weren  
good

And sobre and chaste and large and  
wise.

And now, men sain, is other wise.  
Simon the cause hath undertake,  
The worldés swerde on hond is take.  
And that is wonder nethcles,  
Whan Criste him self hath bodé<sup>6</sup>  
pees

And set it in his Testamént,  
How now that holy chirche is went  
Of that here lawé positifé,

<sup>1</sup> Brigantaille, armour.

<sup>2</sup> Cheste, strife.

<sup>3</sup> Holde, esteemed.

<sup>4</sup> Wisse, teach.

<sup>5</sup> Thilke time, in that time.

<sup>6</sup> Bode, commanded.

Hath set to maké werre and strife  
For worldés goods which may  
nought last!<sup>1</sup>

God wote the causé to the last  
Of every right and wronge also.  
But while the lawe is reuled so  
That clerkés to the werre entende,  
I not<sup>2</sup> how that they shall amende  
The woful worlde, in other thinges

To maké pees between the kinges  
After the lawe of charité,  
Which is the propré dueté  
Belongend unto the presthode.  
But as it thinketh to manhode,  
The heven is fer, the worlde is nigh,  
And vainglorie is eke so sligh,<sup>3</sup>  
Which covetise hath now witholde,<sup>4</sup>  
That they none other thing be-  
holde

But only that they mighten winne.  
And thus the werrés they beginne,  
Wherof the holy chirche is taxed,  
That in the point as it is axed  
The dismés<sup>5</sup> goth to the bataile,  
As though Crist mighté nought  
availe

To don hem right by other weic.  
Into the swerd the chirché keie  
Is tornéd, and the holy bede  
Into cursinge, and every stede  
Whiche sholdé stonde upon the  
feith

And to this cause an eré leyth  
Astonéd is of the quarele.  
That<sup>6</sup> sholdé be the worldes hele  
Is now, men sain, the pestilénce,  
Which hath exilé paciénce  
Fro the clergie in speciáll.  
And that is shewéd overall  
In any thing whan they be greved.  
But if Gregoiré be believed

<sup>1</sup> For the transitory goods of this world.

<sup>2</sup> I not, I know not.

<sup>3</sup> Sligh, cunning.

<sup>4</sup> Witholde, held with, had for comrade.

<sup>5</sup> Disme, tithe.

<sup>6</sup> That, that which.

As it is in the bokés write,  
He dothe us somdele for to wite<sup>1</sup>  
The cause of thilké prelacie,  
Where God is nought of compaignie.  
For every werke as it is founded  
Shall stonde, or ellés be confounded.  
Who that only for Cristés sake  
Desireth curé for to take  
And nought for pride of thilke  
estate

To beare a name of a preláte,  
He shal by reson do profite  
In holy chirche, upon the plite  
That he hath set his consciénce.  
But in the worldés reverence  
Ther ben of suché many glade  
Whan they to thilke estate ben  
made,

Nought for the merite of the charge  
But for they wolde hem self dis-  
charge

Of pouérte and becomé grete;  
And thus for pompe and for beyete<sup>2</sup>  
The scribe and eke the pharisee  
Of Moíses upon the see

In the chaire on high ben set,  
Wherof the feith is oft let<sup>3</sup>  
Whiche is betaken<sup>4</sup> hem to kepe.  
In Cristés cause all day they slepe,  
But of the worlde is nought foryete.  
For wel is him that now may gete  
Office in court to be honoured.

The strongé cofre hath all devoured  
Under the keie of avarice  
The tresor of the benefice,  
Wherof the pouer<sup>5</sup> shulden clothe  
And ete and drinke and housé bothe.  
The charité goth all unknowe,  
For they no greine of pité sowe,  
And slouthé kepeth the librarie  
Which longeth to the seintuarie.

<sup>1</sup> Doth us somdele for to wite, causes us in some part to know.

<sup>2</sup> For beyete, for what they can get.

<sup>3</sup> Let, hindered.

<sup>4</sup> Betaken, entrusted.

<sup>5</sup> The power, the poor.

To studie upon the worldés lore  
 Sufficeth now withouté more.  
 Delficacié his sweté tothe  
 Hath soffred so that it fordothe  
 Of abstinence al that ther is.  
 And for to loken over this,  
 If Etna brenne in the clergie,  
 Al openly to mannés eye  
 At Avignon the experience  
 Therof hath yove an evidénce  
 Of that men seen hem so devided.  
 And yet the cause is nought decided,  
 But it is saide and ever shall :  
 Bitwen two stoolés is the fall,  
 Whan that men wenen best to sitte.

In holy chirche of suche a slitte  
 Is for to rewe unto us alle.  
 God graunte it moté wel befallé  
 Towardés him which hath the trowth.  
 But ofte is seen, that mochel slouth,  
 Whan men ben drunken of the  
 cuppe,

Doth mochel harme whan fire is  
 uppe,  
 But if<sup>1</sup> somwho the flammé  
 staunche ;

And so to speke upon this braunche  
 Which proud envie hath made to  
 springe

Of scismé, causeth for to bringe  
 This newé secte of Lollardie,  
 And also many an heresie,  
 Among the clerkés in hem selve.  
 It weré better dike and delve  
 And stonde upon the righté feith  
 Than knowe al that the Bible saith  
 And erre as somé clerkés do.

Upon the hond to were a shoe  
 And set upon the foot a glove,  
 Accordeth nought to the behove  
 Of resonáble mannés use.  
 If men behelden the vertuse,  
 That Criste in erthé taught us here,  
 They shulden nought in such manere

<sup>1</sup> But if, unless.

Among hem that ben holden wise  
 The papacíe so disguise  
 Upon divérs election,  
 Whiche stant aftér thaffection  
 Of sondry londés al aboute.  
 But whan God wol it shal were oute,  
 For trowth mot stonden atté laste.  
 But yet they argumenten faste  
 Upon the Pope and his estate,  
 Wherof they fallen in great debate.  
 This clerk saith yea, that other nay,  
 And thus they drivé forth the day ;  
 And eche of hem him self amendeth  
 Of worldés good : but none entendeth  
 To that which comun profite were.  
 They sain, that God is mighty there,  
 And shal ordeiné what he wille ;  
 There maké they none other skille,  
 Where is the perill of the feith :  
 But every clerke his herté leith  
 To kepe his worlde in speciall ;  
 And of the causé generáll  
 Whiche unto holy chirché longeth,  
 Is none of hem that underfongeth<sup>1</sup>  
 To shapen any resisténce.  
 And thus the right hath no defence,  
 But there I lové, there I holde.  
 Lo, thus to-broke is Cristés folde,  
 Wherof the flock withouté guide  
 Devouréd is on every side,  
 In lacke of hem that ben unware  
 Shepherdés, which here wit beware<sup>2</sup>  
 Upon the worlde in other halve.  
 The sharpé pricke in stede of salve  
 They usen now, wherof the hele<sup>3</sup>  
 They hurte of that they shulden  
 hele.<sup>4</sup>

And what sheep that is full of wulle  
 Upon his backe they toose and pulle  
 While ther is any thinge to pille.  
 And though there be none other  
 skille,

<sup>1</sup> Underfongeth, undertakes.

<sup>2</sup> Beware, spend.

<sup>3</sup> Hele, heel.

<sup>4</sup> Hele, heal.



But onely for they woldé winne,  
 They levé nought whan they beginne  
 Upon here acté to procede,  
 Whiche is no good shephérdés dede.  
 And upon this also men sáin  
 That fro the leesé whiche is pleine,  
 Into the brerés they forcacche  
 Here orf, for that they wolden lacche  
 With such duresse and so bereve  
 That shal upon the thornes leve  
 Of wulle whiche the brere hath tore,<sup>1</sup>  
 Wherof the sheep ben al to-tore,  
 Of that the herdés make hem lese.<sup>2</sup>  
 Lo, how they feignen chalk for chese !  
 For though they speke and teché wel,  
 They don hem self therof no dele.  
 For if the wolf come in the wey,  
 Their gostly staf is then away,  
 Wherof they shulde her flock  
 defende.

But if the pouer sheep offende  
 In any thing, though it be lite,<sup>3</sup>  
 They ben al redy for to smite ;  
 And thus, howe ever that they tale,  
 The strokés falle upon the smale,  
 And upon other that bene greate  
 Hem lacketh herté for to beate,  
 So that undér the clerkés lawe  
 Men seen the merel al misdrawe.<sup>4</sup>  
 I wol nought say in generall,  
 For there ben somme in speciall,  
 In whome that al vertué dwelleth,  
 And tho ben, as thapostel telleth,  
 That God of his electiön  
 Hath clepéd to perfectiön  
 In the manér as Aaron was.  
 They be nothings in thilké cas  
 Of Simon, which the foldés gate  
 Hath lete and goth in othergate,

<sup>1</sup> *That fro the leesé, &c.* That from the meadow which is open plain they hunt their flock into the briars, because they would seize profit by such hard treatment and so rob them of wool that the briar has torn.

<sup>2</sup> *Lese, lose.*

<sup>3</sup> *Lite, little.*

<sup>4</sup> *The merel al misdrawe,* the world all drawn awry.

But they gone in the righté weic.  
 There bene also somme as men  
 saie,  
 That folwen Simon atté heles  
 Whose carté goeth upon wheles  
 Of covetise and worldés pride,  
 And holy chirché goth beside,  
 Whiche sheweth outwarde a viságe  
 Of that is nought in the coráge.  
 For if men loke in holy chirche  
 Betwene the worde and that they  
 wirche,

There is a ful great différence.  
 They prechen us in audiéce,  
 That noman shall his soule em-  
 peire,<sup>1</sup>

For al is but a chery feire<sup>2</sup>  
 This worldés good, so as they telle.  
 Also they sain there is an helle,  
 Whiche unto mannés sinne is due,  
 And bidden us therfore escheue  
 That wicked is, and do the good.  
 Who that her wordés understood  
 It thinketh they wolden do the  
 same ;

But yet betwene ernést and game  
 Ful oft it torneth other wise.  
 With holy talés they devise,  
 How meritóry is thilké dede  
 Of charité to clothe and fede  
 The pouer folke, and for to parte  
 The worldés good, but they departe  
 Ne thenken nought<sup>3</sup> fro that they  
 have.

Also they sain, good is to save  
 With penaunce and with abstinence  
 Of chastité the continence.  
 But plainly for to speke of that,  
 I not<sup>4</sup> how thilke body fat,  
 Which they with deinté metés kepe,  
 And lein it softé for to slepe,

<sup>1</sup> *Empeire, damage.*

<sup>2</sup> *Chery feire, charivari.*

<sup>3</sup> *They departe ne thenken nought,* they do not think of distributing.

<sup>4</sup> *Not, ne wot, know not.*

Whan it hath ellés of his wille,  
 With chastité shall stonde stille.  
 And nethéles I can nought say  
 In aunter<sup>1</sup> if that I missay  
 Touchend of this, how ever it stonde,  
 I here and wol nought understonde,  
 For therof have I nought to done.  
 But he that madé first the mone,  
 The highé God of his goodnése,  
 If ther be cause, he it redresse.  
 But what as any man can accuse,  
 This may resón of trouthe excuse.

The vice of hem that ben ungood  
 Is no reproef unto the good.  
 For every man his owné werkes  
 Shall beare, and thus as of the clerkes  
 The goodé men ben to commende,  
 And all these other God amende!  
 For they ben to the worldés eye  
 The mirrour of ensamplarie  
 To reulen and to taken hede  
 Betwene the men and the Godhede.

**N**ow for to speke of the comúne  
 It is to drede of that fortúne  
 Whiche hath befallé in sondry  
 londes.

But often for defaute of bondes  
 Al sodeinlich er it be wist  
 A tonné, whan his lie arist,<sup>2</sup>  
 To-breketh, and renneth al aboute  
 Whiche ellés sholdé nought gone  
 oute.

And eke ful ofte a litel scar  
 Upon a banke, er men be ware,  
 Let in the streme which with gret  
 paine,

If ever, man it shal restraine.  
 Where lawé lacketh error groweth,  
 He is nought wise who that ne  
 troweth,

For it hath provéd oft ér this.  
 And thus the comun clamour is

<sup>1</sup> In aunter, peradventure.

<sup>2</sup> Whan his lie arist, when its lees rise, when its contents are fermenting.

In every lond where people dwelleth  
 And eche in his compleinté telleth,  
 How that the worlde is al miswent.  
 And therupon his argument  
 Yeveth every man in sondry wise.  
 But what man wolde him self advise  
 His conscience and nought misuse,  
 He may well at the first excuse  
 His God, whiche ever stant in one,  
 In Him there is defauté none.  
 So must it stonde upon us selve,  
 Nought only upon ten ne twelve,  
 But plenerlich<sup>1</sup> upon us alle,  
 For man is cause of that shal falle.

**A**nd nethéles yet som men write  
 And sayn Fortune is to wite;<sup>2</sup>  
 And som men holde opinión  
 That it is constellación,  
 Which causeth al that a man dothe;  
 God wot of bothé whiche is sothe.  
 The worlde as of his propre kinde  
 Was ever untrew, and as the blinde  
 Improperlich he demeth fame,  
 He blameth that is nought to blame  
 And preiseth that is nought to preise.  
 Thus whan he shall the thingés  
 peise,<sup>3</sup>

Ther is decepte in his balaúnce  
 And al is that the variaunce  
 Of us, that shulde us better advise.  
 For after that we fall and rise  
 The worlde ariste and falleth with al,  
 So that the man is over al  
 His owné cause of wele and wo.  
 That we Fortúné clepé so  
 Out of the man him selfe it groweth.  
 And who that other wisé troweth  
 Beholde the people of Israël.  
 For ever while they deden wel  
 Fortúné was hem debonaire;  
 And whan they deden the contraire  
 Fortúné was contrariende.  
 So that it proveth wel at ende,

<sup>1</sup> Plenerlich, fully. <sup>2</sup> To wite, to blame.

<sup>3</sup> Peise, weigh.

Why that the worlde is wonderful  
 And may no whilé stondé ful,  
 Though that it semé wel bescin ;  
 For every worldés thinge is vain  
 And ever goth the whele aboute  
 And ever stant a man in doute,  
 Fortúné stant no whilé stille.  
 So hath ther no man al his wille,  
 Als far as ever a man may knowe  
 There lasteth no thing but a throwe.<sup>1</sup>

The world stant ever upon debate,  
 So may be siker none estate,  
 Now here now there, now to now  
 fro,

Now up now down, the world goth  
 so

And ever hath done and ever shal.  
 Wherof I finde in special  
 A talé writen in the Bible,  
 Which must nedés be crédible,  
 And that as in conclusión  
 Saith, that upon división  
 Stant why no worldés thing may  
 laste

Til it be drivé to the laste,  
 And fro the firsté regne of all  
 Unto this day how so befall  
 Of that the regnés be mevábile,  
 The man him self hath be coup-  
 able,

Whiche of his propre governaunce  
 Fortúneth al the worldés chaunce.

The high almighty purveiaunce,  
 In whose eterné réembraunce  
 From first was every thing présent,  
 He hath his prophecíe sent  
 In suche a wise, as thou shalt here,  
 To Daniél of this matere,  
 How that this world shal torne and  
 wende

Till it be falle unto his ende ;—  
 Wherof the talé tell I shal  
 In which it is betokenéd al.

<sup>1</sup> But a throwe, but for a space of time.

As Nabugodonosor slepte  
 A sweven<sup>1</sup> him toke, the whiche he  
 kepte

Til on the morwe he was arise,  
 For he therof was sore agrise.  
 Til<sup>2</sup> Daniél his dreame he tolde  
 And praid him fairé, that he wolde  
 Aredé what it token may,  
 And saide : a beddé where I lay  
 Me thought I sigh<sup>3</sup> upon a stage,  
 Where stood a wonder straunge  
 ymage.

His hed with al the necke also  
 They were of fine gold, bothé two  
 His brest, his shuldres and his armes  
 Were al of silver, but the armes,  
 The wombe and al down to the kne  
 Of bras they were upon to se,  
 His leggés were al made of steel,  
 So were his feet also somdele,  
 And somdele part to hem was take  
 Of erthé, which men pottés make.  
 The feble meind<sup>4</sup> was with the  
 strong,

So might it nought wel stonde long.  
 And tho me thoughté, that I sigh  
 A great stone from an hill on high  
 Fell down of sodein aventure  
 Upon the feet of this figure,  
 With which stone al to-broké was  
 Gold, silver, erthé, steel and bras,  
 That al was into pouder brought  
 And so forth tornéd into nought.

This was the sweven which he had,  
 That Daniel anone arad  
 And saidé him : that figure straunge  
 Betokeneth how the world shal  
 chaunge

And waxé lassé worth and lasse,  
 Til it to nought all over passe.  
 The necke and hed, that weren  
 golde,

He saide how that betoken sholde

<sup>1</sup> Sweven, dream.

<sup>3</sup> Sigh, saw.

<sup>2</sup> Til, to.

<sup>4</sup> Meind, mixed.

A worthy worlde, a noble, a riche  
To which none after shal be liche.

Of silver that was over forthe  
Shal ben a worlde of lassé worthe.

And after that the wombe of bras  
Token of a wers worlde it was.  
The steel which he sigh afterward  
A world betokeneth more hard.

And yet the werste of every dele  
Is last, than whan of erth and steel  
He sigh the feet departed<sup>1</sup> so,  
For that betokeneth mochel wo.

Whan that the world devided is,  
It mot algaté fare amis,  
For erth which meined is with steel  
To-gider may nought lasté wele,  
But if that one that other waste,  
So mot it nedés fail in haste.

The stone, whiche fro the hilly stage  
He sigh down falle on that ymage  
And hath it into pouder broke,  
That sweven hath Daniel unloke  
And said, that it is Goddes might,  
Which, whan men wené most up-  
right

To stondé, shal hem over caste.  
And that is of this world the laste,  
And than a newé shal beginne,  
From whiche a man shal never  
twinne

Or al to paine or al to pees,  
That world shal laste endéles.

Lo, thus expoundeth Daniël  
The kingés sweven faire and wel  
In Babiloiné the citee,  
Wher that the wisest of Caldee  
Ne couthen wité<sup>2</sup> what it mente,  
But he tolde al the hole entente,  
As in partie it is befallé.

Of goldé the first regne of alle  
Was in that kingés timé tho,  
And lasté many daiés so.  
There whilés that the monarchfé  
Of al the worlde in that partie

<sup>1</sup> *Departed, divided.*

<sup>2</sup> *Wite, know.*

To Babiloiné was subgite  
And helde him still in suche a plight,  
Til that the world began diverse.  
And that was, whan the kinge of  
Perse,

Which Cyrus hight, ayein the pees  
Forth with his soné Cambisés  
Of Babiloine all that empire,  
Right as they wolde hem self desire,  
Put under in subjection  
And toke it in possession,  
And slain was Baltazar the king,  
Which lost his regne and all his  
thing.

And thus whan they it haddé  
wonne,

The worlde of silver was begonne  
And that of gold was passéd oute ;  
And in this wise it goth aboute  
Into the regne of Dariús,  
And than it fell to Persé thus.  
There Alisaundre put hem under,  
Which wroght of armés many a  
wonder,

So that the monarchfé lefte  
With Grecs and here estate up lefte,  
And Persiens gone under fote,  
So suffre they that nedés mote.

And tho the world began of bras,  
And that of silver ended was,  
But for the timé thus it laste,  
Til it befellé, that at laste  
This king, whan that his day was  
come,

With strength of deth was overcome.  
And nethéles yet or he dide<sup>1</sup>  
He shope his regné to devide  
To knightés, which him haddé  
served,

And after that they have deserved  
Yaf the conquestés that he wanné,  
Wherof great werré tho beganne  
Among hem that the regnes had,  
Through proud envé which hemlad,

<sup>1</sup> *Or he dide, ere he died.*

Til it befelle ayein hem thus.  
The noble Cesar Julius,  
Which tho was kinge of Romé-londe,  
With great bataile and with strong  
honde

All Grecé, Perse and eke Caldee  
Wan and put under, so that he  
Nought al only of th'orient  
But al the marche of th'occident  
Govérneth under his empire  
As he that was hole lord and sire  
And heldé through his chivalrie  
Of al this worlde the monarchie  
And was the first of that honóur  
Which taketh name of Emperóur.

Where Romé thanné wolde  
assaile,

There mighté no thing contrevaille,  
But every contré must obeie :  
Tho goth the regne of bras aweie  
And comen is the worlde of steel,  
And stode above upon the whele.  
As steel is hardest in his kinde  
Above al other that men finde  
Of metals, such was Romé tho  
The mightiest and lasté so  
Long time amongés the Romaines,  
Til they becomé so vilains,  
That the fals emperóur Leo  
With Constantin his sone also  
The patrimonie and the richésse,  
Which to Silvester in pure almesse  
The firsté Constantin lefte,  
Fro holy chirché they berefte.  
But Adrian, which Popé was  
And sawe the mischef of this cas,  
Goth into Frauncé for to pleine  
And praieth the great Charlemaine  
For Cristés sake and soulé hele,  
That he wol také the quarele  
Of holy chirche in his defence,  
And Charlés, for the reverence  
Of God, the cause hath undertake  
And with his host the waie hath  
take

Over the mountes of Lumbardie.  
Of Rome and al the tirannie  
With blody swerd he overcome  
And the citee with strengthé nome<sup>1</sup>  
In suche a wise and there he  
wroughte,

That holy chirche ayein he broughte  
Into fraunchise, and doth restore  
The Popés luste and yaf him more.  
And thus whan he his God hath  
served,

He toke, as he hath well deserved,  
The diademe and was coróned  
Of Rome, and thus was abandóned  
Thempire, whiche camé never  
ayeine

Into the hande of no Romaine.  
But a long time it stode so stille  
Under the Frensshé kingés wille,  
Til that Fortúne her whele so lad,  
That afterward Lumbárdes it had,  
Nought by the swerd, but by  
suffraunce

Of him that tho was king of  
Fraunce,

Whiche Carlé Calvus clepéd was ;  
And he resigneth in this cas  
Thempire of Rome unto Lowis  
His cousin, which a Lumbarde is,  
And so it laste into the yere  
Of Alberte and of Berenger.

But than upon dissensiön  
They felle and in divisiön  
Among hem self that weré grete,  
So that they losté the beyete<sup>2</sup>  
Of worship and of worldés pees.  
But in proverbé nethéles  
Men sain : ful seldome is, that  
welthe

Can suffre his owne estate in helthe,  
And that was in the Lumbardes  
sene,

Suche comun strife was hem be-  
twene

<sup>1</sup> *Nome*, took. — <sup>2</sup> *Beyete*, possession.

Through covetise and through  
 envie,  
 That every man drough his partie,  
 Which mighte leden any route  
 Withinné bourgh and eke withoute.  
 The comun right hath no felawe,  
 So that the governaunce of lawe  
 Was lost; and for necessité  
 Of that they stode in suche degré  
 Al only through divisïön  
 Hem nedeth in conclusïön  
 Of straungé londés helpe beside,  
 And thus for they hem self divide  
 And stonden out of reule uneven,  
 Of Alemainé princes seven  
 They chose, in this condiciön,  
 That upon here electiön  
 Thempire of Romé sholdé stonde.  
 And thus they left it out of honde  
 For lacke of grace, and it forsoke  
 That Alemains upon hem toke.  
 And to confermen here estate  
 Of that they stoden in debate,  
 They token the possessiön  
 After the composiciön  
 Among hem self, and ther upon  
 They made an Emperour anon,  
 Whos name as the croniqué telleth  
 Was Othes, and so forth it dwelleth,  
 Fro thilke daie yet unto this,  
 Thempire of Rome hath ben and is  
 To thalemains: and in this wise  
 As ye to-fore have herd devise<sup>1</sup>  
 How Daniel the sweven<sup>2</sup> ex-  
 poundeth  
 Of that ymage, on whom he  
 foundeth  
 The world which after sholdé falle,—  
 Comen is the last token of alle.  
 Upon the feet of erthe and steel  
 So stant the world now every dele  
 Departed,<sup>3</sup> which began right tho  
 Whan Romé was devided so.

<sup>1</sup> *Devise*, relate.<sup>2</sup> *Sweven*, dream.<sup>3</sup> *Every dele departed*, every part divided.

And that is for to rewé sore,  
 For alwey sithé<sup>1</sup> more and more  
 The worlde empeireth<sup>2</sup> every day,  
 Wherof the sothé shewé may.  
 At Romé first if we beginne,  
 The walle and al the citee withinne  
 Stant in ruine and in decás,  
 The feld is where the palais was,  
 The town is wast, and over that  
 If we beholden thilke estate  
 Whiche whilome was of the Ro-  
 mains,  
 Of knighthod and of citizeins,  
 To peisé<sup>3</sup> now with that beforen,  
 (The chaf is take for the corne.)  
 And for to speke of Romés might  
 Unnethés<sup>4</sup> stant ther ought upright  
 Of worship or of worldés good,  
 As it beforé timé stood.  
 And why the worship is away  
 If that a man the sothe shall say,  
 The cause hath ben devisiön,  
 Which moder of confusiön  
 Is, where she cometh overall  
 Nought only of the temporall  
 But of the spiritual also.  
 The dedé proveth it is so,  
 And hath do many daies er this,  
 Through venim which that medled<sup>5</sup>  
 is  
 In holy chirche of erthely thing.  
 For Crist him self maketh know-  
 leching,  
 That no man may togeder serve  
 God and the World but if<sup>6</sup> he swerve  
 Froward that one, and stonde un-  
 stable:  
 And Cristés word may nought be  
 fable.  
 The thing so open is at theye,  
 It nedeth nought to specifie

<sup>1</sup> *Sithe*, since.<sup>2</sup> *Empeireth*, grows worse.<sup>3</sup> *Peise*, weigh.<sup>5</sup> *Medled*, mixed.<sup>6</sup> *But if*, unless.<sup>4</sup> *Unnethes*, hardly.

Or speke ought more in this matere.  
 But in this wise a man may lere<sup>1</sup>  
 How that the worlde is gone aboute,  
 The whiche wel nigh is weréd out  
 After the forme of that figüre,  
 Which Daniël in his scripture  
 Expoundeth as to-fore is tolde :  
 Of bras, of silver and of golde  
 The worlde is passéd and agone,  
 And nowe upon his oldé tone<sup>2</sup>  
 It stant, of brutel<sup>3</sup> erthe and steel  
 The whiche accorden never a  
 dele,<sup>4</sup>

So mot it nedés swerve aside  
 As thinge the which men seen divide.

**Chapostel** writ unto us alle,  
 And saith, that upon us is falle  
 Thend of the world, so may we  
 knowe

This ymage is nigh overthrowe  
 By which this world was signified,  
 That whilom was so magnified  
 And nowe is olde and feble and  
 vile,

Full of mischéfe and of perile,  
 And stant divided eke also  
 Lyke to the feet, that weré so  
 As I tolde of the statue above.

And thus men seen, through lacke  
 of Love

Where as the lond divided is,  
 It mot alगत fare amis.

And now, to loke on every side,  
 A man may se the world divide :  
 The werrés ben so generall  
 Amonge the Cristen overall,  
 That every man now secheth  
 wreche,<sup>5</sup>

And yet these clerkés alday preche  
 And sain, good dedé may none be  
 Whiche stant nought upon charite.

<sup>1</sup> *Lere*, learn.

<sup>2</sup> *Tonc*, toes.

<sup>3</sup> *Brutel*, brittle.

<sup>4</sup> *Never a dele*, never a bit.

<sup>5</sup> *Wreche*, wreaking of vengeance.

I not<sup>1</sup> how charité sholde stonde  
 Where dedly werre is taken on  
 honde,

But al this wo is cause of man  
 The which that wit and reson can ;  
 And that in token and in wisesse,  
 That ilke ymáge bare liknesse  
 Of man, and of none other beste.  
 For first unto the mannés heste  
 Was every créature ordeigned,  
 But afterward it was restraigned ;  
 Whan that he fel they fellen eke,  
 Whan he wex seke they wexen seke ;  
 For as the man hath passiõ  
 Of sikennesse, in comparison  
 So suffren other créatures.

Lo, first the heavenly figures.

**The** sonne and mone eclipsen  
 both

And ben with mannés sinne wroth ;  
 The purest air, for sinne, alofte  
 Hath ben and is corrupt ful ofte ;  
 Right now the highé windés blowe  
 And anon after they ben lowe,  
 Now cloudy and now clere it is ;  
 So it may proven wel by this,  
 A mannés sinne is for to hate<sup>2</sup>  
 Which maketh the welken to de-  
 bate.

And for to se the properté  
 Of every thinge in his degré,  
 Benethé forth amonge us here  
 Al stant a like in this matere.  
 The see nowe ebbeth and nowe it  
 floweth,

The lond now welketh and now it  
 groweth ;  
 Now be the trees with levés grene,  
 Now they be bare and no thing  
 sene ;

Now be there lusty somer floures,  
 Now be there stormy winter  
 shoures ;

<sup>1</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>2</sup> *For to hate*, to be hated.

Now be the daiés, now the nightes,  
So stant there no thing al uprightes :  
Nowe it is light, nowe it is derke,  
And thus stant al the worldés werke  
After the disposiciön

Of man, and his condiçiön.  
Forthý<sup>1</sup> Gregoire in his moráll  
Saith, that a man in speciáll  
The lassé worlde<sup>2</sup> is properly ;  
And that he proveth redily.  
For man of soulé resonáble  
Is to an angel resembláble ;  
And lyke to beste, he hath féling ;  
And lyke to tres, he hath growing.  
The stonés ben, and so is he,  
Thus of his propre qualite  
The man, as telleth the clergie,  
Is as a worlde in his partie ;  
And when this litel world mis-  
torneth

The greté worlde al overtorneth.  
The lond, the see, the firmament  
They axen allé jugément  
Ayein the man, and make him  
warre,  
Ther while him selfe stant out of  
harre<sup>3</sup>

Theremenaunt wol nought accorde :  
And in this wise as I recorde  
The man is cause of allé wo,  
Why this worlde is divided so.  
Divisiön the gospel saith  
One house upon an other laith,  
Til that the regne al overthrowe.  
And thus may every man wel knowe  
Divisiön aboven alle  
Is thing which maketh the world to  
falle

And ever hath do, sith it began ;  
It may firste prove upon a man.

The which for his complexiön  
Is made upon divisiön

<sup>1</sup> *Forthý*, for that.

<sup>2</sup> *The lassé worlde*, the microcosm.

<sup>3</sup> *Out of harre*, unhinged, out of order.

Of cold of hot of moist of drie,  
He mot by verry kinde<sup>1</sup> die.  
For the contraire of his estate  
Stant evermore in such debate,  
Til that a part be overcome  
There may no final pees be nomc.<sup>2</sup>  
But otherwise if a man were  
Made al togeder of one matere  
Withouten interrupçiön,  
There shuldé no corrupçiön  
Engendre upon that unité ;  
But for there is diversité  
Within him selfe, he may nought  
laste

That he ne deieth at the laste.  
But in a man yet over this  
Full great divisiön there is,  
Through which that he is ever in  
strife

While that him lasteth any life.

The body and the soule also  
Among hem ben divided so,  
That what thing that the body hateth  
The soulé loveth and debateth.  
But nethéles ful ofte is sene  
Of werré whiche is hem betwene,  
The feble hath wonné the victoire ;  
And whoso draweth into memoire  
What hath befallé of olde and newe  
He may that werré soré rewe ;  
Which first began in paradis :  
For there was provéd what it is  
And what disesé there it wrought,  
For thilké werré tho<sup>3</sup> forth brought  
The vice of allé dedly sinne  
Through which divisiön came inne  
Among the men in erthé here,  
And was the cause and the matere,  
Why God the greté flodés sende  
Of all the world and<sup>4</sup> made an ende

<sup>1</sup> *Kinde*, nature.

<sup>2</sup> *Nomc*, taken.

<sup>3</sup> *Tho*, then.

<sup>4</sup> *And*. The place of "and" in a sentence might be varied, as we vary the place of "also."



But Noe with his felaship,  
Which only weren sauf by ship.  
And over that through sinne it  
come,

That Nembroth such emprisé nome,  
Whan he the touré Babel on hight  
Let make, as he that woldé fight  
Ayein the highé goddés might,  
Wherof devided anon right  
Was the languáge in suche entent  
There wisté non what other ment,  
So that they mighten nought pro-  
cede.

And thus it stant of every dede  
Where sinné taketh the case on  
honde

It may upright nought longé stonde,  
For sinne of her condiçion  
Is mother of divisiön,  
And token whan the world shall  
faile.

For so saith Crist withouté faile,  
That nigh upon the worldés ende  
Pees and accorde away shall wende  
And allé charité shall cease  
Among the men, and hate encrease.  
And whan these tokens ben befall  
All sodeinly the stone shall fall,  
As Daniël it hath beknowe,  
Which all this world shal over-  
throwe :

And every man shall than arise  
To joie or elles to juse,<sup>1</sup>  
Where that he shall for ever dwell,  
Or straight to heven or straight to  
hell.

In heven is pees and al accorde,  
But helle is full of such discorde  
That there may be no Lové day.<sup>2</sup>  
Forthý<sup>3</sup> good is, while a man  
may,

<sup>1</sup> *Juse*, judgment.

<sup>2</sup> *Love-day*, day of peacemaking by sub-  
mitting quarrels to the judgment of a Christian  
minister.

<sup>3</sup> *Forthý*, for that.

Echone to setté pees with other  
And loven as his owné brother,  
So may he winné worldés welthe  
And afterwarde his soulé helthe.

But woldé god that now were one  
An other suche as Arione,  
Whiche had an harpe of such tem-  
prúre,

And therto of so good mesúre  
He song, that he the bestés wilde  
Made of his noté tame and milde,  
The hinde in pees with the león,  
The wolfe in pees with the motton,<sup>1</sup>  
The hare in pees stood with the  
hounde,

And every man upon this grounde  
Whiche Arion that timé herde,  
As well the lorde as the shepherde,  
Hebrought hem all in good accorde,  
So that the comun with the lorde  
And lord with the común also  
He sette in Lové bothé two  
And put away maléncolie.  
That was a lustie mélodie  
Whan every man with other lough.<sup>2</sup>  
And if ther were suche one now  
Whiche coudé harpe as he tho<sup>3</sup>  
ded

He might availe in many a stede  
To maké pees where nowe is hate.  
For whan men thenken to debate  
I not<sup>4</sup> what other thinge is good ;  
But wher that wisdom waxeth wood<sup>5</sup>  
And reson torneth into rage,  
So that mesúre<sup>6</sup> upon outrage  
Hath set this worldé, it is to drede ;  
For that bringeth in the comun drede  
Whiche stant at every mannés dore.  
But whan the sharpnesse of the  
spore

The horsé sidé smit to sore  
It greveth ofte. And now no more

<sup>1</sup> *Motton*, sheep.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

<sup>3</sup> *Wood*, mad.

<sup>4</sup> *Lough*, laughed.

<sup>5</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>6</sup> *Mesure*, moderation.

As for to speke of this matere,  
Which nonebut only God maystere.  
So weré good if at this tyde  
That every man vpon his syde  
Besought and prayéd for the peace  
Whiche is the cause of all in-  
cresse

Of worshippe and of worldés welthe,  
Of hertes reste and soulés helthe,  
Without peacestondéno thing good,  
Forthy to Christ which shed his  
blood  
For peace byseketh alle men.  
Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

# CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

## Book E.

**I** may nought strecche up to the  
heven  
Min hond, ne setten al in even  
This world, whiche ever is in bal-  
aunce ;  
It stant nought in my suffisaunce  
So greaté thingés to compásse.  
But I mote lette it over passe  
And treaten upon other thinges :  
Forthý the stile of my writfinges  
Fro this dayforth I thenké change,  
And speake of thinge is nought so  
strange,  
Whiche every kinde hath upon  
honde,  
And wherupon the world mote  
stonde  
And hath done sithen <sup>1</sup> it began  
And shall while there is any man,  
And that is Love ; of whiche I mene  
To treaté, as after shall be sene,  
In whiche there can no man him  
reule  
For Lovés lawe is out of reule  
That of to moche or of to lite <sup>2</sup>  
Wellnigh is every man to wite.<sup>3</sup>  
And nethéles there is no man  
In all this world so wise, that can  
Of Lové temper the mesúre  
But as it falleth in aventure.

<sup>1</sup> *Sithen*, since.      <sup>2</sup> *Lite*, little.  
<sup>3</sup> *To wite*, to blame.

For wit ne strengthé may nought  
helpe  
And he which ellés wolde him  
yelpe<sup>1</sup>  
Is rathest<sup>2</sup> thrown under foote,  
Ther can no wight therof do bote.<sup>3</sup>  
For yet was never such covfne<sup>4</sup>  
That couth ordeine a medicíne  
To thing which God in lawe of  
kinde<sup>5</sup>  
Hath set, for there may no man  
finde  
The righté salve for suche a sore.  
It hath and shal be evermore  
That Love is maister where he will,  
There can no life make other skill,<sup>6</sup>  
For where as ever him list to set  
There is no might which him may  
let.  
But what shall fallen atté laste,  
The sothé can no wisdom caste,  
But as it falleth upon chaunce,  
For if there ever was balauce  
Whiche of Fortúné stant governed,  
I may well leve as I am lerned<sup>7</sup>  
That Love hath that baláunce on  
honde  
Whiche wol no reson understonde.

<sup>1</sup> *Yelpe*, boast.      <sup>2</sup> *Rathest*, soonest.  
<sup>3</sup> *Bote*, remedy.      <sup>4</sup> *Covfne*, contrivance.  
<sup>5</sup> *Kinde*, Nature.      <sup>6</sup> *Skill*, distinction.  
<sup>7</sup> *Leve as I am lerned*, believe as I am  
taught.

For Love is blinde and may nought  
se,

Forthý there may no certeinté  
Be sette upon his jugément.  
But as the whele abouté went  
He yeyeth his graces undeserved,  
And fro that man which hath him  
served

Ful ofte he taketh away his fees ;  
As he that plaieth at the dies<sup>1</sup>  
And therupon what shal befall  
He not,<sup>2</sup> til that the chauncé fall  
Where<sup>3</sup> he shall lese or he shal  
winne.

And thus full ofté men beginne  
That if they wisten what it ment  
Theywoldé chaunge all here entent.

**And** for to prove that it is so  
I am my selfé one of tho<sup>4</sup>  
Whiche to this scole am underfonge.<sup>5</sup>  
For it is sithé go nought longe<sup>6</sup>  
As for to speake of this matere  
I may you telle, if ye woll here,  
A wonder hap which me befelle,  
That was to me bothe harde and  
felle,

Touchend of Love and his fortune,  
The which me liketh to commúne  
And plainly for to telle it oute  
To hem that lovers ben aboute ;  
Fro point to pointe I wol declare  
And writen of my woful care,  
My woful day, my woful chaunce,  
That men mow také rémembraunce  
Of that they shall here after rede.  
For in good feith this wolde I rede,<sup>7</sup>  
That every man ensample take  
Of wisdom which is him betake,<sup>8</sup>  
And that he wote of good apprise<sup>9</sup>  
To teche it forth, for suche emprise

<sup>1</sup> Dies, dice.

<sup>2</sup> Not, knows not.

<sup>3</sup> Where, whether.

<sup>4</sup> Tho, them.

<sup>5</sup> Underfonge, received.

<sup>6</sup> Since not long ago.

<sup>7</sup> Rede, counsel. <sup>8</sup> Betake, entrusted.

<sup>9</sup> And that which he knows to be worth learning.

Is for to preise : and therefore I  
Wol write and shewe all openly,  
How love and I togider mette,  
Wherof the worlde ensample fette  
May<sup>1</sup> after this, whan I am go,  
Of thilke unselv jolif wo,  
Whose reulé stant out of the wey,  
Now glad, and now gladnesse away,  
And yet it may nought be with-  
stonde

For ought that men may under-  
stonde.

**Upon** the point that is befallé  
Of love, in which that I am falle,  
I thenké tellé my matere.  
Now herken, who that woll it here,  
Of my fortune how that it ferde  
This enderday,<sup>2</sup> as I forth ferde  
To walke, as I you tellé may.  
And that was in the moneth of May,  
Whan every brid hath chose his  
make  
And thenketh his merthés for to  
make

Of lové, that he hath acheved.  
But so was I no thing releved,  
For I was further fro my love  
Than erthe is fro the heven above.  
And for to speke of any spede<sup>3</sup>  
So wiste I me none other rede,<sup>4</sup>  
But as it were a man forfare<sup>5</sup>  
Unto the wood I gan to fare,  
Nought for to singé with the briddes,  
For whan I was the wood amiddes  
I fonde a swoté grené pleine,  
And there I gan my wo compleine  
Wisslinge and wepinge all min one<sup>6</sup>  
For other mirthés made I none.  
So hard me was that ilké throwe,<sup>7</sup>  
That ofte sithes<sup>8</sup> overthrowe

<sup>1</sup> Ensamble fette may, may fetch example.

<sup>2</sup> This enderday, this past day, lately.

<sup>3</sup> Spede, success.

<sup>4</sup> Rede, counsel.

<sup>5</sup> Forfare, undone.

<sup>6</sup> All min one, all by myself.

<sup>7</sup> Throwe, throe.

<sup>8</sup> Ofte sithes, many times.

To grounde I was, withouté brethe ;  
 And ever I wisshéd after dethe,  
 Whan I out of my peine awoke,  
 And caste up many a pitous loke  
 Unto the heven and saidé thus :  
 'O thou Cupíde, O thou Venús,  
 Thou god of love and thou god-  
 desse,

Where is pité? where is mekenesse?  
 Now doth me<sup>1</sup> plainly live or die,  
 For certés suche a maladie  
 As I now have, and longe have had,  
 It mighté make a wise man mad,  
 If that it shuldé longe endure.  
 O Venus, queene of lovés cure,  
 Thou life, thou lust, thou mannés  
 hele,

Beholde my cause and my quarele  
 And yef me some part of thy grace,  
 So that I may finde in this place,  
 If thou be gracióus or none !'  
 And with that worde I sawe anone  
 The Kinge of Love and Quené bothe.  
 But he, that king, with eyen wrothe  
 His chere aweiward fro me caste  
 And forthe he passéd atté laste  
 But nethéles er he forth wente  
 A fry dart me thought he hente<sup>2</sup>  
 And threwe it through min herté  
 rote.<sup>3</sup>

In him fonde I none other bote,<sup>4</sup>  
 Forlenger list him nought to dwelle.  
 But she, whiche is the source and  
 welle

Of wele or wo that shal betide  
 To hem that loven, at that tide  
 Abode, but for to tellen here  
 She cast on me no goodly chere,  
 Thus nethéles to me she saide :  
 'What art thou, sonne?' And I  
 abraide<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Doth me*, cause me to.

<sup>2</sup> *Hente*, seized.

<sup>3</sup> *Min herte rote*, the root of my heart.

<sup>4</sup> *Bote*, remedy. <sup>5</sup> *Abraide*, s'arted.

Right as a man doth out of slepe,  
 And therof toke she right good  
 kepe<sup>1</sup>

And bad me nothing be adradde,  
 But for all that I was nought gladde,  
 For I ne sawe no causé why.

And eft<sup>2</sup> she asketh, what was I ?

I saide : 'A caitif that lyth here.  
 What worldé ye my lady dere?  
 Shall I be hole or ellés die?'

She saide : 'Telle thy maladie.  
 What is thy sore of which thou  
 pleinst,

Ne hide it nought, for if thou feignest  
 I can do thee no medicíne.'

'Madame, I am a man of thine  
 That in thy Court have longé served  
 And axé that I have deserved,  
 Some wele after my longé wo.'

And she began to louré tho  
 And saidé : 'There be many of you  
 Faitours,<sup>3</sup> and so may be that thou  
 Art right suche one, and by faintise  
 Saist, that thou hast me do service.'  
 And nethéles she wisté wele  
 My word stood on an other whele  
 Withouten any faiterie.

But algate of my maladie  
 She bad me tell and say her trouthe.

'Madame, if ye wolde havé routhe,  
 Quod I, 'than wolde I tellé you.'

'Say forth,' quod she, 'and telle me  
 how,  
 Shewe me thy sikennesse every dele.'

'Madamé, that can I do wele,  
 Be so my life therto wol laste.'

With that her loke on me she caste  
 And saide : 'In aunter<sup>4</sup> if thou live  
 My wille is first, that thou be  
 shrive ;

<sup>1</sup> *Kepe*, heed.

<sup>2</sup> *Eft*, again.

<sup>3</sup> *Faitours*, dissemblers.

<sup>4</sup> *In aunter*, if it happen.

And nethéles how that it is  
I wot my selfe, but for all this  
Unto my Prest which cometh anone  
I wol thou telle it one and one,  
Both al thy thought and al thy werke.  
O Genius, min owné clerke,  
Come forth, and here this mannés  
shrifte,

Quod Venus tho. And I uplifte  
Min hede with that, and gan beholde  
The selfé Prest, whiche as she  
wolde

Was redy there and fet him doune  
To heré my Confessiön.

**This** worthy prest, this holy man  
To me spekend thus began  
And saidé : "Benedicite  
My sone, of the felicité  
Of Love and eke of all the wo  
Thou shalt be shrive of bothé two.  
What thou er<sup>1</sup> this for lovés sake  
Hast felt, let nothing be forsake ;  
Tel plainly as it is befallé."

And with that worde I gan down  
falle

On knees, and with devociön  
And with full great contriciön  
I saidé thanné ! "Dominus  
Min holy fader Genius,  
So as thou haste experience  
Of Lové, for whose reverence  
Thou shalt me shriven at this time,  
I pray thee let me nought mistime  
My shrifte, for I am destourbed  
In all min herte and so contourbed,  
That I ne may my wittes gete ;  
So shal I moché thing foryete.<sup>2</sup>  
But if thou wolt my shrifte oppose<sup>3</sup>  
Fro point to pointe, than I suppose  
There shall nothing be left behinde.  
But now my wittés be so blinde,

<sup>1</sup> *Er.*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Foryete*, forget.

<sup>3</sup> *Oppose*, test by argument.

That I ne can my selfé teche."

Tho<sup>1</sup> he beganne anon to preche,  
And with his wordés debonaire  
He saidé to me softe and faire :  
"My sone, I am assignéd here  
Thy shrifte to oppose and here  
By Venus the goddésse above,  
Whose prest I am touchend of love.

"But nethéles for certain skill<sup>2</sup>  
I mote algate<sup>3</sup> and nedés will  
Nought only maké my spekinges  
Of Lové, but of other thinges  
That touchen to the cause of Vice.  
For that belongeth to thoffice  
Of Prest, whose ordre that I bere :  
So that I wol nothing forbere  
That I the Vices one and one  
Ne shall thee shewen everichone,  
Wherof thou might take evidence  
To reulé with thy consciënce.

But of conclusiön fináll  
Conclude I wolde in speciáll  
For Lové, whose servaúnt I am  
And why the cause is that I cam.  
So thenke I to do bothé two,—  
First that<sup>4</sup> min ordre longeth to  
The Vices for to telle a rewe ;<sup>5</sup>  
But nexte, above all other, shewe  
Of Love I wol the propretés,  
How that they stondé by degres  
After the disposiciön  
Of Venus, whose condiciön  
I must folwe as I am holde,  
For I with Love am al witholde,<sup>6</sup>  
So that the lasse I am to wite,<sup>7</sup>  
Though I ne conné but a lite<sup>8</sup>  
Of other thingés that bene wise ;  
I am nought taught in suche a wise.

<sup>1</sup> *Tho*, then ; from an indeclinable *thá*.  
When it means 'those,' it is from *thá*, plural  
of 'that.'

<sup>2</sup> *Skill*, discrimination.

<sup>3</sup> *Mote algate*, must always.

<sup>4</sup> That which belongs to my calling.

<sup>5</sup> *A rewe*, in row, in their order.

<sup>6</sup> *Witholde*, retained.

<sup>7</sup> *To wite*, to blame. <sup>8</sup> Know but a little.

For it is nought my comun use  
 To speke of vices and vertúse,  
 But all of Love and of his lore,  
 For Venus bokés of no more  
 Me techen, nouthér text né glose.  
 But for als moche as I suppose  
 It sit a Prest to be wel thewed,<sup>1</sup>  
 And shame it is if he be lewed,<sup>2</sup>  
 Of my presthode after the forme  
 I wol thy shrifté so enforme,  
 That at the lasté thou shalt here  
 The Vices, and to thy matere  
 Of Love I shal hem so remeve  
 That thou shalt knowé what they  
 meve.

For what a man shall axe or saine  
 Touchend of shrifte, it mot be  
 pleine;<sup>3</sup>

It nedeth nought to make it queinte,<sup>4</sup>  
 For Trough his wordés wol nought  
 peinte.

That I wol axe of thee forthý,  
 My sone, it shal be so plainly  
 That thou shalt knowe and under-  
 stonde  
 The pointes of Shrift how that they  
 stonde.”

[*The Senses : Sight and Hearing.*]

**Wetwene** the life and death I  
 herde

This Prestés tale er I answérde ;  
 And than I praid him for to say  
 His will, and I it wolde obey  
 After the forme of his apprise.  
 Tho spake he to me in such wise  
 And bad me, that I sholdé shrive  
 As touchende of my wittés five,  
 And shapé that they were amended  
 Of that I haddé hem mispended.

<sup>1</sup> *Well thewed*, of good manners.

<sup>2</sup> *Lewed*, unlearned as the common people.

<sup>3</sup> *Pleine*, plain.

<sup>4</sup> *Queinte*, ingeniously elaborated.

For tho<sup>1</sup> be properly the gates,  
 Through which as to the hert  
 algates<sup>2</sup>

Cometh all thing unto the feire  
 Which may the mannes foule em-  
 peire.<sup>3</sup>

And now this matter is brought in,  
 “My sone, I thenké first beginne  
 To wit<sup>4</sup> how that thin eye hath  
 stonde,

The whiche is as I understonde  
 The mosté principál of alle  
 Through whom that peril may be-  
 falle.

And for to speke in Lovés kinde,  
 Full many suche a man may finde  
 Whiche ever caste aboute here eye  
 To loke if that they might asprie  
 Ful ofté thing which hem ne touch-  
 eth,

But only that here herte soucheth<sup>5</sup>  
 In hindringe of an other wight.  
 And thus ful many a worthy knight  
 And many a lusty lady bothe  
 Have be full ofté sithés wrothe ;  
 So that an eye is as a thefe  
 To Love, and doth ful great mes-  
 chéfe ;

And also for his owné part  
 Ful ofté thilké fryr dart  
 Of lové, which that ever brenneth,  
 Through him<sup>6</sup> into the herté ren-  
 neth.

And thus a mannés eyé ferst  
 Him selfé greveth altherwerst,<sup>7</sup>  
 And many a timé that he knoweth  
 Unto his owné harme it groweth.  
 My soné, herken now forthý  
 A talé, to be ware therby

<sup>1</sup> *Tho*, those.

<sup>2</sup> *Algates*, always.

<sup>3</sup> *Empeire*, impair, injure.

<sup>4</sup> *To wit*, to know.

<sup>5</sup> *Soucheth*, suspecteth.

<sup>6</sup> *Him*, (the eye). ‘It’ was used only in the  
 nominative and accusative. ‘His’ and ‘him’  
 are both masculine and neuter.

<sup>7</sup> *Altherwerst*, worst of all.

Thin eyé for to kepe and warde,  
So that it passé nought his warde.

“Ovidé telleth in his boke  
Ensamble touchend of misloke  
And saith, how whilom ther was one  
A worthy lord, whiche Acteon  
Was hote,<sup>1</sup> and he was cousin nigh  
To him that Thebés first on high  
Upsetté,<sup>2</sup> which king Cadmé hight.  
This Acteón, as he wel might,  
Above all other cast his chere,<sup>3</sup>  
And used it from yere to yere  
With houndés and with greté hornes  
Among the wodés and the thornes  
To make his hunting and his chace ;  
Where him best thought, in every  
place,

To findé gamen in his way,  
There rode he for to hunte and play.  
So him befelle upon a tide<sup>4</sup>  
On his hunting as he gan ride  
In a foréste alone he was ;  
He sigh<sup>5</sup> upon the grené gras  
The fairé fresshé flourés springe ;  
He herd among the levés singe  
The throstel with the nightingale.  
Thus, er he wist, into a dale  
He came, wher was a litel pleine  
All rounde abouté wel beseine  
With bussches grene and cedres  
high,—

And there within he caste his eye.  
Amid the plaine he saw a welle  
So fairé there might no man telle,  
In which Diana naked stood,  
To bathe and play her in the flood,  
With many a nimphé which her  
serveth.

But he his eye away ne swerveth  
Fro heré, which was naked all.  
And she was wonder wroth withall,

<sup>1</sup> *Note*, called.

<sup>2</sup> *Upsetté*, set up.

<sup>3</sup> *Cast his chere*, lifted his face.

<sup>4</sup> *Upon a tide*, upon a time. <sup>5</sup> *Sigh*, saw.

And him, as she which was god-  
désse,

Forshope<sup>1</sup> anone, and the likenesse  
She made him him taken of an herte,  
Which was tofore his houndés sterte,  
That ronné besilich aboute  
With many an horne and many a  
route,

That maden mochel noise and crie :  
And atté laste unhappilie  
This hert his owné houndes slough  
And him for vengeaunce all to-  
drough.<sup>2</sup>

“Lo now, my soné, what it is  
A man to caste his eye amis,  
Which Acteón hath dere bought ;  
Beware forthy<sup>3</sup> and do it nought.  
For ofté, who that hedé toke,  
Better is to winké than to loke.  
And for to proven it is so  
Ovidé the poete also

A talé, whiche to this matere  
Accordeth, saith, as thou shalt here.

In Methamor<sup>4</sup> it telleth thus,  
How that a lord whiche Phorceus  
Was hoté,<sup>5</sup> haddé daughters thre.  
But upon their nativité  
Such was the constellaciön,  
That out of mannés naciön  
For kindé they be so miswent,  
That to the likenesse of a serpént  
They weré bothe, and so that one  
Of hem was clepéd Stellibone,  
That other suster Suriale,  
The thrid, as telleth in the tale,  
Medusa hight ; and nethéles  
Of comun namé Gorgonés  
In every contre there about,  
As monstres whiché that men  
doute,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Forshope*, transformed.

<sup>2</sup> *All to-drough*, pulled to pieces.

<sup>3</sup> *Forthy*, therefore.

<sup>4</sup> *Methamor*, (Ovid's) *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>5</sup> *Was hote*, was called.

<sup>6</sup> *Doute*, fear.



Men clepen<sup>1</sup> hem ; and but one eye  
Among hem thre in purpartie<sup>2</sup>  
They had of which they mighté se,  
Now hathé it this, nowe hath it  
she.

After that cause and nede it ladde  
By throwés eche of hem it hadde.<sup>3</sup>  
A wonder thing yet more amis  
There was, wherof I telle al this :  
What man on hem his cheré caste<sup>4</sup>  
And hem behelde, he was als faste  
Out of a man into a stone  
Forshape,<sup>5</sup> and thus ful many one  
Deceivéd were, of that they wolde  
Misloké where that they ne shulde.  
But Perseus that worthy knight,  
Whom Pallas of her greté might  
Halpe, and toke him a shield therto,  
And eke the god Mercúry also  
Lent him a swerde, he, as it fell,  
Beyond Athlans the highé hill  
These monstres sought, and there  
he fonde

Diversé men of thilké londe  
Through sight of hem mistornéd  
were  
Stondend as stonés here and there.  
But he,—which wisdome and prow-  
éssé

Hath of the god and the goddessé,—  
The shielde of Pallas gan embrace,  
With which he covereth sauf<sup>6</sup> his  
face,  
Mercuries swerde and out he  
drough,

And so he bare him that he slough  
These dredfull monstres allé thre.

“Lo now, my sone, avisé the,  
That thou thý sight nought misuse ;  
Cast nought thin eye upon Meduse

That thou be tornéd into stone.  
For so wise man was never none  
But if he woll his eyé kepe  
And take of foul delite no kepe,<sup>1</sup>  
That he with lusté nis<sup>2</sup> ofte nome  
Through strengthe of love, and over-  
come.

Of mislokinge how it hath ferde,  
As I have told, now hast thou herde.

“**M**y godé soné, take good hede,  
And over this yet I thee rede,<sup>3</sup>  
That thou beware of thin hering,  
Which to the herté the tiding  
Of many a vanité hath brought  
To tarie with<sup>4</sup> a mannés thought.  
And nethéles good is to here  
Such thing, wherof a man may lere  
That<sup>5</sup> to vertue is accordaunt ;  
And toward alle the remenaunt  
Good is to torne his eré fro,  
For elles but a man do so  
Him may ful ofté misbefalle.  
I rede ensample amongés alle,  
Wherof to kepé wel an ere  
It outhté put a man in fere.

“A serpent, which that aspidis  
Is clepéd, of his kinde hath this,  
That he the stone noblést of alle  
The which that men carbuncle calle  
Bereth in his heed above on heighte.  
For which whan that a man by  
sleighte,

The stone to winne and him to  
daunte

With his carecte<sup>6</sup> him wolde en-  
chaunte,

Anone as he perceiveth that,  
He lith down his one ere al plat  
Unto the ground, and halt it faste,  
And eke that other ere als faste

<sup>1</sup> Clepen, name.      <sup>2</sup> Purpartie, share.  
<sup>3</sup> As cause and need directed, each of them  
had it at times.

<sup>4</sup> His chere caste, turned his face.

<sup>5</sup> Forshape, transformed.

<sup>6</sup> Sauf, safely.

<sup>1</sup> No kepe, no heed.      <sup>2</sup> Nis, is not.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to this I counsel you.

<sup>4</sup> To tarie with, wherewith to corrupt,  
French ‘tarer.’

<sup>5</sup> Learn that which.

<sup>6</sup> Carecte, magic spell.

He stoppeth with his tail so sore,  
That he the wordés lasse or more  
Of his enchauntément ne hereth.  
And in this wise him selfe he  
skiereth,<sup>1</sup>

So that he hath the wordés weived<sup>2</sup>  
And thus his ere is nought deceived.

“An other thing who that recordeth

Lyke unto this ensample accordeth,  
Whiche in the tale of Troye I finde.  
Sirenés of a wonder kinde  
Ben monstres, as the bokés tellen,  
And in the Greté See<sup>3</sup> they dwellen,  
Of body bothe and of viságe  
Like unto women of yonge age  
Up fro the navel on high they be,  
And down benethe, as men may se,  
They bere of fisshes the figúre.  
And over this, of such natúre  
They ben, that with so swete a  
steven<sup>4</sup>

Like to the melodie of heven  
In womannishé vois they singe,  
With notés of so great líkinge,  
Of suche mesúre, of suche musfke,  
Wherof the shippes they beswike<sup>5</sup>  
That passen by the costés there.  
For whan the shipmen lay an ere  
Unto the vois, in here avis<sup>6</sup>  
They wene it be a paradis,  
Whiche after is to hem an helle.  
For reson may nought with hem  
dwelle

Whan they the greté lustés<sup>7</sup> here,  
They conné nought here shippes  
stere ;

So besilich upon the note  
They herken and in such wise  
assote,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Skiereth, secureth.    <sup>2</sup> Weived, set aside.

<sup>3</sup> The Grete See, was the name of the Mediterranean.

<sup>4</sup> Steven, voice.

<sup>5</sup> Beswike, betray.

<sup>6</sup> Here avis, their opinion.

<sup>7</sup> Lustes, delight.

<sup>8</sup> Assote, become besotted.

That they here righté cours and  
weie

Foryète, and to their ere obeie,  
And sailen till it so befallé  
That they into the perill falle  
Where as the shippés ben to-drawe  
And they ben with the monstres  
slawe.

But fro this peril nethéles  
With his wisdóm king Ulixés  
Escapeth and it over passeth,  
For he to-fore the hond<sup>1</sup> compásseth  
That no man of his compaignie  
Hath power unto that folie  
His eré for no lust to caste.  
For he hem stoppéd allé faste,  
That non of hem may here hem  
sing.

Sò whan they comen forth sailing,  
There was such governaunce on  
honde

That they the monstres have with-  
stonde,  
And slain of hem a great partie.  
Thus was he sauf with his navie  
This wisé king through gover-  
naunce.

“Herof, my sone, in rémem-  
braúnce,

Thou might ensample taken here  
As I have tolde, and what thou here  
Be wel ware, and yef no credence  
But if<sup>2</sup> thou se more evidence.  
For if thou woldest také kepe<sup>3</sup>  
And wisely coutheest warde and  
kepe

Thine eye and ere, as I have spoke,  
Than haddest thou the gatés stoke<sup>4</sup>  
Fro such folý as cometh to winne  
Thin hertés wit whiche is withinne.  
Wherof, that now thy love exceedeth  
Mesúre, and many a peiné bredeth :

<sup>1</sup> To fore the hond, before hand.

<sup>2</sup> But if, unless.

<sup>3</sup> Take kepe, take heed.

<sup>4</sup> Stoke fro, barred against.

But if thou coutheſt ſette in reule  
Tho two, the thre were eth<sup>1</sup> to reule.  
Forthy as of thy wittés five  
I wol as nowe no moré ſhrive,  
But only of theſe ilké two.  
Tel me, therefore, if it be ſo,—  
Haſt thou thine eyé nought nought miſ-  
throwe?”

“My fader yea, I am beknowe,  
I have hem caſt upon Meduſe,  
Therof I may me nought excuſe.  
Min hert is growén into ſtone,  
So that my lady there upon  
Hath ſuche a printe of Lové grave,  
That I can nought my ſelfé ſave.”

‘What ſaiſt thou ſone, as of thin  
ere?’

“My fader, I am gilty of there,  
For whanne I my lady here,  
My wit with that hath loſt his ſtere.  
I do nought as Ulixes dede,  
But falle anon upon the ſtede<sup>2</sup>  
Where as I ſe my lady ſtonde.  
And there I do you underſtonde<sup>3</sup>  
I am to-pulléd in my thought,  
So that of reſon leveth<sup>4</sup> nought  
Wherof that I me may defende.”

“My godé ſone, God the amende.  
For as me thenketh by thy ſpeche  
Thy wittés ben right far to ſeche.  
As of thin ere and of thin eye  
I wol no moré ſpecifie,  
But I woll axen over this  
Of other thing how that it is.

[Of the Seven Deadly Sins: and  
PRIDE, the First of them.]

**My ſone,** as I thee ſhall enforme,  
There ben yet of another forme

<sup>1</sup> *Eth*, easy. ‘The two’ are ſight and hearing, which have been diſcuſſed; if you could rule thoſe two of the Five Senſes, it would be eaſy to rule the other three. Therefore of the reſt of the five, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Stede*, place.

<sup>3</sup> Make you to underſtand.

<sup>4</sup> *Leveth*, remaineth.

Of Dedly Vices, Seven applied,  
Wherof the herte is ofté plied<sup>1</sup>  
To thing which after ſhal him greve.  
The firſt of hem thou ſhalt beleve  
Is Pridé, whiche is principall,  
And hath with him in ſpeciall  
Ministrés fivé ful diverſe,  
Of which as I thee ſhal reherſe  
The firſt is ſaid Ypocriſie.  
If thou art of his compaignie  
Tel forth, my ſone, and ſhrive thee  
clene.”

“I wote nought, fader, what ye  
mene,

But this I woldé you beſeche,  
That ye me by ſomweié teche  
What is to ben an ypocrite.  
And than if I be for to wite<sup>2</sup>  
I wol beknowen<sup>3</sup> as it is.”

“My ſone, an ypocrite is this,—  
A man which feigneth conſciéce  
As though it were al innocéce  
Without, and is nought ſo withinne;  
And doth ſo, for he wolde winne  
Of his deſire the vein eſtate:  
And when he cometh anone thereat,  
He ſheweth thanné what he was;  
The corne is tornéd into gras,  
That was a roſe is than a thorne,  
And he that was a lamb beforne  
Is than a wolfe; and thus malíce  
Under the colour of juſtice  
Is had, and, as the people telleth,  
Theſe Ordres witen<sup>4</sup> where he  
dwelleth

As he that of her<sup>5</sup> counſeil is;  
And thilké world, which they er this  
Forsoken, he draweth in ayeine;  
He clotheſt richesſe, as men ſaine,  
Under the ſimpleſt of pouérte  
And doth to ſeme of great deſerte

<sup>1</sup> *Plied*, bent.

<sup>2</sup> *To wite*, to blame.

<sup>3</sup> *Beknownen*, acknowledge and confeſs.

<sup>4</sup> Theſe religious orders know.

<sup>5</sup> *Her*, their.

Thing whiche is litel worth withinne,  
 He saith, in open, fy! to sinne,  
 And in secré there is no vice  
 Of which that he nis a noríce.<sup>1</sup>  
 And ever his chere is sobre and  
 softe,  
 And where he goth he blesseth ofte.  
 Wherof the blindé world he dre-  
 cheth,<sup>2</sup>

But yet all only he ne strecheth  
 His reule upon religiön.  
 But next to that condicion,  
 In suche as clepe hem holy cherche,  
 It sheweth eke howe he can werche  
 Amonge tho widé furréd hodes  
 To geten hem the worldés goodes.  
 And they have self ben thilké same  
 That setten most the world in blame,  
 But yet in contraire of here lore  
 There is nothing they loven more ;  
 So that, feignend of light, they werke  
 The dedés whiche are inward derke,  
 And thus this double Ypocrisie  
 With his devoute apparence,  
 A viser set upon his face  
 Wherof toward this worldés grace  
 He seméth to be right wel thewed,  
 And yet his herte is all beshrewed  
 But nethéles he stant beveled  
 And hath his purpos ofte acheved  
 Of worship and of worldés welthe,  
 And taketh it as who saith by stelthe  
 Through coverture of his fallas.<sup>3</sup>  
 And right so in semblable cas  
 This Vice hath eke his officers  
 Among these other seculars  
 Of greté men,—for of the smale  
 As for to accompt he set no tale,<sup>4</sup>  
 But they that passen the comúne  
 With suche him liketh<sup>5</sup> to comune ;

<sup>1</sup> *Norice*, nurse.

<sup>2</sup> *Drecheth*, troubleth.

<sup>3</sup> *Coverture of his fallas*, concealment of his deceit.

<sup>4</sup> *Set no tale*, makes no account.

<sup>5</sup> *Him liketh*, it pleases him.

And where he saith he wol socoure  
 The people, there he wol devoure.  
 For now-a-day is many one  
 Which speketh of Peter and of John  
 And thenketh Judas in his herte ;  
 There shall no worldés good asterte<sup>1</sup>  
 His honde, and yet he yeveth al-  
 messe

And fasteth ofte and hereth messe  
 With *mea culpa*, whiche he saith ;  
 Upon his brest ful ofte he leith  
 His hond and cast upwárd his  
 eye,

As though he Cristés facé sie,  
 So that it semeth atté sight  
 As he alone al other might  
 Rescué with his holy bede.<sup>2</sup>  
 But yet his herte in other stede  
 Among his bedés most devoute  
 Goth in the worldés cause aboute,  
 How that he might his warison<sup>3</sup>  
 Encrease, and in comparison  
 There ben lovés of suche a sorte,  
 That feignen hem an humble porte,  
 And al is but Ypocrisie,  
 Which with deceipte and flaterie  
 Hath many a worthy wife beguiled.  
 For whan he hath his tunge affiled  
 With softé speche and with lesinge  
 Than with his fals pitóus lokinge  
 He worldé make a woman wene  
 To gon upon the fairé grene,  
 Whan that she falleth in the mire.  
 For if he may have his desire,  
 How so falle of the remenaunt,  
 He halt<sup>4</sup> no worde of covenaut,  
 But er the timé that he spede  
 There is no sleighte at thilké nede,  
 Which any lovés faitour<sup>5</sup> may,  
 That he ne put it in assay  
 As him belongeth for to donc.  
 The colour of the reiny mone

<sup>1</sup> *Asterte*, escape from.

<sup>2</sup> *Bede*, prayer.

<sup>3</sup> *Warison*, advantage.

<sup>4</sup> *Halt*, holds.

<sup>5</sup> *Faitour*, dissembler.

With medicine upon his face  
 He set, and than he axeth grace,  
 As he which hath sikenessé feigned;  
 Whan his viságe is so disteigned,  
 With eye up cast on her he siketh  
 And many a continaunce he piketh<sup>1</sup>  
 To bringen her into beleve  
 Of thing which that he wold acheve,  
 Wherof he bereth the pale hewe,  
 And for he woldé semé trewe  
 He maketh him sike, whan he is  
 heil.

But whan he bereth lowest sail,  
 Than is he swiftest to beguile  
 The woman which that ilké while  
 Set upon him feith or credénce.

“My sone, if thou thy consciénce  
 Entaméd<sup>2</sup> hast in such a wise,  
 In shrifté thou the might avise  
 And telle it me, if it be so.”

“Min holy fader, certés no.  
 As for to feigné such sikenésse  
 It nedeth nought, for this witnésse  
 I take of God, that my coráge<sup>3</sup>  
 Hath ben more sike than my viságe.  
 And eke this may I well avowe,  
 So lowé couthe I never bowe  
 To feigne humilité withoute  
 That me ne listé better loute  
 With all the thoughtés of min herte.  
 For that thing shall me never  
 asterte,

I speke as to my lady dere,  
 To make her any feigné chere;  
 God wot well there I líe nought,  
 My chere hath been such as my  
 thought.

For in good feith, this leveth wele,<sup>4</sup>  
 My wil was better a thousand dele  
 Than any cheré that I couthe.<sup>5</sup>

“But sire, if I have in my youthe

<sup>1</sup> *Piketh*, pitches, sets up.

<sup>2</sup> *Entamed*, subdued.

<sup>3</sup> *Corage*, disposition of the heart.

<sup>4</sup> Believe well.

<sup>5</sup> Than any face that I could put on.

Done other wise in other place,  
 I put me therof in your grace.  
 For this excusen I ne shall,  
 That I have ellés over all  
 To Love and to his compaignie  
 Be plein without yprocisie.  
 But there is one, the whiche I serve,  
 All though I may no thank deserve,  
 To whom yet never unto this day  
 I saide onlich or ‘ye’ or ‘nay,’  
 But if it so wére in my thought  
 As touchend other say I nought  
 That I nam somdele for to wite<sup>1</sup>  
 Of that ye clepe an yprocrite.”

“My sone, it sit wel every wight  
 To kepe his worde in trouth upright  
 Towardés Love in allé wise.  
 For who that wold him wel avise  
 What hath befallé in this matére,  
 Heshuldé nought with feigné chere  
 Deceivé Love in no degre.  
 To Love is every herté fre,  
 But in decept if that thou feignest  
 And therupon thy luste atteignest,  
 That thou hast wonné with thy wile,  
 Though it thee líké for a while,  
 Thou shalt it afterward repente.  
 And for to prové min entente  
 I finde ensample in a cronique  
 Of hem that Lové so beswike.<sup>2</sup>

¶ I fell by oldé daiés thus,  
 Whil themperour Tiberius  
 The monarchie of Romé ladde,  
 There was a worthy Romain hadde  
 A wife, and she Pauliné hight,  
 Which was to every mannés sight  
 Of al the cité the fairést  
 And as men saiden eke the best.  
 It is and hath ben ever yit  
 That so strong is no mannés wit,  
 Which through beauté ne may be  
 drawe

To love, and stonde under the lawe

<sup>1</sup> That I am not some part to blame.

<sup>2</sup> *Beswike*, deceive.

Of thilké boré<sup>1</sup> freilé kinde,  
 Which maketh the hertés eyen  
 blinde,  
 Where no resón may be communed.  
 And in this wisé stode fortunéd  
 Of whiche I wol this talé mene,  
 This wife, whiche in her lustés grene  
 Was faire and fressh and tender of  
 age.  
 She may nought letté the corage  
 Of him that wol on her assote.<sup>2</sup>  
 There was a Duke, and he was  
 hote<sup>3</sup>  
 Mundus, which had in his baillie<sup>4</sup>  
 To ledé the chevalérie  
 Of Rome, and was a worthy knight.  
 But yet he was nought of such might  
 The strength of lové to withstonde,  
 That he ne was so brought to honde,  
 That malgré where<sup>5</sup> he wol or no  
 This yongé wife he loveth so,  
 That he hath put all his assay  
 To winné thing which he ne may  
 Get of her graunt in no manere,  
 By yefte of gold, ne by praiere.  
 And whan he sigh,<sup>6</sup> that by no  
 mede<sup>7</sup>  
 Toward her love he mighté spede,  
 By sleighté feignend than he  
 wrought :  
 And therupon he him bethought,  
 How that there was in the cité  
 A temple of suche auctorité,  
 To which with great devociön  
 The noble women of the towne  
 Most comunlich a pelerináge  
 Gone for to prayé thilke ymage,  
 Which the goddesse of childing is  
 And clepéd was by name Ysis.  
 And in her temple thanné were  
 To reule and to minístre there

<sup>1</sup> *Bore*, born—born of that frail nature.

<sup>2</sup> *Assote*, dote.

<sup>3</sup> *Hote*, called.

<sup>4</sup> *Baillie*, office.

<sup>5</sup> *Where*, whether.

<sup>6</sup> *Sigh*, saw.

<sup>7</sup> *Mede*, means, mode.

After the lawé which was tho,  
 Above all other prestés two.  
 This Duke, which thought his lové  
 get,  
 Upon a day hem two to mete  
 Hath bede, and they come at his  
 heste,  
 Where that they had a riché feste.  
 And after mete in privé place  
 This lord, which wold his thank  
 purcháce,  
 To eche of hem yaf thanne a yift  
 And spaké so by waie of shrift,  
 He drough hem into his covfne<sup>1</sup>  
 To helpe and shape, how he Pauline  
 After his lust deceivé might.  
 And they her<sup>2</sup> trouthés bothé plight,  
 That they by night her shulden  
 winne  
 Into the temple, and he therinne  
 Shall have of her all his entent.  
 And thus accorded forth they went.  
 Now list, through which Ypocrisie  
 Ordeigné was the trecherie,  
 Wherof this lady was deceived.  
 These prestés hadden wel con-  
 ceived,  
 That she was of great holinesse.  
 And with a counterfeit simplesse,  
 Which hid was in a fals coráge,  
 Feignend an hevenly messáge  
 They cam and saide unto her thus :  
 Pauliné, the god Anubus  
 Hath sent us bothé prestés here  
 And saith, he wol to the appere  
 By nightés time him selfe alone,  
 For love he hath to thy persone.  
 And therupon he hath us bede,  
 That we in Ysis temple a stede  
 Honestly for thee purveie,  
 Where thou by night as we thee  
 saie

Of him shalt take a visiön.

<sup>1</sup> *Covfne*, secret treacherous agreement.

<sup>2</sup> *Her*, their.

For upon thy condición,  
The whiche is chaste and full of  
feith,

Suche price, as he us tolde, he leith,  
That he wol stonde of thin accorde ;  
And for to beare herof recorde  
He sende us hider bothé two.  
Glad was her innocéncé tho  
Of suché wordés as she herd,  
With humble chere and thus an-  
swerd

And saidé, that the goddés will  
She was all redy to fulfill,  
That by her husébondés leve  
She wolde in Ysis temple at eve  
Upon her goddés grace abide  
To serven him the nightés tide.  
The prestés tho gon home ayeine,  
And she goth to her soveraine ;  
Of goddes will and as it was <sup>1</sup>  
She tolde him all the plainé cas,  
Wherof he was deceivéd eke,  
And bad that she her shuldé meke  
All hole unto the goddés heste.  
And thus she, which was all honeste  
To godward, after her entent  
At night unto the temple went  
Where that the falsé prestés were.  
And they receívén her there  
With suche a token of holinesse,  
As though they seén a goddesse ;  
And all within in privé place  
A softé bedde of largé space  
They haddé made and encortíned,  
Where she was afterward enginé.<sup>2</sup>  
But she, whiche all honóur sup-  
poseth,

The falsé prestés than opposeth  
And axeth by what observaunce  
She mighté most to the plesaunce  
Of god that nightés reulé kepe.  
And they her bidden for to slepe

<sup>1</sup> And she told all the plain case, of how it was the god's will. 'And' was not always placed at the beginning of a clause.

<sup>2</sup> Engined, trapped by a crafty contrivance.

Liggend upon the bedde a loft,  
For, so they said, al still and soft  
God Anubus her wolde awake.  
The counseil in this wisé take  
The prestés fro this lady gone.  
And she that wiste of guilé none  
In the manér as it was said  
To slepe upon the bedde is leid,  
In hopé that she sholde acheve  
Thing which stode than upon beleve  
Fulfilled of all holinesse.

But she hath failéd as I gesse,  
For in a closet fasté by  
The Duke was hid so privély,  
That she him mighté nought per-  
ceive.

And he that thoughté to deceive  
Hath suche array upon him nome,<sup>1</sup>  
That whan he wold unto her come  
It shuldé semen at her eye,  
As though she verriliché seie  
God Anubus, and in suche wise  
This Ypocrite of his queintise  
Awaiteth ever til she slept.  
And than out of his place he crept  
So stillé, that she nothing herde,  
And to the bed stalkénd he ferde  
And sodeinly, er she it wiste,  
Beclipt in armés he her kiste,  
Wherof in womannishshé drede  
She woke and niste what to rede.<sup>2</sup>  
But he with softé wordés milde  
Comforteth her and saith, with  
childe

He wolde her make in suche a  
kinde,

That al the world shall have in  
minde

The worshippe of that ilké sone ;  
For he shall with the goddes woné <sup>3</sup>  
And ben him selfe a god also.  
With suché wordés and with mo,

<sup>1</sup> Nome, taken.

<sup>2</sup> Knew not what counsel to take.

<sup>3</sup> If one, dwell.

The which he feigneth in his speche,  
 This ladies wit was al to seche,<sup>1</sup>  
 As she which alle trouthe weneth.  
 But he, that all untrouthe meneth,  
 With blindé talés so her ladde,  
 That all his will of her he hadde.  
 And whan him thought it was inough,  
 Ayein the day he him withdrough  
 So prively, that she ne wiste  
 Where he be come, but as him liste  
 Out of the temple he goth his way.  
 And she began to bid and pray,  
 Upon the baré ground knelende,  
 And after that made her offrende  
 And to the prestés yestés great  
 She yaf, and homeward by the strete  
 The Duke her mette and saidé thus:  
 'The mighty god, whiche Anubus  
 Is hote, he savé the Pauline,  
 For thou art of his discipline  
 So holy, that no mannés might  
 May do that he hath do to night,  
 Of thing which thou hast ever  
 eschued.

But I his grace have so pursued,  
 That I was made his lieutenaunt.  
 Forthy by way of coveñaunt  
 Fro this day forth I am all thine,  
 And if thee liké to be mine  
 That stant upon thin owné wille.<sup>2</sup>  
 She herde his tale and bare it stille  
 And home she went as it befell  
 Into her chambre and there she fell  
 Upon her bed to wepe and crie  
 And saide: O derke Ypocrisie,  
 Through whose dissimulatiön  
 Of false ymaginatiön  
 I am thus wickedly deceived!  
 But that I have it aperceived  
 I thonke unto the goddés alle.

<sup>1</sup> *All to seek*, all away, as she who believes all to be truth. 'To seek' was a phrase long used to represent want of knowledge. So the elder brother in *Milton's Comus*—

'I do not think my sister so to seek  
 Or so undisciplined in virtue's book.'

For though it onés be befallé  
 I shall never eft while that I live,  
 And thilke avow to god I give.  
 And thus wependé she compleigneth  
 Her fairé face and all disteigneth  
 With wofull terés of her eye,  
 So that upon this agonie  
 Her husebónde is inné come  
 And sigh<sup>1</sup> how she was overcome  
 With sorwe, and axeth her what  
 her eileth.

And she with that her self beweileth  
 Well moré than she didde afore  
 And said: 'Alas, wifhode is lore  
 In me which whilom was honést,  
 I am none other than a beste  
 Nowe I defouléd am of two!'<sup>2</sup>  
 And as she mighté speaké tho  
 Ashaméd with a pitous onde,<sup>3</sup>  
 She tolde unto her husebónde  
 The soth of all the holé tale,  
 And in her speché dead and pale  
 She swouneth well nigh to the laste.  
 And he her in his armés faste  
 Upheld and ofté swore his oth,  
 That he with her is nothing wroth,  
 For wel he wot she may there  
 nought.

But nethéles within his thought  
 His hert stode in a sory plite  
 And said, he wolde of that despite  
 Be vengéd how so ever it falle;  
 And send unto his frendes alle,  
 And whan they weré come infere,<sup>3</sup>  
 He tolde hem upon this matere  
 And axeth hem what was to done.  
 And they aviséd weré sone  
 And said, it thought hem for the  
 beste

To setté first his wife in reste  
 And after pleiné to the king  
 Upon the matter of this thing.  
 Tho was his wofull wife comfórted

<sup>1</sup> *Sigh*, saw.

<sup>2</sup> *Onde*, anger. <sup>3</sup> *Inferre*, together.



By alle waiés and dispórted,  
 Til that she was somdele amended.  
 And thus a day or two dispended  
 The thriddé day she goth to pleine  
 With many a worthy citezeine  
 And he with many a citezein.  
 Whan themperour it herde saine  
 And knew the falsehed of the vice,  
 He said he woldé do justíce.  
 And first he let the prestes take,  
 And for they shulde it nought for-  
 sake<sup>1</sup>

He put hem into questión.  
 But they of the suggestión  
 Ne couthé nought a word refuse,  
 But for they wold hem self excuse  
 The blame upon the Duke they  
 laide.

But thereyeyn the conseil saide,  
 That they be nought excuséd so  
 For he is one and they be two,  
 And two have moré wit than one,  
 So thilke excusément was none.  
 And over that, was said hem eke  
 That whan men wolden vertue seke  
 Men shulden it in the prestés finde,  
 Their ordre is of so high a kinde,  
 That they be divisers<sup>2</sup> of the wey.  
 Forthý if any man forswey<sup>3</sup>  
 Through hem, they be nought ex-  
 cusáble,

And thus by lawé resonáble  
 Among the wisé jugés there  
 The prestés bothé dampned were,  
 So that the privé trecherý  
 Hid under false Ypocrisie  
 Was thanne all openliché shewed,  
 That many a man hem hath be-  
 shrewed.

And whan the prestés weren dede,  
 The temple of thilk horriblé dede  
 They thoughten purge and thilke  
 ymage

<sup>1</sup> Forsake, deny.

<sup>2</sup> Divisers, tellers.

<sup>3</sup> Forswey, swerve aside, go wrong.

Whose causé was the pelrináge  
 They drowen out and also faste  
 Fer into Tiber they it caste,  
 Where the rivér it hath defied.<sup>1</sup>  
 And thus the temple purified  
 They have of thilke horriblé sinne,  
 Which was that timé do<sup>2</sup> therinne.  
 Of this point such was the divise.  
 But of the duke was otherwise ;  
 For<sup>3</sup> he with lové was bestad  
 His dome was nought so hardé lad.  
 For lové put refón away  
 And can nought se the righté wey.  
 And by this cause, he was respfcted,  
 So that the deth him was acqufcted,  
 But for all that he was exiled,  
 For he his love had so beguiled,  
 That he shall never come ayeine.  
 For he that is to trowth unpleine  
 He may nought failen of vengeance  
 And eke to také remembrance  
 Of that Ypocrisie hath wrought.  
 On other half, men shuldé nought  
 To lightly leve all that they here,  
 But thanné shulde a wiseman stere  
 The ship, whan suchéwindés blowe ;  
 For first though they beginné lowe,  
 At endé they be nought meváble,<sup>4</sup>  
 But all to-broken mast and cable,  
 So that the ship, with sodain blast  
 Whan men leste wene, is overcast.  
 As now full ofte a man may se,  
 And of old time how it hath be  
 I finde a great experience,  
 Wherof to take an evidence  
 Good is, and to beware also  
 Of the perffl er him be woo.<sup>5</sup>

“ Of hem that ben so derk  
 withinne

At Troie also if we beginne,

<sup>1</sup> Defied, digested. So in ‘The Vision of Piers Plowman,’ ‘wyn the roste to defye.’

<sup>2</sup> At that time done.

<sup>3</sup> For, because.

<sup>4</sup> Mevable, to be moved.

<sup>5</sup> Before woe betides him.

Ypocrisie it hath betrayed.  
 For whan the Grekes had all assaied  
 And foundé that by no bataile  
 Ne by no siege it might availe  
 The town to winné through prow-

esse,  
 This Vicé feigné of simplese,  
 Through sleight of Calcas and of  
 Crise

It wan by such a maner wise :—  
 An horse of brass they let do forge  
 Of suche entaile,<sup>1</sup> of suche a forge,  
 That in this world was never man  
 That such an other werk began.  
 The crafty werkeman Epius  
 It made, and for to tellé thus,  
 The Grekes that thoughten to be-  
 guile

The king of Troie in thilké while  
 With Antenór and with Enee,  
 That weré bothe of the citee  
 And of the counseil the wisést,  
 The richest and the mightiest,  
 In privé placé so they trete  
 With fair beheste and yestes grete  
 Of gold, that they hem have enginød  
 To-gider and whan they be covined,  
 They feignen for to maké pees,  
 And under that yet nethéless  
 They shopen the destruction  
 Bothe of the king and of the town.  
 And thus the falsé pees was take  
 Of hem of Grece and undertake,  
 And therupon they founde a way,  
 Where strengthé mighté nought  
 away,

That sleighté shuldé helpé thanne,  
 And of an inche a largé spanne,<sup>2</sup>  
 By colour of the pees they made :  
 And tolden how they weré glade  
 Of that they stoden in-accorde,  
 And, for it shall ben of recórde,

<sup>1</sup> *Entaile*, carving.

<sup>2</sup> An ell should be got out of an inch under outward show of the peace made.

Unto the king the Gregois saiden  
 By way of love and thus they  
 praiden,—

As they that wolden his thank  
 deserve,

A sacrifice unto Minerve  
 The pees to kepe in good entent  
 They must offre, or that they went.  
 The King, counseilé in the cas  
 By Antenór and Eneás,

Therto hath yoven his assent.  
 So was the pleiné trouthé blent<sup>1</sup>  
 Through counterfeit Ypocrisie.  
 Of that they shulden sacrifice  
 The Grekes under the holinesse  
 Anone with alle besinesse  
 Here hors of brass let fairé dight,  
 Which was to sene a wonder sight.

For it was trappéd of him selve  
 And had of smalé whelés twelve,  
 Upon the whiché men inowe  
 With craft toward the town it drowe,  
 And goth glistrénd ayein the sonne.  
 Tho was there joie inough begonne,  
 For Troie in great devoción  
 Came also with processión  
 Ayein this noble sacrifice

With great honóur, and in this wise  
 Unto the gatés they it broughte :  
 But of here entré whan they soughte,  
 The gatés weren all to smale.

And therupon was many a tale ;  
 But for the worship of Minerve,  
 To whom they comen for to serve,  
 They of the town which understood  
 That all this thing was done for  
 good,

For pees, wherof that they ben  
 glade,

The gatés that Neptunus made  
 A thousand winter ther to-fore  
 They have anone to-broke and tore,  
 The strongé wallés down they bete,  
 So that into the largé strete

<sup>1</sup> *Blent*, blinded.

This horse with great solempnité  
Was brought withinné the cité,  
And offred with great reverence,  
Which was to Troie an evidence  
Of love and pees for evermo.  
The Gregois token levé tho  
With all the holé felaship,  
And forth they wenten into ship,  
And crossen sail, and made hem  
yare,<sup>1</sup>

Anone as though they wolden fare.<sup>2</sup>  
But whan the blacké winter night  
Withouté mone or sterré light  
Bederkéð hath the water stronde,  
Al privély they gone to londe  
Full arméd out of the navie.  
Sinon, whiche made was here espie  
Withinné Troie, as was conspired,  
Whan timé was, a tokne hath fired,  
And they with that here waié holden  
And comen in, right as they wolden,  
There as the gaté was to-broke.  
The purpose was full take and spoke  
Er any man may teké kepe,  
Whil that the citee was aslepe ;  
They slown al that was withinne  
And token what they mighten winne  
Of such good as was suffisaunt  
And brenden<sup>3</sup> up the remenaunt.  
And thus come out the trecherie,  
Which under false Ypocrisie  
Was hid, and they that wendé<sup>4</sup> pees  
Tho mighten findé no releese  
Of thilké swerd whiche al de-  
voureth.

Full ofte and thus the sweté soureth  
Whan it is knowé to the taste,  
He spilleth many a worde in waste  
That shal with such a people trete,  
For whan he weneth most beyete<sup>5</sup>  
Than is he shapé most to lese.

<sup>1</sup> Yare, ready.

<sup>2</sup> As though they would go.

<sup>3</sup> Brenden, burnt.

<sup>4</sup> Wéndé, hoped for, expected.

<sup>5</sup> When he expects to get most.

And right so if a woman chese<sup>1</sup>  
Upon the wordés that she hereth,  
Som man whan he most true ap-  
pereth

Than is he furthest fro the trouthe.  
But yet full ofte, and that is routhe,  
They speden that ben most untrue  
And loven every day a newe,  
Wherof the life is after lothe  
And love hath causé to be wrothe.  
But what man that his lust desireth  
Of love and therupon conspireth  
With wordés feignéð to deceive,  
He shall nought failé to receive  
His peine as it is ofté sene.

“Forthy my sone, as I the mene,  
It sit thee well to taken hede,  
That thou escheue of thy manhede  
Ypocrisie and his semblaunt,  
That thou ne be nought deceivaunt  
To make a woman to beleve  
Thing whiche is nought in thy  
beleve.

For in suche feint Ypocrisie  
Of Love is all the trecherie,  
Through which love is deceivéð  
ofte.

For feignéð semblaunt is so softe,  
Unnethés<sup>2</sup> Lové may be ware.  
Forthy my sone, as I well dare,  
I chargé the to flec that vice,  
That many a woman hath made  
nice,  
But loke thou delé nought with-  
all.”—

“Iwis<sup>3</sup> my fader, no more I  
shall.”—

“Now, soné, kepe that thou hast  
swore.

For this that thou hast herd before  
Is said the firsté point of Pride.  
And next upon that other side

<sup>1</sup> Chese, choose.

<sup>2</sup> Unnethés, not easily.

<sup>3</sup> Iwis (“gewis”) certainly.

To shrive and speken over this,  
 Touchend of Pridé, yet there is  
 The Point Secónde I thee behote,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which Inobedience is hote.

*Inobedience.*

**This Vice** of Inobedience  
 Ayein the reule of conscience  
 All that is humble he disaloweth,  
 That he toward his God ne boweth  
 After the lawés of his heste.<sup>2</sup>  
 Nought as a man, but as a beste  
 Whiche goth upon his lustés wilde  
 So goth this proudé Vice unmilde,  
 That he disdeigneth allé lawe.  
 He not<sup>3</sup> what is to be felawe,  
 And servé may he nought for pride.  
 So is he ledde on every side  
 And is that selve of whom men  
 speke,  
 Which woll nought bowe er that he  
 breke.

I not<sup>3</sup> if Lové might him plie,<sup>4</sup>  
 For ellés for to justifie  
 His herte, I not<sup>3</sup> what might availe.  
 Forthý<sup>5</sup> my sone, of suche entaile  
 If that thin herté be disposed,  
 Telle out and let it nought be glosed.  
 For if that thou unbuxome<sup>6</sup> be  
 To love, I not<sup>3</sup> in what degre  
 Thou shalt thy goodé worde  
 acheve."—

"My fader, ye shal well beleve,  
 The yongé whelpé which is affaited<sup>7</sup>  
 Hath nought his maister better  
 awaited  
 To couché whan he saith : go lowe,  
 Than I anone as I may knowe  
 My lady will me bowé more.

<sup>1</sup> *Behote*, promised.

<sup>2</sup> *Heste*, commandment.

<sup>3</sup> *Not*, knows not.

<sup>4</sup> *Plie*, bend.

<sup>5</sup> *Forthý*, therefore.

<sup>6</sup> *Unbuxome*, unbending, un-bow-some.

<sup>7</sup> *Affaited*, bound to some object, tamed.

But other while I grucché sore  
 Of somé thingés that she doth,  
 Wherof that I woll tellé soth.  
 For of two pointes I am bethought,  
 That though I wolde I mighté nought  
 Obeie unto my ladies hest ;  
 But I dare maké this behest  
 Sauf only of that ilké two,  
 I am unbuxome of no mo."

"What ben tho two, tell on," quod  
 he.

"My fader, this is one, that she  
 Commaundeth me my mouthe to  
 close,

And that I shulde her nought oppose  
 In love, of whiche I ofte preche,  
 And plenerlich<sup>1</sup> of suche a speche  
 Forbere and suffre her in pees.

But that ne might I nethéles  
 For all this worlde obey iwis.<sup>2</sup>  
 For whan I am there as she is,  
 Though she my talés nought allowe,  
 Ayein her will yet mote I bowe  
 To seche if that I might have grace.  
 But that thing may I nought em-  
 brace

For ought that I can speke or do.  
 And yet full ofte I speké so,  
 That she is wroth and saith : be  
 stille.

If I that hesté shall fulfille  
 And therto ben obediént,  
 Than is my causé fully shent,  
 For spechéles may no man spede.  
 So wote I nought what is to rede.<sup>3</sup>  
 But certés I may nought obeie,  
 That I ne mote alगतé<sup>4</sup> saie  
 Some what of that I woldé mene,  
 For ever it is aliché grene  
 The greaté lové which I have,  
 Wherof I can nought bothé save  
 My speche and this obedience.

<sup>1</sup> *Plenerlich*, fully, wholly.

<sup>2</sup> *Iwis*, certainly.

<sup>3</sup> I know not what is to be counselled.

<sup>4</sup> *Algate*, always.

And thus full ofté my silence  
I breke, and is the firsté point  
Wherof that I am out of point  
In this, and yet it is no Pride.

“ Now than upon that other side  
To tell my disobeïsaunce,  
Full sore it stant to my grevaunce  
And may nought sinke into my wit.  
Full ofté timé she me bit<sup>1</sup>

To leven her and chese a newe ;  
And saith, if I the sothé knewe  
How fer I stondé from her grace,  
I shuldé love in other place.

But therof wol I disobeie,  
For also wel she mighté saie  
‘Go take the moné there it sit,’  
As bringé that into my wit.

For there was never rooted tree  
That stood so faste in his degrec,  
That I ne stondé moré faste  
Upon her love, and may nought  
caste

Min herte away all though I wolde.  
For God wote though I never sholde  
Sene her with eye after this daie,  
Yet stant it so, that I ne maie  
Her love out of my brest remue.  
This is a wonder retenue,  
That malgré where<sup>2</sup> she woll or  
none

Min herte is evermo in one,  
So that I can none other chese,  
But whether that I winne or lese  
I must her loven till I deie ;  
And thus I breke, as by that weie,  
Herhestés and her cómmaundínges.  
But trulich in none other thinges.  
Forthý my fader, what is more  
Touchende unto this ilké lore  
I you beseche, after the forme  
That ye plainly me wolde enforme,  
So that I may min herté reule  
In Lovés cause after the reule.”

<sup>1</sup> *Bit*, prays.

<sup>2</sup> *Where*, whether.

*Murmur and Complaint.*

**Toward** this Vice of which we  
trete

There ben yet tweie of thilke  
estrete,<sup>1</sup>

Her<sup>2</sup> name is Murmur and Com-  
pleinte.

Ther can no man her cheré peinte  
To sette a glad semblaunt ther-  
inne :

For though Fortuné make hem  
winne,

Yet grucchen they ; and if they lese  
There is no waie for to chese  
Wherof they mighten stonde ap-  
pesed.

So ben they comunly disesed,  
There may no welth ne no pouerte  
Attempren hem to the deserte<sup>3</sup>  
Of buxonnessé by no wise.

For ofté timé they despise  
The goodé fortune as the badde,  
As they no mannés reson hadde,  
Through Pridé wherof they be  
blinde.

And right of such a maner kinde  
Ther be lovérs, that though they  
have

Of love all that they worldé crave,  
Yet woll they grucché by some  
weie,

That they wol nought to love obeie  
Upon the trouth, as they do sholde.  
And if hem lacketh that they wolde,  
Anon they falle in such a peine,  
That ever unbuxomly they pleine  
Upon Fortune and curse and crie,  
That they wol nought her hertes  
plic

To suffre, till it better falle.  
Forthý if thou amongés alle

<sup>1</sup> *Of thilke estrete*, of the same street, neigh-  
bours.

<sup>2</sup> *Her*, their.

<sup>3</sup> *Deserte*, merit.

Hast uséd this condición,  
My sone, in thy Confessiôn  
Now tell me plainly what thou  
art."—

"My fader, I beknowe<sup>1</sup> a part  
So as ye tolden here above  
Of Murmur and Compleint of Love;  
That for I se no spede coménde,  
Ayein Fortúné compleignénde  
I am, as who saith, evermo  
And eke full ofté time also.  
Whan so as that I se or here  
Of hevuy word or hevuy chere  
Of my lady, I greuche anone,  
But wordés dare I speké none  
Wherof she mighté be displeed.  
But in min herte I am disesed  
With many a Murmur god it wote,  
Thus drinke I in min owné swote.<sup>2</sup>  
And though I maké no semblaunt,  
Min herte is all disóbeisaunt,  
And in this wise I me confesse  
Of that ye clepe Unbuxomnesse.  
Now telleth what your counseil  
is."—

"My sone, as I thee redé this,  
What so befall of other weie,  
That thou to lovés hest obeie  
Als fer as thou it might suffise.  
For ofté sith<sup>3</sup> in such a wise  
Obedience in love availeth,  
Where all a mannés strengthé  
faileth :

Wherof if that thee list to wit,  
In a cronique as it is writ  
A great ensample thou might finde,  
Which now come is into my minde.

**There** was whilom by daiés olde  
A worthy knight, and as men tolde  
He was neuveu to temperour  
And of his court a courteour.  
Wifeles he was, Florent he hight,  
He was a man that mochel might.

<sup>1</sup> Beknowe, confess.      <sup>2</sup> Swote, sweat.

<sup>3</sup> Ofte sith, oftentimes.

Of armés he was desiróus,  
Chiváleróus and amoróus,  
And for the fame of worldés speche  
Straunge aventúrés for to seche  
He rode the marches all aboute.  
And fell a time, as he was oute,  
Fortúné, which may every threde  
To-breke<sup>1</sup> and knitte of mannés  
spede,<sup>2</sup>

Shope, as this knight rode in a pas,  
That he by strengthé taken was,  
And to a castell they him ladde,  
Where that he fewé frendés hadde.  
For so it fell that ilké stounde,  
That he hath with a dedly wounde,  
Fightend, his owne hondes slain  
Branchus, whiche to the Capitain  
Was sone and heire, wherof ben  
wrothe

The fader and the moder bothe.  
That knight Branchus was of his  
honde

The worthiest of all his londe,  
Andfain they wolden do vengeaunce  
Upon Florent, but remembraunce  
That they toke of his worthinesse,  
Of knighthode and of gentillesse,  
And how he stood of cousinage  
To themperour, made hem assuage,  
And dorsté nought slaine him for  
fere.

In great disputeson they were  
Among hem selfe, that<sup>3</sup> was the  
best.

There was a lady, the sliest  
Of allé that men knewen tho,  
So olde she might unnethés go,  
And was grauntdamé to the dede.  
And she with that began to rede<sup>4</sup>  
And saide hem she wol bring him  
inne,

That she shal him to dethé winne

<sup>1</sup> To-breke, break up altogether. To- is an  
intensive prefix.

<sup>2</sup> Spede, prosperity.

<sup>3</sup> What.

<sup>4</sup> Rede, counsel.

All only of his owné graunt  
Through strength of verray cove-  
naunt <sup>1</sup>

Withouté blame of any wight.  
Anone she sendé for this knight  
And of her soné she alleide <sup>2</sup>  
The deth, and thus to him she  
saide :

‘Florent, how so ever thou be to  
wite <sup>3</sup>

Of Branchus deth, men shal respite  
As now to také vengément,  
Be so thou stonde in jugément  
Upon certain condición,  
That thou unto a questiún  
Which I shall axé shalt answére.

And over this thou shalt eke swere,  
That if thou of the sothé faile,  
There shal non other thinge availe,  
That thou ne shalt thy deth receive;  
And for men shal thee nought de-  
ceive

That thou therof might ben avised,  
Thou shalt have day and time  
assised

And levé sauffy for to wende,  
Be so that at thy daiés ende  
Thou come ayein with thin advise.’  
This knight, which worthy was and  
wise,

This lady praieth, that he may wt  
And have it under sealés writ,  
What questiún it sholdé be  
For which he shall in that degre  
Stonde of his life in jeopartie.

With that she feigneth compaignie  
And saith: ‘Florent, on love it  
hongeth

All that to min axingé longeth:—  
What allé women most desire—  
This woll I axe, and in thempire  
Where thou hast mosté know-  
leching

<sup>1</sup> *Verray covenaut*, a true agreement.

<sup>2</sup> *Alleide*, alleged. <sup>3</sup> *To wite*, to blame.

Také counsél of this axinge.’  
Florent this thing hath undertake ;  
The day was set and timé take ;  
Under his seale he wrote his othe  
In such a wise, and forth he gothe  
Home to his emés <sup>1</sup> courte ayein,  
To whom his aventuré plein  
He tolde, of that is him befallé.  
And upon that they weren alle  
The wisest of the londe assent,  
But nethéles of one assent  
They mighté nought accordé plat,  
One saidé this, an other that ;  
After the dispositiún  
Of natural complexiún

To some woman it is plesaúnce  
That to another is grevaúnce,  
But suche a thinge in speciáll  
Whiche to hem alle in generall  
Is most plesaunt and most desired  
Above all other and most cons-  
pired,

Suche o <sup>2</sup> thing conné they nought  
finde

By constellatiún ne kinde.<sup>3</sup>  
And thus Florent withouté cure  
Mot stonde upon his aventuré  
And is al shape unto the lere,<sup>4</sup>  
And in defaulte of his answeere  
This knight hath lever for to deie  
Than breke his trouth, and for to lie  
In placé whéré he was swore,  
And shapeth him gone ayein <sup>5</sup> ther-  
fore.

“Whán timé cam he toke his leve  
That lenger wolde he nought be-  
léve <sup>6</sup>

And praieth his eme he be nought  
wroth,

For that is a point of his oth,

<sup>1</sup> *Eme*, uncle.

<sup>2</sup> *O*, one.

<sup>3</sup> *Kinde*, nature.

<sup>4</sup> *Lere*, learning (finding the answer to the question).

<sup>5</sup> Makes himself ready to go back again.

<sup>6</sup> *Beleve*, remain.

He saith, that no man shal him  
wreke,<sup>1</sup>  
Though afterward men heré speke  
That he perávventuré deie.  
And thus he wenté forth his weic  
Alone as a knight aventuróus  
And in his thought was curióus  
To witté what was best to do.  
And as he rode aloné so  
And can nigh there he woldé be,  
In a forést there under a tree  
He sigh<sup>2</sup> there sate a créature,  
A lothly womannisssh figúre,  
That for to speke of flesshe and  
bone  
So foule yet sigh he never none.  
This knight behelde her redily,  
And as he wolde have passéd by  
She clepéd him and bad abide.  
And he his hors hevéd<sup>3</sup> aside  
Tho<sup>4</sup> tornéd and to her he rode  
And there he hovéd<sup>5</sup> and abode  
To witté<sup>6</sup> what she woldé mene.  
And she began him to bemene<sup>7</sup>  
And saidé: 'Florent, by thy name  
Thou hast on hondé such a game  
That but thou be the better avised  
Thy deth is shapen and devised,  
That al the world ne may thee save,  
But if<sup>8</sup> that thou my counseil have.'  
Florent whan he this talé herde,  
Unto this oldé wight answerde  
And of her counseil he her praide.  
And she ayein to him thus saide:  
'Florent, if I for thee so shape,  
That thou through me thy deth  
escape  
And také worship of thy dede,  
What shall I havé to my mede?'  
'What thing,' quod he, 'that thou  
wolde axe.'

<sup>1</sup> Wreke, avenge.<sup>3</sup> Hevéd, head.<sup>5</sup> Hovéd, waited.<sup>7</sup> Bemene, bemoan.<sup>2</sup> Sigh, saw.<sup>4</sup> Tho, then.<sup>6</sup> To witté, to know.<sup>8</sup> But if, unless.

'I bid never a better taxe,  
Quod she, 'but first, or thou be  
sped,  
Thou shalt me levé suche a wed<sup>1</sup>  
That I woll have thy trowth on  
honde,  
That thou shalt be min husébonde.'  
'Nay,' saith Florent, 'that may  
nought be.'  
'Ridé thanne forth thy way,' quod  
she,  
'And if thou go withouté rede,  
Thou shalt be sekerliché dede.'  
Florent behight<sup>2</sup> her good inough  
Of londe, of rent, of parke, of  
plough,  
But all that compteth she at nought.  
Tho fell this knight in mochel  
thought,  
Now goth he forth, now cometh  
ayein,  
He wot nought what is best to sain,  
And thought as he rode to and fro,  
That chese he mote one of the two—  
Or for to take her to his wife  
Or ellés for to lese his life.  
And than he caste his avantage,  
That she was of so great an age  
That she may livé but a while,  
And thought to put her in an ile  
Where that no man her shuldé  
knowe  
Til she with deth were overthrowe.  
And thus this yongé lusty knight  
Unto this oldé lothly wight  
Tho said: 'If that none other  
chaunce  
May maké my deliveraunce  
But only thilké samé speche  
Which as thou saist thou shalt me  
teche,  
Have here min honde, I shal thee  
wedde.'

<sup>1</sup> Wed, pledge.<sup>2</sup> Behight, promised.



And thus his trowth he leith to  
wedde,

With that she frounceth up the  
browe :

‘This covenant woll I allowe,’

She saith, ‘if any other thing  
But that thou hast of my teching  
Fro deth thy body may respite,  
I woll thee of thy trowth acquite,  
And elles by none other waie.

Now herken me what I shall saie :

Whan thou art come into the  
place,

Where now they maken great  
manáce

And upon thy coming abide,

They wol anone the samé tide

Opposé thee of thine answére.

I wot thou wolt no thing forbere

Of that thou wenest be thy beste,

And if thou might so findé reste

Wel is, for than is ther no more.

And ellés this shall be my lore,

That thou shalt saie :—Upon this

Molde

That allé Women levest wolde

Be Soverein of Mannés Love :—

For what woman is so above

She hath, as who saith, all her wille,

And ellés may she nought fulfillle

What thinge her weré levest have.

With this answeré thou shalt save

Thy self, and other wisé nought.

And whan thou hast thy endé

wrought,

Come here ayein, thou shalt me

finde,

And let nothinge out of thy minde.’

He goth him forth with hevy chere,

As he that not<sup>1</sup> in what manere

He may this worldés joie atteigne :

For if he deie he hath a peine ;

And if he live he mote him binde

To suche one which of allé kinde

<sup>1</sup> Not, knows not.

Of women is the unsemlieste.  
Thus wot he nought what is the  
beste.

But be him lief or be him loth

Unto the castel forth he goth

His full answeré for to yive

Or for to deie or for to live.

Forth with his counseil came the  
lorde,

The thingés stoden of recorde,

He send up for the lady sone,

And forth she cam that oldé mone.<sup>1</sup>

In presence of the remenaunt

The strengthe of all the covenant

Tho was rehearséd openly,

And to Florent she bad forthý

That he shall tellen his avise

As he that wot what is the prise.

Florent saith all that ever he couth,

But such word cam ther none to  
mouth,

That he for yefte or for beheste

Might any wise his deth areste.

And thus he tarieth longe and late,

Til that this lady bad algate

That he shall for the dome fináll

Yef<sup>2</sup> his answeré in speciall

Of that she had him first opposed.

And than he hath trulý supposed.

That he him may of nothing yelpe,<sup>3</sup>

But if so by tho wordés helpe

Which as the woman hath him

taught,

Wherof he hath an hopé caught

That he shall be excuséd so,

And tolde out plein his willé tho.

And whan that this matróné herde

The maner how this knight an-

swerde,

She said : ‘Ha, treson ! Wo thee be

That hast thus tolde the priveté,

Whiche allé women most desire !

I woldé that thou were afre !’

<sup>1</sup> Mone, wicked one, hag.

<sup>2</sup> Yef, give.

<sup>3</sup> Yelpe, boast.

But nethéles in suche a plite  
 Florent of his answére is quite.  
 And tho began his sorwé newe,  
 For he mot gone or ben untrewé  
 To hiré which his trouthé hadde.  
 But he, which allé shamé dradde,  
 Goth forth in stede of his penaunce  
 And taketh the fortune of his  
 chaunce

As he that was with trouth affaited,<sup>1</sup>  
 This olde wight him hath awaited  
 In placé where as he her lefte.  
 Florent his wofull hed up lifte  
 And sigh this vecke<sup>2</sup> where that  
 she syt,

Which was the lothliesté wyght,  
 That ever man cast on his eye.  
 Her nasé bass,<sup>3</sup> her browés high,  
 Her eyen smal and depé set,  
 Her chekés ben with terés wet  
 And rivelin<sup>4</sup> as an empty skin  
 Hangend down unto the chin,  
 Her lippés shrunken ben for age,  
 There was no grace in her viságe,  
 Her front was narwe, her lockés  
 hore,

She loketh forth as doth a more,<sup>5</sup>  
 Her necke is short, her sholders  
 courbe,

That might a mannés lust dis-  
 tourbe,

Her body great and no thing small,  
 And shortly to describe her all  
 She hath no lith<sup>6</sup> without a lack ;  
 But liche unto the wollé sack  
 She profreth her unto this knight  
 And bad him, as he hath behight,  
 So as she hath by his warránt,  
 That he her holdé covaenánt.

And by the bridell she him seseth,

<sup>1</sup> *With trouth affaited*, bound to truth only. Goods and chattels might be promised in Old French 'pour estre et demourer affaiz et ypothequez.'

<sup>2</sup> *Vecke*, old woman.

<sup>3</sup> *Bass*, low.

<sup>4</sup> *Rivelin*, wrinkled, shrunk.

<sup>5</sup> *Witch*, hag.

<sup>6</sup> *Lith*, limb.

But god wot how that she him  
 pleseth

Of suché wordés as she speketh ;  
 Him thenketh wel nigh his herté  
 breketh

For sorwe that he may nought fle  
 But if<sup>1</sup> he wolde untrewé be.  
 Loke, how a seke man for his hele  
 Taketh baldemoin with canele<sup>2</sup>

And with the mirré taketh the  
 sucre,

Right upon such a maner lucre  
 Stant Florent, as in this diete  
 He drinketh the bitter with the  
 swete,

He medleth sorwe with líking  
 And liveth so as who saith dyng.  
 His youthé shall be cast away  
 Upon suche one, which as the wey  
 Is olde and lothly overall.

But nede he mot that nedé shall  
 He wolde algate his trouthé holde  
 As every knight therto is holde  
 What hap so him is ever befalle,  
 Though she be the foulést of alle.  
 Yet to thonour of womanhed  
 Him thought he shuldé taken heed,  
 So that for puré gentillesse  
 As he her couthé best adresse,  
 In raggés as she was to-tore  
 He set her on his hors to-fore,  
 And forth he taketh his way softe.  
 No wonder though he siketh<sup>3</sup> ofte.  
 But as an oulé fleeth by nighte  
 Out of all other briddés sighte,  
 Right so this knight on daiés brode  
 In close him held, and shope his  
 rode

On nightés timé till the tide  
 That he come there he wolde abide,  
 And prively withouté noise  
 He bringeth this foulé greaté coise<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *But if*, unless.

<sup>2</sup> *Baldemoin with canele*, gentian with cinnamon.

<sup>3</sup> *Siketh*, sigheth.

<sup>4</sup> *Coise*, mistress.

To his castell in suche a wise,  
 That no man might her shape avise,  
 Til she into the chambre came,  
 Where he his privé counseil name  
 Of<sup>1</sup> suché men as he most truste  
 And told hem, that he nedés muste  
 This besté<sup>2</sup> weddé to his wife,  
 For ellés had he lost his life.  
 The privé women were assent<sup>3</sup>  
 That sholden ben of his assent.  
 Her raggés they anone of drawe  
 And as it was that timé lawe  
 She haddé bath, she haddé rest,  
 And was arraiéd to the best.  
 But with no craft of combés brode  
 They might her horé lockés shode,<sup>4</sup>  
 And she ne woldé nought be shore  
 For no counseil, and they therfore  
 With suche attire as tho was used  
 Ordeinen,<sup>5</sup> that it was excused  
 And had so craftilich aboute  
 That no man mighté seen hemoute.<sup>6</sup>  
 But whan she was fullich arraiéd  
 And her attire was all assaiéd,  
 Tho was she fouler unto se,  
 But yet it may non other be,  
 They weré wedded in the night ;  
 So wo begone was never knight  
 As he was than of mariáge.  
 And she began to pleie and rage  
 As who saith, I am well inough ;  
 But he therof nothing ne lough.<sup>7</sup>  
 For she toke thanné chere on honde  
 And clepeth him her husébonde  
 And saith : ' My lord, go we to  
 bedde,  
 For I to that ententé wedde  
 That thou shalt be my worldés  
 blisse.'

<sup>1</sup> Took private counsel with.

<sup>2</sup> This beast.

<sup>3</sup> Assent, sent to her.

<sup>4</sup> Part her hoary locks.

<sup>5</sup> Set it in order.

<sup>6</sup> So craftily surrounded with the customary headgear that one could see any grey locks peep out of it.

<sup>7</sup> Lough, laughed.

And profreth him with that to kisse,  
 As she a lusty lady were.  
 His body mighté well be there,  
 But as of thought and memorie  
 His hert was in purgátorie.  
 But yet for strengthe of matrimóine  
 He mighté maké non essóine,  
 That he ne mote algatés plie  
 To gon to bed of compaignie.  
 And whan they were a beddé naked  
 Withouté slepe he was awaked,  
 He torneth on that other side  
 For that he wolde his eyen hide  
 Fro loking of that foulé wight.  
 The chamber was all full of light,  
 The courtines were of sendall  
 thinne,  
 This newé bride which lay withinne,  
 Though it be nought with his  
 accorde,  
 In armés she beclept her lorde  
 And praid, as he was tornéd fro  
 He wolde him torne ayeinward tho.  
 ' For now,' she saith, ' we be both  
 one.'  
 But he lay stille as any stone,  
 And ever in one she spake and  
 praide  
 And bad him thenke on that he  
 saide,  
 Whan that he toke her by the honde.  
 He herd and understood the bonde,  
 How he was set to his penaunce.  
 And as it were a man in traunce  
 He torneth him all sodeinly  
 And sigh a lady lay him by  
 Of eightené winter age,  
 Which was the fairest of visage,  
 That ever in all this world he sigh.  
 And as he wolde have take her  
 nigh,  
 She put her hond, and by his leve  
 Besought him that he woldé leve,  
 And saith, that for to winne or lesc  
 He mot one of two thingés chese,

Where<sup>1</sup> he woll have her such on  
night

Or ellés upon daiés light,  
For he shall nought have bothé  
two.—

And he began to sorwe tho  
In many a wise and caste his  
thought,

But for al that yet couth he nought  
Devise him self which was the best.  
And she that wolde his hertés rest  
Praieth that he shulde chese algate,  
Til at the lasté longe and late  
He saide: ‘O, ye my livés hele,  
Say what ye liste in my quarele.

I not<sup>2</sup> what answeere I shall yive,  
But ever while that I may live  
I woll that ye be my maistresse ;  
For I can nought my selfé gesse  
Which is the best unto my chois,  
Thus graunt I you min holé vois,  
Chesé for us bothe, I you praie,  
And what as ever that ye saie,  
Right as ye wollé so woll I.’

‘My lord,’ she saidé, ‘graunt mercy,  
For of this word that ye now sain  
That ye have made me Soverein  
My destiné is overpassed,  
That never hereafter shall be  
lassed<sup>3</sup>

My beauté which that I now have,  
Til I be take into my grave.  
Both night and day as I am now  
I shall all way be such to you.  
The kingés daughter of Cecile  
I am ; and fell but sith a while,<sup>4</sup>  
As I was with my fader late,  
That my stepmoder for an hate,  
Which toward me she hath begonne,  
Forshope<sup>5</sup> me, till I haddé wonne  
The love and the sovéreinté

<sup>1</sup> *Where*, whether.

<sup>2</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>3</sup> *Lassed*, lessened.

<sup>4</sup> *Sith a while*, a while since.

<sup>5</sup> *Forshope*, transformed.

Of what knight that in his degré  
All other passeth of good name.

And as men sain ye ben the same  
The dedé proveth it is so ;  
Thus am I yourés evermo.’

Tho was plesaunce and joie inough,  
Echone with other pleid and lough,  
They livé longe, and well they ferde,  
And clerkés that this chauncé herde  
They writen it in evidence

To teche how that obedience  
May well fortune a man to love  
And set him in his luste above,  
As it befell unto this knight. |

“Forthý, my sone, if thou do  
right,

Thou shalt unto thy love obeie  
And folwe her will by allé weie.”—

“Min holy fader, so I will.  
For ye have told me such a skill  
Of this ensample now to-fore,  
That I shall evermo therfore  
Here afterward min observaunce  
To love and to his obeissaunce  
The better kepe, and over this<sup>1</sup>  
Of Pride if there ought ellés is  
Wherof that I me shrivé shall,  
What thing it is in speciall,  
My fader, axeth, I you pray.”—

“Now list, my sone, and I shall say.  
For yet there is Surquederie,<sup>2</sup>  
Which stant with Pride of com-  
paignie,

Wherof that thou shalt here anone  
To knowe if thou have gult or  
none,

Upon the forme as thou shalt here ;  
Now understand well the matere.

### *Surquederie.*

Surquederie is thilké Vice  
Of Pridé which the third office

<sup>1</sup> *Over this*, beyond this.

<sup>2</sup> *Surquederie*, presumption.

Hath in his court and wol nought  
knowe

The trouthé till it overthrowe.

Upon his fortune and his grace  
Cometh *had I wist*<sup>1</sup> full ofte a place,  
For he doth all his thing by gesse  
And voideth allé sikernesse ;  
None other counseil good him  
semeth

But such as he him selfé demeth.  
For in such wise as he compásseth  
His wit alone all other passeth,  
And is with Pride so thorough  
sought

That he all other set at nought,  
And weneth of him selven so  
That such as he there be no mo  
So fair, so semely, ne so wise,  
And thus he woldé beare a prise  
Above all other, and nought forthý  
He saith nought onés graunt mercy<sup>2</sup>  
To God, which allé gracé sendeth,  
So that his wittés he dependeth  
Upon him selfe, as though there were  
No God which might availé there,  
But all upon his owné wit  
He stant, till he fall in the pit  
So fer that he may nought arise.

“And right thus in the samé wise  
The Vice upon the cause of Love  
So proudly set the hert above  
And doth him plainly for to wene,  
That he to loven any quene  
Hath worthinesse and suffisaunce.  
And so withouté purveiaunce  
Full ofte he heweth up so highe,  
That chippés fallen in his eye ;  
And eke full ofte he weneth this,  
There as he nought belovéd is

<sup>1</sup> *Had I wist*, if I had only known. “*Had-I-wist*” was a popular phrase for the repentance of the rash. So in Spenser’s “*Mother Hubbard’s Tale*”—

“Most miserable man, whom wicked Fate  
Hath brought to court, to sue for *Had-y-wist!*”

<sup>2</sup> *Graunt mercy*, gramercy, great thanks!

To be belovéd altherbeste.  
Now, soné, telle what so thee leste  
Of this that I have told thee here.”—

“Ha fader, be nought in a were.<sup>1</sup>  
I trowé there be no man lesse  
Of any maner worthinesse  
That halt him lesse worthy than I  
To be belovéd, and nought forthý  
I say in excusing of me

To allé men, that love is fre.  
And certés that may no man werne,<sup>2</sup>  
For love is of him selfe so derne,<sup>3</sup>  
It luteth<sup>4</sup> in a mannes herte.

But that ne shall me nought asterte<sup>5</sup>  
To wené for to be worthy  
To loven, but in her mercy.  
But sir, of that ye woldé mene,  
That I shulde other wisé wene  
To be belovéd than I was,  
I am beknowe as in this cas.”—

“My godé soné, telle me how.”—  
“Now list, and I woll tellé you,  
My godé fader, how it is.

Full ofte it hath befalle er this  
Through hopé, that was nought  
certein,

My wening hath be set in vein  
To trust in thing that helpe me  
nought

But onlich of min owné thought.  
For as it semeth that a bell  
Like to the wordés that men tell  
Answereth right so, no more ne  
lesse,

To you, my fader, I confesse  
Such will my wit hath over set,  
That what so hopé me behet<sup>6</sup>  
Full many a time I wene it soth,  
But finally no spede it doth.  
Thus may I tellen, as I can,  
Wening beguileth many a man.

<sup>1</sup> *In a were*, in confusion or doubt.

<sup>2</sup> *Werne*, refuse.

<sup>3</sup> *Derne*, secret.

<sup>4</sup> *Luteth*, lies hidden.

<sup>5</sup> Drive me to think myself worthy of love, but through her mercy.

<sup>6</sup> *Me behet*, promises me.

So hath it me, right wel I wot,  
 For if a man wol in a bote  
 Whiche is withouté botmé rowe,  
 He must nedés be overthrowe.  
 Right so wenfing hath fard by me,  
 For whan I wendé next have be  
 As I by my wening caste,  
 Than was I furthest atté laste,  
 And as a fool my bowe unbende  
 Whan all was failéd that I wende.  
 Forthý, my fader, as of this  
 That my wenfing hath gone amis  
 Touchend unto surquederie,  
 Yef me my penaunce or I die.  
 But if ye wolde in any forme  
 Of this matér a tale enforme,  
 Which were ayein this Vicé set,  
 I shuldé faré well the bet.”—

“**My song**, in allé maner wise  
 Surquederie is to despise,  
 Wherof I findé writé thus :—  
 The proudé knight Capaneus  
 He was of suche surquederie,  
 That he through his chivalerie  
 Upon him self so mochel triste,<sup>1</sup>  
 That to the goddés him ne liste  
 In no quarelé to beseche,  
 But saide it was an idel speche  
 Which causé was of puré drede,  
 For lacke of hert and for no nede.  
 And upon such presumption  
 He held this proude opinión,  
 Till atté laste upon a day  
 Abouté Thebés, where he lay,  
 Whan it of siegé was belaine,  
 This knight, as the croníqués saine,  
 In allé mannés sighté there,  
 Whan he was proudest in his gere  
 And thought how nothing might  
 him dere,<sup>2</sup>  
 Full arméd with his shield and  
 spere

As he the cité wolde assaile,  
 God toke him selfé the bataile

<sup>1</sup> *Triste*, trusted.

<sup>2</sup> *Dere*, hurt.

Ayein his pride, and fro the sky  
 A firy thonder sodeinly  
 He sende and him to poudere smote.  
 And thus the Pridé, which was hote  
 Whan he most in his strengthé  
 wende,

Was brent and lost withouten ende.  
 So that it proveth well therfore  
 The strength of man is soné lore,<sup>1</sup>  
 But if<sup>2</sup> that he it well govérne.  
 And over this a man may lerne,  
 That eke full ofté time it greveth  
 What that a man him self beleveth,  
 As though it shulde him well beseme  
 That he all other men can deme<sup>3</sup>  
 And hath foryete his owné vice.  
 A tale of hem that be so nice  
 And feigne hem self to be so wise  
 I shall thee telle in suche a wise,  
 Wherof thou shalt ensample take,  
 That thou no such thing undertake.

**I finde** upon surquederie,  
 How that whilom of Hungarie  
 By oldé daiés was a king  
 Wise and honést in allé thing.  
 And so befell upon a daie,  
 And that was in the month of May,  
 As thilké time it was usaunce,  
 This king with noble purveiaunce  
 Hath for himselfe his chare<sup>4</sup> arraied,  
 Wherin he woldé ride amaied<sup>5</sup>  
 Out of the cite for to pleie  
 With lordés and with great nobleie  
 Of lusty folk that weré yonge,  
 Where somé pleide and somé songe,  
 And somé gone and somé ride,  
 And somé prick her horse aside  
 And bridlen hem now in now oute.  
 The kinge his eyé cast aboute,  
 Til he was atté lasté ware  
 And sigh coménd ayein his chare

<sup>1</sup> *Lore*, lost.

<sup>2</sup> *But if*, unless.

<sup>3</sup> *Deme*, judge.

<sup>4</sup> *Chare*, chariot.

<sup>5</sup> *Amaied*, a-Maying. Professor Skeat, in explaining this peculiar construction, started from the phrase in “*Piers Plowman*” “they gon a begged” for “they go a begging.”

Two pilgrimés of so great age,  
That lich unto a drie ymage  
They weren pale and fadé hewed,  
And as a busshe, whiche is be-  
snewed,

Here berdés weren hore and white,  
There was of kindé<sup>1</sup> but a lite  
That they ne semen fully dede.

They comen to the king and bede<sup>2</sup>  
Some of his good, pur<sup>3</sup> charité.

And he with great humilité

Out of his chare to groundé lepte

And hem in both his armes kepte

And kist hem bothé foot and honde

Before the lordés of his londe

And yaf hem of his good therto.

And whan he hath this dedé do

He goth into his chare ayeine.

Tho<sup>4</sup> was murmur, tho was dis-  
deine,

Tho was compleinte on every side,

They saiden of their owné pride

Echone till other, 'What is this?

Our king hath do this thing amis

So to abesse<sup>5</sup> his roialté,

That every man it mighté se,

And humbled him in such a wise

To hem that were of none emprise.'

Thus was it spoken to and fro

Of hem that weré with him tho

All privély behinde his backe.

But to him selfé no man spake.

The kingés brother in présence

Was thilké time, and great offence

He toke therof and was the same

Above all other which moste blame

Upon his legé lord hath laid,

And hath unto the lordés said

Anone as he may timé finde,

There shall nothing be left behinde,

That he wol speke unto the king.

Now list what fell upon this thing.

The weder was merie and fair  
inough,

Echone with other pleid and lough

And fellen into talés newe,

How that the fresshé flourés grewe,

And how the grené levés spronge,

And how that love amonge the

yonge

Began the hertés thanne awake,

And every brid hath chose his

make.

And thus the Maiés day to thende

They lede, and home ayein they

wende.

The king was nought so soné come,

That whan he had his chambre

nome,

His brother ne was redy there

And brought a tale unto his ere

Of that he diddé such a shame

In hindring of his owné name,

Whan he him selfé woldé dreche<sup>1</sup>

That to so vile a pouer wrecche

Him deignethshewé such simplesse

Ayein the state of his noblesse.

And saith, he shall it no more use

And that he mot him selfe excuse

Toward his lordés everichone.

The king stood still as any stone

And to his tale an ere he laide

And thoughté moré than he saide.

But nethéles to that he herde

Well curteisly the king answerde

And tolde, it shuldé ben amended.

And thus whan that here tale is

ended,

All redy was the bord and cloth,

The king unto his souper goth

Among the lordés to the halle.

And whan they haddé soupéd alle,

They token leve and forth they go.

The king bethought him selfé tho,

How he his brother may chastie,

That he through his surquederie

<sup>1</sup> Of kindé, by nature lite, little.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, pray.

<sup>3</sup> Pur (pour), for.

<sup>4</sup> Tho, then.

<sup>5</sup> Abesse, abase.

<sup>1</sup> Dreche, trouble.

Toke upon hondé to dispreise  
Humilité, which is to preise,  
And therupon yaf such counseil  
Toward his king, that was nought  
heil,

Wherof to be the better lered  
He thenketh to make him afered.

It fell so, that in thilké dawé<sup>1</sup>  
There was ordeignéé by the lawe  
A trompé with a sterné breth,  
Which was clepéd the Trompe of  
Deth,

And in the court where the king  
was

A certain man this trompe of brass  
Hath in keping and therof serveth,  
That whan a lord his deth deserveth,  
He shall this dredfull trompé blowe  
To-fore his gate, and make it knowe  
How that the jugément is yive  
Of deth, which shall nought be  
foryive.

The king whan it was night anone  
This man assent<sup>2</sup> and bad him gone  
To trompen at his brothers gate.

And he, which mot so done algate,  
Goth forth and doth thekingés hest.  
This lord, which herde of this  
tempest

That he to-fore his gaté blewe,  
Tho wist he by the lawe and knewe  
That he was sekerliché dede.

And as of helpe he wist no rede,  
But sendé for his frendés all  
And tolde hem how it is befallé.  
And they him axé causé why,  
But he the sothé nought forthý  
Ne wist, and there was sorwe tho.  
For it stood thilké timé so,

This trompé was of such sentence,  
That there ayein no resisténcé  
They couthe ordeinéé by no weie,  
That he ne mot algaté deie,  
But if so that he may purcháce

<sup>1</sup> Dawe, day.

<sup>2</sup> Assent, sent to.

To get his legé lordés grace.  
Here wittés therupon they caste  
And ben appointed atté laste.  
This lorde a worthy lady had  
Unto his wife, whiche also drad  
Her lordés deth, and children five  
Betwene hem two they had alive,  
That weren yonge and tender of age  
And of statúre and of viságe  
Right faire and lusty on to se.  
Tho casten they, that he and she  
Forth with their children on the  
morwe,

As they that weré full of sorwe,  
All naked but of smock and sherte  
To tendre with the kingés herte  
His gracé shulden go to seche  
And pardon of the deth beseche.  
Thus passen they that wofull night,  
And erly whan they sigh it light  
They gone hem forth in suche a wise,  
As thou to-fore hast herd divise,  
All naked but here shertés on  
They wepte and madé mochel  
mone.

Here hair hangénd about here eres,  
With sobbing and with sory teres  
This lord goth than an humble pas  
That whilom proud and noble was,  
Wherof the cité sore a flight<sup>1</sup>  
Of hem that sawen thilké sight.

And nethéless all openly  
With such weping and with such cry  
Forth with his children and his wife  
He goth to praié for his life.  
Unto the court whan they be come  
And men therin have hedé nome,  
There was no wight, if he hem sigh,  
From water mighté kepe his eye  
For sorwé which they maden tho.  
The king supposeth<sup>2</sup> of this wo  
And feigneth as he nought ne wiste,  
But nethéles at his upriste

<sup>1</sup> A flight, was afflicted, grieved.

<sup>2</sup> Supposeth, makes believe.



Men tolden him, howe that it ferde.  
And whan that he this wonder  
herde,

In hast he goth into the halle.  
And all at onés down they falle,  
If any pité may be founde.

The king, which seeth hem go to  
grounde,

Hath axéd hem what is the fere,  
Why they be so dispuiled there.  
His brother said: 'Ha, lord, mercy!  
I wote none other causé why,  
But only that this night full late  
The trompe of deth was at my gate  
In token that I shuldé deie;  
Thus we be comé for to preie  
That ye my worldés deth respite.'

'Ha, fool, how thou art for to  
wite,'<sup>1</sup>

The kinge unto his brother saith,  
'That thou art of so litel feith,  
That only for a trompés soun  
Hath gone dispuiled through the  
town

Thou and thy wife in such manere  
Forth with thy children that ben here  
In sight of allé men aboute.

For that thou saist, thou art in  
doubte<sup>2</sup>

Of deth which standeth under the  
lawe

Of man, and man it may withdrawe,  
So that it may perchauncé faile,  
Now shalt thou nought forthý mer-  
veile.

That I down from my chare alight,  
Whan I beheld to-fore my sight  
In hem that were of so great age  
Min owné deth through here  
ymáge,

Which God hath set by lawe of  
kinde,

Wherof I may no boté<sup>3</sup> finde.

<sup>1</sup> To wite, to blame.      <sup>2</sup> Doubte, fear.

<sup>3</sup> Boté, remedy.

For well I wot, suche as they be  
Right suche am I in my dégré,  
Of flesshe and blood, and so shall  
deie.

And thus though I that lawe obeie  
Of which that kingés ben put under,  
It ought ben well the lassé wonder  
Than thou, which art withouté nede  
For lawe of londe in suche a drede,  
Which for to accompte is but a jape  
As thing which thou might over-  
scape.

Forthy, my brother, after this  
I rede that sithen it so is  
That thou canst drede a man so  
sore,

Drede God with all thin herté more.  
For all shall deie and all shall passe,  
As well a leon as an asse,  
As well a begger as a lorde,  
Towardés dethe in one accorde  
'They shullen stonde.' And in this  
wise

The kingé with his wordés wise  
His brother taught and all foryive.  
Forthý, my sone, if thou wolt live  
In Vertue, thou must Vice escheue  
And with lowe herte humblesse sue,  
So that thou be nought surque-  
dous."—

"My fader, I am amorous,  
Wherof I woldé you beseche  
That ye me some ensample teche,  
Which might in Lovés causé  
stonde."—

"My soné, thou shalt under-  
stonde

In Love and other thingés alle,  
If that surquederié falle,  
It may to him nought well betide  
Which useth thilke Vice of Pride,  
Which torneth wisdom to wening  
And sothfastnesse into lesing  
Through foll imagination.  
And for thin énfornation,

That thou this Vice as I thee rede  
Escheué shalte, a tale I rede,  
Which fell whilom by daiés olde,  
So as the clerke Ovidé tolde.

**There** was whilom a lordés  
sone,

Which of his Pride a nicé wone<sup>1</sup>  
Hath caught, that worthy to his  
liche<sup>2</sup>

To sechen all the worldés riche  
There was no woman for to love.  
So high he set him selfe above  
Of stature and of beauté bothe,  
That him thought allé women lothe.  
So was there no comparisón  
As towarde his conditió.

This yongé lord Narcizus hight,  
No strength of Lové bowé might  
His herté, whiche is unaffiled,<sup>3</sup>  
But atté laste he was beguiled.  
For of the goddés purveiaúnce  
It felle him on a day perchaunce,  
That he in all his proudé fare  
Unto the forest gan to fare  
Amonge othér, that there were,  
To huntén and disporte him there.  
And whan he cam into the place,  
Where that he woldé make his  
chace,

The houndés weren in a throwe  
Uncoupled and the hornés blowe,  
The greté herte anone was founde  
With swifté feet set on the grounde.  
And he with spore in horsé side  
Him hasteth fasté for to ride,  
Till allé men be left behinde.  
And as he rode under a linde  
Beside a roche, as I thee telle,  
He sigh where spronge a lusty  
welle.

The day was wonder hote withalle,  
And suche a thirst was on him  
falle,

<sup>1</sup> *Wone*, custom.

<sup>2</sup> *Liche*, body.

<sup>3</sup> *Unaffiled*, attached to no one.

That he must outhere deie or drinke.  
And downe he light and by the  
brinke

He tide his hors unto a braunche  
And laid him lowé for to staunche  
His thirst. And as he cast his  
loke

Into the welle and hedé toke,  
He sigh the like of his viságe  
And wendé there were an ymáge  
Of suche a nimphe, as tho was say,<sup>1</sup>  
Wherof that love his herte assay  
Began, as it was after sene  
Of his sotie<sup>2</sup> and made him wene  
It were a woman, that he sigh.<sup>3</sup>

The more he cam the wellé nigh,  
The neré cam she to him ayein,  
So wist he never what to sain ;  
For whan he wepte he sigh her  
wepe,  
And whan he cried he toke good  
kepe,

The samé worde she cried also ;  
And thus began the newé wo,  
That whilom was to him sostraunge.  
Tho made him Love an harde  
eschaunge

To set his herte and to beginné  
Thing whiche hemight never winné.  
And ever amonge he gan to loute,<sup>4</sup>  
And praith that she to him come  
oute.

And other while he goth afer  
And other while he draweth ner  
And ever he founde her in one place.  
He wepeth, he crieth, he axeth  
grace,

There as he mighté geté none.  
So that ayein a roche of stone,  
As he that knewe none other rede,  
He smote him self til he was  
dede.

<sup>1</sup> *Tho was say*, then was seen.

<sup>2</sup> *Sotie*, folly.

<sup>3</sup> *Sigh*, saw.

<sup>4</sup> *Loute*, bow.

Wherof the nimphés of the welles  
 And other that there weren elles  
 Unto the wodés belongénde  
 The body, which was dede ligénde,  
 For puré pité that they have  
 Under gravé they begrave.<sup>1</sup>  
 And than out of his sepulture  
 There spronge anone perávéntúre  
 Of flourés suche a wonder sight,  
 That men ensample také might  
 Upon the dedés whiche he dede.  
 And tho was sene in thilké stede,  
 For in the winter fressh and faire  
 The flourés ben, whiche is contraire  
 To kinde, and so was the folie  
 Which felle of his Surquederie.

“ Thus he which Love had in  
 disdeigne,

Worst of all other was beseine,  
 And as he set his prise most hie,  
 He was lest worthy in Lovés eye  
 And most bejapéd in his wit,  
 Wherof the remembraunce is yit ;  
 So that thou might ensample take,  
 And eke all other, for his sake.”—

“ My fader, as touchénde of me  
 This Vice I thinké for to fle,  
 Whiche of his wening overthroweth  
 And namélich<sup>2</sup> of thing which  
 groweth

In Lovés cause or well or wo,  
 Yet prided I me never so.  
 But woldé God that gracé sende,  
 That toward me my lady wende  
 As I towardés hiré wene,  
 My lové shuldé so be sene  
 There shuldé go no Pride a place.  
 But I am fer fro thilké grace  
 And for to speke of timé nowe  
 So mote I suffre and praié you  
 That ye woll axe on other side,  
 If there be any point of Pride  
 Wherof it nedeth me to be  
 shrive.”—

<sup>1</sup> *Begrave*, bury.    <sup>2</sup> *Namélich*, especially.

“ My soné, God it thee foryive,  
 If thou have any thing misdo  
 Touchend of this, but evermo  
 Ther is another yet of Pride  
 Which couthé never his wordés  
 hide,

That he ne wold him selfe avaunt.  
 There may nothing his tungé daunt,  
 That he ne clappeth as a belle,  
 Wherof if thou wolt that I telle  
 It is behovely for to here,  
 So that thou might thy tungé stere  
 Toward the worlde and stonde in  
 grace,

Which lacketh ofte in many a place  
 To him that can nought sitté stille,  
 Whiche ellés shuld have all his  
 wille

*Boasting.*

**The vice clepéd Avauntáncé**<sup>1</sup>  
 With Pride hath take his ácquein-  
 táncé,

So that his owné prise he lasseth  
 Whan he such mesure overpasseth,  
 That he his owné herald is.  
 That first was wel is thanné mis,  
 That was thankworthy is than  
 blame,

And thus the worship of his name  
 Through pride of his avauntarie  
 He torneth into vilenie.

I rede, how that this proudé Vice  
 Hath thilké wind in his office  
 Which through the blastés that he  
 bloweth

The mannés fame he overthroweth  
 Of vertue which shulde ellés  
 springe

Unto the worldés knoulechinge.  
 But he fordeth it all to sore,  
 And right of such a maner lore  
 There ben lovérs ; forthý if thou  
 Art one of hem, tell and say how,

<sup>1</sup> *Avauntáncé*, vaunting, boasting.

Whan thou hast taken any thinge  
Of lovés yefte or ouche<sup>1</sup> or ringe,  
Or toke upon thee for the colde  
Some goodly word that thee was  
tolde

Of frendly chere or token or letter,  
Wherof thin herté was the better,  
Of that she sendé thee gretinge,  
Hast thou for pride of thy likinge  
Made thin avaunt where as thee  
liste?"—

"I woldé, fader, that ye wiste  
My consciéncé lith not here.  
Yet had I never such matere,  
Wherof min herté might amende,  
Nought of so mochel as she sende  
By mouth and saidé, 'grete him  
wel.'"

And thus for that there is no dele  
Wherof to maké min avaunt,  
It is to reson accordaunt,  
That I may never, but I lie,  
Of lové make avauntarie.  
I wote nought what I shulde have do  
If that I had encheson so  
As ye have said here many one ;  
But I found causé never none,  
But Daunger which me welnigh  
slough.

Therof I couthé telle inough  
And of none other avauntance.  
Thus nedeth me no repentaunce.  
Now axeth further of my life,  
For herof am I nought gultife."—

"My sone, I am wel paid withall.  
For wite it wel in speciall,  
That love of his verray justice  
Above all other ayein this Vice  
At allé timés most debateth  
With all his hert and most it hateth.  
And eke in allé maner wise  
Avauntarie is to despise,  
As by ensample thou might wite,  
Whiche I finde in the bokés write.

<sup>1</sup> *Ouche*, jewel in its setting.

Of hem that we Lombárdes now  
calle

Albinus was the firste of alle  
Which baré crowne of Lombardie,  
And was of great chivalerie  
In werre ayeinst divers kinges.  
So felle it amonge other thinges  
That he that time a werré had  
With Gurmund which the Ceptes  
lad,<sup>1</sup>

And was a mightie kinge also.  
But nethéles it fell him so  
Albinus slough him in the felde,  
Ther halpe him nouthere spere ne  
shelde,  
That he ne smote his heved of  
thanne,

Wherof he toke awey the panne,  
Of whiche he saide he woldé make  
A cuppé for Gurmundés sake  
To kepe and drawe into memoire  
Of his batailé the victoire.  
And thus when he the felde had  
wonne,

The londe anon was overronne  
And seséd in his owné honde ;  
Where he Gurmundés daughter  
fonde,

Which maidé Rosemundé hight,  
And was in every mannés sight  
A fair, a fressh, a lusty one.  
His herté fell to her anone,  
And suche a love on her he cast,  
That he her wedded atté last.  
And after that long time in reste  
With her he dwelleth, and to the  
beste

They love eche other wonder wele.  
But she that kepeth the blindé  
whele,

Venus, when they be most above  
In all the hottest of her love,  
Her whele she torneth : and they  
felle

<sup>1</sup> *Lad*, led.

In the manér, as I shall telle.  
 This king which stood in all his  
 welth  
 Of pees, of worship and of helth,  
 And felt him on no sidé greved  
 As he that hath his worlde acheved,  
 Tho thought he wolde a festé make  
 And that was for his wivés sake,  
 That she the lordés atté feste,  
 That were obeisaunt to his heste,  
 May knowe. And so forth there  
 upon  
 He lette ordeigne and send anon  
 By letters and by messengers  
 And warnéd all his officers,  
 That every thing be well arraied,  
 The greaté stedés were assaied  
 For justinge and for torneament,  
 And many a perléd garnément  
 Embrouded was ayein the day.  
 The lordés in her beste array  
 Be comen at the timé set ;  
 One justeth well, an other bet,  
 And other whilé they torney ;  
 And thus they casten care away  
 And token lustés upon honde.  
 And after thou shalt understande  
 To mete into the kingés halle  
 They comen, as they be bidden alle.  
 And whan they weré set and served  
 Than after, as it was deserved  
 To hem that worthy knightés were,  
 So as they setten here and there,  
 The prise was yove and spoken out  
 Among the heralds all about.  
 And thus benethe and eke above  
 All was of armés and of love,  
 Wherof abouten atté bordes  
 Men had many sondry wordes,  
 That of the mirthé which they made  
 The kinge him self began to glade  
 Within his hert and toke a Pride  
 And sigh the cuppé stonde aside,  
 Which made was of Gurmundés  
 hed,

As ye have herd, when he was ded,  
 And was with golde and riché stones  
 Beset and boundé for the nones,  
 And stode upon a fote on highte  
 Of burnéd golde, and with great  
 slighte

Of werkmenship it was begrave  
 Of such worke as it shuldé have  
 And was polisséd eke so clene  
 That no signe of the scull was sene  
 But as it were a gripés<sup>1</sup> eye.

The king bad bere his cuppe away  
 Which stood before him on the borde  
 And fetté thilke.<sup>2</sup> Upon his worde  
 The sculle is fette and wine ther-  
 inne,

Wherof he bad his wife beginne :  
 'Drink with thy fader, dame,' he  
 said.

And she to his bidding obeid  
 And toke the sculle, and what her list  
 She drank, as she which nothing wist  
 What cup it was. And than all out  
 The kinge in audiéncie about  
 Hath tolde, it was her faders sculle,  
 So that the lordés knowé shulle  
 Of his bataile a soth withnésse,  
 And made avaunt through what  
 prowésse

He hath his wivés lové wonne,  
 Whiche of the sculle hath so be-  
 gonne.

Tho was there mochel pride alofte,  
 They spoken all, and she was softe,  
 Thenkend on thilke unkindé Pride,  
 Of that her lord, so nigh her side,  
 Avaunteth him that he hath slaine  
 And pikéd out her faders braine  
 And of the sculle had made a cuppe.  
 She suffreth all till they were uppe,  
 And tho she hath sekenessé feigned  
 And goth to chambre and hath  
 compleigned

<sup>1</sup> Gripes, eagle's.

<sup>2</sup> Fette thilke, fetch that one.

Unto a maidé which she triste,<sup>1</sup>  
 So that none other wight it wiste.  
 This maidé Glodeside is hote,  
 To whom this lady hath behote<sup>2</sup>  
 Of ladiship all that she can  
 To vengen her upon this man,  
 Which did her drink<sup>3</sup> in suche a  
 plite

Among hem allé for despite  
 Of her and of her fader bothe,  
 Wherof her thoughtés ben so  
 wrothe,

She saith, that she shall nought be  
 glad,

Till that she se him so bestad  
 That he no moré make avaunt.  
 And thus they felle in covenaut,  
 That they accorden atté laste  
 With suché wilés as they caste,  
 That they wol get of here accorde  
 Some orpéd<sup>4</sup> knight to sle this lorde.  
 And with this sleighté they beginne,  
 How they Helmegé mighten winne,  
 Which was the kingés botéler,  
 A proude and lusty bachiler,  
 And Glodeside he loveth hote.  
 And she to make him more assote<sup>5</sup>  
 Her lové graunteth, and by nighte  
 They shape how they to-gider  
 mighte

A beddé mete. And done it was  
 This samé night. And in this cas  
 The quene her self the night  
 seconde

Went in her stede and there she  
 fonde

A chambre derké without light  
 And goth to beddé to this knight.  
 And he to kepe his observaunce  
 To lové doth his obeisaunce  
 And weneth it be Glodeside.  
 And she than after lay a side

<sup>1</sup> *Triste*, trusted.

<sup>2</sup> *Behote*, promised.

<sup>3</sup> *Did her drink*, caused her to drink.

<sup>4</sup> *Orpéd*, bold. <sup>5</sup> *Assote*, to dote.

And axeth him what he hath do,  
 And who she was she tolde him tho  
 Andsaid: 'Helmege, I am thy quene,  
 Now shall thy lové well be sene  
 Of that thou hast thy willé wrought;  
 Or it shall soré ben abought,  
 Or thou shalt worche, as I thee saie.  
 And if thou wolt by suche a waie  
 Do my plesaunce and holde it stille,  
 For ever I shall ben at thy wille  
 Bothe I and all min heritáge.'

Anone the wildé lovés rage,  
 In which no man him can governe,  
 Hath made him that he can nought  
 werne,<sup>1</sup>

But felle all hole to her assent,  
 And thus the whele is all miswent,  
 The which Fortúne hath upon  
 honde.

For how that ever it after stonde,  
 They shope among hem such a wile  
 The king was ded within a while.  
 So slily came it nought aboute,  
 That they ne ben discovered out,  
 So that it thought hem for the beste  
 To fle, for theré was no reste.  
 And thus the tresor of the kinge  
 They trusse, and mochel other  
 thinge,

And with a certaine felaship  
 They fled and went away by ship  
 And heldé her right cours from  
 thenne

Till that they comen to Ravenne,  
 Where they the dukés helpé sought.  
 And he, so as they him besought,  
 A placé graunteth for to dwelle.  
 But after, whan he herdé telle  
 Of the manér how they have do,  
 The duke let shapé for hem so,  
 That of a poison which they drunke  
 They hadden that they have be-  
 swunke.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Werne*, refuse.

<sup>2</sup> *Beswunke*, laboured for.

And all this made Avaunt of Pride.  
 Good is therfore a man to hide  
 His owné prise, for if he speke,  
 He may lightly his thanké breke.  
 In armés lith none avauntance  
 To him, which thinketh his name  
 avaunce

And be renoméd of his dede.  
 And also who that thenketh tospede  
 Of Love he maynought him avaunte.  
 For what man thilké Vicé haunte,  
 His purpose shall full ofté faile.  
 In armés he that woll travaille  
 Or ellés Lovés grace atteigne,  
 His losé tunge he mot restreigne,  
 Whiche bereth of his honóur the  
 keie.

“Forthy my sone, in alle waie  
 Take right good hede of this  
 matere.”—

“I thonké you, my fader dere,  
 This scole is of a gentil lore.  
 And if there be ought ellés more  
 Of Pridé whiche I shall escheue,  
 Nowe axeth forth, and I woll sue<sup>1</sup>  
 What thing, that ye me woll en-  
 forme.”—

“My sone, yet in other forme  
 There is a Vice of Pridés lore,  
 Which like an hawk whan he will  
 sore,

Fleeth up on high in his delíces  
 After the likinge of his vices  
 And woll no mannés reson knowe  
 Till he down falle and overthrowe.  
 This vicé Vaynglorie is hote,  
 Wherof, my sone, I thee behote  
 To trete and speke in suche a wise,  
 That thou thee might better avise.

*Vainglory.*

**The** proudé Vice of Veinglorie  
 Remembreth nought of purgatorie,

<sup>1</sup> Sue, follow.

His worldés joié ben so grete,  
 Him thenketh of heven no beyete.<sup>1</sup>  
 This livés pompe is all his pees,  
 Yet shall he deié nethéles,  
 And therof thenketh he but a lite,<sup>2</sup>  
 For all his lust is to delite

In newé thingés, proude and veine,  
 Als ferforth as he may atteine.  
 I trowe, if that he mighté make  
 His body newe, he woldé take  
 A newé forme and leve his olde.  
 For what thing that he may beholde  
 The which to comun use is straunge,  
 Anone his oldé guisé change  
 He woll, and fallé therupon  
 Lich unto the camelión,

Whiche upon every sondry hewe  
 That he beholt he moté newe  
 His colour; and thus unavise  
 Ful ofté time he stant disguised.  
 More jolif than the brid in Maie,  
 He maketh him ever fressh and gaie  
 And doth all his array disguise,  
 So that of him the newé guise  
 Of lusty folke all other take.

And eke he can carollés make,  
 Roundel, baláde and virélay.  
 And with all this, if that he may  
 Of lové gete him avauntage  
 Anone he wext of his coráge  
 So over glad, that of his ende  
 He thenketh there is no deth  
 coménde.

For he hath than at allé tide  
 Of lové such a maner Pride,  
 Him thenketh his joy is endéles.

“Now shrive thee, sone, in  
 Goddés pees  
 And of thy lové tell me plein,  
 If that thy glorie hath be so  
 vayne.”—

“My fader, as touchénd of all  
 I may nought well ne nought ne  
 shall

<sup>1</sup> Beyete, gain.    <sup>2</sup> Lite, little.

Of vayn glorie excusé me,  
That I ne have for lové be  
The better addresséd and arraiéd.  
And also I have ofte assaiéd  
Roundel, baláde and virélay  
For her on whom min herté lay,  
To make and also for to peinte  
Carollés with my wordés queinte  
To setté my purpós alofte.

And thus I sang hem forth full ofte  
In halle and eke in chambre aboute  
And madé merie among the route :  
But yet ne ferde I nought the bet.  
Thus was my glorie in vayn beset  
Of all the joíé that I made.

For when I worldé with her glade  
And of her lové songes make,  
She saide, it was nought for her  
sake,

And listé nought my songés here,  
Ne witen what the wordés were.  
So for to speke of min array  
Yet couth I never be so gay  
Ne so well make a songe of love,  
Wherof I mighté ben above  
And have enchésion<sup>1</sup> to be glad.  
But rather I am ofte adrad  
For sorwé, that she saith me nay.  
And nethéles I woll nought say,  
That I nam glad on other side  
For famé that can nothing hide.  
All day woll bringe unto min ere  
Of that men speken here and there,  
How that my lady berth the prise,  
How she is faire, how she is wise,  
How she is womanlich of chere.  
Of all this thing whan I may here,  
What wonder is though I be fain.  
And eke whan I may heré sain  
Tidingés of my ladis hele,  
All though I may nought with her  
dele,

Yet am I wonder glad of that.  
For whan I wote her good estate,

<sup>1</sup> *Encheson*, occasion.

As for that time I dare well swere,  
None other sorwé may me dere.  
Thus am I gladed in this wise.  
But, fader, of your lorés wise,  
Of whiché ye be fully taught,  
Now tell me if ye thenketh ought,  
That I therof am for to wite."<sup>1</sup>—  
“Of that there is, I thee acquite,  
My sone,” he saide, “and for thy  
good

I wollé that thou understood,  
For I thenke upon this matere  
To tell a tale, as thou shalt here,  
How that ayein this proudé Vice  
The highé God of his justice  
Is wrothe and great vengeaúncé  
doth.

Nowe herken a talé, that is soth,  
Though it be nought of Lovés  
kinde.

A great ensample thou shalt finde  
This Veinglorié for to fle,  
Whiche is so full of vanité.

**There was** a king, that mochel  
might,

Which Nabugodonosor hight,  
Of whom that I spake here to-fore.  
Yet in the bible this name is bore,  
For all the worlde in thorient  
Was hole at his commaundément,  
As than of kingés to his liche  
Was none so mighty ne so riche,  
To his empire and to his lawes  
As who saith all in thilké dawes  
Were obeisaúnt and tribute bere,  
As though he god of erthé were.  
With strengthe he putté kingés  
under

And wrought of Pridé many a  
wonder,

He was so full of Veinglorie,  
That he ne hadde no memorie,  
That there was any God but he  
For pride of his prosperite.

<sup>1</sup> *To wite*, to blame.



Till that the highé King of Kinges,  
Which seeth and knoweth allé  
things,

Whose eyé may nothíngé asterte  
The privetés of mannés herte,<sup>1</sup>  
They speke and sounen in his ere  
As though they loudé windés were,  
He toké vengeaunce of his Pride.  
But for he wolde a while abide  
To loke if he wolde him amende,  
To him aforé token he sende.  
And that was in his slepe by night  
This proudé kinge a wonder sight  
Had in his sweven<sup>2</sup> there he lay.  
Him thought upon a mery day,  
As he beheld the world aboute,  
A tre full growe he sigh<sup>3</sup> there oute  
Which stood the world amiddés  
even,

Whos heighté straught up to the  
heven.

The levés weren faire and large,  
Of fruit it bore so ripe a charge,  
That allé men it mighté fede.  
He sigh also the bowés sprede  
Above all erth, in whiché were  
The kinde of allé briddes there.  
And eke him thought he sigh also  
The kinde of alle bestés go  
Under the tre abouten round  
And fedden hem upon the ground.  
As he this wonder stood and sigh,  
Him thought he herdea vois on high  
Criende, and saide aboven alle :  
'Hewé down this tree and let it falle,  
The levés let defoule in haste  
And do the fruit destruie and waste ;  
And let ofshreden every braunche,  
But atté roote be let it staunche.  
Whan all his Pride is cast to  
grounde

The rooté shall be fasté bounde ;

<sup>1</sup> From whose eye the secrets of man's heart  
may in no wise escape.

<sup>2</sup> Sweven, dream.

<sup>3</sup> Sigh, saw.

And shall no mannés herté bere,  
But every lust he shall forbere  
Of man, and lich an oxé his mete  
Of gras he shall purcháce and etc,  
Till al the waters of the heven  
Have washen him by tímés seven,  
So that he be through-knowe  
aright

What is the hevenliché might,  
And be made humble to the wille  
Of Him which may all save and  
spille.<sup>7</sup>

This king out of his sweven ab-  
raide<sup>1</sup>

And he upon the morwe it saide  
Unto the clerkés which he hadde.  
But none of hem the soth aradde,  
Was none his sweven couth undo.  
And it stood thilké tímé so,  
This kinge had in subjection  
Judee and of affection

Above al other one Daniél  
He loveth, for he couthé well  
Diviné that none other couthe.  
To him were allé thingés couthe,  
As he it hadde of Goddes grace.  
He was before the kingés face  
Assent and bodé<sup>2</sup> that he shulde  
Upon the point the kinge of tolde<sup>3</sup>  
The fortune of his sweven ex-  
pounde,

As it shulde afterward be founde.  
Whan Daniél this sweven herde,  
He stood long time, er he answérde,  
And made a wonder hevy chere.<sup>4</sup>  
The king toke hede of his manere  
And bad him tellé that he wiste  
As he to whome he mochel triste,<sup>5</sup>  
And said, he woldé nought be  
wroth.

But Daniél was wonder loth

<sup>1</sup> Awoke suddenly from his dream.

<sup>2</sup> Sent for and commanded.

<sup>3</sup> Of tolde, told of.

<sup>4</sup> Hevy chere, sad face.

<sup>5</sup> Triste, trusted.

And said : ' Upon thy fomen alle,  
 Sir king, thy sweven moté falle.  
 And nethéles touchénd of this  
 I woll thee tellen howe it is,  
 And what disese is to thee shape,  
 God wote if thou it shall escape.  
 The highé tre which thou hast sein,  
 With lef and fruit so wel besein,  
 The which stood in the world  
 amiddes,

So that the bestés and the briddes  
 Govérnéd were of him alone,  
 Sir King, betokeneth thy persóne  
 Which stonde above all ertihely  
 thinges.

Thus regnen under thee the kinges  
 And all the people unto thee louteth<sup>1</sup>  
 And all the worlde thy person  
 douteth,<sup>2</sup>

So that with vein honoúr deceived  
 Thou hast the reverencé weived<sup>3</sup>  
 Fro him whiche is thy kinge above,  
 That thou for dredé ne for love  
 Wolt nothing knowen of this God,  
 Which now for thee hath made a  
 rod,

Thy Vaynglorie and thy folie  
 With greté peinés to chastie.  
 And of the vois thou herdest speke,  
 Which bad the bowés for to breke  
 And hewe and fellé down the tre,  
 That word belongeth unto thee.  
 Thy regné shall be overthrowe,  
 And thou despuilé for a throwe.<sup>4</sup>  
 But that the rooté shuldé stonde,  
 By that thou shalt wel understonde,  
 There shall abiden of thy regne  
 A time ayein whan thou shall regne.  
 And eke of that thou herdest saie  
 To take a mannés hert aweie  
 And setté there a bestíall,  
 So that he lich an oxé shall

<sup>1</sup> *Louteth*, bows.

<sup>2</sup> *Douteth*, fears.

<sup>3</sup> *Weived*, put aside.

<sup>4</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

Pastúre, and that he be bereined  
 By tímés seven and soré peined,  
 Till that he knowe his Goddes  
 mightes,

Than shall he stond ayein uprightes.  
 All this betokeneth thine estate,  
 Which now with God is in debate :  
 Thy mannés formé shall be lassed,  
 Till seven yere ben overpassed,  
 And in the likenesse of a beste  
 Of gras shall be thy roiall feste,  
 The weder shall upon thee rayne.  
 And understonde, that all this payne  
 Which thou shalt suffre thilké tide,  
 Is shape all only for thy Pride  
 Of Vaynglorie and of the sinne  
 Which thou hast longé stondeninne.  
 So upon this condición

Thy sweven hath exposición.  
 But er this thing befalle in dede,  
 Amendé thee, this wold I rede,  
 Yif and departé<sup>1</sup> thin almésse,  
 Do mercy forth with rightwisnesse,  
 Beseche and praie the highé grace,  
 For so thou might thy pees pur-  
 cháce

With God and stonde in good ac-  
 corde.<sup>2</sup>

But Pride is loth to leve his lorde  
 And wol nought suffre Humilité  
 With him to stonde in no degré.  
 And whan a ship hath lost his stere,  
 Is none so wise that may him stere  
 Ayein the wawés in a rage.  
 This proudé king in his coráge  
 Humilité hath so forlore,  
 That for no sweven he sigh to-fore  
 Ne yet for all that Daniél  
 Him hath counséléd every dele,  
 He let it passe out of his minde  
 Through Vaynglorie, and as the  
 blinde

He seth no weie er him be wo.  
 And fel withinne a tímé so,

<sup>1</sup> *Departe*, divide, distribute.

As he in Babiloiné wente,  
The Vanité of Pride him hente.<sup>1</sup>  
His hert aros of vayn glorie,  
So that he drough to memorie  
His lordship and his regalie  
With wordés of surquederie.  
And whan that he him most avaun-

teth,  
That Lord, which Vaynglorié daun-

teth,  
All sodeinlich, as who saith treis,<sup>2</sup>  
Where that he stood in his paleis  
He toke him from the mennés sight.

Was none of hem so ware that might  
Set eyé where that he becom.

And thus was he from his kingdóm  
Into the wildé forest drawe,  
Where that the mighty Goddés lawe  
Through his powér did him trans-

forme  
Fro man into a bestés forme.  
And lich an oxe under the fote  
He graseth as he nedés mote  
To geten him his livés fode.  
Tho thought him coldé grasses  
goode,

That whilome ete the hoté spices,  
Thus was he tornéd fro delices.  
The wine which he was wont to  
drinke,

He toke than of the wellés brinke  
Or of the pit or of the slough,  
It thought him thanné good inough.  
In stede of chambres well arraied  
He was than of a bussh well paied;  
The hardé ground he lay upon,  
For other pilwés had he non,  
The stormés and the reinés fall,  
The windés blowe upon him all,  
He was tormented day and night.  
Such was the highé Goddes might,  
Till seven yere an endé toke.  
Upon him self tho gan he loke :

<sup>1</sup> Hente, seized.

<sup>2</sup> As who seith treis, in a trice.

In stede of meté gras and streis ;  
In stede of handés longé cleis ;<sup>1</sup>  
In stede of man a bestés like ;<sup>2</sup>  
He sigh,<sup>3</sup> and than he gan to sike<sup>4</sup>  
For cloth of golde and of perrie.<sup>5</sup>  
Which him was wont to magnifie.  
When he beheld his cote of heres  
He wepte and with full wofull teres  
Up to the heven he caste his chere<sup>6</sup>  
Wepénd and thought in this manere ;  
Though he no wordés mighté winne,  
Thus said his hert and spake  
withinne :

‘ O mighty God, that all hast  
wrought

And all might bring ayein to  
nought,

Now knowe I wel but all of thee  
This world hath no prosperité,  
In thin aspect ben alle aliche  
The pouer man and eke the riche,  
Withouté thee there may no wight,  
And thou above all other might.  
O mighty Lord, toward my vice  
Thy mercy medle<sup>7</sup> with justice,  
And I woll make a covaunaunt  
That of my life the remenaunt  
I shall it by thy grace amende  
And in thy lawé so dispende,  
That Vaynglorie I shall escheue,  
And bowe unto thin heste, and sue  
Humilité, and that I vowe.’<sup>8</sup>

And so thenkend he gan down  
bowe,

And though him lacké vois of  
speche,

He gan up with his fete areche  
And wailend in his bestly steven<sup>8</sup>  
He made his plaint unto the braieth.  
He kneleth in his wise and braieth  
To seché mercy and assaieth

<sup>1</sup> Cleis, claws.

<sup>3</sup> Sigh, saw.

<sup>5</sup> Perrie, precious stones.

<sup>6</sup> Chere, countenance.

<sup>7</sup> Medle, mix, join.

<sup>2</sup> Like, body.

<sup>4</sup> Sike, sigh.

<sup>8</sup> Steven, voice.

His God, which made him nothing  
straunge.<sup>1</sup>

Whan that he sigh his Pride  
change

Anone as he was humble and tame  
He found toward his God the same,  
And in a twinkeling of a loke  
His mannés forme ayein he toke  
And was reforméd to the regne  
In whiche that he was wont to  
regne,

So that the Pride of Vaynglorie  
Ever after out of memorie  
He lett it passe. And thus is  
shewed

What is to ben of Pride unthewed<sup>2</sup>  
Ayein the highé Goddés lawe,  
To whom no man may be feláwe.

“Forthy my sone, také good  
hede

So for to ledé thy manhede,  
That thou ne be nought lich a beste.  
But if thy life shall ben honéste  
Thou must Humblessé take on  
honde,

For thanné might thou siker stonde,  
And for to speke it other wise  
A proud man can no love assise.<sup>3</sup>  
For though a woman wolde him  
plese,

His Pridé can nought ben at ese.  
There may no man to mochel blame  
A Vicé which is for to blame.  
Forthy men shulden nothing hide  
That mighte fall in blame of Pride,  
Whiche is the worsté Vice of alle,  
Wherof so as it was befallé  
The tale I thenke of a cronique  
To telle, if that it may thee like,  
So that thou might Humblessé sue  
And eke the Vice of Pride escheue,

<sup>1</sup> Showed himself no whit estranged—did not turn from him.

<sup>2</sup> *Unthewed*, showing want of discipline against the law of the high God to whom, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Assise*, be in session with.

Wherof the glorie is false and  
vaine,

Which God him self hath in  
disdeine,

That though it mounté for a throwe,<sup>1</sup>  
It shall down falle and overthrowe.

**A** king whilom was yonge and  
wise,

The which set of his wit great prise.  
Of depe ymaginatións

And straunge interpretatións,  
Problemés and demaundés eke  
His wisdom was to finde and seke,  
Wherof he wolde in sondry wise  
Opposen hem that weren wise.

But none of hem it mighté bere  
Upon his word to yive answére  
Out taken<sup>2</sup> one, which was a  
knight,

To him was every thing so light,  
That al so sone as he hem herde  
The kingés wordés he answerde,  
What thing the king him axe wolde,  
Whereof anone the truth he tolde.  
The king somdele had an envie  
And thought he wolde his wittés  
plie

To seté some conclusión,  
Which shuldé be confusióne  
Unto this knight, so that the name  
And of wisdóm the highé fame  
Toward him sélfe he woldé winne.  
And thus of all his wit withinne  
This king began to studie and muse  
What straungé mater he might use  
The knightés wittés to confounde,  
And atté last he hath it founde :  
And for the knight anon he sente,  
That he shall tellé what he mente.  
Upon thre points stood the matere  
Of questións as thou shalte here.

“The firsté point of allé thre  
Was this: ‘What thing in his degré

<sup>1</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

<sup>2</sup> *Out taken*, except.

Of all this world hath nedé lest  
And yet men helpe it allthermost.<sup>1</sup>

The seconde is : 'What moste  
is worth  
And of costage is lest put forth.'

The thrid is : 'Which is of most  
cost

And lest is worth and goth to lost.<sup>2</sup>  
The king these thre demaundés  
axeth,

To the knight this law he taxeth,  
That he shall gone and comen ayein  
The thriddéweke and tell him pleine  
To every point, what it amounteth.  
And if so be that he miscounteth  
To make in his answer a faile,  
There shall none other thinge  
availe,

The king saith, but he shall be dede  
And lese his goodés and his hede.  
This knight was sory of this thinge  
And wolde excuse him to the kinge;  
But he ne woldehim nought forbere,  
And thus the knight of his answer  
Goth home to take avisément.

But after his entendément  
The more he cast his wit aboute,  
The more he stant therof in doubt.  
Tho wist he well the kingés herte,  
That he the deth ne shulde asterte<sup>2</sup>  
And suche a sorwe to him hath take,  
That gladship he hath all forsake.  
He thoughté first upon his life,  
And after that upon his wife,  
Upon his children eke also,  
Of whiché he had doughteres two.  
The yongest of hem had of age  
Fourtené yere, and of visage  
She was right faire and of stature  
Lich to an hevenlich figure,  
And of manér and goodly speche ;  
Though men wolde allé londés  
seche,

<sup>1</sup> *Allthermost*, most of all.

<sup>2</sup> *Asterte*, escape from.

They shulden nought have founde  
her like.

She sigh her fader sorwe and sike  
And wisté nought the causé why.  
So cam she to him prively  
And that was, wher he made his  
mone

Within a gardin all him one.<sup>1</sup>  
Upon her knees she gan down falle  
With humble herte and to him calle  
And saide : 'O goodé fader dere,  
Why maké ye thus hevy chere  
And I wot nothinge how it is ?  
And well ye knowé, fader, this,  
What aventuré that you felle  
Ye might it sauffy to me telle,  
For I have ofté herd you saide,  
That ye such truste have on me  
laide,

That to my suster ne to my brother  
In all this worlde ne to none other  
Ye dursté telle a priveté  
So well, my fader, as to me.  
Forthy,<sup>2</sup> my fader, I you praie  
Ne casteth nought that hert awaie,  
For I am she, that woldé kepe  
Your honour.' And with that to  
wepe

Her eyé may nought be forbore,  
She wissheth for to ben unbore,  
Er that her fader so mistriste  
To tellen her of that he wiste.  
And ever among 'Mercy' she cride,  
That he ne shulde his counseil  
hide

From hiré, that so wolde him good  
And was so nigh in flesshe and  
blood.

So that, with weping, atté laste  
His chere<sup>3</sup> upon his childe he caste  
And sorwefullý to that she praide  
He tolde his tale and thus he saide :

<sup>1</sup> *All him one*, by himself alone.

<sup>2</sup> *Forthy*, therefore.

<sup>3</sup> *Chere*, countenance.

'The sorwe, doughter, which I  
make

Is nought all only for my sake,  
But for thee bothe and for you alle.  
For suche a chaunce is me befallé,  
That I shall er this thriddé day  
Lese<sup>1</sup> all that ever I lese may,  
My life and all my good therto.  
Therefore it is I sorwe so.'

'What is the cause, alas,' quod  
she,

'My fader, that ye shulden be  
Dedeand destruiéd in sucheawise?'  
And he began the points devise,<sup>2</sup>  
Which as the king tolde him by  
mouthe

And said her pleinely, that he couthe  
Answéren to no point of this.

And she, that hereth howe it is,  
Her counseil yaf and saidé tho :<sup>3</sup>

'My fader, sithen<sup>4</sup> it is so,  
That ye can se none other weie,  
But that ye must nedés deie,  
I woldé pray you of o thinge,—  
Let me go with you to the kinge,  
And ye shall make him under-  
stonde,

How ye, my wittés for to fonde,<sup>5</sup>  
Have laid your answeere upon me,  
And telleth him in such degré  
Upon my worde ye wol abide  
To life or deth what so betide.  
For yet perchaunce I may purcháce  
With some good word the kingés  
grace,

Your life and eke your good to save.  
For ofté shall a woman have  
Thing whiche a man may nought  
arche.<sup>6</sup>

The fader herd his doughters speche  
And thought there was no reson in,  
And sigh his owné life to winne

<sup>1</sup> *Lese*, lose.

<sup>3</sup> *Tho*, then.

<sup>5</sup> *Fonde*, try.

<sup>2</sup> *Devise*, relate.

<sup>4</sup> *Sithen*, since.

<sup>6</sup> *Arche*, reach to.

He couthe done him self no cure.  
So better him thought in aventure  
To put his life and all his good,  
Than in the maner as it stood  
His life incertain for to lese.  
And thus thenkénd he gan to chese<sup>1</sup>  
To do the counseil of his maid  
And toke the purpose, which she  
said.

The day was comen and forth they  
gon,

Unto the court they come anon,  
Where as the kinge in his jugemént  
Was set, and hath this knight assent.  
Arraiéd in her besté wise

This maiden with her wordés wise  
Her fader leddé by the honde  
Into the placé, where he fonde  
Thé king with other which he wolde,  
And to the king kneleénd he tolde  
As he enforméd was to-fore,  
And praith the king, that he ther-  
fore

His doughters wordés woldé take,  
And saith that he woll undertake  
Upon her wordés for to stonde.  
Tho was ther great merveile on  
honde,

That he, which was so wise a knight,  
His life upon so yonge a wight  
Besetté wolde in jeopartie,  
And many it helden for folie.  
But at the lasté nethéles  
The king commaundeth ben in  
pees,

And to this maide he cast his chere  
And saide, he wolde her talé here,  
And bad her speke, and she began :  
'My legé lord, so as I can,'

Quod she, 'the pointés which I  
herde,

They shull of reson ben answerde.  
The first I understonde is this,  
What thinge of all the worlde it is,

<sup>1</sup> *Chese*, choose.

Which men most helpe and hath  
lest nede.

My legé lord, this wolde I rede  
The erthe it is, whiche evermo  
With mannés labour is bego  
As well in Winter as in Maie.  
The mannés honde doth what he  
may

To helpe it forth and make it riche,  
And forthý men it delve and diche  
And eren<sup>1</sup> it with strength of  
plough,

Wher it hath of him self inough  
So that his nede is atté leste.  
For every man and birde and beste  
Of flour and gras and roote and  
rinde

And every thing by way of kinde  
Shall sterve,<sup>2</sup> and erthe it shall be-  
come;

As it was out of erthé nome  
It shall to therté torne ayein.  
And thus I may by reson sein  
That erthe is mosté nedéles  
And most men helpe it nethéles,  
So that, my lord, touchénd of this  
I have answerde how that is.

‘That other point I understood,  
Which most is worth and most is  
good

And costeth lest a man to kepe,  
My lorde, if ye woll také kepe,  
I say it is Humilité,  
Through whiché the high Trinite  
As for deserte of puré Love  
Unto Marié from above  
Of that he knewe her humble entente  
His owné sone adown he sente,  
Above all other and<sup>3</sup> her he chese  
For that vertu which bodeth pees.  
So that I may by reson calle  
Humilité most worthe of alle,

<sup>1</sup> Eren, till.

<sup>2</sup> Sterve, die.

<sup>3</sup> And he chose her above all other. “And” used in the middle of a clause, as we might now use “also.”

And lest it costeth to mainteine  
In all the worlde, as it is seine.  
For who that hath humblesse on  
honde

He bringeth no werrés into londe,  
For he desireth for the best  
To setten every man in reste.  
Thus with your highé reverence  
Me thenketh that this evidence  
As to this point is suffisaúnt.

‘And touchend of the reme-  
naúnt,  
Whiche is the thridde of your  
axinges,

What lest is worth of allé thinges  
And costeth most, I telle it Pride,  
Which may nought in the Heven  
abide.

For Lucifer with hem that felle  
Bar Pridé with him into helle.  
There was Pride of to grete cost,  
Whan he for Pride hath Heven  
lost;

And after that in paradise  
Adam for Pridé lost his prise  
In middel-erth. And eke also  
Pride is the cause of allé wo,  
That all the world ne may suffise  
To staunche of Pridé the reprise.<sup>1</sup>  
Pride is the hevéd<sup>2</sup> of all sinne,  
Which wasteth all and may nought  
winne.

Pride is of every mis<sup>3</sup> the pricke,  
Pride is the worste of allé wicke,  
And costeth most and lest is worth  
In placé where he hath his forth.

‘That have I said that I woll  
say  
Of min answére and to you pray,  
My legé lorde, of your offíce,  
That ye such grace and suche justíce  
Ordeigné for my fader here,  
That after this whan men it here,

<sup>1</sup> Reprise, reproach.

<sup>2</sup> Hevéd, head.

<sup>3</sup> Mis, thing amiss; wrong.

The world therof may speké good.'

The king, which reson understood

And hath all herde how she hath said,

Was inly glad and so well paid,  
That all his wrath is over go.  
And he began to loké tho  
Upon this maiden in the face,  
In which he found so mochel grace,  
That all his prise on her he laide  
In audiéncie and thus he saide:  
' My fairé maidé, well thee be  
Of thin answére, and eke of thee  
Me liketh well, and as thou wilt  
Foryivé be thy faders gilte.

And if thou were of such lignage,  
That thou to me were of parage  
And that thy fader were a pere,  
As he is now a bachelére,  
So siker as I have a life,  
Thou sholdest thanné be my wife.  
But this I saié nethéles,  
That I woll shapé thin encrese,  
What worldés good that thou wolt  
crave

Are of my yift, and thou shalt have.'

And she the king with wordés wise

Knelendé thonketh in this wise:  
' My legé lord, god mot you quite.<sup>1</sup>  
My fader here hath but a lité  
Of warison,<sup>2</sup> and that he wende  
Had all be lost, but now amende  
He may well through your noble  
grace.'

With that the king right in his place

Anon forth in that fressshé hete  
An erldome, which than of eschete  
Was laté falle into his honde,  
Unto this knight, with rent and  
londe,

<sup>1</sup> Quite, requite.

<sup>2</sup> Little of reward for service done.

Hath yove and with his chartre  
sesed.<sup>1</sup>

And thus was all the noise appesed.  
This maiden, which sate on her  
knees

To fore the kingés charitees,  
Commendeth and saith evermore:  
' My legé lord, right now to-fore  
Ye saide, and it is of recórde,  
That if my fader were a lorde  
And pere unto these other grete,  
Ye wolden for nought ellés lette,  
That I ne sholdé be your wife.  
And thus wote every worthy life  
A kingés worde mot nede be holde.  
Forthý my lord, if that ye wolde  
So great a charité fulfille,  
God wote it weré well my wille.  
For he, which was a bachelere,  
My fader, is now made a pere;  
So whan as ever that I cam,  
An erlés doughter nowé I am.'

"This yongé king, which peiséd  
all

Her beauté and her wit withall,  
As he which was with lové hente,  
Anone therto yaf his assente.  
He mighté nought the place asterte  
That she nis lady of his herte.  
So that he toke her to his wife  
To holdé while that he hath life.  
And thus the king toward his  
knight

Accordeth him as it is right.  
And over this, good is to wite<sup>2</sup>  
In the cronique as it is write  
This noble kinge, of whom I tolde,  
Of Spainé by tho daiés olde  
The kingdom had in governaunce,  
And as the boke maketh remem-  
braúncé

Alphonsé was his propre name.  
The knight also, if I shall name,

<sup>1</sup> Sesed, "seisin" (possession), given.

<sup>2</sup> To wite, to know.



Danz Petro hight, and as men telle  
 His doughter wisé Petronelle  
 Was clepéd, which was full of grace.  
 And that was sene in thilké place,  
 Where she her fader out of tene<sup>1</sup>  
 Hath brought, and made her selfe  
 a quene,

Of that she hath so well desclosed  
 The points wherof she was opposed.

“Lo now, my sone, as thou might  
 here,

Of all this thing to my matere  
 But one I take, and that is Pride,  
 To whom no gracé may betide.  
 In Heven he fell out of his stede,  
 And Paradise him was forbede ;  
 The goodé men in erthe him hate,  
 So that to helle he mote algate,  
 Where every Vertueshall be weived<sup>2</sup>  
 And every Vicé be received.  
 But Humblesse is all other wise,  
 Which most is worth, and no re-  
 prise<sup>3</sup>

It taketh ayein, but softe and faire  
 If any thing stant in contraire  
 With humble speche it is redressed.  
 Thus was this yongé maiden blessed,  
 The whiche I spake of now to-fore,  
 Her faders life she gat therfore

<sup>1</sup> *Tene*, anxious grief.

<sup>2</sup> *Weived*, put aside.

<sup>3</sup> *Reprise*, reproach.

And wan withall the kingés love.  
 Forthý my sone, if thou wolt love,  
 It sit thee well to levé Pride  
 And taken Humblesse on thy side,  
 The more of gracé thou shalt  
 gete.”—

“My fader, I woll nought foryete  
 Of this that ye have told me here,  
 And if that any such manere  
 Of humble port may love appaie,  
 Here afterwarde I thonke assaie,  
 But now forth over I beseche,  
 That ye more of my shrifté  
 seche.”—

“My godé sone, it shall be do.  
 Now herken and lay an éré to,  
 For as touchénd of Pridés fare  
 Als ferforth as I can declare  
 In cause of Vice, in cause of Love  
 That hast thou pleinely herde above,  
 So that there is no more to saie  
 Touchénd of that ; but other waie  
 Touchend Envie I thinké telle,  
 Whiche hath the propre kinde of  
 helle,<sup>1</sup>

Withouté causé to misdo  
 Toward him self and other also ;  
 Hereafterward as understonde  
 Thou shalt the spieces,<sup>2</sup> as they  
 stonde.

<sup>1</sup> Which hath from hell its proper nature.

<sup>2</sup> Species, classification into its several kinds.

## Book II.

### OF ENVY.

**N**ow after Pridé the secounde  
There is, which many a  
wofull stoude,  
Towardés other berth aboute  
Within him self and nought with-  
oute.

For in his thought he brenneth ever,  
Whan that he wote an other lever<sup>1</sup>  
Or moré vertuós than he,  
Which passeth him in his degré ;  
Therof he taketh his maladie.  
That Vice is clepéd hot Envie.  
Forthy, my sone, if it be so,  
Thou art or hast ben one of tho,<sup>2</sup>  
As for to speke in Lovés cas  
If ever yet thin herté was  
Seke of another mannes hele ?<sup>3</sup>—

“ So god avauncé my quaréle,  
My fader, ye<sup>4</sup> a thousand sithe.  
Whan I have sene another blithe  
Of love and hadde a goodly chere,  
Ethna, which brenneth yere by yere,  
Was thanné nought so hote as I  
Of thilké sore which privély  
Mine hertés thought withinné bren-  
neth.

The ship, which on the wawes  
renneth  
And is forstorméd and forblowe,<sup>5</sup>

Is nought more peined for a throwe<sup>1</sup>  
Than I am thanné whan I se  
Another which that passeth me  
In that fortúne of Lovés yifte.  
But fader, this I telle in shrifte,  
That is no where but in o place.  
For who that lese or findé grace  
In other stede, it may nought greve.  
But this ye may right well beleve,  
Toward my lady that I serve,  
Though that I wisté for to sterve,  
Min hert is full of such folý,  
That I my selfe may nought chastý,  
Whan I the Court se of Cupide  
Approche unto my lady side  
Of hem that lusty ben and fresshe,  
Though it availe hem nought a  
resshe,<sup>2</sup>

But only that they ben of speche,  
My sorwe is than nought to seche.  
But whan they rounen<sup>3</sup> in her ere,  
Than groweth all my mosté fere.  
And namely<sup>4</sup> whan they talen  
longe,

My sorwes thanné be so stronge,  
Of that I see hem well at ese  
I can nought tellé my disese.  
But, sire, as of my lady selve,  
Though she have wowers, ten or  
twelve,

<sup>1</sup> *Lever*, more beloved.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, those.

<sup>3</sup> Sick of another man's health.

<sup>4</sup> *Ye*, yea.

<sup>5</sup> “For” is an intensive prefix.

<sup>1</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

<sup>2</sup> *Resshe*, rush.

<sup>3</sup> *Rounen*, whisper.

<sup>4</sup> *Namely*, especially.

For no mistrust I have of her  
 Me greveth nought, for certés, sir,  
 I trowe in all this world to seche  
 Nis woman, that in dede and  
 speche  
 Woll better avise her what she  
 doth,

Ne better, for to saie a sothe,  
 Kepe her honour at allé tide  
 And yet get her a thank beside.  
 But nethéles I am beknowe,  
 That than I se at any throwe<sup>1</sup>  
 Or elles if I may it here,  
 That she make any man good  
 chere,  
 Though I therof have nought to  
 done,  
 My thought woll entermete<sup>2</sup> him  
 sone.

For though I be my selven straunge  
 Envié maketh min herté chaunge,  
 That I am sorwefully bestad  
 Of that I se another glad  
 With hiré, but of other all  
 Of Lové what so may befall,  
 Or that he faile or that he spede,  
 Therof take I but litel hede.  
 Nowe have I said, my fader, all,  
 As of this point in special  
 As ferforthly as I have wiste.<sup>3</sup>  
 Nowaxeth, fader, what you liste.”—

“My sone, ere I axe any more  
 I thenké somdele for thy lore  
 Tell an ensample of this matére  
 Touchend Envý, as thou shalt here.

“Write in Civilé this I finde,  
 Though it be nought the houndés  
 kinde  
 To eté chaff, yet woll he werne  
 An oxe, which cometh to the berne,  
 Therof to taken any fode.  
 And thus who that it understode

It stant of Love in many a place,  
 Who that is out of Lovés grace  
 And may him selven nought availe,  
 He wold an other sholdé faile.  
 And if he may put any lette,  
 He doth al that he may to lette.  
 Wherof I finde, as thou shalt wit,  
 To this purpós a talé write.

“**There ben** of suché mo than  
 twelve,  
 That ben nought able as of hem  
 selve

To getté love, and for Envie  
 Upon all other they aspíe.  
 And for<sup>1</sup> hem lacketh that they  
 wolde,

They kepé that none other sholde  
 Touchend of love his causé spede;  
 Wherof a great ensample I rede,  
 Whiche unto this matére accordeth,  
 As Ovide in his boke recordeth,  
 How Poliphemus whilom wrought,  
 Whan that he Galathé besought  
 Of lové, whiche he may nought  
 lacche,<sup>2</sup>

That made him for to waite and  
 wacche  
 By allé waiés howe it ferde ;  
 Till at the last he knewe and herde  
 How that an other haddé leve  
 To lové there, as he mot leve  
 As for to speke of any spede ;  
 So that he knew none other rede  
 But for to waiten upon alle  
 Till he may se the chauncé falle,  
 That he her lové mighté greve,  
 Whiche he him self may nought  
 acheve.

This Galathé, saith the poéte,  
 Above all other was unmete<sup>3</sup>  
 Of beauté, that men thanné knewe,  
 And had a lusty love, and trewe

<sup>1</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

<sup>2</sup> *Entermete*, go apart from.

<sup>3</sup> As far forth as I have known.

<sup>1</sup> *For*, because.

<sup>2</sup> *Lacche*, catch, secure.

<sup>3</sup> *Unmete*, beyond measure.

A bachelor in his degré,  
 Right such an other as was she;  
 On whom she hath her herté set,  
 So that it mighté nought be let<sup>1</sup>  
 For yifté ne for no beheste,  
 That she ne was all at his heste.<sup>2</sup>  
 This yongé knight Acís was hote,<sup>3</sup>  
 Whiche her ayeinwarde also hote<sup>4</sup>  
 All only loveth and no mo.<sup>5</sup>  
 Herof was Poliphemus wo  
 Through pure Envíe and everaspide  
 And waiteth<sup>6</sup> upon every side,  
 Whan he to-gider mighté se  
 This yonge Acís with Galathé.  
 So longe he waiteth to and fro,  
 Till at the laste he founde hem two  
 In privé placé, where they stood  
 To speke and have her wordés good.  
 The placé, where as he hem sigh,<sup>7</sup>  
 It was under a banké nigh  
 The greaté se, and he above  
 Stood and behelde the lusty love,  
 Whiche eche of hem to other made  
 With goodly chere and wordés glade  
 That all his hert hath sette a fire  
 Of pure Envíe. And as a vire<sup>8</sup>  
 Which flieth out of a mighty bowe,  
 Away he fleddé for a throwe,<sup>9</sup>  
 As he that was for lové wode,  
 Whan that he sigh how that it  
 stode.

This Polipheme a geaunt was,  
 And whan he sigh the sothé cas,  
 How Galathé him hath forsake  
 And Acís to her lové take,  
 His herté may it nought forbere  
 That he ne roreth as a bere  
 And as it were a wildé beast  
 In whom no reson might areste.  
 He ranne Ethná the hill about,  
 Where never yet the fire was out,

<sup>1</sup> *Let*, hindered.<sup>2</sup> *Heste*, command.<sup>3</sup> *Hote*, named.<sup>4</sup> *Hote*, hotly.<sup>5</sup> *No mo*, no more, no one else.<sup>6</sup> *Waiteth*, watcheth.<sup>7</sup> *Sigh*, saw.<sup>8</sup> *Vire*, arrow.<sup>9</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

Fulfilled of sorwe and great disese  
 That he sigh Acís well at ese.  
 Till atté last he him bethoughte  
 As he which all Envíe soughte,  
 And torneth to the banke ayein  
 Where he with Galathé hath sein  
 That Acís, whom he thoughté  
 greve,  
 Though he him self may nought  
 releve.

This geaunt with his rudé might  
 Part of the banke he shof down  
 right,

The whiche even upon Acís fille,<sup>1</sup>  
 So that with falling of this hille  
 This Poliphemus Acís slough,  
 Wherof she madé sorwe inough.  
 And as she fleddé from the londe,  
 Neptúnus toke her by the honde  
 And kept her in so faste a place  
 Fro Polipheme and his manáce,  
 That he with al his false Envie  
 Ne might atteigne her compaignic.  
 This Galathé, of whom I speke,  
 That of her self may nought be  
 wreke,<sup>2</sup>

Withouten any semblaunt feigned  
 She hath her lovés deth com-  
 pleigned,  
 And with her sorwe and with her  
 wo

She hath the goddés moved so,  
 That they of pité and of grace  
 Have Acís in the samé place,  
 There he lay dede, into a welle  
 Transforméd, as the bokes telle,  
 With fresshé stremés and with clere,  
 As he whilom with lusty chere  
 Was fressh his lové for to queme.<sup>3</sup>  
 And with this rudé Polipheme  
 For his Envie and for his hate  
 They weré wroth. And thus  
 algate,

<sup>1</sup> *Fille*, fell. <sup>2</sup> *Wreke*, avenged.<sup>3</sup> *Queme*, please.

“ My soné, thou might understonde,

That if thou wolt in gracé stonde  
With Lové, thou must leve Envie:  
And as thou wolt for thy partie  
Toward thy lové stondé fre  
So must thou suffre another be,  
What so befallé upon thy chaunce.  
For it is an unwise vengeaünce  
Which to none other man is lefe  
And is unto him selvé grefe.”<sup>1</sup>—

“ My fader, this ensample is good,

But how so ever that it stood  
With Poliphemus love as tho,<sup>2</sup>  
It shall nought stondé with me so  
To worchen any felonie  
In lové for no suche envie.

Forthy if there ought ellés be,  
Now axeth forth, in what degré  
It is, and I me shall confesse  
With shrifte unto your holynesse.

“ ~~My~~ godé soné, yet there is  
A Vicé revers unto this,  
Whiche envioús taketh his glad-  
nésse

Of that he seeth the hevynesse  
Of other men. For his welfare  
Is, whan he wote another care  
Of that an other hath a falle,  
He thinketh him selfe arist<sup>3</sup> with  
alle.

Suche is the gladship of Envie  
In worldés thing and in partie  
Full ofté tímés eke also  
In Lovés cause it stant right so.  
If thou, my sone, hast joié had,  
Whan thou an other sigh unglad,  
Shrive thee therof.”—“ My fader,  
yis.

I am beknowe<sup>4</sup> unto you this

Of these lovérs that loven streite,<sup>1</sup>  
And for that point which they  
coveite

Ben pursuaüntes from yere to yere  
In Lovés court, when I may here  
How that they climbe upon the  
whele,  
And whan they wene all shall be  
wele

They ben down throwen atté laste,  
Than am I fed of that they faste,  
And laugh of that I se hem loure,  
And thus of that they brewé soure  
I drinké swete, and am well esed  
Of that I wote they ben disesed.  
But this whiche I you tellé here  
Is only for my lady dere,

That for none other that I knowe  
Me recheth nought who overthrowe  
Ne who that stonde in love upright;  
But be he squier, be he knight,  
Which to my lady warde<sup>2</sup> pursueth  
The more he lost of that he sueth,  
The more me thenketh that I winne,  
And am the moré glad withinne  
Of that I wote him sorwe endure;  
For ever upon suche aventure  
It is a comfort, as men sain,  
To him the which is wo besein<sup>3</sup>  
To sene an other in his peine,  
So that they bothé may compleine.  
Where I myself may nought availe,  
To sene an other man travaille  
I am right glad if he be let.<sup>4</sup>

And though I faré nought the bet,  
His sorwe is to min herte a game,  
Whan that I knowe it is the same  
Which to my lady stant enclined  
And hath his lové nought termíned,<sup>5</sup>  
I am right joyfull in my thought.  
If such Envie greveth ought,

<sup>1</sup> Which pleases no other man and grieves oneself.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

<sup>3</sup> *Arist*, lifted up.

<sup>4</sup> *Beknowe*, to confess.

<sup>1</sup> *Streite*, strictly, intensely.

<sup>2</sup> *To my lady warde*, toward my lady.

<sup>3</sup> *Wo besein*, clothed in sorrow.

<sup>4</sup> *Let*, hindered.

<sup>5</sup> *Termíned*, brought to the desired end.

As I beknowé me coupable,  
Ye that be wise and resonable,  
My fader, telleth your avise."—

"My sone, Envie in to no prise  
Of such a forme I understonde  
Ne mighté by no reson stonde.  
For this Envie hath such a kinde,  
That he woll set himself behinde  
To hinder with another wight,  
And gladly lese<sup>1</sup> his owné right  
To make another lesé his.  
And for to knowen how so it is  
A talé lich to his matere  
I thinké telle, if thou wolte here,  
To shewé properly the Vice  
Of this Envie and the malíce.

"Of Jupiter thus I finde iwrite,  
How whilom that he woldé wite<sup>2</sup>  
Upon the pleinté<sup>3</sup> whiche he herde  
Among the men, how that it ferde,  
As of her wrong condición  
To do justificación.

And for that causé down he sent  
An aungel, which abouté went  
That he the sothé knowé may.  
So it befell upon a day  
This aungel which him shuld en-  
forme

Was clothéd in a mannés forme  
And overtoke, I understonde,  
Two men that wenten over londe,  
Through which he thoughté to  
aspie

His cause and goth in compaignie.  
This aungel with his wordés wise  
Opposeth hem in sondry wise,  
Now loudé wordés and now softe,  
That made hem to desputen ofte.  
And eche of hem his reson hadde,  
And thus with talés he hem ladde  
With good examinación  
Till he knew the condición  
What men they weré bothé two ;

And sigh wel atté lasté tho,  
That one of hem was coveitóus,  
And his felaw was envióus.  
And thus, whan he hath knoulech-  
ing,

Anone he feignéd departing  
And said he mote algate wende.  
But herken now what fell at ende,  
For than he made hem understonde,  
That he was there of Goddés  
sonde ;<sup>1</sup>

And said hem for the kindeship  
That they have done him felaship  
He woldé do some grace ayein,  
And bad that one of hem shuld sain  
What thinge him is levést to crave,  
And he it shall of yifté have.  
And over that<sup>2</sup> eke forth with all  
He saith that other havé shall  
The double of that his felawe axeth :  
And thus to hem his grace he taxeth.  
The coveitous was wonder glad,  
And to that other man he bad  
And saith, that he first axé sholde ;  
For he supposeth that he wolde  
Make his axing of worldés good ;  
For than he knewe well howe it  
stood,

That he him self by double weight  
Shall esté take ; and thus by sleight  
By causé that he woldé winne  
He badde his felaw first beginne.  
This envióus, though it be late  
Whan that he sigh<sup>3</sup> he mote algate  
Make his axingé first, he thought  
If he worship or profit sought,  
It shall be doubled to his fere :<sup>4</sup>  
That wold he chese in no manere.  
But than he sheweth what he was  
Towarde Envie, and in this cas  
Unto this aungel thus he saide  
And for his yifté this he praide,

<sup>1</sup> *Sonde*, sending.

<sup>2</sup> *Over that*, beyond that.

<sup>3</sup> *Sigh*, saw.

<sup>4</sup> *Fere*, companion.

<sup>1</sup> *Lese*, lose.      <sup>2</sup> *Wite*, know.

<sup>3</sup> *Pleinte*, complaint.

To make him blinde on his one eye,  
 So that his felaw no thing sigh.  
 This word was nought so sonéspoke,  
 That his one eye anon was loke,  
 And his felaw forth with also  
 Was blinde on both his eyen two.  
 Tho was that other gladdé inough,  
 That oné wept, that other lough,  
 He set his one eye at no cost  
 Wherof that other two hath lost.  
 Of thilke ensample, which fell tho,  
 Men tellen now full ofté so.  
 The worlde empeireth<sup>1</sup> comunly  
 And yet wot none the causé why;  
 For it accordeth nought to kinde<sup>2</sup>  
 Min owné harme to seche and  
 finde,  
 Of that I shall my brother greve  
 I mighté never wel acheve.

What saist thou, sone, of this  
 folie? ”—

“ My fader, but<sup>3</sup> I shuldé lie  
 Upon the point which ye have  
 saide,

Yet was min herté never laide  
 But in the wise as I you tolde.  
 But evermore if that ye wolde  
 Ought ellés to my shrifté saie  
 Touchend Envie, I woldé praie.”—  
 “ My soné, that shall well be do.  
 Now herken and lay thin ere to.

“ **Touchend** as of envíous brood  
 I wot nought one of allé good,  
 But nethéles suche as they be  
 Yet there is one, and that is he,  
 Which clepéd is Detraction.  
 And to conferme his action  
 He hath witholde Malebouche,<sup>4</sup>  
 Whose tunge nouter pill ne  
 crouche<sup>5</sup>  
 May hiré so that he pronounce

<sup>1</sup> *Empeireth*, grows worse.

<sup>2</sup> *Kinde*, nature. <sup>3</sup> *But*, unless.

<sup>4</sup> *Witholde Malebouche*, held with Evil Mouth.

<sup>5</sup> *Pill ne crouche*, plunder nor coin.

A plein good word withouten  
 frounce,<sup>1</sup>

Whéré behinde a mannés backe;  
 For though he preise he find some  
 lacke,

Whiche of his tale is ay the laste  
 That all the prise shall overcaste.  
 And though there be no causé why,  
 Yet woll he jangle nought forthy,  
 As he whiche hath the heraldie  
 Of hem that usen for to lie.

For as the nettle whiche up renneth  
 The fresshé redé roses brenneth  
 And maketh hem fade and pale of  
 hewe,

Right so this fals envíous hewe<sup>2</sup>  
 In every placé where he dwelleft  
 With falsé wordés where he telleth  
 He torneth preising into blame  
 And worship into worldés shame.

Of such lesíngé as he compásseth  
 Is none so good that he ne passeth  
 Betwene his tethe and is backbited  
 And through his falsé tunge ended.  
 Lich to the sharnebudés<sup>3</sup> kinde,  
 Of whose natúré this I finde,  
 That in the hotest of the day,  
 Whan comen is the mery May,  
 He spret his winge and up he fleeth  
 And under all aboute he seeth  
 The fairé lusty flourés vtroués  
 But therof hath he no líkinge.

But where he seeth of any beste  
 The filthé, there he maketh his feste  
 And there upon he woll alighte,  
 There liketh him none other sighte  
 Right so this jangler envíous,  
 Though he a man se vertuóus  
 And full of good condición,  
 Therof maketh he no mención.  
 But ellés, be it nought so lite,<sup>4</sup>  
 Wherof that he may set a wite,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Frounce*, frown.

<sup>2</sup> *Hewe*, servant.

<sup>3</sup> *Sharnebudés*, shard-beetle's.

<sup>4</sup> *Lite*, little.

<sup>5</sup> *Wite*, blame.

There renneth he with open mouth  
Behinde a man and maketh it  
couth.<sup>1</sup>

But all the vertue whiche he can  
That woll he hide, of every man,  
And openly the vicé telle,  
As he which of the scole of helle  
Is taught, and fostred with Envie  
Of housholde and of compaignie,  
Where that he hath his propre office  
To sette on every man a vice.  
How so his mouth be comely,  
His wordé sit e'ermore awry  
And saith the worsté that he may.  
And in this wisé now a daye  
In Lovés court a man may here  
Full ofté pleine of this matere;  
That many envious tale is stered,<sup>2</sup>  
Where that it may nought be answered

But yet full ofte it is beleved;  
And many a worthy love is greved  
Through backbitinge of false Envie.

“If thou have made suche janglerie

In Lovés court, my sone, er this,  
Shrive thee therof.”—“My fader,  
yis.

But wite ye how, nought openly  
But otherwhilé prively,  
Whan I my deré lady mete  
And thenke how that I am nought  
mete

Unto her highé worthinesse,  
And eke I se the besinesse  
Of all this yongé lusty route  
Which all day púrsue her aboute,  
And eche of hem his time awaiteth,  
And eche of hem his tale affaiteth,<sup>3</sup>  
All to deceive an innocent  
Which woll nought be of her<sup>4</sup> assent.

<sup>1</sup> *Couth*, known.

<sup>2</sup> *Stered*, stirred up.

<sup>3</sup> *Affaiteth*, submitteth.

<sup>4</sup> *Her*, their.

And for men sain ‘unknowen un-  
kiste,’

Her thombé she holt in her fiste  
So close within her owné honde  
That theré winneth no man londe;  
She leveth nought all that she  
hereth

And thus ful ofte her self she  
skiereth<sup>1</sup>

And is all ware of *had I wist*.<sup>2</sup>

But for all that min hert ariste  
Whan I these comun lovers see  
That wol nought holden hem to thre  
But well nigh loven over al,  
Min hert is envioús with all,  
And ever I am adrad of guile,  
In aunter if with any wile  
They might her innocence en-  
chaunte.

Forthý my words full ofte I haunte  
Behindé hem so as I dare,  
Wherof my lady may beware.  
I say what ever cometh to mouth,  
And wers I wolde if that I couth.  
For whan I come unto her speche  
All that I may enquere and seche  
Of such deceipte I telle it all,  
And ay the worst in speciall.  
So faine I woldé that she wist  
How litel they ben for to trist,  
And what they wold and what they  
mente

So as they be of double entente,  
Thus toward hem that wické mene<sup>3</sup>  
My wicked word was ever grene.  
And nethéles the soth to telle  
In certein if it so befelle  
That althertwest man ibore<sup>4</sup>  
To chese amonge a thousand score,  
Which were all fully for to triste,  
My lady loved, and I it wiste,

<sup>1</sup> *Skiereth*, secureth.

<sup>2</sup> *Had I known*. Old phrase to express a repentance come too late.

<sup>3</sup> Those who mean wickedly.

<sup>4</sup> The truest of all men born.



Yet rather than he shuldé spede  
 I woldé suché talés sprede  
 To my lady, if that I might,  
 That I shuld all his love unright,  
 And therto wolde I do my peine.  
 For certés though I shuldé feigne  
 And tellé that was never thought,  
 For all this worlde I mighté nought  
 To suffre an other fully winne  
 There as I am yet to beginne;  
 For be they good or be they bad  
 I woldé none my lady had.  
 And that me maketh full ofte aspie  
 And usen wordés of Envié,  
 And for to make hem bere a  
 blame—  
 And that is but of thilké same—  
 The whiche unto my lady drawe,  
 For ever on them I rounge<sup>1</sup> and  
 gnawe  
 And hinder hem all that ever I  
 maie.  
 And that is, sothly for to saie,  
 But only to my lady selve;  
 I telle it nought to ten ne twelve,  
 Therof I wol me well advise  
 To speke or jangle in any wise  
 That toucheth to my ladies name,  
 The whiche in earnest and in game  
 I woldé save, in to my deth;  
 For me were lever to lacke breth  
 Than speken of her name amis.  
 Now have ye herd touchénd of this,  
 My fader, in Confession  
 And therfore of Detraction  
 In Love, of that I have mispoke,  
 Tell how ye will it shall be wroke.  
 I am all redy for to bere  
 My peine, and also to forbere  
 What thing that ye woll nought  
 allowe;  
 For who is bounden, he must bowe.  
 So woll I bowe unto your hest,  
 For I dare maké this behest,

<sup>1</sup> Rounge, nip.

That I to you have nothing hid,  
 But told right as it is betid,  
 And otherwise of no misspeche  
 My consciencé for to séche.  
 I can nought of Envié finde  
 That I misspoke have ought be-  
 hinde,  
 Wherof love oughté be mispaide.  
 Now have ye herde and I have  
 saide,  
 What woll ye fader, that I do?"—  
 "My soné, do no moré so,  
 But ever kepe thy tungé still,  
 Thou might the moré have thy will.  
 For as thou saist thy selven here,  
 Thy lady is of such manere,  
 So wise so ware in allé thinges,  
 It nedeth of no bakbitnges,  
 That thou thy lady misenforme:  
 For whan she knoweth all the  
 forme,  
 How that thy self art envious,  
 Thou shalt nought be so graciouis,  
 As thou paraunter<sup>1</sup> shuldest be  
 elles.  
 There wol no man drinke of the  
 welles,  
 Whiche as he wote<sup>2</sup> is poison inne.  
 And ofté suche as men beginne  
 Towardés other, such they finde,  
 That set hem ofté fer behinde  
 Whan that they wenen be before.  
 My godé sone, and thou therfore  
 Be ware and leve thy wicked speche,  
 Wherof hath fallen ofté wreche<sup>3</sup>  
 To many a man before this time.  
 For who so wol his hondés lime,<sup>4</sup>  
 They musten be the more unclene.  
 For many a moté shall be sene,  
 That woldé nought cleve ellés there;  
 And that shulde every wise man fere.  
 For who so woll another blame,  
 He seketh ofte his owné shame,

<sup>1</sup> Paraunter, peradventure.

<sup>2</sup> Wote, knows.      <sup>3</sup> Wreche, revenge.

<sup>4</sup> Take birdlime in his hands.

Which ellés mighté be right stille.  
 Forthý if that it be thy wille  
 To stonde upon amendément,  
 A tale of great entendément  
 I thenké tellé for thy sake,  
 Wherof thou might ensample take.

“**A** worthy knight in Cristés  
 lawe

Of greaté Rome, as is the sawe,  
 The sceptre haddé for to right,  
 Tibéry Constantin he hight,  
 Whos wife was cléped Italie.  
 But they to-gider of progenie  
 No children haddé but a maide,  
 And she the God so wel apaide<sup>1</sup>  
 That al the widé worldés fame  
 Spake worship of her godé name.  
 Constance, as the croniqué saith,  
 She hight, and was so full of faith  
 That the greatést of Barbarie,  
 Of hem whiche usen marchandie,  
 She hath converted, as they come  
 To her upon a time in Rome  
 To shewen such thing as they  
 brought

Which worthely of hem she bought.  
 And over that<sup>2</sup> in suche a wise  
 She hath hem with her wordés wise  
 Of Cristés feith so full enformed,  
 That they therto ben all conformed,  
 So that baptismé they receiven  
 And all her<sup>3</sup> falsé goddé weiven.

“Whan they ben of the feith  
 certéin,

They gone to Barbaré ayein,  
 And there the Souldan for hem sente  
 And axeth hem to what entente  
 They have her firsté feith forsake.  
 And they, whiche hadden undertake  
 The righté feith to kepe and holde,  
 The mater of her talé tolde  
 With all the holé circumstaunce.

<sup>1</sup> *Apaide*, pleased.

<sup>2</sup> *Over that*, beyond that.

<sup>3</sup> *Her*, their.

And whan the Souldan of Con-  
 stance,

Upon the point that they answerde,  
 The beauté and the gracé herde,  
 As he which thanné was to wedde,  
 In allé haste his causé spedde  
 To sendé for the mariáge.

And furthermore with good coráge  
 He saith, be so<sup>1</sup> he may her have,  
 That Crist, that came this world  
 to save,

He woll beleve, and thus recorded  
 They ben on either side accorded.  
 And there upon to make an ende  
 The Souldan his hostáges sende  
 To Rome, of princes sonés twelve.  
 Wherof the fader in him selve  
 Was glad, and with the Pope avised.  
 Two Cardinales he hath assised  
 With other lordés many mo,  
 That with his doughter shulden go  
 To se the Souldan be converted.

“But that which never was wel  
 herted

Envié tho gan to travafile  
 In disturbaunce of this spousafle  
 So privély that none was ware.  
 The Moder which the Souldan bare  
 Was than alive, and thoughté this  
 Unto her selfe: if it so is,  
 My sone him wedde in this manere,  
 Than have I lost my joiés here,  
 For min estate shall so be lassed.  
 Thenkend thus, she hath compasséd  
 By sleight how that she may beguile  
 Her sone, and fell within a while,  
 Betwene hem two whan that they  
 were,

She feigné wordés in his ere  
 And in this wisé gan to say:

‘My sone, I am by double way  
 With all min herté glad and blithe,  
 For that my selfe have ofté sithe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Be so*, if so be.

<sup>2</sup> *Ofté sithe*, oftentimes.

Desiréd thou wolte, as men saith,  
Receive and take a newé feith,  
Which shall be forthringe of thy  
life.

And eke so worshipfull a wife  
The doughter of an emperour  
To wedde, it shall be great honour.  
Forthý<sup>1</sup> my sone, I you beseche,  
That I such gracé might areche,  
Whan that my doughter comé shall,  
That I may than in speciáll,  
So as me thenketh it is honéste,  
Be thilké which the firsté feste  
Shall make unto her welcominge.'

"The Souldan graunteth her  
axfinge.

And she therof was gladde inough,  
For under that anone she drough  
With falsé wordés that she spake  
Covin<sup>2</sup> of dethe behinde his backe.  
And therupon her ordinaunce  
She madé so, that whan Constance  
Was comen forth with the Romains,  
Of clerkés and of citezeins  
A riché festé she hem made.  
And mosté whan they weren glade  
With falsé covin, which she hadde,  
Her close Envié tho she spradde.  
And allé tho, that hadden be  
Or in appert or in privé  
Of counseil to the mariáge,  
She slough hem in a sodein rage  
Endlong the borde as they be set,  
So that it mighté nought be let.  
Her owné soné was nought quite,<sup>3</sup>  
But died upon the samé plite.  
But what the highé God woll spare  
It may for no perfill misfare.  
This worthy maiden which was  
there  
Stode than as who saith dede for  
fere

<sup>1</sup> *Forthý*, therefore.

<sup>2</sup> *Covin*, secret contrivance.

<sup>3</sup> *Quite*, acquitted.

To se the fest how that it stood,  
Whiche all was tornéd into blood.  
The dissh forth with the cuppe and  
all

Bebled<sup>1</sup> they weren over all ;  
She sigh hem die on every side,  
No wonder though she wepte and  
cride

Makend maný a wofull mone.  
When all was slain but she al one,  
This oldé fend, this Sarazin  
Let take anone this Constantin  
With all the good shethider brought  
And hath ordeigné as she thought  
A naked ship withouté stere,  
In which the good and her in fere,  
Vitaléd full for yerés five,  
Where that the winde it woldé  
drive,

She put upon the wawés wilde.

"But he, which allé thinges may  
shilde

Thre yere til that she cam to londe  
Her ship to stere hath take on  
honde,  
And in Northumberlond arriveth;<sup>2</sup>  
And happeth thanné that she  
driveth

Under a castell with the flood,  
Whiche upon Humber banké stood.  
And was the kingés owne also  
The whiche Allee was clepéd tho ;  
A Saxon, and a worthy knight,  
But he beleveth nought aright.  
Of this castéll was castellaine  
Elda the kingés chamberlaine,  
A knightly man after his lawe.  
And whan he sigh upon the wawe<sup>3</sup>  
The ship drivénd aloné so,  
He badde anone men shulden go  
To se what it betoken may.  
This was upon a somer day

<sup>1</sup> *Bebled*, covered with blood.

<sup>2</sup> *Arriveth*, touches shore.

<sup>3</sup> Saw upon the waves.

The ship was lokéd and she founde.  
Elda within a litel stounde<sup>1</sup>  
It wist, and with his wife anone  
Toward this yongé lady gone,  
Where that they foundé great  
richesse.

But she her woldé nought confesse,  
Whan they her axen what she was.  
And nethéles upon the cas  
Out of the ship with great worshíp  
They toke her into felashíp  
As they that weren of her glade.  
But she no maner joié made,  
But sorweth sore of that she fonde  
No christendome in thilké londe ;  
But ellés she hath all her will,  
And thus with hem she dwelleth  
still.

Dame Hermegild, which was the  
wife

Of Elda, liche her owné life  
Constancé loveth ; and fell so  
Spekend all day betwene hem two  
Through grace of Goddés purvei-  
aúnce

This maiden taughté the creaúnce  
Unto this wife so parfitly,  
Upon a day that fasté by  
In presence of her husébonde,  
Where they go walkend on the  
stronde,

A blindé man which cam ther ladde  
Unto this wife criénd he badde  
With bothe his hondés up and  
praide

To her, and in this wise he saide :  
' O Hermegilde, which Cristés feith  
Enforméd as Constancé saith  
Receivéd hast : yif me my sight !'

" Upon this worde her herte  
aflight

Thenkend what was besté to done,  
But nethéles she herde his bone<sup>2</sup>  
And saide : ' Intrust of Cristés lawe,

<sup>1</sup> Stounde, interval, hour. <sup>2</sup> Bone, petition.

Which done was on the crosse and  
slawe,<sup>1</sup>

Thou blindé man beholde and se !'  
With that, to God upon his kne  
Thonkend, he toke his sight anone,  
Wherof they merveil everychone,  
But Elda wondreth most of alle ;  
This open thing whiche is befallé  
Concludeth<sup>2</sup> him by suche a way  
That he the feith mo nede obey.

" Now list what fell upon this  
thinge.

This Elda forth unto the kinge  
A morwé toke his way and rode,  
And Hermegild at home abode  
Forth with Constancé well at ese.  
Elda, which thought his king to  
plese,

As he that than unwedded was,  
Of Constance all the pleiné cas,  
As godélich as he couth, tolde.  
The king was glad, and said he  
wolde

Comé thidér in suche a wise,  
That he him might of her avise.<sup>3</sup>  
The time appointed forth withall  
This Elda truste in speciall  
Upon a knight which fro childhode  
He had updrawe into manhode,  
To him he tolde all that he thought ;  
Wherof that after him forthought.<sup>4</sup>

And nethéles at thilké tide  
Unto his wife he bad him ride  
To maké redy allé thinge  
Ayeinst the cominge of the kinge ;  
And saith that he him self to-fore  
Thenketh for to come, and bad  
therfore

That he him kepe,<sup>5</sup> and tolde him  
whan.

<sup>1</sup> The law of Christ who was put upon the  
cross and slain.

<sup>2</sup> Concludeth, decides.

<sup>3</sup> Him avise, take note.

<sup>4</sup> Him forthought, it repentéd him.

<sup>5</sup> Him kepe, have care for him, look for him.

This knight rode forth his waié than.  
 And soth was, that of timé passed  
 He had in all his wit compásed,  
 Howe he Constancé mighté winne.  
 But he sigh tho no spede<sup>1</sup> therinne.  
 Wherof his lust began to abate,  
 And that was love is thanné hate.  
 Of her honour he had Envie,  
 So that upon his trecherie  
 A lesinge<sup>2</sup> in his herte he cast.  
 Til he come home he hieth fast,  
 And doth his lady to understonde  
 The message of her husebonde.  
 And therupon the longé daie  
 They setten thingés in arraie,  
 That all was as it shuldé be  
 Of every thinge in his degre.  
 And whan it came into the night,  
 This wife with her hath to beddé  
 dight

Where that this maiden with her  
 lay.

This falsé knight upon delay,  
 Hath taried till they were aslepe,  
 As he that woll his timé kepe  
 His dedly werkés to fulfille.  
 And to the bed he stalketh stille,  
 Where that he wisté was the wife,  
 And in his honde a rasour knife  
 He bar, with whiche her throte he  
 cut

And privély the knife he put  
 Under that other beddé side,  
 Where that Constancé lay beside.  
 Elda come hom the samé night  
 And stillé with a privé light,  
 As he that woldé nought awake  
 His wife, he hath his waié take  
 Into the chambre, and there lig-  
 génd

He fonde his dedé wife bledénd,  
 Where that Constancé fasté by  
 Was falle aslepe; and sodeinly

He cried aloude, and she awoke,  
 And forth with all she cast a loke  
 And sigh this lady bledé there,  
 Wherof swounéndé dede for fere  
 She was, and stille as any stone  
 She laie, and Elda therupon  
 Into the castell clepeth out,  
 And up sterte every man about;  
 Into the chambre forth they went.  
 But he whiche all untrouthé ment  
 This falsé knight among hem all  
 Upon this thing whiche is befall  
 Saith that Constancé hath don this  
 dede.

And to the bed with that he yede  
 After the falsehed of his speche  
 And made him theré for to seche,<sup>1</sup>  
 And fond the knife where he it laid.  
 And than he cried and than he  
 said:

‘Lo, se the knife all bloody here,  
 What nedeth more in this matere  
 To axe?’ and thus her innocéce  
 He sclaudreth there in audiéce  
 With falsé wordés, whiche he  
 feigneth.

But yet for al that ever he plaineth.  
 “Elda no full credéncé toke.  
 And happéd that there lay a boke,  
 Upon the which, whan he it sighe,  
 This knight hath swore, and said  
 on highe

That allé men it mighten wite,<sup>2</sup>—  
 ‘Now by this boke which here is  
 wite,

Constance is gultif well I wote.’  
 With that the honde of Heven him  
 smote

In token of that he was forswore,  
 That he has bothe his eyen lore,<sup>3</sup>  
 Out of his hed the samé stounde  
 They stert, and so they weré  
 founde.

<sup>1</sup> *Sigh tho no spede*, saw then no success.  
<sup>2</sup> *Lesinge*, falsehood.

<sup>1</sup> *Seche*, seek.  
<sup>2</sup> *Wite*, know.  
<sup>3</sup> *Lorr*, lost.

A vois was herd whan that they fel,  
Which saide: 'O dampnéd man  
to helle,  
Lo, thus hath God thy sclaunder  
wroke,  
That thou ayein Constánce hath  
spoke:  
Beknowe the sothe<sup>1</sup> er that thou  
deie.'

And he tolde out his felonie  
And starf forth with his tale anone.  
Into the grounde where allé gone,  
This dedé lady was begrave.  
Elda, which thought his honour  
save

All that he may, restreigneth sorwe.  
"For by the second day a  
morwe

The king came, as they were ac-  
corded,

And whan it was to him recorded,  
What God hath wrought upon this  
chance,

He toke it into remembraunce  
And thoughté moré than he saide;  
For all his holé herte he laide  
Upon Constánce, and saide he  
shulde

For love of her, if that she wolde,  
Baptismé take and Cristés feith  
Beleve, and over that he saith  
He wol her wedde, and upon this  
Assuré eche til other is.

And for to maké shorté tales  
There came a bisshop out of Wales  
Fro Bangor, and Lucie he hight,  
Which through the grace of God  
almight

The king with many an other mo  
He cristnéd, and betwene hem two  
He hath fulfilled the mariáge.  
But for no lust ne for no rage  
She tolde hem never what she was.  
And nethéles upon this cas

<sup>1</sup> Confess the truth.

The king was glad, how so it stood,  
For well he wist and understood  
She was a noble créature.  
The highé Maker of Natúre  
Her hath visítéd in a throwe,  
That it was openliché knowe  
She was with childé by the kinge,  
Wherof above all other thinge  
He thonketh God and was right  
glad.

And fell that time he was bestad  
Upon a werre, and musté ride.  
And while he shuldé there abide  
He left at home to kepe his wife  
Suche as he knewe of holy life,  
Elda forth with the bisshop eke.  
And he with power go to seke  
Ayein the Scottes for to fonde<sup>1</sup>  
The werré whiche he toke on  
honde.

The timé set of kinde is come,  
This lady hath her chambre nome<sup>2</sup>  
And of a soné boré fulle,  
Wherof that she was joiéfull,  
She was delivered sauf and sone.<sup>3</sup>  
The bisshop, as it was to done,  
Yaf him baptisme and Moriscalleth.  
And therupon as it befalleth  
With letters writen of recorde  
They send unto her legé lorde  
That keepers weren<sup>4</sup> of the quene.  
And he, that shuldé go betwene,  
The messanger to Knarésburgh  
(Which town he shuldé passé  
thurgh)

Ridendé cam the firsté daie;  
The kingés moder theré lay,  
Whose righté namé was Domilde,  
Whiche after all the causé spilde.  
For he, which thonk deservé wolde,  
Unto this lady goth and tolde

<sup>1</sup> *Fonde*, try issues in.

<sup>2</sup> *Nome*, taken.

<sup>3</sup> Safe and sound.

<sup>4</sup> They that were keepers of the queen sent to their liege lord.

Of his messáge al how it ferde.  
 And she with feigné<sup>d</sup> joie it herde  
 And yaf him yestés largély,  
 But in the night al privély  
 She toke the letters whiche he had,  
 Fro point to point and overrad<sup>1</sup>  
 As she that was through out un-  
 trewe,

And let do writen other newe  
 In stede of hem, and thus they speke.

‘Our legé lord, we thee beseke,  
 That thou with us ne be nought  
 wroth,  
 Though we such thing as is thee  
 loth

Upon our trouthe certifie.  
 Thy wifé, whiche is of fairie,  
 Of suche a child delivered is,  
 Fro kindé,<sup>2</sup> which stant all amis.  
 But for it shuldé nought be saie  
 We have it kept out of the waie  
 For drede of puré woridés shame,  
 A pouer childe, and in the name  
 Of thilké whiche is so misbore,  
 We toke and therto we be swore,  
 That none but only you and we  
 Shall knowen of this priveté.  
 Morice it hat, and thus men wene  
 That it was boren of the quene  
 And of thine owné bodie gete.

But this thing may nought be for-  
 yete,  
 That thou ne sende us worde anone,  
 What is thy willé therupon.’

‘This letter, as thou hast herd  
 devise,  
 Was counterfet in suche a wise,  
 That no man shulde it apperceive.  
 And she which thoughté to deceive  
 It laith where she that other toke.  
 This messenger, whan he awoke,  
 And wist nothíngé how it was,  
 Arose and rode the greaté pas

And toke his letter to the kinge.  
 And whan he sigh<sup>1</sup> this wonder  
 thinge,

He maketh the messenger no chere,  
 But nethéles in wise manere  
 He wrote ayein, and yaf him charge  
 That they ne suffre nought at large  
 His wife to go but kepe her still,  
 Till they have herd more of his  
 will.

‘This messenger was yestéles,  
 But with his letter nethéles,  
 Or be him lefe or be him loth,  
 In allé haste ayeine he goth  
 By Knaresburgh, and as he went,  
 Unto the moder his entent  
 Of that he fond toward the kinge  
 He tolde, and she upon this thinge  
 Saith, that he shulde abide all night  
 And made him feste and chere  
 aright,

Feignend as though she couthe him  
 thonke.<sup>2</sup>  
 But he with strong wine which he  
 dronke

Forth with the travaile of the day  
 Was drunke aslepe, and while he lay  
 She hath his letters oversay,  
 And forméd in an other way  
 There was a newé letter write,

‘Which saith: ‘I do you for to  
 wite,

That through the counseil of you two  
 I stonde in point to ben undo,  
 As he whiche is a king deposed,  
 For every man it hath supposed  
 How that my wife Constance is fay.  
 And if that I, they sain, delay  
 To put her out of compaignie,  
 The worship of my regalie  
 Is lore, and over this they telle  
 Her child shal nought among hem  
 dwelle

<sup>1</sup> And read them over from point to point.

<sup>2</sup> Fro kinde, contrary to nature.

<sup>1</sup> Sigh, saw.

<sup>2</sup> Couthe him thonke, paid him thanks.

To claimen any heritáge.  
 So can I se none avautáge,  
 But all is lost, if she abide.  
 Forthý to loke on every side  
 Toward the mischeffe as it is  
 I chargé you and biddé this,  
 That ye the samé ship vittaile,  
 In which that she toke arrivaile,  
 Therin and putteth<sup>1</sup> bothé two  
 Her self forth with her childe also,  
 And so forth brought into the depe  
 Betaketh her the see<sup>2</sup> to kepe.  
 Of fouré daiés time I set  
 That ye this thing no lenger let,<sup>3</sup>  
 So that your life be nought forfete.<sup>4</sup>

“And thus this letter counterfete  
 The messenger, which was unware,  
 Upon the kingés halvé bare  
 And where he shulde it hath betake.  
 But whan that they have hedé take  
 And rad that writen is withinne,  
 So great a sorwé they beginne,  
 As they her<sup>4</sup> owné moder sighen  
 Brent in a fire before her<sup>4</sup> eyen.  
 There was wepíngé and there was  
 wo,

But finallý the thinge is do.  
 Upon the see they have her  
 brought,

But she the causé wisté nought,  
 And thus upon the flood they  
 wone<sup>5</sup>

This lady with her yonge sone.  
 And than her hondés to the heven  
 She straught, and with a mildé  
 steven<sup>6</sup>

Knelend upon her baré kne  
 She saide: ‘O highé magesté,  
 Which seest the point of every  
 trouth,

Take of thy wofull woman routh

<sup>1</sup> *Therin and putteth*, and put therein.

<sup>2</sup> *Betaketh her the see*, commit her to the sea.

<sup>3</sup> *Let*, delay.

<sup>5</sup> *Wone*, dwell.

<sup>4</sup> *Her*, their.

<sup>6</sup> *Steven*, voice.

And of this child that I shal  
 kepe!’<sup>1</sup>

And with that word she gan to  
 wepe

Swounénd as dede, and there she  
 lay.

But he, whiche allé thingés may,  
 Confórteth her, and atté laste  
 She loketh, and her eyen caste  
 Upon her childe, and saydé this:

‘Of me no maner charge it is  
 What sorwe I suffre, but of thee  
 Me thenketh it is great pitee,  
 For if I stervé thou shalt deie,  
 So mote I nedés by that weie  
 For moderhed and for tendernesse  
 With all min holé businesse  
 Ordeigné me for thilke office  
 As she which shall be thy norice.’  
 Thus was she strengthed for to  
 stonde.

And tho she toke her childe in  
 honde

And yaf it souke and ever amonge  
 She wepte and otherwhilé songe  
 To rocké with her childe aslepe;  
 And thus her owné childe to kepe  
 She hath under the Goddes cure.

“And so fell upon aventúre,  
 Whan thilké yere hath made his  
 ende,

Her ship, so as it mosté wende,  
 By strength of wind which God  
 hath yive

Estward was into Spainé drive  
 Right fast under a castell walle  
 Where that an hethen admiralle  
 Was lorde, and he a steward had  
 One Theloués, whiche al was bad,  
 A fals knight and a renegate.  
 He goth to loke in what estate  
 The ship was comen, and there he  
 fonde

<sup>1</sup> *Shal kepe*, have to take care of (shall, with the sense of obligation).



Forth with a childe upon her honde  
This lady where she was alone.  
He toke good hede of the persóné  
And sigh she was a worthy wight,  
And thought he wolde upon the  
night

Demene her at his owné wille ;  
And let her be therinné stille,  
That no man sigh she nought<sup>1</sup>  
that day.

At Goddes wille and thus she lay  
Unknowé what her shall betide.  
And fell so that by nightés tide  
This knight withouté felaship  
Hath take a boot, and cam to ship  
And thought of her his lust to take,  
And swore, if she him daunger  
make,

That certainly she shuldé deie.  
She sigh there was none other weie  
And saide he shulde her well con-  
fórte,

That he first loked out at porte,  
That no man weré nigh the stede  
Which mighté knowé what they  
dede,

And than he may do what he wolde.  
He was right glad that she so tolde,  
And to the port anone he ferde.

“She praieth God, and he her  
herde.

And sodeinlich he was out throwe  
And dreint,<sup>2</sup> and tho<sup>3</sup> began to  
blowe

Windé mevábale fro the londe,  
And thus the mighty Goddes honde  
Her hath conveiéed and defended.  
And whan thre yere ben full de-  
spended,

Her ship was drive upon a daie,  
Where that a great navié laie  
Of shippés, all the.worldé at ones.  
And as God woldé for the nones

<sup>1</sup> She saw not any man.

<sup>2</sup> *Dreint*, drowned. <sup>3</sup> *Tho*, then.

Her ship goth in amonge hem alle  
And stint nought er it be befallé  
And hath that vessel under gete  
Which maister was of all the flete ;  
But there it resteth and abode.  
This greté ship on anker rode,  
The lord come forth, and whan he  
sigh

That other ligge on bord so nigh  
He wondreth what it mighté be,  
And bad men to go in and se.  
This lady tho was crope a side  
As she that wolde her selven hide,  
For she ne wisté what they were.  
They sought about and fond her  
there

And broughten up her childe and her.  
And therupon this lord to spire<sup>1</sup>  
Began fro whenné that she came  
And what she was. Quod she :  
‘ I am

A woman wofully bestad.  
I had a lorde and thus he bad,  
That I forth with my litel sone  
Upon the wawés shuldé wone.  
But why the causé was I not,<sup>2</sup>  
But he whiche allé thingés wot  
Yet hath, I thonk him, of his might  
My childe and me so kepte upright,  
That we be saufé bothé two.’—

This lorde her axeth evermo  
How she beleveth, and she saith :  
‘ I leve and trust in Cristés feith,  
Which died upon the rodé tre.’—  
‘ What is thy namé ? ’ tho quod he.  
‘ My name is Custé,’ she him saide.  
But furthermore for nought he  
praide

Of her estaté to knowe pleine,  
She wolde him nothing ellés saine  
But of her namé, which she feigned,  
All other thingés she restreigned,  
That o word moré she ne tolde.  
This lord than axeth if she wolde

<sup>1</sup> *Spire*, enquire, “speir.” <sup>2</sup> *Not*, know not.

With him abide in compaignie,  
 And saide, he came from Barbarie  
 To Romé ward and home he went.  
 Tho she supposeth what it ment  
 Andsaith, she woldé with him wende  
 And dwelle unto her lives ende,  
 If it so be to his plesaúnce.  
 And thus upon her ácqueintaúnce  
 He tolde her plainly as it stood,  
 Of Rome how that the gentil blood  
 In Barbarié was betraied  
 And therupon he hath assaied  
 By werre, and taken such ven-  
 geaúnce

That none of thilke euil alliaúnce,  
 By whom the treson was compásed,  
 Is from the swerd alivé passed.  
 But of Constance<sup>1</sup> how it was  
 That couthe<sup>1</sup> he knowé by no cas  
 Where she becam, so as he said ;  
 Her ere unto his word she laid,  
 But furthermore made she no chere.  
 And nethéles in this matére  
 It happed that ilké timé so  
 This lord with whom she shuldé go  
 Of Romé was the senatour  
 And of her fader temperour  
 His brother daughter hath to wive,  
 Which hath her fader eke on live,<sup>2</sup>  
 And was Salustés clepéd tho,  
 His wife Heleiné hight also,  
 To whom Constancé was cousine.  
 Thus to the sike a medicine  
 Hath God ordeigné of his grace,  
 That forthwith in the samé place  
 This senatour his trouthé plight  
 For ever while he livé might  
 To kepe her in worshíp and in wele,  
 Be so that God woll yive her hele,  
 This lady, which Fortúne himsende.  
 And thus by shippé forth sailénde  
 Her and her childe to Rome be  
 brought,

And to his wife tho he besought

<sup>1</sup> *Couthe*, could.    <sup>2</sup> *On live*, alive.

To take her into compaignie.  
 And she, which couth of curtesie  
 All that a good wife shuldé conne,<sup>1</sup>  
 Was inly glad, that she hath wonne  
 The felaship of so good one.  
 This emperourés daughter Custe  
 Forth with the daughter of Saluste  
 Was kept, but no man redély  
 Knew what she was, and nought  
 forthý  
 They thoughten well she haddé be  
 In her estate of high degré,  
 And every life her loveth wele.

“ Now herken : thilke unstable  
 whele

Whiche ever torneth went aboute.  
 The king Alleé, while he was oute,  
 As thou to-fore hast herd this cas,  
 Deceivéd through his moder was.  
 But whan that he come home ayein,  
 He axeth of his chamberlain  
 And of the bissshop eke also,  
 Where they the quené hadden do.  
 And they answerdé there he bad  
 And have him thilké letter rad  
 Whiche he hem sendé for warránt,  
 And tolde him plainly as it stant,  
 And sain, it thought hem great pité  
 To se a worthy one as she  
 With suche a childe as there was  
 bore

So sodeinly to be forlore.  
 He axeth hem, what child that  
 were.  
 And they him saidé, that no where  
 In all the world, though men it  
 sought,  
 Was never woman that forth  
 brought  
 A fairer child than it was one.  
 And than he axeth hem anone,  
 Why they ne hadden writen so.  
 They tolden, so they hadden do.

<sup>1</sup> Who knew all that a good wife should know of courtesy.

He saidé, nay. They saiden, yis.  
The letter shewéd, rad<sup>1</sup> it is,  
Which they forsoken every dele.<sup>2</sup>  
Tho was it understondé wele  
That there is treson in the thinge.  
The messanger to-fore the kinge  
Was brought and, sodeinlich op-  
posed

As he which no thinge hath sup-  
posed

But allé wel, began to saie,  
That he no where upon the waie  
Abode but only in a stede,<sup>3</sup>  
And causé why that he so dede,  
Was, as he wenté to and fro,  
At Knaresburgh by nightés two  
The kingés moder made him  
dwelle.

And when the king it herdé telle,  
Within his hert he wiste als faste  
The treson whiche his moder caste;  
And thought he woldé nought  
abide

But forth right in the samé tide  
He toke his hors and rode anone,  
With him there riden many one,  
To Knaresburgh, and forth they  
wente

And lich the fire which thonder  
hente<sup>4</sup>

In suche a rage, as saith the boke,  
His moder sodeinlich he toke  
And saide unto her in this wise:  
'O beste of helle, in what juse<sup>5</sup>  
Hast thou deservéd for to deie,  
That hast so falsely put aweie  
With treson of thy backbitnge  
The trewest at my knoulechinge  
Of wivés and the most honést?  
But I wol maké this behest,

<sup>1</sup> Rad, read.

<sup>2</sup> Forsoken, denied in every part.

<sup>3</sup> A stede, one place.

<sup>4</sup> Hente, pursued and seized, i.e., lightning,  
the fire on which the thunder pounced.

<sup>5</sup> Juse, judgment.

I shall be vengéd or<sup>1</sup> I go,  
And let a firé do make tho  
And bad men for to caste her inne,  
But first she tolde out all the sinne,  
And did hem allé for to wite  
How she the letters haddé write,  
Fro point to point as it was  
wrought.

And tho she was to dethé brought<sup>1</sup>  
And Brent to-fore her sonés eye,  
Wherof these other, whiche it sighe  
And herden how the causé stood,  
Sain, that the jugément was good  
Of that her sone her hath so served;  
For she it haddé wel deserved  
Through treson of her falsé tunge,  
Which through the lond was after  
songe,

Constance and<sup>2</sup> every wight com-  
pleineth.

But he, whom allé wo distreigneth,  
This sorwefull king, was so bestad  
That he shall never more be glad,  
He saith, eftsoné for to wedde  
Till that he wist how that she spedde  
Which haddé ben his firsté wife;  
And thus his yonge unlusty life  
He driveth forth so as he may.

"Till it befel upon a day,  
Whan he his werrés hadde acheved  
And thought he woldé be releved  
Of soulé hele upon the feith  
Whiche he hath také, than he saith,  
That he to Rome in pelrinage  
Wol go, where Popé was Pelage,  
To take his absolución,  
And upon this condición  
He made Edwin his lieutenaúnt,  
Whiche heir to him was apparaúnt,  
That he the lond in his abséncé  
Shall reule. And thus by providéncé  
Of allé thingés well begonne  
He toke his leve and forth is gone.

<sup>1</sup> Or, ere.

<sup>2</sup> And every one laments for Constance.

“Elda, which was with him tho  
there,  
Er they fulliche at Romé were,  
Was sent to-foré to purveie,  
And he his guide upon the weie,  
In helpé to ben herbergeour<sup>1</sup>  
Hath axéd who was senatour,  
That he his namé mighté kenne.  
Of Capadoce, he saide, Arcenne  
He hight and was a worthy knyght.  
To him goth Elda tho forth right  
And tolde him of his lord tidíng  
And praidé, that for his comfíng  
He wolde assigne him herbergáge.  
And he so did of good coráge.

“Whan all is do that was todone,  
The kinge him self cam after sone,  
This senatour whan that he come  
To Custe and to his wife at home,  
Hath tolde how suche a Kinge Allee  
Of great array to the citee  
Was come, and Cust upon his tale  
With herté close and colour pale  
A swouné<sup>2</sup> felle, and he merveilth  
So sodeinly what thinge her eileth,  
And caught her up, and whan she  
woke

She siketh with a pitous loke  
And feigneth sikennesse of the see,  
But it was for the kinge Allee,  
For joíe which fell in her thought,  
That God him hath to towné  
brought.

This King hath spoké with the  
Pope  
And tolde all that he couthé grope  
What greveth in his consciéce,  
And than he thought in reverence  
Of his estate, er that he went  
To make a feste, and thus he sent  
Unto the senatour to come  
Upon the morwe and other some

<sup>1</sup> *Herbergeour*, one sent before to provide lodgings for a stately company.

<sup>2</sup> *A swouné*, in swoon.

To sitté with him at the mete.  
This tale hath Custé nought for-  
yete,

But to Moríce her soné tolde  
That he upon the morwe sholde  
In all that ever he couth and  
might

Be present in the Kingés sight,  
So that the Kinge him ofte sigh,  
Moríce to-fore the Kingés eye  
Upon the morwe, where he sat,  
Full ofté stood, and upon that  
The King his chere upon him  
caste

And in his face him thought als  
faste

He sigh his owné wife Constánce,  
For Nature, as in resembaúnce  
Of face, him liketh so to clothe  
That they were of a suité bothe.  
The King was movéd in his thought  
Of that he sigh, and knew it nought;  
This childe he loveth kindély,  
And yet he wot no causé why;  
But wel he sigh and understode,  
That he toward Arcenné stode,  
And axeth him anone right there  
If that this childe his soné were.  
He saidé: ‘ye,<sup>1</sup> so I him calle,  
And wolde it weré so befallé,  
But it is all in other wise.’

And tho<sup>2</sup> began he to devise,  
How he the childés moder fonde  
Upon the see, from<sup>3</sup> every londe,  
Within a ship was steréles;  
And how this lady helpéles  
Forth with her childe he hath forth  
drawe.

The Kinge hath understood his  
sawe

The childés name and axeth tho,  
And what the moder hight also,  
That he him woldé telle he praide.

<sup>1</sup> *Ye*, yea.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

<sup>3</sup> *From*, away from.

‘Morice this childe is hote,’<sup>1</sup> he  
saide,

‘His moder hatté Custe, and this  
I not<sup>2</sup> what maner name it is.’

But Allee wiste wel inough,  
Wherof somdele smilénd he lough.  
For Custe in Saxon is to saine  
Constance upon the word Romaïne.  
But who that couthé specifie,  
What tho fell in his fantasie,  
And how his witte abouté renneth  
Upon the love in which he bren-  
neth

It were a wonder for to here.  
For he was nouthere there ne here,  
But clene out of him selfe away,  
That he not what to thenke or say,  
So faine he wolde it weré she ;  
Wherof his hertés priveté  
Began the werre of ye and nay,  
The whiche in such balaúncé lay  
That contaúncé for a throwe<sup>3</sup>  
He losté, till he mighté knowe  
The soth. But in his memorie  
The man which lieth in purgatorie,  
Desireth nought the Heven more  
That he ne longeth also sore  
To wité what him shall betide.  
And whan the bordés were aside  
And every man was rise aboute,  
The Kinge hath weivéd all the route  
And with the senatoúr alone  
He spake and praid him of a bone,<sup>4</sup>  
To se this Custé where she dwelleth  
At home with him, so as he telleth.  
The senatoúr was wel apaide ;  
This thing no lenger was delaide.  
To se this Custé goth the Kinge,  
And she was warnéd of the thinge,  
And with Heleiné forth she came  
Ayein the Kinge, and he tho name<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hote*, called.

<sup>2</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>3</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

<sup>4</sup> *Bone*, petition.

<sup>5</sup> *Name*, took.

Good hede, and whan he sigh his  
wife,

Anone with all his hertés life  
He caught her in his armes and  
kiste.

Was never wight that sigh ne wiste<sup>1</sup>  
A man that moré joié made,  
Wherof they weren allé glade  
Which herdé tellen of this chaunce.  
This King tho with his wife Con-  
stance,

Whiche had a great part of his will,  
In Romé for a timé still

Abode and made him well at ese.  
But so yet couth he never plese  
His wife, that she him woldé saine  
Of her estate the trouthé pleine,  
Of what contré that she was bore  
Ne what she was, and yet therfore  
With all his wit he hath done seke.  
Thus as they ligh in bedde and  
speke,

She praith him and counsefleth  
both,

That for the worship of hem both  
So that her thought it were honésté  
He wolde an honourable feste  
Make er he went in that citee,  
Where temperour him self shall  
be.

He graunteth all that she him  
praide.

But as men in that timé saide,  
This emperour, fro thilké day  
That first his daughter went away,  
He was than after never gladdé,  
But what that any man him badde  
Of gracé for his daughter sake  
That gracé wolde he nought for-  
sake,<sup>2</sup>

And thus ful great almésse he dede,  
Wherof he haddé many a bede.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sigh ne wiste*, saw or knew.

<sup>2</sup> *Forsake*, refuse.

<sup>3</sup> *Bede*, prayer.

“This Emperour out of the towne,  
Within a ten mile enviroúne,  
Where as it thought him for the  
beste

Hath sondry places for to reste,  
And as fortuné worldé tho  
He was dwellénd at one of tho.  
The kinge Allee forth with thassent  
Of Custe his wife hath thider sent  
Moríce his sone, as he was taught,  
To themperour, and he goth  
straight

And in his fader halve<sup>1</sup> he sought  
As he whiche of his lordship sought,  
That of his highé worthinesse  
He worldé do so great mekenesse  
His owné town to come and se  
And give a time in the citee,  
So that his fader might him gete  
That he wolde onés with him etc.  
This lorde hath graunted his re-  
queste.

And whan the day was of the feste,  
In worship of her<sup>2</sup> Emperour  
The kinge and eke the senatoúr  
Forth with her wivés bothé two,  
With many a lorde and lady mo,  
On hors gan riden him ayeine,  
Till it befell upon a pleine  
They sigh where as he was coménd.  
With that Constance anone praiénd  
Spake to her lord that he abide,  
‘So that I may to-foré ride  
To ben upon his bienvenue<sup>3</sup>  
The firsté which shall him salue.’  
And thus after her lordés graunte  
Upon a mulé white amblaúnte  
Forth with a fewé rode this quene.  
They wondred what she worldé  
mene,

And riden after softé pas.  
But whan this lady comen was  
To themperour, in his presence

<sup>1</sup> On his father's behalf.

<sup>2</sup> Her, their.

<sup>3</sup> Bienvenue, welcome.

She saide aloudé in audience :  
‘My lord, my fader, wel you be !  
And of this timé that I se  
Your honour and your godé hele,  
Whiche is the helpe of my quarele,  
I thonke unto the goddés might.’  
For joie his herté was aflight  
Of that she tolde in remembraunce.  
And whan he wiste, it was Con-  
stánce,

Was never fader half so blithe.  
Wepend he kiste her often sihe,  
So was his hert all overcome,  
For though his moder weré come  
Fro deth to life out of the grave,  
He might no moré wonder have  
Than he hath whan that he her  
sigh.

With that her owné lord come nigh  
And is to themperour obeied.  
And whan the fortune is bewreied,<sup>1</sup>  
How that Constánce is come  
abouté,

So harde an herté was noþe oute  
That he for pité tho ne wepte.  
Arcennus which her fonde and  
kepte

Was thanné glad of that is falle,  
So that with joie among hem alle  
They riden in at Romé gate,  
This Emperour thought all to late,  
Till that the Popé weré come  
And of the lordés sendé some  
To pray him that he worldé haste.  
And he cam forth in allé haste,  
And whan that he this talé herde,  
How wonderly this chauncé ferde,  
He thonketh god of his mirácle,  
To whos might may be none ob-  
stácle.

The King a noble feste hem made,  
And thus they weren allé glad.  
A parlément er that they went  
They setten, unto this entent,

<sup>1</sup> Bewreied, disclosed.

To putten Rome in full espeire,<sup>1</sup>  
 That Moríce was apparant heire  
 And shulde abidé with hem stille,  
 For such was all the londés wille.

“Whan every thing was fully  
 spoke

Of sorwe and queint<sup>2</sup> was all the  
 smoke,

Tho toke his leve Allee the Kinge  
 And with full many a riché thinge  
 Which themperour him hadde  
 yive

He goth a gladdé life to live.  
 For he Constance hath in his honde,  
 Which was the comfort of the londe.  
 For whan that he cam home ayein,  
 There is no tungé that might sain,  
 What joié was that ilké stounde  
 Of that he hath his quené founde,  
 Which first was sent of Goddés  
 sonde<sup>3</sup>

Whan she was driven upon the  
 stronde,  
 By whom the misbeleve of sinne  
 Was lefte and Cristés feith came  
 inne

To hem that whilome weré blinde.  
 But he, which hindreth every kinde  
 And for no gold may be forbought,  
 The Deth, coménd er he besought  
 Toke with this king such acquain-  
 taunce

That he with all his retenaunce  
 Ne mighté nought defend his life ;  
 And thus he parteth from his wife  
 Which thanné madé sorwe inough.  
 And therupon her herté drough  
 To leven Engélonde for ever  
 And go where that she haddé lever,  
 To Romé whanné<sup>4</sup> that she came.  
 And thus of all the lond she nam<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Espeire*, hope.

<sup>2</sup> *Queint*, quenched ; and all the smoke of sorrow was quenched.

<sup>3</sup> *Sonde*, sending.

<sup>4</sup> *Whanne*, whence.

<sup>5</sup> *Nam*, took.

Her leve, and goth to Rome ayein.  
 And after that the bokés sain  
 She was nought theré but a throwe  
 Whan Deth, of kinde,<sup>1</sup> hath over-  
 throwe

Her worthy fader, which men saide  
 That he betwene her armés deide.  
 And afterward the yere suénde  
 Tho God hath made of her an ende,  
 And fro this worldés fairie<sup>2</sup>  
 Hath take her into compaignie.

“Moríce her soné was corouéde,  
 Which so ferforth was abandoúned  
 To Cristés feith that men him  
 calle

Moríce the Christenest of alle.  
 And thus the whel meving of Love  
 Was atté lasté set above.

And so, as thou hast herd to-fore,  
 The falsé tungés weren lore<sup>3</sup>  
 Whiche upon Lové wolden lie.  
 Forthý touchénd of this Envie,  
 Which longeth unto Bakbitinge,  
 Be waré thou make no lesinge  
 In hindring of another wight.  
 And if thou wolt be taught aright,  
 What mischefe Bakbitingé doth,  
 By other waie a talé soth  
 Now might thou heré next suénde,  
 Which to this Vice is accordénde.

“**In a cronique** as thou shalt  
 wite

A great ensample I finde write,  
 Whiche I shall telle upon this  
 thinge.

Philip of Macedoiné Kinge  
 Two sonés haddé by his wife,  
 Whose famé yet in Grece is rife.  
 Demetrius the firsté brother  
 Was hote<sup>4</sup> and Perseús that other.  
 Demetrius men saiden tho<sup>5</sup>  
 The better knight was of the two,

<sup>1</sup> *Of kinde*, in the course of Nature.

<sup>2</sup> *Fairie*, changes and illusions.

<sup>3</sup> *Lore*, lost.

<sup>4</sup> *Hote*, called.

<sup>5</sup> *Tho*, then.

To whom the lond was attendánt  
 As he, whiche heir was apparánt  
 To regne aftér his faders day.  
 But that thing which no water may  
 Quenche in this world, but ever  
 brenneth,

Into his brothers hert it renneth,  
 The proud Envie of that he sighe<sup>1</sup>  
 His brother shuldé climbe on highe  
 And lie to him mot than obeie;  
 That may he suffre by no waie,  
 With strengthé durst he no thing  
 fonde,<sup>2</sup>

So toke he lesinge upon honde  
 When he sigh time, and spake  
 therto.

For it befell that timé so  
 His fader greté werrés hadde  
 With Romé, whiche he streitè ladde  
 Through mighty hond of his man-  
 hód,

As he which hath inough knighthód,  
 And ofte hem haddé fore greved.  
 But er the werré were acheved,  
 As he was upon ordenaunce  
 At home in Grece, it fell par  
 chaunce

Demetrius, whiche ofte aboute  
 Ridénd was, stodé that time out,  
 So that this Perse in his absénce,  
 Which bar thé tunge of pestilénce  
 With falsé wordés whiche he  
 feigneth

Upon his owné brother pleineth  
 In priveté behinde his bake,  
 And to his fader thus he spake:  
 ‘My deré fader, I am holde  
 By way of kinde, as reson wolde,  
 That I fro you shall nothing hide  
 Which mighté torne in any side  
 Of youre estate into grevaúnce.  
 Forthý min hertés obeísaúnce  
 As toward you I thenké kepe.

<sup>1</sup> *Sighe*, saw.

<sup>2</sup> *Fonde*, try.

For it is good ye také kepe<sup>1</sup>  
 Upon a thing whiche is me tolde.  
 My brother hath us allé solde  
 To hem of Rome, and you also,  
 For thanné they behote<sup>2</sup> him so  
 That he with hem shall regne in  
 pees.

Thus hath he cast, for his encrés,  
 That your estate shall go to nought.  
 And this to prové shall be brought  
 So ferforth that I undertake  
 It shall nought wel mow be for-  
 sake.’<sup>3</sup>

“The kinge upon this tale  
 answerd

And said, ‘If this thing which he  
 herd

Be soth and may be brought to  
 prove,

It shall nought be to his behove<sup>4</sup>  
 Which so has shapen us the werste,  
 For he him self shall be the ferste  
 That shall be dede, if that I may.’

Thus afterwarde upon a day,  
 Whan that Demetrius was come,  
 Anone his fader hath him nome<sup>5</sup>  
 And bad unto his brother Perse,  
 That he his talé shall reherse  
 Of thilké treson whiche he tolde.  
 And he whiche all untrouthé wolde  
 Counseileth that so high a nede  
 Be treted where as it may spede,  
 In comun place of jugément.

The King therto yaf his assent.  
 “Demetrius was put in holde,  
 Wherof that Perseús was bolde.  
 Thus stood the trouth under the  
 charge

And the falsehedé goth at large,  
 Which through behest hath over-  
 come

The greatest of the lordés some,

<sup>1</sup> *Také kepe*, take heed.

<sup>2</sup> *Behote*, promised.

<sup>3</sup> *Forsake*, denied.

<sup>4</sup> *Behove*, advantage.

<sup>5</sup> *Nome*, taken.



That priveliche of his accorde  
They stonde as witnessse of recorde,  
The juge was madé favouráble ;  
Thus was the lawé deceiváble  
So ferforth that the trouthé fonde  
Rescoussé<sup>1</sup> none, and thus the  
londe

Forth with the King deceivéd were :  
The giltélez was dampnéd there  
And deide upon accusément.  
But suche a fals conspirément,  
Though it be privé for a throwe,<sup>2</sup>  
God woldé nought it were unknowe,  
And that was afterward wel proved  
In him which hath the deth contro-  
troved

Of that his brother was so slaine,  
This Perseús was wonder faine  
As he that tho was apparánt  
Upon the regne<sup>3</sup> and expectant,  
Wherof he wax so proude and veine  
That he his fader in disdeigne  
Hath take, and sette at none ac-  
compte,  
As he which thought him to sur-  
mounte,

That where he was first debonaire  
He was the rebell and contraire,  
And nought as heir but as a kinge  
He toke upon him allé thinge  
Of malice and of tirannie  
In cóntempe of regalitie  
Livénd his fader, and so wrought  
That than the fader him bethought  
And sighe to whether side it drough,  
Anone he wisté well inough  
How Perse aftér his falsé tonge  
Hath so thenvious bellé ronge,  
That he hath slain his owné brother ;  
Wherof as thanne he knew none  
other

But sodeinly the juge he nome<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rescoussé*, rescue.

<sup>2</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

<sup>3</sup> Heir apparent to the kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> *Nome*, took.

Which corrupt sat upon the dome,<sup>1</sup>  
In suche a wise and<sup>2</sup> hath him  
pressed

That he the soth him hath con-  
fessed

Of all that hath ben spoke and do.  
More sory than the king was tho  
Was never man upon this molde,  
And thought in certain that he  
wolde

Vengeauncé take upon this wronge.  
But thother partie was so stronge,  
That for the lawe of no statúte  
There may no right ben execute.  
And upon this división  
The lond was tornéd up so downe,  
Wherof his herte is so distraught  
That he for puré sorwe hath caught  
The maladie of which nature  
Is quint<sup>3</sup> in every creature.

“And whan this King was passéd  
thus,  
This falsé tungéd Perseús  
The regiment<sup>4</sup> hath underfongé.  
But there may nothing stondé longé  
Whiche is nought upon trouthé  
grounded.

For God, which hath al thingé  
bounded  
And sigh<sup>5</sup> the falsehed of his guile,  
Hath set him but a litel while  
That he shall regne upon depose,  
For sodeinlich right as a rose  
So sodeinliché down he felle.

“In thilké timé, so it befelle,  
This newé King of newé pride  
With strengthé shope him for to  
ride<sup>6</sup>

And saide he woldé Romé waste ;  
Wherof he made a besy haste,

<sup>1</sup> *Upon the dome*, in judgment.

<sup>2</sup> And in such a wise.

<sup>3</sup> *Of which nature is quint*, by which nature is extinguished (caught his death).

<sup>4</sup> *Regiment*, rule.

<sup>5</sup> *Sigh*, saw.

<sup>6</sup> *Ride*, make raid.

And hath assembled him an host  
 In all that ever he might most,  
 What man that mighté wepen bere  
 Of all he woldé none forbere.  
 So that it mighté nought benombred  
 The folké which was after encom-  
 bred  
 Through him that God wolde over-  
 throw.

“Anon it was at Romé know  
 The pompé, which that Persé lad,  
 And the Romainés that time had  
 A consul which was clepéd thus  
 By namé Paul Emilius,  
 A noble, a worthy knight withalle,  
 And he which chef was of hem alle  
 This werre on honde hath under-  
 take.

And whan he shulde his levé take  
 Of a yong doughter which was his,  
 She wepte, and he what cause it is  
 Her axeth, and she him answerde,  
 ‘That Perse is dede;’ and he it  
 herde

And wondreth what she mené  
 wolde.

And she upon childehód him tolde,  
 That Perse, her litel hounde, is  
 dede.

With that he pulleth up his hede  
 And madé right a glad visagé  
 And said, how it was a preságe  
 Touchénd unto that other Perse,  
 Of that Fortúne him shuldeadverse.  
 He saith for suche a prénostfke  
 Most of an hound was to him like,  
 For as it is an houndés kinde  
 To berke upon a man behinde,  
 Right so behinde his brothers bake  
 With falsé wordés whiche he spake  
 He hath do slaine, and that is routh.  
 But he whiche hateth all untrouth  
 The highé God it shall redresse,  
 For so my doughter prophetesse  
 Forth with her litel houndés dethe

Betokeneth; and thus forth he geth  
 Comfórted of this evidénce  
 With the Romains in his defence  
 Ayein the Grekes that ben coménde.  
 This Perseus, as nought seénde  
 This mischef which that him  
 abode,

With all his multitudé rode  
 And prided him upon this thinge,  
 Of that he was become a Kinge,  
 And howe he had his regné gete.  
 But he hath all the right foryete  
 Which longeth unto governaunce,  
 Wherof through Goddés orde-  
 naunce

It felle upon the winter tide  
 That with his hoste he shuldé ride  
 Over Danubie thilké flood,  
 Whiche all befrosé thanné stood  
 So hardé, that he wendé wele  
 To passé. But the blindé whele,  
 Which torneth ofte er men be  
 ware

Thilke ice which that the horsmen  
 bare

To-brake, so that a great partie  
 Was dreint<sup>1</sup> of the chivalérie;  
 The reréwarde it toke aweie,  
 Came none of hem to londé drey.<sup>2</sup>

“Paulus, this worthy knight  
 Romain,

By his asprie it herdé sain,  
 And hasteth him all that he may,  
 So that upon that other day<sup>3</sup>  
 He came where he this host behelde,  
 And that was in a largé felde,  
 Wherein the banners ben displaied.  
 He hath anone his men arraied,  
 And whan that he was embatafled  
 He goth and hath the felde assafled  
 And slough and toke all that he  
 fonde,

Wherof the Macedonie londe

<sup>1</sup> *Dreint*, drowned.

<sup>2</sup> Dry land.

<sup>3</sup> *That other day*, the second day.

Which, through king Alisaundre  
honoured

Long timé stood, tho was devoured ;  
To Perse and all that infortúne  
They wité,<sup>1</sup> so that the comúne  
Of all the londe his heire exile :  
And he dispeired<sup>2</sup> for the while  
Desguisé in a pouer wede  
To Romé goth ; and there, for nede,  
The craft which thilke timé was  
To worche in laton<sup>3</sup> and in bras  
He lerneth for his sustenaúnce.  
Such was the sonés purveiaunce.  
And of his fader it is saide,  
In strong prisón that he was laide  
In Albé, where that he was dede  
For hunger and defaulte of brede.  
The hounde was token and pro-  
phecie

That liche an hounde he shuldé deie  
Which lich was of conditió  
Whan he with his detractiún  
Barke on his brother so behinde.

“Lo, what profit a man may finde,  
Which hinder woll an other wight.  
Forthý with all thin holé might,  
My sone, escheué thilke vice.”—

“My fader, ellés were I nice.  
For ye therfore so well have spoke,  
That it is in min herté loke  
And ever shall ; but of Envie,  
If there be more in his bailie<sup>4</sup>  
Towardés Lové, say me what.”—

“My sone, as guile under the hat  
With sleightés of a tregetour<sup>5</sup>  
Is hid, Envie of such colour  
Hath yet the fourthé deceivaúnt,  
The whiche is clepéd Fals Sem-  
blaunt,  
Wherof the mater and the forme

<sup>1</sup> And to Perseus they give the blame for all that misfortune.

<sup>2</sup> *Dispeired*, in despair.

<sup>3</sup> *Laton*, latten, brass with an alloy of tin.

<sup>4</sup> *Bailie*, government.

<sup>5</sup> *Tregetour*, sleight-of-hand man.

Nowe herken, and I thee shall en-  
forme.

“Of fals semblaunt if I shall  
telle

Above all other it is the welle  
Out of the which deceipté floweth.  
There is no man so wise that  
knoweth

Of thilké flood whiche is the tide,  
Nehowe he shulde him selven guide  
To také sauf passagé there.

And yet the wind to mannés ere  
Is softe, and as it semeth oute  
It maketh clere weder all aboute.  
But though it seme, it is nought so.  
For Fals Semblaunt hath ever mo  
Of his counseil in compaignie  
The derke untrewé Ypocrisie  
Whose word discórdeth to his  
thought.

Forthý they ben to-gider brought  
Of one covíne, of one houshólde,  
As it shall after this be tolde.  
Of Fals Semblaunt it nedeth  
nought

To telle of olde ensamples ought.  
For all day in experiéce  
A man may see thilke evidéce  
Of fairé wordés, whiche he hereth.  
But yet the barge Envié stereth  
And halt<sup>1</sup> it ever fro the londe,  
Where Fals Semblaunt with ore in  
honde

It roweth and will nought arrive  
But let it on the wawés drive  
In great tempést and great debate,  
Wherof that Love and his estate  
Empeireth.<sup>2</sup> And therfóre I rede,  
My soné, that thou fle and drede  
This Vice and, what that other sain,  
Let thy semblaunt be trewe and  
plein.

For Fals Semblaunt is thilké Vice,  
Which never was without offíce,

<sup>1</sup> *Halt*, holds.    <sup>2</sup> *Empeireth*, are impaired.

Where that Envié thenketh to guile  
He shall be for that ilké while  
Of privé conseil messagére.  
For whan his semblaunt is most  
clere

Than is he most derke in his  
thought;

Though men him se, they knowe  
him nought.

But as it sheweth in the glas  
Thing which therinné never was,  
So sheweth it in his viságe  
That never was in his coráge.<sup>1</sup>  
Thus doth he all his thing by  
sleighte.

Now lith thy consciéce in weichte,  
My godé sone, and shrive thee  
here

If thou were ever costumére  
To Fals Semblaunt in any wise."—

"For ought I can me yet avise,  
My godé fader, certes no;  
If I for love have ought don so,  
Now axeth, I woldé pray you.  
For ellés I wot never how  
Of Fals Semblaunt that I have  
gilt."<sup>2</sup>—

"My sone, and sithen<sup>3</sup> that  
thou wilt

That I shall axé, gabbé nought,  
But telle if ever was thy thought  
With Fals Semblaunt and Cover-  
ture

To wite of any creature  
How that he was with lové ladde,  
So were he sory, were he gladdé.  
Whan than thou wistest howe it  
were,

All that he rounéd<sup>4</sup> in thin ere  
Thou toldest forth in other place

<sup>1</sup> That which never was in the thought of his heart. *Courage* was any feeling from the heart. When the small birds make melody, says Chaucer, <sup>1</sup> so pricketh hem Nature in her corages,<sup>2</sup> that is, they sing with all their hearts.

<sup>2</sup> *Gilt*, been guilty. <sup>3</sup> *Sithen*, since.

<sup>4</sup> *Rounéd*, whispered.

To setten him fro Lovés grace  
Of what womán that thee best listé,  
There as no man his conseil wiste  
But thou, by whom he was deceived  
Of love, and from his purpose  
weived,<sup>1</sup>

And thoughtest that his disturb-  
aunce

Thin owné causé shuld avaúnce,  
As who saith I am so sely<sup>2</sup>  
There may no mannés priveté  
Ben heléd<sup>3</sup> half so well as min.  
Art thou, my sone, of suche engín?  
Tell on."—"My godé fader, nay,  
As for the moré part, I saie.

But of somedele I am beknowe<sup>4</sup>  
That I may stonde in thilké rowe  
Amongés hem that saundres<sup>5</sup> use.  
I woll nought me therof excuse,

That I with such colouír ne steine,  
Whan I my besté semblant feigne  
To my felów, till that I wote  
All his conseil both colde and hote.  
For by that cause I make him chere  
Till I his lové knowe and here.

And if so be min herté soucheth<sup>6</sup>  
That ought unto my lady toucheth  
Of lové that he woll me telle,  
Anon I renne unto the welle

And casté water in the fire,  
So that his cart amid the mire  
By that I have his conseil knowe  
Full ofté sith<sup>7</sup> I overthrowe  
Whan that he weneth best to stonde.

But this I do you understande,<sup>8</sup>  
If that a man love ellés there,  
So that my lady be nought there,  
And he me tell, I will it hide,  
There shall no worde escape aside.  
For with decept of no semblaunt

<sup>1</sup> *Weived*, put aside. <sup>2</sup> *Sely*, simple.

<sup>3</sup> *Heléd*, concealed.

<sup>4</sup> I confess as to some part.

<sup>5</sup> *Saundres*, sandal wood (as a dye).

<sup>6</sup> *Soucheth*, suspects.

<sup>7</sup> *Ofté sith*, oftentimes.

<sup>8</sup> *Do you*, make you to understand.

To him breke I no covénaunt.  
 Me liketh nought in other place  
 To letté no man of his grace,  
 Ne for to ben inquisitíffe  
 To knowe an other mannés life,  
 Where that he love or lovéd nought  
 That toucheth nothing to my  
 thought,

But all it passeth through min ere  
 Right as a thing that never were  
 And is foryete and laid beside.  
 But if it toucheth any side  
 My lady, as I have er spoken,  
 Min erés ben nought thanné loken.  
 For certés whanné that betit,<sup>1</sup>  
 My will, min herte and all my wit  
 Ben fully set to herken and spire<sup>2</sup>  
 What any man woll speke of hire.  
 Thus have I feigné compaignie  
 Full ofté for<sup>3</sup> I wolde asprie  
 What thinge it is that any man  
 Tell of my worthy lady can.  
 And for two causes I do this.  
 The firsté causé wherof is,  
 If that I might of herken and seke  
 That any man of her missspeke,  
 I woll excuse her so fully  
 That than she wist it nderly,<sup>4</sup>  
 Min hopé shuldé be the more  
 To have her thank for evermore.  
 That other cause, I you assure,  
 Is, why that I by coverture  
 Have feigné semblaunt ofté timé  
 To hem that passen all day by me  
 And ben lovés all well as I,  
 For this I wené truély,  
 That there is of hem allé none,  
 That they ne loven everychone  
 My lady. For sothlích I leve<sup>5</sup>  
 And dursté setten it in preve,  
 Is none so wise that shulde as-  
 terte,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Betit*, betides.

<sup>2</sup> *Spire*, speir, seek narrowly.

<sup>3</sup> *For*, because.

<sup>4</sup> *Inderly*, thoroughly.

<sup>5</sup> *Leve*, believe.

<sup>6</sup> *Asterie*, escape.

But<sup>1</sup> he were lustles in his herte,  
 For why and he my lady sigh,<sup>2</sup>  
 Her visage and her goodlich eye,  
 But he her lovéd er he went.  
 And for that suche is min entent,  
 That is the cause of min asprie,  
 Why that I feigné compaignie  
 And maké felowe over all,  
 For gladly wolde I knowen all  
 And holdé me covért alway,  
 That I full ofté ye or nay  
 Ne list answére in any wise,  
 But feignen semblaunt as the wise  
 And herken talés, till I knowe  
 My ladies lovers all arowe.  
 And whan I here how they have  
 wrought,

I fare as though I herd it nought  
 And as I no worde understood.  
 But that is nothing for her good,  
 For leveth well, the soth is this,  
 That than I knowe all how it is,  
 I woll nought furthren hem a lite  
 But all the werste I can endite  
 I tell it unto my lady plat  
 For furthering of min own estate  
 And hinder hem all that I may.  
 But for all that yet dare I say  
 I finde unto my self no bote,  
 All though min herté nedés mote,  
 Through strength of love, all that  
 I here

Discover unto my lady dere.  
 For in good feith I have no might  
 To helé<sup>3</sup> fro that sweté wight  
 If that it toucheth her any thinge.  
 But this wote wel the heven kinge,  
 That sithen first the world began  
 Unto none other straungé man  
 Ne feigné I semblaunt ne chere  
 To wite or axe of his matere,  
 Though that he lovéd ten or twelve  
 Whan it was nought my ladieselve.

<sup>1</sup> *But*, unless.

<sup>2</sup> If he saw my lady.

<sup>3</sup> *Helé*, conceal.

But if he wold axe any rede  
 Alonlich of his owné hede,  
 How he with other lové ferde,  
 His talés with min eres I herde  
 But to min herté came it nought  
 Ne sank no deper in my thought,  
 But held counseil as I was bede,  
 And tolde it never in other stede,<sup>1</sup>  
 But let it passen as it come.  
 Now fader, say, what is thy dome,  
 And how thou wolt that I be  
 peined<sup>2</sup>  
 For such semblaunt as I have  
 feigned."—

"My sone, if reson woll be  
 peised,<sup>3</sup>

There may no Vertue ben un-  
 preised  
 Ne Vicé none be set in prise.  
 Forthy, my sone, if thou be wise  
 Do no visér upon thy face  
 Which woldé nought thin hert  
 embrace.

For if thou do, within a throwe  
 To other men it shall be knowe,  
 So might thou lightly fall in blame  
 And lese a great part of thy name.  
 And nethéles in this degré  
 Full ofté timé thou might se  
 Of suché men as now a day  
 This Vicé setten in assay,  
 I speke it for no mannes blame  
 But for to warné thee the same.  
 My sone, as I may heré talke  
 In every placé where I walke,  
 I not<sup>4</sup> if it be so or none  
 But it is many daiés gone  
 That I first herdé tellé this,  
 How Fals Semblaunt hath be and is  
 Most comunly from yere to yere  
 With hem that dwelle among us  
 here

Of suche as we Lumbardés calle.

<sup>1</sup> *Stede*, place.      <sup>2</sup> *Peined*, put to penance.

<sup>3</sup> *Peised*, weighed.

<sup>4</sup> *Not*, know not.

For they ben the sliést of alle  
 So as men sain in towne about  
 To feigne and sheué thing without  
 Whiche is reverts to that withinne,  
 Wherof that they full ofté winne  
 Whan they by reson shuldé lese.  
 They ben the last, and yet they  
 chese,

And we the firste, and yet behinde  
 We gone there as we shulden finde  
 The profit of our owné londe,  
 Thus gone they free withouten  
 bonde

To done her profit all at large,  
 And other men bere all the charge.  
 Of Lumbardes unto this covine  
 Whiche allé londés conne engine<sup>1</sup>  
 May Fals Semblaunt in especiáll  
 Be likened, for they over all  
 Where that they thenken for to  
 dwelle,

Among hem self, so as they telle,  
 First ben enforméd for to lere<sup>2</sup>  
 A craft which cleped is Facrere.<sup>3</sup>  
 For if Facreré come about  
 Than afterward hem stant no doubt  
 To voidé with a subtil honde  
 The besté goodés of the londe,  
 And bringé chaffe and také corne.  
 Where as Facreré goth beforene  
 In all his waie he fint no lette,  
 That doré can none ussher shette,  
 In whiche he list to take entré.  
 And thus the counseil most secré  
 Of every thing Facreré knoweth  
 Whiche into straungé place he  
 bloweth

Where as he wote<sup>4</sup> it may most  
 greve.

And thus Facreré maketh beleve,  
 So that full ofte he hath deceived  
 Er that he may ben apperceived.

<sup>1</sup> To this secret contrivance of the Lombards,  
 who can outwit all nations.

<sup>2</sup> *Lere*, learn.      <sup>3</sup> *Facrere*, dissimulation.

<sup>4</sup> *Wote*, knows.

Thus is this Vicé for to drede,  
 For who these oldé bokés rede  
 Of suche ensamples as were er,  
 Him oughté be the moré ware  
 Of allé tho that feigné chere,  
 Wherof thou shalte a talé here.

“**Of fals semblaunt** whiche is  
 beleved,

Ful many a worthy wight is greved  
 And was long time or<sup>1</sup> we were  
 bore.

To thee, my sone, I will therefore  
 A talé tell of Fals Semblaunt  
 Which falseth many a covenaunt  
 And many a fraude of fals counsél  
 There ben hangénd upon his sail.  
 And that aboughten giltéles  
 Both Deianire and Hercules,  
 The whiche in great disesé fell  
 Through Fals Semblaunt, as I shall  
 tell.

“Whan Hercules within a throwe  
 All only hath his herté throwe  
 Upon this fairé Deianire,  
 It fell him on a day desire,  
 Upon a river as he stood,  
 That passe he wolde over the flood  
 Withouté bote and with him lede  
 His lové, but he was in drede  
 For tendresse of that sweté wight,  
 For he knewe nought the forde  
 aright.

There was a geaunt thanné nigh,  
 Which Nessus hight, and whan he  
 sigh

This Hercules and Deianire,  
 Within his herte he gan conspire  
 As he which through his trecherie  
 Hath Hercules in great envie,  
 Whiche he bare in his herté loke,  
 And than he thought it shall be  
 wroke.

But he ne dursté nethéles  
 Ayein this worthie Hercules

<sup>1</sup> Or, ere.

Fall in debate as for to feight,  
 But feigned semblaunt all by sleight  
 Of frendship and of allé good,  
 And cometh where as they both  
 stood

And maketh hem all the chere he can  
 And saith, that as her<sup>1</sup> owné man  
 He is all redy for to do  
 What thinge he may ; and it fel so,  
 That they upon this semblaunt  
 triste<sup>2</sup>

And axen him, if that he wiste  
 What thinge hem weré best to done,  
 So that they mighten sauf and sone  
 The water passé, he and she.  
 And whan Nessús the priveté  
 Knew of her herté what it ment,  
 As he that was of double entent  
 He made hem right a glad viságe.  
 And whan he herde of the passáge  
 Of him and her, he thoughté guile  
 And feigneth semblant for a while  
 Todone hem plesaunce and servíce,  
 But he thought all an other wise.

“This Nessus with his wordés  
 sligh

Yaf such counsail to-fore her eye,  
 Which semeth outward profitáble  
 And was withinné déceiváble.  
 He bad hem of the stremés depe  
 That they beware and také kepe,  
 So as they knowé nought the pas.  
 But for to helpe in suche a cas  
 He saith him self, that for her ese  
 He wolde, if that it mighte hem  
 plese,

The passage of the water take  
 And for this lady undertake  
 To bere her to that other stonde  
 And sauf to set her up a londe,  
 And Hercules may than also  
 The waié knowe, how he shall go.  
 And herto they accorden all.  
 But what as after shall befall

<sup>1</sup> Her, their.

<sup>2</sup> Triste, trust.

Well paid was Hercules of this.  
 And this geaunt also glad is  
 And toke this lady up alofte  
 And set her on his shulder softe  
 And in the flood began to wade  
 As he which no grucchingé made,  
 And bare her over sauf and sounde.  
 But whan he stood on drié grounde  
 And Hercules was fer behinde,  
 He set his trouth all out of minde,  
 Who so therof be lefe or loth  
 With Deianiré forth he goth,  
 As he that thoughté to dissever  
 The compaignie of hem for ever.  
 Whan Hercules therof toke hede,  
 As faste as ever he might him spede  
 He hiéth after in a throwe.  
 And hapneth that he had a bowe,  
 The whiche in allé hast he bende,  
 As he that wolde an arwé sende,  
 Whiche he to-fore had envenímed.  
 He hath so well his shotté timed,  
 That he him through the body  
 smette  
 And thus the falsé wight he lette.<sup>1</sup>  
 But list now, suche a felonie.  
 Whan Nessus wist he shuldé deie,  
 He toke to Deianire his sherte,  
 Which with the blood was of his  
 herte  
 Through out disteigné over all,  
 And tolde how she it kepé shall  
 And privély to this entent,  
 That if her lorde his herté went  
 To love in any other place,  
 This shert, he saith, hath suche a  
 grace,  
 That if she may so mochel make  
 That he the sherte upon him take,  
 He shall all other lette in veine  
 And torne unto her love ayeine.  
 "Who was so glad but Deianire?  
 Her thought her herte was on a  
 fire,

<sup>1</sup> *Lette*, delayed, stopped.

Till it was in her cofre loke,  
 So that no word therof was spoke.  
 "The daiés gone, the yerés passe,  
 The hertés waxen lasse and lasse  
 Of hem that ben to love untrewé.  
 This Hercules with herté newe  
 His love hath set on Eolen,  
 And therof speken allé men.  
 This Eolen, this fairé maide  
 Was as men thilké timé saide  
 The kingés daughter of Eurice.  
 And she made Hercules so nice  
 Upon her love and so assote,<sup>1</sup>  
 That he him clotheth in her cote,  
 And she in his was clothéd ofte,  
 And thus feblésse is set alofte  
 And strengthé was put under fote.  
 There can no man therof do bote.  
 Whan Deianire hath herd this  
 speche,  
 There was no sorwe for to seche,  
 Of other helpé wot she none  
 But goth unto her cofre anone,  
 With wepend eye and wofull herte  
 She toke out thilke unhappy sherte,  
 As she that wendé wel to do,  
 And brought her werke abouté so,  
 That Hercules this shert on dede  
 To suche entent as she was  
 bede  
 Of Nessus, so as I said er.  
 But therof was she nought the ner,  
 As no fortuné may be weived,  
 With Fals Semblant she was de-  
 ceived.  
 But whan she wendé best have  
 wonne,  
 She lost all that she hath begonne.  
 For thilké shert unto the bone  
 His body sette a fire anone  
 And cleveth so it may nought  
 twinne<sup>2</sup>  
 For the venim, that was therinne.

<sup>1</sup> *Assote*, made to dote.

<sup>2</sup> *Twinne*, be separated.



And he than as a wildé man  
Unto the highé wode he ran,  
And as the clerke Ovidé telleth,  
The greté trees to grounde he  
felleth

With strengthe al of his owné might  
And made an hughé fire upright  
And lept therin him self at ones  
And brent him self both flesh and  
bones ;

Which thingé cam through Fals  
Semblaúnt

That falsé Nessus the geaunt  
Made unto him and to his wife,  
Wherof that he hath lost his life,  
And she sorý for evermo.

“Forthy my sone, er thee be wo  
I redé be wel ware therfore.

For whan so great a man was lore,<sup>1</sup>  
It ought to yive a great concept  
To warne all other of such de-  
ceipt.”—

“Graunt mercy, fader ; I am ware  
So fer, that I no moré dare  
Of Fals Semblaunt take ácqueint-  
aúnce,

But rather I wol do penaúnce,  
That I have feigné d chere er this.  
Now axeth forth, what so there is  
Of that belongeth to my shrifte.”—

“My soné, yet there is the fifte,  
Whiche is conceivé of envie  
And clepéd is supplantarie,  
Through whos compassément and  
guile

Ful many a man hath lost his while  
In love as wel as other wise,  
Here after as I shall devise.

**The Pice** of Supplantación  
With many a fals collación  
Whiche he conspireth àll unknowe,  
Full ofté time hath overthrowe  
The worship of another man.  
So wel no life awaité can

<sup>1</sup> Lore, lost.

Ayein his sleighté for to caste,  
That he his purpose atté laste  
Ne hath, er that it be withset.<sup>1</sup>  
But most of all his hért is set  
In court upon these great offices  
Of dignités and benefices.  
Thus goth he with his sleighte  
about

To hinder and shove another out  
And stonden with his slich compás  
In stedé there another was,  
And so to set him selven inne.

He recheth nought be so he winne  
Of that another man shall lese,  
And thus full ofté chalk for chese  
He chaungeth with full litel coste,  
Wherof another hath the loste  
And he the profit shall receive.

For his Fortúne is to deceive  
And for to chaunge upon the whele  
His wo with other mennés wele ;  
Of that another man availeth

His own estate thus he up hailleth  
And taketh the brid to his beyete,<sup>2</sup>  
Where other men the busshes bete.  
My sone, and in the samé wise

There ben lovérs of suche emprise,  
That shapen hem to be relieved  
Where it is wronge to ben acheved,  
For it is other mannés right  
Whiche he hath taken, day and  
night,

To kepé for his owné store,  
Toward him self for evermore  
And is his proper<sup>3</sup> by the lawe,  
Which thing that axeth no felawe,  
If Lové holde his covenaut.

But they that worchen by supplant,  
Yet wolden they a man supplant  
And take a part of thilké plant,  
Whiche he hath for him sélv set.  
And so ful ofte is all unknét

<sup>1</sup> *Withset*, upset.

<sup>2</sup> Takes the bird for his own profit.

<sup>3</sup> *Proper*, property.

That some man weneth be right  
faste,

For Súpllaunt with his slié caste  
Full ofté happeneth for to mowe  
Thing which another man hath  
sowe,

And maketh común of propreté  
With sleighte and with subtilité,  
As men may sen from yere to yere.  
Thus claimeth he the bote to stere  
Of whiche another maister is.

“Forthý my sone, if thou er this  
Hast ben of such professión,  
Discover thy confessión.  
Hast thou supplanted any man?”—

“For ought that I you tellé can,  
Min holy fader, as of dede  
I am withouten any drede  
And giltéles but of my thought,  
My consciéce excuse I nought.  
For were it wronge or were it right,  
Me lacketh no thingé but might  
That I the woldé longe er this  
Of other mannés love iwis<sup>1</sup>

By way of súpllantatió  
Have made appropriatió  
And holde that I never bought,  
Though it another man forthought,<sup>2</sup>  
And all this speke I but of one,  
For whom I let all other gone.  
But her I may nought overpasse  
That I ne mote alway compásse,  
Me rought nought by what quein-  
tise,<sup>3</sup>

So that I might in any wise  
Fro suché that my lady serve,  
Her herté maké for to swerve  
Withouten any part of love.  
For by the goddés alle above  
I wolde it mighté so befallé,  
That I aloné shuld hem alle  
Supplant and welde her at my wille.  
And that thing may I nought fulfille,

<sup>1</sup> *Iwis*, certainly.    <sup>2</sup> *Forthought*, grieved.  
<sup>3</sup> I should not care by what ingenious device.

But if I shuldé strengthé make.  
And that I dare nought undertake  
Though I were as w Alisaunder,  
For therof might arise a sclaunder.  
And certés that shall I do never,  
For in good feith yet had I lever  
In my simpllessé for to deie,  
Than worché such supplantarie.  
Of other wise I woll nought say  
That, if I founde a siker way,  
I wolde as for conclusion  
Worche after supplantacion  
So highe a lové for to winne.  
Now fader, if that this be sinne,  
I am all redy to redesse  
Thegilt, of whiche I me confesse.”—

“My godé sone, as of Supplant  
Thee theré nought drede *tant ne  
quant*

As for no thing that I have herde,  
But only that thou haste misferde  
Thenkend, and that me liketh  
nought,

For God beholt<sup>1</sup> a mannes thought.  
And if thou understood in soth  
In Lovés causé what it doth  
A man to ben a supplantoúr,  
Thou woldest for thin own honoúr  
By double waie také kepe.

“First for thin own estatetokepe,  
To be thy self so well bethought  
That thou supplanted weré nought.  
And eke for worship of thy name  
Towardés other do the same  
And suffre every man have his.  
But nethéles it was and is  
That in awaite<sup>2</sup> at all assaies  
Supplant of love is in our waies ;  
The lief full ofté for the lever  
Forsaketh,<sup>3</sup> and so it hath done  
ever.

Ensamble I finde therupon,  
At Troie how that Agámemnón

<sup>1</sup> *Beholt*, beholds,    <sup>2</sup> *Awaite*, watch.  
<sup>3</sup> Leaves the loved for the more loved.

Supplanted hath the worthy knight  
Achilles for that sweté wight,  
Which naméd was Brisseïda ;  
And also of Criseïda,  
Whom Troilus to lové ches,<sup>1</sup>  
Supplanted hath Diómedés.

Of Geta and Amphitrióné,  
That whilom weré both as one  
Of frendship and of compaignie,  
I rede how that Supplantaré  
In Love, as it betidé tho,  
Beguiléd hath one of hem two.  
For this Getá, that I of mene,  
To whom the lusty faire Alcmene  
Assuréd was by way of love,  
Whan he best wendehave ben above  
And sikerest of that he hadde,  
Cupído so the causé ladde,  
That while he was out of the way,  
Amphitrión her love away  
Hath take, and in this forme he  
wrought.

By night unto the chambre he  
sought  
Where that she lay, and with a wile  
He counterfeteth for the while  
The vois of Get in suche a wise,  
That made her of her bedde arise  
Wenéndé, that it weré he,  
She wendé, that it weré soth.  
Lo, what supplant of Lové doth.  
This Geta forth bejapéd went,  
And yet ne wist he what it ment.  
Amphitrión him hath supplanted  
With sleight of love and her en-  
chaunted,

And thus put every man out other.  
The ship of Love hath lost his rother,  
So that he can no reson stère.  
And for to speke of this matere  
Touchendé Love and his supplaunt  
A talé, whiche is accordaúnt,  
Unto thin ere I thenke enforme.  
Now herken, for this is the forme.

<sup>1</sup> *Ches*, chose.

“ *Of thiske citee* chefe of alle,  
Which men the noble Romé calle,  
Er it was set to Cristés feith,  
There was, as the croniqué saith,  
An emperour, the whiche it ladde  
In pees, that he no werrés hadde.  
There was no thing disóbeisaúnt,  
Which was to Rome appertenaúnt,  
But all was tornéd into rest.  
To some it thought hem for the  
best,

To some it thought nothíngé so.  
And that was only unto tho  
Whoseherést stood upon knight hode.  
But most of allé his manhode  
The worthy sone of themperour,  
Which woldé ben a werriour,  
As he that was chivalerous,  
Of worldés fame and desiroús,  
Began his fader to besече,  
That he the werrés mighté seche  
In straungé marchés for to ride.  
His fader saide he shulde abide  
And woldé graunté him no leve.  
But he, which woldé nought be-  
leve,<sup>1</sup>

A knight of his to whom he trist,  
So that his fader nothing wist,  
He toke and tolde him his corage,<sup>2</sup>  
That he purpóseth a viage,  
If that Fortúné with him stonde.  
He said how that he woldé fonde<sup>3</sup>  
The Greté See<sup>4</sup> to passe unknowe  
And there abidé for a throwe<sup>5</sup>  
Upon the werrés to travaile.  
And to this point withouté faile  
This knight, whan he hath herde  
his lorde,

Is swore and stant of his accorde.  
And they that bothé yongé were,  
So that in privé conseil there

<sup>1</sup> *Beleve*, remain.

<sup>2</sup> *His corage*, the thought of his heart.

<sup>3</sup> *Fonde*, try.

<sup>4</sup> *Grete See*, Mediterranean.

<sup>5</sup> *For a throwe*, for a time.

They ben assented for to wende ;  
And therupon to make an ende  
Tresûre inough with hem they  
token.

And whan the time is best they  
loken

That sodeinlich in a galeie  
Fro Romé-lond they went their waie  
And lond upon that other side.

“ The worldé fell so thilké tide,  
Whiche ever his happés hath  
diverse,

The greté Souldan than of Perse  
Ayein the Caliphe of Egípte

A werré, which that him beclipte,<sup>1</sup>  
Hath in a marché costeaúnt,<sup>2</sup>

And he, which was a pursuivaunt  
Worshíp of armés to atteigne,  
This Romain, let anon ordeigne  
That he was redy every dele.

And whan he was arraiéd wele  
Of every thing which him be-  
longeth,

Straight unto Kaire his wey he  
fongeth,<sup>3</sup>

Wher he the Souldan thanné fonde  
And axeth that within his londe  
He might him for the werré serve  
As he which woll his thank deserve.  
The Souldan was right glad withall  
And well the more in speciáll,  
Whan that he wist he was Romain.  
But what was ellés incertaín

That might he wité by no way.  
And thus the knight of whom I say  
Toward the Souldan is belefte  
And in the marches now and este,  
Where that the dedly werrés were,  
He wroughté such knighthodé  
there,

That every man spake of him good.

“ And thilké timé so it stood,

<sup>1</sup> *Beclipte*, surrounded.

<sup>2</sup> *Marché costeaúnt*, border country.

<sup>3</sup> *Fongeth*, takes.

This mighty Souldan by his wife  
A doughter hath, that in this life  
Men saidé there was none so faire ;  
She shuldé ben her faders heire,  
And was of yerés ripe inough,  
Her beauté many an herté drough  
To bowen to that ilké lawe,  
Fro which no life may be with-  
drawe.

And that is Lové, whose natúre  
Set life and deth in a ventúre  
Of hem that knighthode undertake.  
This lusty peine hath overtake  
The hert of this Romain so sore,  
That to knighthodé more and more  
Prowesse avaunteth his coráge.

Lich to the leon in his rage,  
Fro whom that alle bestés fle ;  
Such was this knight in his degre.  
Where he was arméd in the felde,  
Ther dursté none abide his shelde.  
Great price<sup>1</sup> upon the werre he  
hadde.

“ But she, whiche all the chauncé  
ladde,

Fortúné shope the marchés so,  
That by thassent of bothé two  
The Souldan and the Caliphe eke  
Bataile upon a day they seke,  
Which was in suche a wisé set,  
That lenger shulde it nought be let.  
They made hem stronge on every  
side,

And whan it drough toward the tide,  
That the batailé shuldé be,  
The Souldan in great priveté  
A gold ringe of his doughter toke  
And made her swere upon a boke  
And eke upon the goddés all,  
That if fortuné so befall  
In the batailé that he deie,—  
That she shall thilké man obeie  
And take him to her husébonde,  
Which thilké samé ring to honde

<sup>1</sup> *Price*, praise.

Her shuldé bringe after his deth.

“This hath she swore, and forth  
he geth

With all the power of his londé  
Unto the marché, where he fonde  
His enemy full embatailed.  
The Souldan hath the feld assailed.  
They that ben hardy sone assem-  
blen,

Wherof the dredfull hertés trem-  
blen.

That one sleeth, and that other  
sterveth,<sup>1</sup>

But above all his prise deserveth  
This knightly Romain; where he  
rode

His dedly swerd no man abode,  
Ayein the which was no defence,  
Egipté fledde in his présence,  
And they of Perse upon the chace  
Pursuen, but I not<sup>2</sup> what grace  
Befell, an arwe out of a bowe  
All sodeinly within a throwe  
The Souldan smote, and there he  
lay.

The chas is left for thilké day,  
And he was bore into a tent.  
The Souldan sigh how that it went,  
And that he shulde alगतé deie.  
And to this knight of Romainie,  
As unto him whome he most triste,  
His daughters ring, that none it  
wiste,

He toke and tolde him all the cas,  
Upon her othe what token it was  
Of that she shuldé ben his wife.  
Whan this was said, the hertés life  
Of this Souldán departeth sone.  
And therupon, as was to done,  
The dedé body well and faire  
They carry till they come at Kaire,  
There he was worthely begrave.

“The lordés, whiche as wolden  
save

<sup>1</sup> *Sterveth*, dies.    <sup>2</sup> *Not*, know not (ne wot).

The regné, which was desolate,  
To bringe it into good estate  
A parlément they set anone.  
Now herken what fell therupon.  
This yougé lord, this worthy knight  
Of Rome upon the samé night  
That they a morwe treté sholde,  
Unto his bacheler he tolde  
His counseil, and the ring with al  
He sheweth, through which that he  
shall,

He saith, the kingés daughter  
wedde,

For so the ring was leid to wedde,<sup>1</sup>  
He tolde, into her faders honde,  
That with what man that she it  
fonde

She shulde him take unto her lorde.  
‘And thus,’ he saith, ‘stant of re-  
corde.

But no man wot who hath this  
ring.’

This bacheler upon this thing  
His ere and his ententé laid  
And thoughté moré than he said;  
And feigneth with a fals viságe,  
That he was glad, but his coráge  
Was all set in another wise.  
These oldé philosóphres wise  
They writen upon thilké while,  
That he may best a man beguile  
In whom the man hath most  
credéce.

And this befell in evidence  
Toward this yongé lord of Rome.  
His bacheler, which haddé come  
Whan that his lord by nighté  
slepte,  
This ring, the which his maister  
kepte,

Out of his purs away he dedé  
And put another in the stede.

“A morwe whan the court is set  
The yongé lady was first fet,

<sup>1</sup> *To wedde*, as pledge.

To whom the lordés done homáge,  
 And after that of mariáge  
 They treten and axen of her wille.  
 But she, which thoughté to fulfille  
 Her faders hest in this matére,  
 Said openly, that men may here,  
 The chargé whiche her fader bad.  
 Tho was this lorde of Romé glad  
 And drough toward his purs anone,  
 But all for nought, it was agone.  
 His bacheler it hath forth drawe  
 And axeth therupon the lawe,  
 That she him holdé covenaut.  
 The token was so suffisaúnt,  
 That it ne mighté be forsake.  
 And nethéles his lorde hath take  
 Quaréle ayein his owné man,  
 But for no thing that ever he can  
 He might as thanné nought be  
 herde,

So that his claime is unanswérde,  
 And he hath of his purpos failed.

“This bacheler was tho coun-  
 seiled

And wedded and of thilke empíre  
 He was corouéd lord and sire,  
 And all the lond him hath re-  
 ceived ;

Wherof his lord, which was de-  
 ceived,

A siknesse er the thriddé morwe  
 Conceivéð hath of dedly sorwe.  
 And as he lay upon his deth,  
 There while him lasteth speche  
 and breth

He sendé for the worthiést  
 Of all the londe and eke the best  
 And tolde hem all the sothé tho,  
 That he was sone and heire also  
 Of themperour of greté Romé,  
 And how that they to-gider come,  
 This knight and he, right as it was  
 He tolde hem all the plein cas.  
 And for that he his counseil tolde,  
 That other hath all that he wolde

And he hath failéd of his mede.  
 As for the good he taketh none hede  
 He saith, but only of the love,  
 Of which he wend have ben above.  
 And therupon by letter write  
 He doth his fader for to wite  
 Of all the mater how it stode.  
 And thanné with an hertely mode  
 Unto the lordés he besought  
 To tell his lady howe he bought  
 Her love, of whiche another glad-  
 deth.

And with that worde his hewéfadeth  
 And saide: ‘a dieu my lady swete.’  
 The life hath lost his kindly hete,  
 And he lay dede as any stone,  
 Wherof was sory many one,  
 But none of allé so as she.

“This falsé knight in his degre  
 Arested was and put in holde.  
 For openly whan it was tolde  
 Of the tresón, whiche is befallé,  
 Throughout the lond they saiden -  
 alle,

If it be soth that men suppose  
 His owne untrouth him shall depose.  
 And for to seche an evidence  
 With honour and great reverence,  
 Wherof they mighté knowe an ende,  
 To themperour anon they sende  
 The letter whiche his soné wrote.  
 And whan that he the sothé wote,  
 To tell his sorwe is endéles ;  
 But yet in hasté nethéles  
 Upon the talé whiche he herde,  
 His steward into Persé ferde  
 With many a worthy Romain eke  
 His legé tretour<sup>1</sup> for to seke.  
 And whan they thider comé were,  
 This knight him hath confesséd  
 there,

How falsly that he hath him bore,  
 Wherof his worthy lord was lore.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His legé tretour, his traitorous liegeman.

<sup>2</sup> Lore, lost.

“Tho saiden some he shuldé  
deie,

But yet they founden such a weie,  
That he shall nought be dede in  
Perse,

And thus the skillés ben diverse.  
By causé that he was coróned,  
Of that the lond was abandóned  
To him, all though it were unright,  
There is no peiné for him dight,  
But to this point and to this ende  
They graunten wel, that he shall  
wende

With the Romaíns to Rome ayein.  
And thus accorded full and plein  
The quické body with the dede  
With levé také<sup>1</sup> forth they lede,  
Where that supplant hath his juise.<sup>2</sup>  
Wherof that thou thee might advise  
Upon this enformaciön  
Touchend of Supplantaciön,  
That thou, my soné, do nought so  
And for to také hede also  
What Súplant doth in other halve,  
There is no man can finde a salve  
Plainly to helen suche a sore.  
It hath and shall ben evermore,  
Whan Pride is with Envié joint,  
He suffreth no man in good point,  
Where that he may his honour let.  
And therupon if I shall set  
Ensamble, in holy chirche I finde  
How that Supplant is nought be-  
hinde.

God wote, if that it now be so.  
For in croníque of time ago  
I finde a talé concordáble  
Of Supplant, which that is no fable,  
In the manér as I shall telle  
So as whilóm the thingés felle.

**At Rome** as it hath ósté falle  
The Viker Generall of alle  
Of hem that leven Cristés feith

<sup>1</sup> *Levé také*, leave taken.

<sup>2</sup> *Juise* (judicium), judgment.

His lasté day,—which none with-  
saith,—

Hath shette as to the worldes eye;  
Whos name, if I shall specifie,  
He highté Popé Nicholas.

And thus whan that he passéd was,  
The Cardinals, that wolden save  
The forme of lawe in the conclave,  
Gon for to chese a newé Pope,  
And after that they couthe agrope  
Hath eche of hem said his entent.  
Til atté lasté they assent

Upon an holy clerk recluse,  
Which full was of gostly vertuse.  
His paciéncé and his simplesse  
Hath set him into highe noblesse.  
Thus was he Popé canonised  
With great honouér and intronised.  
And upon chaunce, as it is falle,  
His namé Celestin men calle;  
Which notifiéd was by bulle  
To holy chirche, and to the fulle  
In allé londés magnified.

But every worship is envéd,  
And that was thilké timé sene.  
For whan this Pope, of whome I  
mene,

Was chose and other set beside,  
A Cardinal was thilké tide,  
Which the papate long hath desired  
And therupon gretely conspired,  
But whan he sigh fortúne is failed,  
For which long time he hath tra-  
vailed,

That ilké fire whiche Ethna bren-  
neth

Throughout his wofull hertérenneth,  
Whiche is resembled to Envie,  
Wherof Supplant and Trecherie  
Engendred is. And nethéles  
He feigneth love, he feigneth pees.  
Outward he doth the reveréncé,  
But all within his consciéncé  
Through fals ymaginaciön  
He thoughté Supplantaciön.

And therupon a wonder wile  
 He wroughté. For at thilké while  
 It fel so, that of his lignage  
 He hadde a clergeon of yonge age,  
 Whom he hath in his chambre  
 affaited.<sup>1</sup>

“This Cardinal his time hath  
 waited

And with his wordés sly and queint,  
 The whiche he couthé wisely peint,  
 He shope this clerke, of whiche I  
 telle,

Toward the Popé for to dwelle,  
 So that within his chamber a night  
 He lay, and was a privé wight  
 Toward the Pope on nightés tide;  
 May no man fle that shall betide.

“This Cardinal, which thoughté  
 guile,

Upon a day, whan he hath while,  
 This yongé clerke unto him toke  
 And made him swere upon a boke  
 And tolde him what his willé was.  
 And forth with al a trompe of bras  
 He hath him take and bad him  
 this :

‘Thou shalt,’ he saidé, ‘whan  
 time is

Awaite and také right good kepe,  
 Whan that the Pope is fast aslepe  
 And that none other man be nigh.  
 And thanné that thou be so sligh  
 Through out the trompe into his  
 ere,

Fro heven as though a vois it were,  
 To souné of such prolaciön,  
 That he his meditaciön

Therof may take, and understonde  
 As though it were of Goddés sonde.  
 And in this wisé thou shalt say,  
 That he do thilk estate away  
 Of Pope, of whiche he stant hon-  
 oured,

So shall his soulé be socoured

<sup>1</sup> *Affaited*, adapted to his purpose.

Of thilké worship atté last  
 In heven which shall ever last.’

“This clerk, whan he hath herd  
 the form,

How he the Popé shuld enform,  
 Toke of the Cardinal his leve  
 And goth him home, till it was eve.  
 And privély the trompe he hedde,  
 Til that the Popé was a bedde.  
 And at the midnight, whan he  
 knewe

The Popé slepté, than he blewe  
 Within his trompé through the wall  
 And tolde, in what manér he shall  
 His Papacé leve, and take  
 His firste estate. And thus awake  
 This holy Pope he madé thries,  
 Wherof diversé fantasies  
 Upon his greté holinésse

Within his hert he gan impresse.  
 The Popé full of innocéce  
 Conceiveth in his consciéce  
 That it is Goddés wil he cesse.<sup>1</sup>  
 But in what wise he may relese  
 His highé estate, that wote he  
 nought.

And thus within him selfe be  
 thought,

He bare it stille in his memoire,  
 Till he cam to the consistoire,  
 And there in presence of hem alle  
 He axeth if it so befalle,  
 That any Popé cessé wolde,  
 How that the lawe it suffré sholde.  
 They seten allé stille and herde,  
 Was none, which to the point  
 answérde ;

For to what purpos that it ment  
 There was no man knew his en-  
 tent

But only he which shope the guile.

“This Cardinal the samé while  
 All openly with wordés pleine  
 Saith if the Popé woll ordeigne,

<sup>1</sup> *Cesse*, abdicate.



That there be suche a lawé wrought,  
Than might he cesse, and elles  
nought.

“And as he saidé, done it was.  
The Pope anone upon the cas  
Of his papáll auctorité  
Hath made and yové the decreté.  
And whan the lawé was confermed  
In dué forme and all affermed,  
This innocent which was deceived  
His papacie anone hath weived,<sup>1</sup>  
Renouncéd and resignéd eke.  
That other was no thing to seke,  
But undernethé suche a jape  
He hath so for him selfé shape,  
That how as ever it him beseme  
The mitre with the diademe  
He hath through Supplantaciön  
And in his confirmaciön,  
Upon the fortune of his grace,  
His name was clepéd Boneface.

“Under the visér of Envie,  
Lo, thus was hid the trecherie  
Whiche hath beguiléd many one.  
But such counseil theremay be none  
Which treson, whan it is conspired,  
That it nis lich the sparké fired  
Up in the roof, which for a throwe  
Lith hid til, whan the windés blowe,  
It blaseth out on every side.

This Boneface, which can nought  
hide

The trecherie of his supplaunt,  
Hath openly made his avaunt,  
How he the papacie hath wonne.  
But thing which is with wrong be-  
gonne

May never stondé wel at ende.  
Where Pridé shall the bowé bende,  
He shet<sup>2</sup> ful oft out of the way,  
And thus the Pope, of whom I say,  
Whan that he stood on high the  
whele,

<sup>1</sup> *Weived*, put aside.

<sup>2</sup> *Shet*, shoots.

He can nought suffre himselfe be  
wele.

Envië, whiche is lovéles,  
And Pridé, whiche is lawéles,  
With such tempésté made him erre,  
That charité goth out of herre.<sup>1</sup>  
So that upon misgovernance  
Ayein Lewfís the King of Fraunce  
He toké quarell of his oultrage  
And said, he shuldé don homáge  
Unto the chirché bodély.  
But he, that wist no thingé why  
He shuldé do so great servíce  
After the worlde in suche a wise,  
Withstood the wrong of that  
demaunde,

For nought the Popé may com-  
maunde

The King woll nought the Pope  
obeie.

This Popé tho by allé weie  
That he may worche of violénce,  
Hath sent the bulle of his senténce  
With cursinge and with enterdite.  
The king upon this wrongfull plite  
To kepe his regné from serváge,<sup>2</sup>  
Counseilé was of his barnáge,<sup>2</sup>  
That might with might shall be  
withstond.

Thus was the causé tak on hond,  
And saiden, that the papacie  
They wolden honouór and magnífie  
In all that ever is spirituáll,  
But thilké Pridé temporáll  
Of Boneface in his persone  
Ayein that ilké wronge alóne  
They woldé stonden in debate,  
And thus the man and nought the  
state

The Frensshé shopen by her might  
To greve. And fel there was a  
knight

Sire Guilliám de Langharet,  
Which was upon this causé set.

<sup>1</sup> Goes off its hinges.    <sup>2</sup> *Barnáge*, baronage.

And therupon he toke a route  
 Of men of armés and rode oute,  
 So longe and <sup>1</sup> in awaite he lay,  
 That he aspiéd upon a day  
 The Popé was at Avinon  
 And shuldé ride out of the town  
 Unto Pontsorgé, the whiche is  
 A castell in Provence of his.  
 Upon the way and as he rode,  
 This knight, whiche hovéd and  
 abode

Embuisshé upon horsébake,  
 All sodeinlich upon him brake  
 And hath him by the bridell sesed  
 And said: 'O thou, which hast  
 disesed

The courte of Frauncé by thy  
 wronge,  
 Now shalt thou singe an other  
 songe.

Thin enterdite and thy senténcé  
 Ayein thin owné consciéncé  
 Hereafter thou shalt fele and grope.  
 We pleigné nought ayein the Pope,  
 For thilké name is honouráble,  
 But thou, whiche hast be deceiváble  
 And trecherous in all thy werke,  
 Thou Boneface, and proudé clerke,  
 Misleder of the papacie,  
 Thy falsé body shall abie <sup>2</sup>  
 And suffre, that it hath deserved.'

"Lo, thus this supplantór was  
 served.

For they him ladden into Fraunce  
 And setten him to his penáunce  
 Within a toure in hardé bondes,  
 Where he for hunger both his  
 hondes

Ete of and diéd, God wote how.

<sup>1</sup> *So longe and*, and so long. This way of placing "and" occurs frequently throughout the poem. Here it recurs six lines lower down.

<sup>2</sup> *Abie*. "Abye" means buy, that is, "pay for." "Abide" would mean "wait for," as this knight "hovéd" (hovered about a spot) and abode, waited for, Pope Boniface.

Of whome the writinge is yet now  
 Registred as a man may here,  
 Which speketh and saith in this  
 maner :

'Thin entré lich a fox was sligh,  
 Thy regne also with pride on high  
 Was lich the leon in his rage,  
 But atté laste of thy passáge  
 Thy deth was to the houndés like.'

"Suche is the letter of his cro-  
 nique

Proclaméd in the court of Rome,  
 Wherof the wise ensample nome.<sup>1</sup>  
 And yet as ferforth as I dare,  
 I rede all other men beware  
 And that they loké well algate,  
 That none his owne estate translate  
 Of holy chirche in no degre  
 By fraudé ne by subtílté.  
 For thilke honoúr whiche Aaron  
 toke

Shall none receive as saith the boke,  
 But he be clepéd,<sup>2</sup> as he was.  
 What shall I thenken in this cas  
 Of that I heré nowe a day?  
 I not,<sup>3</sup> but he which can and may  
 By reson both and by natúre  
 The helpe of every mannés cure  
 He kepé Simon fro the folde.

"For Joachim, thilke abbottolde,  
 How suché daiés shulden falle,  
 That comunlich in places alle  
 The chapmen of such mercerie  
 With fraude and with supplantarie  
 So many shulden beie and selle,  
 That he ne may for shamé telle  
 So foule a sinne in mannés ere,  
 But God forbedé that it were  
 In ouré daiés, that he saith.

For if the clerk beware <sup>4</sup> his faith  
 In chapmanhode at suche a faire  
 The remenaunt mot nede empeire <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nome*, took.

<sup>2</sup> *But he be clepéd*, unless he be called.

<sup>3</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>4</sup> *Beware*, barter.

<sup>5</sup> *Empeire*, grow worse.

Of all that to the world belongeth,  
For whan that holy churché wrong-  
eth,

I not what other thing shall righte.  
And nethéles at mannés sighte  
Envfë for to be preferred  
Hath consciencé so differred,  
That no man loketh to the Vice  
Whiche is the moder of malíce,  
And that is thilké fals Envie,  
Which causeth many a trecherie.  
For where he may another se  
That is more gracióús than he,  
It shall nought stonden in his might  
But if he hinder suche a wight.  
And that is well nigh over all  
This Vice is now so generall.

“Envfë thilke unhap indrough,  
Whan Joab by decepté slough  
Abner, for drede he shuldé be  
With king David such as was he.

“And through Envie also it felle  
Of thilké fals Achitofelle,  
For his counseil was nought  
acheved

But that he sigh Cusy beveled  
With Absolon and him forsake,  
He henge him selfe upon a stake.

“Senec witénsseth openly,  
How that Envfë properly  
Is of the Court the comun wenche.  
And halt taverné for to schenche<sup>1</sup>  
That drink which maketh the herté  
brenne,

And doth<sup>2</sup> the wit abouté renne  
By every waié to compásse  
How that he might all other passe,  
As he which through unkindéship  
Envfeth every felaship.  
So that thou might well knowe and  
se,

There is no Vicé suche as he  
First toward God abhominable  
And to mankindé unprofitable.

<sup>1</sup> Schenche, pour out.    <sup>2</sup> Doth, causes.

And that by wordés but a fewe  
I shall by reson prove and shewe.

“Envie if that I shall describe,  
He is nought shaply for to wive  
In erth among the women here.  
For there is in him no matere  
Wherof he mighté do plesaunce.  
First for his hevy contenance  
Of that he semeth eyer unglad  
He is nought able to be hadde,  
And eke he brenneth so withinne,  
That kindé may no profit winne,  
Wherof he shulde his lové plesé.  
For thilké blood, which shuld have  
ese

To regne among the moisté veines,  
Is drie of thilke unkindly peines  
Through which Envie is fired ay.  
And this by reson prove I may,  
That toward Love Envie is nought;  
And other wise if it be sought,  
Upon what side as ever it falle  
It is the wersté Vice of alle,  
Which of him self hath most malíce.  
For understand that every Vice  
Some causé hath wherof it groweth,  
But of Envfë no man knoweth  
Fro whenne he cam, but out of  
helle.

For thus the wisé clerkés telle,  
That no spirít but of malíce  
By way of kinde upon a Vice  
Is tempted, and by such a way  
Envie hath kindé<sup>1</sup> put away  
And of malíce hath his sterfng,  
Wherof he maketh his bákbítng,  
And is him self therof disesed;  
So may there be no kindé plesed.  
For ay the more that he envieth,  
The more ayein him self he plieth.  
Thus stant Envie in good espeire  
To ben him self the divels heire  
As he whiche is his nexté liche  
And furthest from the heaven riche.

<sup>1</sup> Kindé, nature.

For theré may he never wone.<sup>1</sup>

“Forthý my godé deré sone,  
If thou wolt finde a siker way  
To lové, put Envíe away.”—

“Min holy fader, reson wolde,  
That I this Vice escheué sholde.  
But yet to strengthen my coráge  
If that ye wolde in avautáge  
Therof set a recoverir,  
It were to me a great desir,  
That I this Vicé mighté flee.”—

“Now understand, my sone, and  
see,

There is phisiqué for the seke  
And Vertues for the Vices eke.  
Who that the Vices wolde escheue,  
He mot by reson thanné sue<sup>2</sup>  
The Vertues. For by thilké way  
He may the Vices done away;  
For they to-gider may nought dwelle.  
For as the water of the welle  
Of fire abateth the malíce,  
Right so Vertu fordoth the Vice.

“Ayein Envíe is Charité,  
Whiche is the moder of pité,  
That maketh a mannés herté tender,  
That it may no malíce engender  
In him that is inclined therto.  
For his coráge is tempred so,  
That though he might him self  
releve

Yet wolde he nought another greve,  
But rather for to do plesaunce  
He bereth him selven the gre-  
vaunce,

So fain he wolde another ese.  
Wherof, my soné, for thin ese  
Now herken a talé, whiche I rede,<sup>3</sup>  
And understonde it well I rede.<sup>4</sup>

“Among the bokés of Latín  
I finde it writ of Constantín,  
The worthy emperour of Rome,  
Such infortunés to him come

<sup>1</sup> Wone, dwell.

<sup>3</sup> Rede, read.

<sup>2</sup> Sue, follow.

<sup>4</sup> Rede, advise.

Whan he was in his lusty age,  
The lepre caught in his viságe  
And so forth over all aboute  
That he ne mighté riden oute.  
So left he bothé shield and spere,  
As he that might him nought be-  
stere,

And helde him in his chamber close.  
Through all the world the fame  
arose.

The greté clerkés ben assent  
And com at his commaundémént  
To tret upon this lordés hele.  
So longé they to-gider dele,  
That they upon this medicíne  
Appointen hem and determiné,  
That in the maner as it stood  
They wolde him bath in childés  
blood

Withinné seven winter age.  
For as they sain, that shulde assuage  
The leper and all the violéce,  
Which that they knewe of accidéce  
And nought by way of kinde is falle,  
And therto they accorden alle  
As for fináll conclusiön,  
And tolden her opiniön  
To themperour. And he anone  
His counsel toke, and therupon  
With letters and with sealés out  
They send in every londe about  
The yongé children for to seche,  
Whose blood, they said, shuldé be  
leche

For themperourés maladie.

“There was inough to wepe and  
crie

Among the moders, whan they herde  
How wofully this causé ferde.  
But nethéles they moten bowe,  
And thus womén there come inowe,  
With children soukend on the tete;  
Tho was there many terés lete.

“But were hem liefé or were hem  
loth,

The women and the children both  
 Into the paleis forth be brought  
 With many a sory hertés thought  
 Of hem whiche of her<sup>1</sup> body bore  
 The children hadde, and so forlore  
 Within a whilé shulden se.

The moders wepe in her degre  
 And many of hem a swouné falle,  
 The yongé babies crieden alle.  
 This noise arose, this lorde it herde  
 And lokéd out, and how it ferde  
 He sigh, and as who saith abraide  
 Out of his slepe and thus he saide :  
 ‘O thou diviné purveaúnce,  
 Which every man in the balaúnce  
 Of kinde hast forméd to be liche,—  
 The pouer is bore as is the riche  
 And dieth in the samé wise ;  
 Upon the fole, upon the wise,  
 Sikkénse and hele entér comune ;  
 May none escheué that fortúne  
 Which kinde hath in her lawé sette ;  
 Her strengthe and beauté ben be-  
 sette

To every man aliché free ;  
 That she preferreth no degree  
 As in the disposiciön  
 Of bodely complexiön.  
 And eke, of soulé resonáble,  
 The pouer childe is bore as able  
 To vertue as the kingés sone.  
 For every man his owné wone<sup>2</sup>  
 After the lust of his assay  
 The Vice or Vertue chesé may.  
 Thus stonden allé men franchised,  
 But in estate they ben devised ;  
 To somé worshíp and richésse,  
 To somé pouérte and distresse ;  
 One lordeth and an other serveth :  
 But yet as every man deserveth  
 The world yeveth nought his yeftés  
 here.

And certés he hath great matere

<sup>1</sup> *Her*, their.

<sup>2</sup> *His owné wone*, according to his own usage.

To ben of good condiciön,  
 Whiche hath in his subjectiön  
 The men that ben of his sem-  
 blaúnce.’

And eke he toke his remembraúnce,  
 How he that madé lawe of kinde  
 Wolde every man to lawé binde,  
 And bad a man, suche as he wolde  
 Toward him self, right such he  
 sholde

Toward an other done also.

“And thus this worthy lord as tho<sup>1</sup>  
 Set in balaúnce his owne estate  
 And with him self stood in debate  
 And thoughté, howe it was nought  
 good

To se so mochel mannés blood  
 Be spilt by cause of him alone.

“He sigh also the greté mone  
 Of that the moders were unglad,  
 And of the wo the children made  
 Wherof that all his herté tendreth,  
 And such pité within engendreth  
 That him was lever for to chese  
 His owné body for to lese,  
 Than se so great a mordre wrought  
 Upon the blood which gilteth  
 nought.

Thus for the pité whiche he toke,  
 All other lechés he forsoke  
 And put him out of aventure  
 Al only into Goddés cure  
 And saith : ‘Who that woll maister  
 be

He mot be servaunt to pité.’  
 So ferforth he was overcome  
 With charité, that he hath nome  
 His counseil and his officérs,  
 And badde unto his tresorérs,  
 That they his tresour all about  
 Departe<sup>2</sup> among the pouer route  
 Of women and of children bothe,  
 Wherof they might hem fede and  
 clothe

<sup>1</sup> *As tho*, as then.    <sup>2</sup> *Departé*, part out, divide.

And sauflly tornen home ayein  
 Withoute loss of any grein.  
 Through Charité thus he dispendeth  
 His good, wherof that he amendeth  
 Thepouer people and countrevaileth  
 The harm that he hem sotravailleth.  
 And thus the wofull nightés sorwe  
 To joie is tornéd on the morwe.  
 All was thankíng, all was blessing,  
 Whiche erst was wepinge and  
 cursíng.

These women gone home glad  
 inough,

Echone for joie on other lough  
 And praiden for this lordés hele,  
 Whiche hath releséd the quaréle  
 And hath his owné will forsake  
 In Charite for Goddés sake.  
 But now hereafter thou shalte here  
 What God hath wrought in this  
 matére,

As he that doth all equité.  
 To him that wroughté Charité  
 He was ayeinward charitoús  
 And to pité he was pitoús.  
 For it was never knowé yit,  
 That Charité goth unaquit.  
 The night whan he was laid to  
 slepe,

The highé God, which wold him  
 kepe,

Saint Peter and saint Poule him  
 sende,

By whom he wolde his lepre  
 amende.

They two to him slepénd appere  
 Fro God, and said in this manére:  
 ‘O Constantin, for thou hast  
 served

Pité, thou hast pité deserved.  
 Forthý thou shalt such pité have,  
 That God through pité wold the save.  
 So shalt thou double helé finde,  
 First for thy bodeliché kinde,  
 And for thy wofull soule also.

Thou shalt ben hole of bothé two.  
 And for thou shalt the nought de-  
 speire,

Thy lepré shall no more empeire  
 Till thou wolt sendé therupon  
 Unto the mount of Celióñ,  
 Where that Silvéster and his clergie  
 To-gider dwelle in compaignie  
 For drede of the, which many a day  
 Hast ben a fo to Cristés lay<sup>1</sup>  
 And hast destrued to mochel shame  
 The prechours of his holy name.  
 But now thou hast somdele appesed  
 Thy God and with good dedé-  
 plesed,

That thou thy pité hast bewared  
 Upon the blood which thou hast  
 spared.

Forthý to thy salvaciön  
 Thou shalt have informaciön,  
 Such as Silvéster shall the teche,  
 The nedeth of none other leche.’  
 This emperour, whiche all this  
 herde :

‘Graunt mercý Lorde, he answerde,  
 I wold do so as ye me say.  
 But of o thing I woldé pray,  
 What shall I telle unto Silvéstre  
 Or of your name or of your estre?’<sup>2</sup>  
 And they him tolden what they  
 hight

And forth with all oute of his sight  
 They passen up into the heven.  
 And he awoke out of his sweven<sup>3</sup>  
 And clepeth, and men come anone  
 And tolde his dreame, and therupon  
 In suche a wise as he hem telleth  
 The mount wher that Silvester  
 dwelleth

They have in allé hasté sought,  
 And founde he was, and with hem  
 brought

To themperour, which to him tolde

<sup>1</sup> Lay, law, faith.      <sup>2</sup> Estre, being.

<sup>3</sup> Sweven, dream.

His sweven and ellés what he wolde.  
And whan Silvéster hath herd the  
king

He was right joyfull of this thing,  
And him began with all his wit  
To techen upon Holy Writ.

First how mankindé was forlore,  
And how the highe God therfore  
His Soné sendé from above,  
Which boré was for mannés love;  
And after of his owné chois  
He toke his deth upon the crois;  
And how in grave he was beloke,  
And how that he hath hellé broke  
And toke hem out that were him  
leve.<sup>1</sup>

And for to make us full beleve  
That he was verray Goddes Sone  
Ayein the kinde of mannés wone  
Fro deth he rose the thriddé day.  
And whan he wolde, as he well  
may,

He stigh up to his Father even  
With flesh and blood into the  
heven;

And right so in the samé forme,  
In flesh and blood, he shall re-  
torne,

Whan timé cometh, to quicke and  
dede

At thilké wofull Day of Drede,  
Where every man shall take his  
dome

Als well the maister as the grome.  
The mighty kingés retenue  
That Day may stonde of no valúe  
With worldés strengthé to defende;  
For every man mot than entende  
To stond upon his owné dedes  
And leve all other mennés nedes.

That Day may no counsél availle,  
The pledour and the plee shall faille;  
The sentence of that ilké day  
May none appele sette in delay;

<sup>1</sup> *Leve*, dear.

There may no gold the jugé plie  
That he ne shall the sothé trie  
And setten every man upright,  
As well the plowman as the knight.  
The leudé man, the greté clerke  
Shall stonde upon his owné werke;  
And suche as he is foundé tho,  
Such shall he be for evermo,  
There may no peiné be relesed,  
There may no joié ben encresed,  
But endéles as they have do  
He shall receivé one of two.

“And thus Silvester with his  
sawe

The ground of all the newé lawe  
With great devociön he precheth  
Fro point to point and plainly  
techeth

Unto this hethen emperour  
And saith: ‘The highe Creatour  
Hath underfonge his Charité  
Of that he wroughté suche pité,  
Whan he the children had on honde.’

“Thus whan this lord hath under-  
derstonde

Of all this thing how that it ferde,  
Unto Silvéster he than answérde  
With all his holé herte and saith,  
That he is redy to the feith,

And so the vessell, which for blood  
Was made, Silvéster, there<sup>1</sup> it stood  
With clené water of the welle  
In allé haste he let do felle

And setté Constantin therinne  
All nakéd up unto the chinne.

And in the while it was begunne,  
A light, as though it were a sunne,  
Fro heven into the placé come  
Where that he toke his christen-  
dome,

And ever amonge the holy tales  
Lich as they weren fisses scales  
They fellen from him now and este,  
Till that there was nothing belefte

<sup>1</sup> *There*, where.

Of all this greté maladie.  
 For he that wolde him purifie  
 The highé God hath made him  
 clene,  
 So that there lefté nothing sene.  
 He hath him clenséd bothé two  
 The body and the soule also.  
 Tho<sup>1</sup> knew this emperour in dede,  
 That Cristés feith was for to drede,  
 And sende anone his letters out  
 And let do crien all aboute  
 Up pein of deth, that no man  
 weive,  
 That he baptismé ne receive.  
 After his moder quene Eleine  
 He sende, and so betwene hem  
 tweine  
 They treten, that the citee all  
 Was christnéd, and she forth with  
 all.  
 This emperour, which hele hath  
 found,  
 Withinné Rome anone let founde  
 Two churches, which that he did  
 make<sup>2</sup>  
 For Peter and for Poulés sake,  
 Of whom he hadde a visión  
 And yaf therto possession  
 Of lordship and of worldés good.  
 And how so that his will was good  
 Toward the Pope and his fraunchise,  
 Yet hath it provéd otherwise  
 To se the worching of the dede.  
 For in croniqué thus I rede  
 Anone as he hath made the yefte  
 A vois was herde on high the lefte,<sup>3</sup>  
 Of which all Romé was adradde  
 And said: 'This day is venim  
 shadde  
 In Holy Chirche, of temporall

<sup>1</sup> *Tho*, then.<sup>2</sup> *Did make*, caused to be made.<sup>3</sup> *Lefte*, air.

Which medleth<sup>1</sup> with the spirituall.<sup>1</sup>  
 And how it stant of that degré  
 Yet a man may the sothe se,  
 God may amende it, whan he wille,  
 I can therto none other skille.  
 But for to go there I began,  
 How Charité may helpe a man  
 To bothé worldés, I have saide.  
 And if thou have an eré laide,  
 My soné, thou might understonde,  
 If Charité be take on honde,  
 There folweth after mochel grace.  
 Forthý if that thou wolt purcháce  
 How that thou might Envié flee,  
 Acquainté the with Charite,  
 Whiche is the Vertue Sovereine."—  
 "My fader, I shall do my peine.  
 For this ensample whiche ye tolde  
 With all min herte I have witholde,  
 So that I shall for evermore  
 Escheue Envié well the more.  
 And that I have er this misdo  
 Yive me my penaunce er I go.  
 And over that to my matere  
 Of shrifté, why we sitten here  
 In priveté betwene us twey,  
 Now axeth what there is I prey."—  
 "My godé sone, and for thy lora  
 I woll the tellé what is more,  
 So that thou shalt the Vices knowe.  
 For whan they be to thee full  
 knowe,  
 Thou might hem wel the better  
 eschue.  
 And for this cause I thinké sue  
 The formé bothe and the matere,  
 As now suendé thou shalt here,  
 Which Vicé stant nexte after this.  
 And whan thou wost how that it is,  
 As thou shalt heré my devise,  
 Thou might thyself the better avise.

<sup>1</sup> *Medleth*, mingleth.



BOOK · III.

OF WRATH.

If thou the Vices list to knowe,  
 My sone, it hath nought be  
 unknowe  
 Fro first that men their swerdés  
 grounde,  
 That there nis one upon this  
 grounde  
 A Vicé foreine fro the lawe,  
 Wherof that many a good felawe  
 Hath be destrought by sodein  
 chaunce.  
 And yet to kindé no plesaúnce  
 It doth, but where he most acheveth  
 His purpose, most to kinde he  
 greveth,  
 As he whiche out of consciéce  
 Is enemy unto paciéce.  
 And is by name one of the Seven,  
 Whiche oft hath set the world un-  
 even,  
 And clepéd is the cruel Ire,  
 Whose herte is evermore on fire  
 To speke amis, and to do, bothe,  
 For his servaúnts ben ever wrothe.”  
 “My godé fader, tell me this  
 What thinge is Iré?”—“Sone, it is  
 That in our englissh Wrath is hote,  
 Whiche hath his wordés ay so hote,  
 That all a mannés paciéce  
 Is fíred of the violence.  
 For he with him hath ever five  
 Servaunts, that helpen him to strive.  
 The first of hem Maléncoly

Is clepéd, whiche in compaignie  
 An hundred timés in an houre  
 Woll as an angry besté loure,  
 And no man wot the causé why.  
 My soné, shrive the now forthý,  
 Hast thou be Malencolien?”—

“Ye fader, by saint Julien.  
 But<sup>1</sup> I untrewé wordés use  
 I may me nought therof excuse.  
 And all maketh Lové, well I wote,  
 Of which min herte is ever hote,  
 So that I brenne as dothe a glede  
 For wrathé that I may nought  
 spede.

And thus full oft a day for nought  
 Saufe onlich of min owné thought  
 I am so with my selven wroth,  
 That how so that the gamé goth  
 With other men, I am nought glad  
 But I am well the more unglad ;  
 For that is other mennés game  
 It torneth me to puré grame.<sup>2</sup>  
 Thus am I with my self oppressed  
 Of thought the whiche I have im-  
 pressed,

That all wakénd I dreme and mete,<sup>3</sup>  
 That I with her alone mete<sup>4</sup>  
 And pray her of some good answeére.  
 But for she wol nought gladly swere,  
 She saith me ‘Nay’ withouten othe.  
 And thus waxe I withinné wrothe

<sup>1</sup> But, unless.

<sup>3</sup> Mete, dream.

<sup>2</sup> Grame, vexation.

<sup>4</sup> Mete, meet

That outward I am all affraied  
 And so distempred and so esmaied,  
 A thousand timés on a day  
 There souneth in min eres 'Nay,'  
 The which she saidé me to-fore.  
 Thus be my wittés all forlore.  
 And namély<sup>1</sup> whan I beginne  
 To reken with my self withinne,  
 How many yerés ben agone,  
 Sith I have truely lovéd one  
 And never toke of her other hede,  
 And ever a liché for to spede  
 I am, the more I with her dele,  
 So that min hap and all min hele  
 Me thenketh is ay the lenger the  
 ferre.<sup>2</sup>

That bringeth my gladship out of  
 herre,

Wherof my wittés ben empeired  
 And I, as who saith, all dispeired,  
 For finally whan that I muse  
 And thenke, how she woll me re-  
 fuse,

I am with Anger so bestad,  
 For al this world might I be glad.  
 And for the whilé that it lasteth  
 All up so down my joie it casteth,  
 And ay the further that I be  
 Whan I ne may my lady se,  
 The more I am redý to Wrathe,  
 That for the touching of a lath  
 Or for the turning of a stre<sup>3</sup>  
 I wode<sup>4</sup> as doth the wildé see  
 And am so malencolióús,  
 That there nis servaunt in min  
 house

Ne none of tho that be aboute,  
 That eche of hem ne stant in doute  
 And wenen that I shuldé rave,  
 For anger that they se me have.  
 And so they wonder more and lasse,  
 Til that they seen it óverpasse.  
 But fader, if it so betide,

<sup>1</sup> Namély, especially. <sup>2</sup> Ferre, farther.  
<sup>3</sup> Stre, straw. <sup>4</sup> Wode, rage madly.

That I approche at any tide  
 The placé where my lady is,  
 And thanné that her like iwis  
 To speke a goodly word untó me,  
 For all the gold that is in Romé  
 Ne couth I after that be wroth,  
 But all min anger overgoth.  
 So glad I am of the preséncé  
 Of hiré, that I all offence  
 Foryete, as though it weré nought  
 So over glad is than my thought.  
 And nethéles, the soth to telle,  
 Ayeinward if it so befelle,  
 That I at thilké timé sigh  
 On me that she miscaste her eye,  
 Or that she listé nought to loke,  
 And I therof good hedé toke,  
 Anone into my first estate

I torne and am with that so mate,<sup>1</sup>  
 That ever it is aliché wicke.

And thus min honde ayein the  
 pricke

I hurte and have don many a day,  
 And go so forth as I go may  
 Full ofté biting on my lippe  
 And make unto my self a whippe  
 With whiche in many a chele and  
 hete

My wofull herte is so tobete,<sup>2</sup>  
 That all my wittés ben unsofte,  
 And I am wrothe I not<sup>3</sup> how ofte.  
 And all it is maléncolie,  
 Which groweth on the fantasie  
 Of Lové that me woll nought  
 loute.<sup>4</sup>

So bere I forth an angry snoute  
 Full many timés in a yere.  
 But fader, now ye sitten here  
 In Lovés stede, I you besече,  
 That some ensample ye me teche,  
 Wherof I may my self appese."—

"My soné, for thin hertés ese

<sup>1</sup> Mate, deadened in spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Tobete, to is an intensive prefix.

<sup>3</sup> Not, know not.

<sup>4</sup> Love that will not bow to me.

I shall fulfillé thy praieré,  
So that thou might the better lere,  
What mischefe that this Vicé stereth,  
Whiche in his anger nought for-  
bereth,

Wherof that after him forthenketh,  
Whan he is sobre, and that he  
thenketh

Upon the folie of his dede.

But if thou ever in cause of Love  
Shalt deme, and thou be so above  
That thou might lede it at thy wille,  
Let never through thy Wrathé spille  
Whiche every kindé shuldé save.  
For it sit every man to have  
Reward to love and to his might,  
Ayein whos strengthé may no wight.  
What Nature hath set in her lawe,  
Ther may no mannés might with-  
drawe,

And who that worcheth thereayein,  
Full ofté time it hath be sein,  
There hath befallé great ven-  
geaünce,

Wherof I finde a remembraunce.

“Ovide after the timé tho  
Tolde an ensample and saide so,  
How that whilóm Tiresias,  
As he walkéndé goth par cas,  
Upon an high mountein he sigh  
Two serpentés in his waie nigh.  
And they so, as natüre hem taught,  
Assembled were, and he tho cought  
A yerdé, which he bare on honde,  
And thoughté, that he wolde fonde<sup>1</sup>  
To letten hem, and smote hem bothe,  
Wherof the goddes weren wrothe.  
And for he hath destourbé kinde  
And was so to Natüre unkinde,  
Unkindelich he was transformed,  
That he, which erst a man was  
formed,

Into a woman was forshape ;  
That was to him an angry jape.

<sup>1</sup> Fonde, try.

But for that he with anger wrought  
His anger angerliche he bought.

“Lo, thus my sone, Ovide hath  
write,

Wherof thou might by reson wite  
More is a man than suche a beste,  
So might it never ben honésté  
A man to wrathen him to sore  
Of that another doth the lore  
Of kinde, in whiche is no malfece,  
But only that it is a Vice.  
And though a man be resonáble,  
Yet after kinde he is meváble  
To lové where<sup>1</sup> he woll or none.  
Thenk thou, my soné, therupon  
And do Maléncolié away,  
For love hath ever his lust to pley  
As he which wold no lifé greve.”—

“My fader, that I may well leve<sup>2</sup>  
All that ye tellen it is skille,<sup>3</sup>  
Let every man love as he wille,  
Be so it be nought my lady,  
For I shall nought be wroth thereby.  
But that I wrath and fare amis  
Alone upon my self it is,  
That I with bothé love and kinde  
Am so bestad, that I can finde  
No wey howe I it may astert,  
Which stand upon min owné hert  
And toucheth to none other life  
Sauf onely to that sweté wife,  
For whom, but if it be amended,  
My gladdé daiés ben dispended,  
That I my self shall nought forbere  
The Wrath the whiché now I bere,  
For therof is none other liche,  
Nowe axeth forth I you beseche  
Of Wrathe, if there ought ellés is,  
Wherof to shrivé.”—“Sone yis,

Of Wrathé the secónd is Chest,<sup>4</sup>  
Which hath the windés of tempest  
To kepe, and many a sodein blast  
He bloweth, wherof ben agast

<sup>1</sup> Where, whether.

<sup>2</sup> Leve, believe.

<sup>3</sup> Skille, reason.

<sup>4</sup> Chest, strife.

They that desiren pees and rest.  
 He is that ilke ungoodliest,  
 Which many a lusty love hath  
 twinned,  
 For he bereth ever his mouth un-  
 pinned,  
 So that his lippés ben unloke  
 And his coráge is all to-broke,  
 That every thing whiche he can telle,  
 It springeth up as doth a welle,  
 Which may none of his stremés hide,  
 But renneth out on every side.  
 So boilen up the foulé sawes,  
 That Chesté wote <sup>1</sup> of his felawes.  
 For as a sivé <sup>2</sup> kepeth ale,  
 Right so can chesté kepe a tale ;  
 All that he wote he woll disclose  
 And speke er any man oppose.  
 As a citee withoute a walle,  
 Where men may gon out overalle  
 Withouten any resisténcé,  
 So with his crokéd eloquence  
 He speketh all that he wot withinne,  
 Wherof men lesé more than winne.  
 For often time of his chiding  
 He bringeth to housé such tiding  
 That makéth werre at beddés hede.  
 He is the levin of the brede  
 Which soureth all the past <sup>3</sup> about,  
 Men ought well suché one to doute, <sup>4</sup>  
 For ever his bowe is redy bent,  
 And whome he hit I tell him shent, <sup>5</sup>  
 If he may perce him with his tonge.  
 And eke so loude his belle is ronge,  
 That of the noise and of the souné  
 Men feren him in all the towne  
 Well moré than they done of  
 thonder ;  
 For that is cause of moré wonder.  
 For with the windés, which he  
 bloweth,

<sup>1</sup> *Wote*, knows.

<sup>2</sup> *Sive*, sieve.

<sup>3</sup> The leaven of the bread that turns all the  
 paste sour.

<sup>4</sup> *Doute*, fear.

<sup>5</sup> *I tell him shent*, I count him put to shame.

Full ofté sith he overthroweth  
 The citees and the polecie,  
 That I have herd the people crie  
 And echone saide in his degre:  
 ‘ Ha, wické tungé, wo thou be ! ’  
 For men sain, that the hardé bone—  
 All though him selvé havé none—  
 A tungé braketh it all to pieces.  
 He hath so many sondry spieces <sup>1</sup>  
 Of Vicé, that I may nought wele  
 Describe hem by a thousand dele. <sup>2</sup>  
 But whan that he to Chesté falleth,  
 Full many a wonder thing befalleth,  
 For he ne can no thing forbere.  
 Now tell, my soné, thin answére,  
 If it hath ever so betid,  
 That thou at any time hast chid  
 Toward thy lové. ” — “ Fader, nay.  
 Such Chesté yet unto this day  
 Ne made I never, God forbéde.  
 For er I singé suche a crede,  
 I haddé lever to be lewed,  
 For thanne were I all beshrewed  
 And worthy to be put abacké  
 With all the sorwe upon my backe,  
 That any man ordeigné couthe.  
 But I spake never yet by mouthe  
 That unto Chesté mighté touche.  
 And that I durst right wel vouché  
 Upon her selfe as for witnessé.  
 For I wote of her gentillesse,  
 That she me woldé wel excuse,  
 That I no suché thingés use.  
 And if it shuldé so betid,  
 That I alगतés must chid,  
 It mighté nought be to my Love.  
 For so yet was I never abové  
 For all this widé world to winne,  
 That I durst any word beginne,  
 By which she might have ben  
 amoved,  
 And I of Cheste also reproved.  
 But rather if it might her like,

<sup>1</sup> *Spieces*, species, kinds.

<sup>2</sup> By a thousandth part.

The besté wordés wolde I pike <sup>1</sup>  
 Whiche I couthe in min herté chese  
 And serve hem forth in stede of chese,  
 For that is helpelich to defie; <sup>2</sup>  
 And so I wolde my wordés plie,  
 That mighten Wrath and Cheste  
 avale <sup>3</sup>

With telling of my softé tale.  
 Thus dar I maken a forwárd,  
 That never unto my lady ward  
 Yet spake I word in suche a wise,  
 Wherof that Chesté shulde arise.  
 Thus say I nought that I full ofte  
 Ne havé, whan I spake most softé,  
 Par cas said moré than inough;  
 But so well halt no man the plough,  
 That he ne balketh other while;  
 Ne so wel can no man affile  
 His tungé, that sometime in rape <sup>4</sup>  
 Him may somelicht word overscape,  
 And yet ne meneth he no cheste.  
 But that I have ayein her heste  
 Full ofté spoke, I am beknowe. <sup>5</sup>  
 And how, my wille is that ye knowe;  
 For whan my timé cometh about  
 That I dar speke and say all out  
 My longé love of which she wot,  
 That ever in one aliché hot  
 Me greveth, than all my disese  
 I telle, and though it her displese  
 I speke it forth and nought ne leve.  
 And though it be beside her leve  
 I hope and trowé nethéles,  
 That I do nought ayein the pees.  
 For though I telle her all my thought,  
 She wot well that I chidé nought.  
 Men may the highé God beseche,  
 And he wol here a mannés speche  
 And be nought wroth of that he saith,  
 So yiveth it me the moré feith  
 And maketh me hardy soth to say,

<sup>1</sup> Pike, pick.  
<sup>2</sup> Defie, digest. This belief was the origin  
 of the old custom of ending dinner with cheese.  
<sup>3</sup> Avale, bring down. <sup>4</sup> Rape, haste.  
<sup>5</sup> I confess.

That I dar wel the better prey  
 My lady, whiche a woman is.  
 For though I telle her that er is  
 Of lové, which me greveth sore,  
 Her oughté nought be wroth the  
 more,

For I withouté noise or cry  
 My plainté make all buxomly,  
 To putten allé Wrath away,  
 This dar I say unto this day  
 Of Cheste, in earnest or in game,  
 My lady shall me no thing blame.

“ But ofté time it hath betid,  
 That with my selven I have chid,  
 That no man couthé better chide,  
 And that hath ben at every tide,  
 Whan I cam to my selve alone.  
 For than I made a privé mone,  
 And every talé by and by  
 Whiche as I spake to my lady,  
 I thenke and peise in my balaunce  
 And drawe into my remembraunce.  
 And than, if that I finde a lacke  
 Of any word that I misspake,  
 Which was to moche in any wise,  
 Anone my wittés I despise  
 And make a chiding in min herte  
 That any word me shulde asterte <sup>1</sup>  
 Whiche as I shulde have holden inne  
 And so forth after I beginne  
 And loke if there was ellés ough  
 To speke, and I ne spake it nought.  
 And than if I may seche and finde,  
 That any word ben left behinde,  
 Whiche as I shuldé more have spoke,  
 I wold upon my self be wroke  
 And chidé with my selven so,  
 That all my wit is over-go.  
 For no man may his timé lore  
 Recover, and thus I am therfore  
 So overwroth in all my thought,  
 That I my self chide all to nought.  
 Thus for to moche, or for to lite,  
 Full ofte I am my self to wite. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Asterte, escape.

<sup>2</sup> Wite, blame.

But all that may me nought availe,  
 With Chesté though I me travaile,  
 But oule on stoke and stoke on oule  
 The moré that a man defoule,  
 Men witen wel which hath the warse,  
 And so to me nis worth a kerse,<sup>1</sup>  
 But torneth unto min owné hede,  
 Though I till that I weré dede  
 Wolde ever chide in suche a wise  
 Of Love, as I to you devise.  
 But fader, now ye have all herd  
 In this manér, howe I have ferd  
 Of Cheste and of Dissension,  
 Yif me your absolucion."—

"My sone, if that thou wistest all,  
 What Chesté doth in speciall  
 To love and to his welwilling,  
 Thou woldest fleen his knowleching  
 And lerné to be debonaire.  
 For who that most can speké faire  
 Is most accordend unto love.  
 Fair speche hath ofté brought above  
 Full many a man, as it is knowe,  
 Whiche ellés shuld have ben right  
 love

And failéd mochel of his wille.  
 Forthý hold thou thy tungé stille  
 And let thy wit thy will areste  
 So that thou fallé nought in cheste,  
 Whiche is the source of great dis-  
 taunce,

And take into thy rémembraunce,  
 If thou might geté paciéncé,  
 Which is the leche of all offence,  
 As tellen us these oldé wise.  
 For whan nought ellés may suffice  
 By strengthé ne by mannés wit,  
 Than paciéncé it over sit  
 And over cometh it at laste.  
 But he may never longé laste,  
 Which woll nought bow er that he  
 breke.

Take hedé, sone, of that I speke."—

"My fader, of your goodly speche

<sup>1</sup> *Kerse*, cress.

And of the wit, whiche ye me teche,  
 I thonké you with all min hert.  
 For that word shall me never astert,  
 That I ne shall your wordés holde  
 Of paciéncé, as ye me tolde,  
 Als ferforth as min herté thenketh  
 And of my Wrath it me forthenketh.  
 But fader, if ye forth with all  
 Some good ensample in speciáll,  
 Me wolden teche of some croníque,  
 It shuldé well min herté like  
 Of paciéncé for to here,  
 So that I might in my matére  
 The more unto my love obey  
 And putten my disese away."—

"*My sone*, a man to bye him  
 pees

Behoveth suffre as Socrates  
 Ensample leté, whiche is write,  
 And for thou shalt the sothé wite  
 Of this ensample, what I mene,  
 All though it be now litel sene  
 Among the men thilke evidence,  
 Yet he was upon paciéncé  
 So set, that he him self assay  
 In thing, which might him most  
 mispay,  
 Desireth and a wicked wife  
 He weddeth, which is sorwe and  
 strife

Ayein his esé was contraire.  
 But he spake ever soft and faire,  
 Till it befell, as it is tolde,  
 In winter, when the day is colde,  
 This wife was fro the wellé come,  
 Where that a pot with water nome<sup>1</sup>  
 She hath and brought it into house,  
 And sigh how that her sely spouse  
 Was set and lookéd on a boke  
 Nigh to the fire, as he which toke  
 His ese as for a man of age,  
 And she began the wodé rage  
 And axeth him, what divel he thought  
 And bare on hond, that him ne rought

<sup>1</sup> *Nome*, taken.

What labour that she toke on honde,  
 And saith, that suche an husébonde  
 Was to a wife nought worth a stre.<sup>1</sup>  
 He saidé nouthér nay ne ye,  
 But helde him stille and lete her  
 chide.

And she, which may her self nought  
 hide,

Began withinné for to swelle  
 And that she brought in fro the welle,  
 The water pot, she hent a lofte  
 And bad him speke, and he all softe  
 Sat stille and nought a word answérd.  
 And she was wroth that he so ferd,  
 And axeth him, if he be dede,  
 And all the water on his hede  
 She poured out and bad him awake.  
 But he, whiche woldé nought forsake  
 His paciéncé, thanné spake  
 And said, how that he fond no lake  
 In nothing which she haddé do,  
 For it was winter timé tho,  
 And winter, as by wey of kinde,  
 Which stormy is as men it finde,  
 First maketh the windés for to blowe  
 And after that, within a throwe,  
 He reineth and the water gates  
 Undoth, and thus my wife algates,  
 Which is with reson well besein,  
 Hath made me bothé winde and rein  
 After the seson of the yere.  
 And than he set him ner the fire  
 And as he might his clothés dreide,<sup>2</sup>  
 That he nomore o word ne saide,  
 Wherof he gat him somdele rest,  
 For that him thought was for the  
 best.

“I not<sup>3</sup> if thilke ensample yit  
 Accordeth with a mannés wit  
 To suffre as Socrátes dede.  
 And if it fal in any stede  
 A man to lesé so his galle,

<sup>1</sup> *Stre*, straw.

<sup>2</sup> Dried his clothes as well as he could.

<sup>3</sup> *Not*, know not.

Him ought among the women alle  
 In Lové court by jugément  
 The namé bere of paciént  
 To yive ensample to the good  
 Of paciéncé how that it stood,  
 That other men it mighté knowe.  
 And, sone, if thou at any throwe  
 Be tempted ayein paciéncé,  
 Take hede upon this evidence,  
 It shall par cas the lassé greve.”—

“My fader, so as I believe  
 Of that shall be no maner nede,  
 For I woll také so good hede,  
 That er I fall in suche assay  
 I thinke escheue, if that I may.  
 But if there be ought ellés more,  
 Wherof I mighté také lore  
 I praié you, so as I dare,  
 Now telleth, that I may beware,  
 Some other tale of this mater.”—

“Sone, it is ever good to lere  
 Wherof thou might thy word re-  
 streigne

Er that thou falle in any peine.  
 For who that can no counseil hide,  
 He may nought faile of wo beside,  
 Which shall befallé, er he it wite,  
 As I finde in the bokés write.

Yet cam therenever good of strié  
 To seche in all a mannés life,  
 Though it beginne on puré game  
 Full ofte it torneth into grame  
 And doth grevaúnce on somé side.  
 Wherof the greté clerk Ovide  
 After the lawé which was tho,  
 Of Jupiter and of Juno  
 Maketh in his bokés mención,  
 How they felle at dissenciön,  
 In manner as it were a borde,<sup>1</sup>  
 As they begunné for to worde  
 Among hem self in priveté.  
 And that was upon this degré,  
 Whiche of the two more amorous is  
 Or man or wife. And upon this

<sup>1</sup> *Borde*, jest.

They mighten nought accorde in one  
 And toke a jugé therupon,  
 Which clepéd is Tiresias  
 And bede him demen in this cas.  
 And he withoute avisément  
 Ayein Junó yaf jugément.  
 This Goddesse upon his answére  
 Was wroth and woldé nought for-  
 bere,

But tok away for evermo  
 The light from both his eyen two.  
 Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein  
 Another bienfait there ayein  
 He yaf and suche a grace him doth  
 That, for he wiste he saidé soth,  
 A soth-saier he was for ever.  
 But yet that other weré lever  
 Have had the loking of his eye  
 Than of his word the prophecie.  
 But how so that the sothé went,  
 Strife was the cause of that he hent  
 So great a peiné bodily.

“My soné, be thou ware thereby  
 And hold thy tungé stillé close,  
 For who that hath his word disclose  
 Er that he wité what he mene  
 He is full ofte nigh his tene<sup>1</sup>  
 And leseth full many timé grace,  
 Wher that he wold his thank pur-  
 cháce.

And over this, my soné dere,  
 Of other men, if thou might here  
 In privité what they have wrought,  
 Hold counseil and discoverit nought,  
 For Chesté can no counseil hele,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or be it wo or be it wele,  
 And take a tale into thy minde,  
 The which of olde ensample I finde.

**P**hebus, which maketh the daiés  
 light,

A love he haddé, which tho hight  
 Cornidé, whom aboven alle  
 He pleseth. But what shall befallé  
 Of lové, there is no man knoweth.

<sup>1</sup> *Tene*, vexation.    <sup>2</sup> *Hele*, conceal.

But as fortune her happés throweth,  
 So it befell upon a chauce,  
 A yong knight toke her ácquaint-  
 aunce

And had of her all that he wolde.  
 But a fals bird, which she hath holde  
 And kept in chambre of puré youthe  
 Discovereth all that ever he couthe.  
 The briddés namé was as tho  
 Corvus, the which was than also  
 Well moré white than any swan,  
 And he, the shrewe, al that he can  
 Of his lady to Phebus saide,  
 And he for wrath his swerd out  
 braide,

With which Cornide anone he  
 slough.

But after, him was wo inough  
 And toke a full great repentaunce,  
 Wherof in token and remembraunce  
 Of hem whiche usen wické speche,  
 Upon this brid he toke his wreche,  
 That there he was snow-white to fore  
 Ever afterward cole black therfore  
 He was transforméd, as it sheweth.  
 And many a man yet him beshreweth  
 And clepen him into this day  
 A raven, by whom yet men may  
 Take evidencé, whan he crieth,  
 That some mishap it signifieth.  
 Beware therfore and say the best,  
 If thou wolt be thy self in rest,  
 My godé sone, as I the rede.  
 And suche a daiés be now fele<sup>1</sup>  
 In Lovés Courte, as it is saide,  
 That let her tungé's gone unteide.  
 My soné, be thou none of tho  
 To jangle and telle talés so,  
 And namély<sup>2</sup> that thou ne chide,  
 For Chesté can no counseil hide,  
 For Wrathé saidé never wele.”—

“My fader, sothe is every dele,  
 That ye me teche, and I woll holde,  
 The reulé to whiché I am holdé,

<sup>1</sup> *Fele*, many.    <sup>2</sup> *Namely*, especially.



To fle the Cheste, as ye me bidde :  
For well is him, that never chidde.  
Now telle me forth if there be more,  
As touching unto wrathés lore.”—

“Of **wrathé** yet there is another,  
Whiche is to Cheste his owné brother,  
And is by namé clepéd Hate,  
That suffreth nought within his gate,  
That there come other love or pees,  
For he woll maké no relese  
Of no debate whiche is befallé.  
Now speke, if thou arte one of alle,  
That with this Vice hath be with-  
holde.”<sup>1</sup>—

“As yet forought that ye metolde,  
My fader, I not what it is.”—

“In good feith, sone, I trowé  
yis.”—

“My fader, nay, but ye me  
lere.”—

“Now list, my sone, and thou  
shalt here.

Hate is a Wrathé nought shewend,  
But of long timé gaderénd,  
And dwelleth in the herté loken  
Till he se timé to be wroken.  
And than he showeth his tempést  
More sodein than the wildé beste,  
Which wot nothing, what mercy is.  
My sone, art thou knowen of  
this?”—

“My gode fader, as I wene,  
Now wote I somedele what ye mene,  
But I dare sauflly make an othe,  
My lady was me never lothe.  
I woll nought sweré nethéles,  
That I of Hate am giltéles.  
For whan I to my lady ply  
Fro day to day and mercy cry,  
And she no mercy on me laith,  
But shorté wordés to me saith,  
Though I my lady love algate,  
Tho wordés mote I nedés hate,  
And woldé they were all dispent

<sup>1</sup> *Witholde*, held with.

Or so fer out of londé went  
That I never after shuld hem here:  
And yet love I my lady dere.  
Thus is there Hate, as ye may se,  
Betwene my ladies word and me.  
The worde I hate and her I love,  
What so me shall betide of love.  
But furthermore I woll me shrive,  
That I have hated all my live  
These janglers, whiche of her envié  
Ben ever redy for to lie.

For with her fals compassément  
Full often they have made me shent  
And hindred me full ofté timé,  
Whan they no causé wisten by me,  
But onlich of her owné thought.  
And thus have I full ofté bought  
The lye and drank nought of the  
wine.

I wolde her hap were such as mine.  
For how so that I be now shrive,  
To hem ne may I nought foryive,  
Untill I se hem at debate  
With Love, and thanné min estate  
They mighten by her owné deme  
And loke how wel it shuld hem  
queme<sup>1</sup>

To hinder a man, that loveth sore.  
And thus I hate hem evermore,  
Til Love o; hem wold done his  
wreche ;

For that I shall always beseche  
Unto the mighty Cupido,  
That he so mochel woldé do,  
So as he is of Love a god,  
To smite hem with the samé rod,  
With whiche I am of Lové smiten,  
So that they mighten know and  
witen,

How hindring is a wofull peine  
To him that lové wold atteigne.  
Thus ever on hem I wait and hope,  
Till I may se hem lepe a lope<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Queme*, be pleasing.

<sup>2</sup> *Lepe a lope*, take a leap.

And halten on the samé sore,  
 Whiche I do now for evermore,  
 I woldé thanné do my might  
 So for to stonden in her light,  
 That they ne shulden have a wey  
 To that they wolden put away.  
 I wolde hem put out of the stede  
 Fro Lové, right as they me dede  
 With that they speke of me by  
 mouthe,

So wolde I do, if that I couthe  
 Of hem, and thus so God me save  
 Is all the Haté that I have  
 Toward these janglers every dele,  
 I wolde all other ferdé wele.  
 Thus have I, fader, said my wille.  
 Say ye now forth, for I am stille."—

"My sone, of that thou hast me  
 said

I holdé me nought fully paid,<sup>1</sup>  
 That thou woldé hateen any man  
 To that accorden I ne can,  
 Though he have hindred thee to-  
 fore.

But this I tellé thee therefore,  
 Thou might upon my benison  
 Well hateen the condiciön  
 Of tho janglér's, as thou me toldest,  
 But furthermore, of that thou  
 woldest

Hem hinder in any other wise,  
 Suche Hate is ever to despise.  
 Forthý my sone, I wold thee rede,  
 That thou drawe in by frendly hede  
 That thou ne might nought do by  
 Hate,

So might thou geté love algate  
 And setté thee, my sone, in rest.  
 For thou shalt finde it for the best,  
 And over this so as I dare  
 I redé, that thou be right ware  
 Of other mennés Hate about,  
 Whiche everywise man shuldédout,  
 For Hate is ever upon await.

<sup>1</sup> Paid, sati-fied.

And as the fissher on his bait  
 Sleeth, whan he seeth the fisshes  
 faste,

So whan he seeth time atté last  
 That he may worche an other wo,  
 Shall no man tornen him ther fro,  
 That Haté nill his felonie  
 Fulfill and feigné compaignie.  
 Yet nethéles for fals semblaunt  
 Is toward him of covenauant  
 Witholdé, so that under bothe  
 The privé wrathé can him clothe,  
 That he shall seme a great beleve.  
 But ware thee well, that thou ne  
 leve

All that thou seest to-fore thin eye,  
 So as the Gregois whilom sigh ;  
 The boke of Troié who so rede,  
 There may he finde ensample in  
 dede.

"**Sone**, after the destruction,  
 Whan Troy was allé beté down  
 And slain was Priamus the king,  
 The Gregois, which of all this thing  
 Ben causé, tornen home ayein.  
 There may no man his hapwithsain,  
 It hath ben sene and felt full ofte,  
 The hardé time after the softe.  
 Byseeas they forth homeward went,  
 A rage of great tempést hem hent.<sup>1</sup>  
 Juno let bende her partie bow,  
 The sky wax derke, the wind gan  
 blow,  
 The firy welken gan to thonder,  
 As though the world shuld al  
 asonder.

From heven out of the water gates  
 The reiny storm fell down algates,  
 And all her tacle made unwelde,  
 That no man might him self be-  
 welde.

There may men heré shipmen crie  
 That stood in aunter for to die.  
 He that behindé sat to stere

<sup>1</sup> Hent, seized.

• Maynought the foré stempne<sup>1</sup> here;  
 The ship arose ayein the wawes,  
 The lodésman hath lost his lawes,  
 The see bet in on every side,  
 They nisten what fortune abide,  
 But setten hem all in goddes will,  
 Where<sup>2</sup> he wolde hem save or spill.  
 And it fell thilké timé thus,  
 There was a kingé, which Nauplus  
 Was hote, and he a soné hadde  
 At Troié, which the Gregois ladde  
 As he that was made prince of alle,  
 Till that Fortuné let him falle.  
 His namé was Palámidés,  
 But through an Haté nethéles  
 Of som of hem his deth was caste  
 And he by treson overcaste.  
 His fader, whan he herde it telle,  
 He swore, if ever his timé felle,  
 He wolde him vengeif that he might,  
 And therto his avow he hight.  
 And thus this king through privé  
 Hate

Abode upon a waite algate,  
 For he was nought of suche emprise,  
 To vengen him in open wise.

“The famé, which goth widé  
 where,

Maketh knowe, how that the Gre-  
 gois were  
 Homwárd with al the felaship  
 Fro Troy upon the see by ship.  
 Nauplus, whan he this understood  
 And knew the tidés of the flood  
 And sigh the wind blow to the londe,  
 A great decept anone he fonde  
 Of privé Hate, as thou shalte here,  
 Wherof I telle all this matére.

“This king the wedergan beholde  
 And wisté well, they moten holde  
 Hercoursendlonge his marché right,  
 And made upon the derké night  
 Of greté shidés<sup>3</sup> and of blockes

Great fire ayeine the greaté rockes,  
 To shew upon the hillés high,  
 So that the flete of Grece it sigh.  
 And so it fell right as he thought,  
 This fleté, which an haven sought,  
 The brighté firés sighe a fer,  
 And they ben drawn ner and ner  
 And wendé well and understood  
 How all that fire was made for good  
 To shewé where men shulde arrive.<sup>1</sup>  
 And thiderward they hasten blive.<sup>2</sup>  
 In semblaunt as men sain is guile,  
 And that was provéd thilké while.  
 The ship, which wend his helpe  
 accroche,<sup>3</sup>

Drof all to pieces on the roche.  
 And so there deden ten or twelve  
 There no man mighté helpe him  
 selve,

For there they wenden<sup>4</sup> deth escape  
 Withouten helpe her deth was shape.  
 Thus they that comen first to-fore  
 Upon the rockés ben forlore.  
 But through the noise and through  
 the cry

The other weren ware therby,  
 And whan the day began to rowe,<sup>5</sup>  
 Tho mighten they the sothé knowe,  
 That where they wenden frendés  
 finde,

They fondé frendship all behinde.  
 The londé than was soné weived,  
 Where that they hadden be deceived,  
 And toke hem to the highé see,  
 Therto they saiden alle ye,  
 Fro that day forthe and ware they  
 were

Of that they had assaiéd there.

“My sone, herof thou might advise,  
 How fraudé stant in many wise  
 Amongés hem that guilé thinke.  
 There is no scriyener with his inke,

<sup>1</sup> *Arrive*, come to the shore.

<sup>2</sup> *Blive*, quickly.

<sup>3</sup> *Accroche*, increase.

<sup>4</sup> *Wenden*, hoped.

<sup>5</sup> *Rowe*, dawn.

<sup>1</sup> *Foré stempne*, voice in the bows.

<sup>2</sup> *Where*, whether.

<sup>3</sup> *Shides*, logs.

Whiche half the fraudé writé can,  
That stant in suche a maner man.  
Forthý the wisé men ne demen  
The thingés after that they semen,  
But after that they knowe and finde.  
The mirrour sheweth in his kinde  
As he had all the world withinne,  
And is in soth nothing therinne.  
And so fareth Haté for a throwe,<sup>1</sup>  
Till he a man hath overthrowe;  
Shall no man knowé by his chere,  
Whiche is avaunt ne whiche arere.  
Forthý my soné, thenke on this.”—

“My fader, so I woll iwis,<sup>2</sup>  
And if there more of Wrathé be,  
Nowe axeth forth pour charité,  
As ye by your bokés knowe,  
And I the sothé shall beknowe.”—

“My sone, thou shalt under-  
stonde,  
That yet towardé Wrathé stonde  
Of dedly Vices other two.  
And for to telle her namés so  
It is Contek and Homicide,  
That ben to drede on every side.  
Contek so as the bokés sain  
Foolhast hath to his chamberlain,  
By whose counseil all unavised  
Is paciëncé most despised,  
Till Homicidé with him mete.  
Fro mercy they ben all unmete  
And thus ben they the worst of alle  
Of hem whiche unto Wrathé falle  
In dedé both and eke in thought.  
For they accompte her Wrath at  
nought

But if there be sheding of blood,  
And thus liche to a besté wode  
They knowen nought the god of life,  
Be so they havé swerde or knife  
Her dedly wrathé for to wreke,  
Of pité list hem nought to speke.  
None other reson they ne fonge,  
But that they ben of mightés stronge.

<sup>1</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.    <sup>2</sup> *Iwis*, certainly.

But ware hem well in other place,  
Where every man behoveth grace;  
For there I trowe it shall him faile,  
To whom no mercy might availe,  
But wroughten upon tirannie,  
That no pité ne might hem plie.  
Now tell, my sone.”—“My fader,  
what?”—

“If thou hast be coupáble of that?”

“Myfader, nay, Crist me forbede;  
I onliché speke of the dede  
Of which I never was coupáble  
Withouten causé resonáble.  
But this is nought to my matére  
Of shríté, why we sitten here.  
For we ben set to shrive of Love,  
As we beganné first above.  
And nethéles I am beknowe,  
That as touchénd of lovés throwe,  
Whan I my wittés overwende,  
Min hertés Contek hath none ende,  
But ever stant upon debate  
To great disese of min estate,  
As for the timé that it lasteth.  
For whan my fortune overcasteth  
Her whele and is to me so straunge,  
And that I se she woll nought  
chaunge,

Than cast I all the worlde about  
And think howe I at home in dout  
Have all mytime in vein despended  
And se nought how to be amended,  
But rather for to be empeired,  
As he that is well nigh despeired.  
For I ne may no thank deserve,  
And ever I love and ever I serve  
And ever I am a liché nere,  
Thus, for I stonde in suche a weré,  
I am as who saith out of herre.<sup>1</sup>  
And thus upon my self I werre,  
I bringe and put out allé pees.  
That I full ofte in such a rees<sup>2</sup>  
Am wery of min owné life,

<sup>1</sup> *Out of herre*, unhinged.

<sup>2</sup> *Rees*, stir of battle.

So that of Contek and of Strife  
I am beknowe and have answérde,  
As ye, my fader, now have herde.  
Min herte is wonderly begone  
With counseil, wherof wit is one,  
Whiche hath resón in compaignie  
Ayein the whiché stant partie  
Will, which hath Hope of his ac-  
corde.

And thus they bringen up discorde,  
Witte and Resón counseilen ofte,  
That I min herté shuldé softe  
And that I shuldé Will remue <sup>1</sup>  
And put him out of retenue  
Or elles holde him under fote.  
For as they sain, if that he mote  
His owné reule have upon honde,  
There shall no Wit ben understande  
Of Hope; also they tellen this,  
That over all where that he is  
He set the herte in jeopartie  
With wishing and with fantasie,  
And is nought trewe of that he saith,  
So that there is on him no feith.  
Thus with Resón and Witte avised  
Is Will and Hope all day despised.  
Resón saith, that I shuldé leve  
To lové, where there is no leve  
To spede, and Will saith there ayein  
That such an herte is to vilain  
Which dare nought love till that he  
spede;

Let Hopé serve at suché nede.  
He saith eke, where an herte sit  
All holé governed upon Wit,  
He hath this livés lust forlore.  
And thus min herte is all to-tore  
Of suche a Contek, as they make.  
But yet I may nought Will forsake  
That he nis maister of my thought,  
Or that I spede, or spedé nought.”—

“Thou dost, my sone, ayeinst  
the right,  
But Love is of so great a might,

<sup>1</sup> *Remue*, remove.

His lawé may no man refuse,  
So might thou there the better  
excuse.

And nethéles thou shalt be lerned,  
That thy Will shuldé be govérned  
Of Reson moré than of Kinde;  
Wherof a talé write I finde.

**A philosopre** of which men  
tolde

There was whilom by daiés olde,  
And Diogénes than he hight,  
So olde he was that he ne might  
The world travaile, and for the best  
He shope him for to take his rest  
And dwelle at home in suche a wise,  
That nigh his house he let devise  
Endlonge upon an axel tree  
To set a tonne in suche degree  
That he it mighté torne aboute;  
Wherof one heed was taken oute  
For he therinne sitte shulde  
And torné him selve as he wolde  
And také the eire and se the heven  
And deme of the planetés seven  
As he which couthé mochel what.<sup>1</sup>  
And thus full ofté there he sat  
To muse in his philosophie  
Solé withouten compaignie;  
So that upon a morwe tide  
A thing which shuldé tho betide.  
Whan he was sette here as him list  
To loke upon the sonne arist,  
Wherof the propertie he sigh,  
It fellé, there cam ridend nigh  
King Alisaundré with a route.  
And as he cast his eye aboute  
He sigh this tonne, and what it ment  
He woldé wite, and thider sent  
A knight, by whom he might it  
knowe.

And he him self that ilké throwe  
Abode and hoveth theré stille.  
This knight after the kingés wiile

<sup>1</sup> *Couthé mochel what*, knew a good deal, much what, a formation similar to somewhat.

With sporé made his horse to gone  
 And to the tonne he came anone,  
 Where that he fonde a man of age,  
 And he him toldé the message,  
 Suche as the kinge him haddé bede,  
 And axeth why in thilké stede<sup>1</sup>  
 The tonné stood and what it was.  
 And he, which understood the cas,  
 Sat still and spake no worde ayein.  
 The knight bad speke and saith :

‘Vilain,

Thou shalt me telle, er that I go,  
 It is thy king, whiche axeth so.’  
 ‘My king,’ quod he, ‘that were  
 unright.’

‘What is he thanné?’ saith the  
 knight,

‘Is he thy man?’ ‘That say I  
 nought,’

Quod he, ‘but this I am bethought,  
 My mannés man how that he is.’  
 ‘Thou liest, falsé cherle, iwis,’<sup>2</sup>

The knight him said and was right  
 wroth,

And to the kinge ayein he goth  
 And told him, how this man  
 answérde.

The king whan he this talé herde  
 Bad that they shulden all abide,  
 For he him self wold thider ride.  
 And whan he came to-fore the tonne,  
 He hath his talé thus begonne :

‘Al heil,’ he saith, ‘what man art  
 thou?’

Quod he : ‘Such one as thou seest  
 now.’

The king, which haddé wordés wise,  
 His agé woldé nought despise  
 But saith : ‘My fader, I thee pray,  
 That thou me wolt the causé say,  
 How that I am thy mannés man?’  
 ‘Sire king,’ quod he, ‘and that I can,  
 If thou wilt.’—‘Yea,’ saith the  
 king.—

<sup>1</sup> *Stede*, place.

<sup>2</sup> *Iwis*, certainly.

Quod he : ‘This is the sothé thing :  
 Sith I first reson understood  
 And knew what thing was evil and  
 good,

The Will, whiche of my body  
 moveth,

Whos werkés that the god re-  
 proveth,

I have restreignéd evermore  
 Of him which stant under the lore  
 Of Reson, whos subjéct he is,  
 So that he may nought done amis.  
 And thus by wey of covenaut  
 Will is my Man and my Servaunt  
 And ever hath be and ever shall.

And thy Will is thy Principal  
 And hath the lordship of thy wit,  
 So that thou coutheest never yit  
 Take a day rest of thy labour.

But for to be a conqueroúr  
 Of worldés good, which may nought  
 laste,

Thou hiést ever a liché faste,  
 Where thou no Reson hast to winne.  
 And thus thy Will is cause of sinne  
 And is thy Lord to whom thou  
 servest,

Wherof thou litel thank deservest,  
 The king, of that he thus answérd,  
 Was nothing wroth, but when he  
 herd

The highé wisdom, whiche hesaide,  
 With goodly wordés this he praide,  
 That he him woldé tell his name.

‘I am,’ quod he, ‘that ilké same,  
 Which that men Diogénes calle.’  
 Tho was the king right glad with  
 alle,

For he had herd ofté to-fore  
 What man he was, so that therefore  
 He saide : ‘O wisé Diogéne,  
 Now shall thy greté wit be sene,  
 For thou shalt of my yifté have,  
 What worldés thingé thou wolt  
 crave.’

Quod he: 'Than hove out of my sonne

And lete it shine into my tonne,  
For thou benimst me<sup>1</sup> thilké yifte,  
Which lith nought in thy might to shifte :

None other good of thee menedeth,'

"The king, whom every contré dredeth,

Lo, thus he was enforméd there;  
Wherof, my soné, thou might lere,  
How that thy Wil shal nought be leved,

Where it is nought of Wit releved.  
And thou hast said thy self er this,  
How that thy Wil thy maister is,  
Through which thin hertés thought withinne

Is ever of kontek to beginne,  
So that it greatly is to drede,  
That it no homicidé brede.

For Love is of a wonder kinde  
And hath his wittés ofté blinde,  
That they fro mannés Reson falle.

But whan that it is so befallé,  
That Will shall his coragé lede  
In Lovés cause, it is to drede;  
Wherof I finde ensample write,  
Whiche is behovely for to wite.

"**I rede a false**, and telleth this,  
The citee which Semiramis  
Encloséd hath with walle about  
Of worthy folk with many a rout  
Was inhabited here and there.  
Amongé the which two there were  
Above all other noble and great,  
Dwellend tho within a strete  
So nigh to-gider, as it was sene,  
That there was nothing hem betwene

But wowe<sup>2</sup> to wowe and walle to walle.

<sup>1</sup> *Benimst me*, takest away from me.

<sup>2</sup> *Wowe*, wall. "Wowe" and "wall" are equivalent, like "follow" and "sue" fourteen lines later.

This o lord hath in specialle  
A sone, a lusty bachelere,  
In all the towne was none his pere.  
That other had a daughter eke  
In all the lond that for to seke  
Men wisten none so faire as she.  
And fell so, as it shuldé be,  
This fairé daughter nigh this sonc,  
As they to-gider thanné wone,<sup>1</sup>  
Cupfd hath so the thingés shape.  
That they ne might his honds escape  
That he his fire on hem ne caste,  
Wherof her herts he overcaste  
To folwé thilké lore and sue,  
Which never man yet mightescheue.  
And that was Love, as it is happed,  
Whiche hath her hertés so be-trapped,

That they by allé waiés seche,  
How that they mighten winne a speche

Her wofull peiné for to lesse.  
Who loveth wel, it may nought misse,

And namély<sup>2</sup> whan there ben two  
Of one accord, how so it go,  
But if that they some waié finde,  
For Love is ever of suche a kinde  
And hath his folk so wel affaited,  
That how so that it be awaited,  
There may no man the purpos let.<sup>3</sup>  
And thus betwene hem two they set  
An hole upon a wal to make  
Through which they have her counseil take

At allé timés, whan they might.  
This fairé maiden Tisbé hight  
And he, whom that she lovéd hote,  
Was Pirusus by namé hote.  
So longe her lesson they recorden,  
Til atté lasté they accorden  
By nightés timé for to wende  
Alone out fro the townés ende,

<sup>1</sup> *Wone*, dwell. <sup>2</sup> *Namely*, especially.

<sup>3</sup> *Let*, hinder.

Where was a welle under a tree,  
 And who cam first, or she or he,  
 He shuldé stillé there abide,  
 So it befell the nightés tide  
 This maiden which desguiséd was,  
 All privély the softé pas  
 Goth through the largé town un-  
 knowe,

Till that she cam within a throwe  
 Where that she likéd for to dwelle  
 At thilke unhappy freshé welle,  
 Which was also the forest nigh ;  
 Where she coménd a leon sigh  
 Into the feld to take his pray  
 In haste. And she tho fledde away,  
 So as Fortúné shuldé falle,  
 For fere, and let her wimpel<sup>1</sup> falle  
 Nigh to the wel upon therbage.  
 This wildé leon in his rage  
 A besté whiche he found thère out  
 Hath slain, and with his bloody snout  
 Whan he hath eten what he wolde,  
 To drinke of thilké stremés colde  
 Come to the wellé, where he fonde  
 The wimpel, whiche out of her honde  
 Was falle, and he it hath to-drawe,  
 Bebledde aboute and all forgnawe.  
 And than he straught<sup>2</sup> him for to  
 drinke

Upon the fresshé wellés brinke,  
 And after that out of the plein  
 He torneth to the wode ayein.  
 And Tisbé dursté nought remewe,  
 But as a brid which were in mewe,<sup>3</sup>  
 Within a bussh she kept her close  
 So stillé that she nought arose  
 Unto her self and pleigneth ay.  
 And fell, while that she theré lay,  
 This Piramus cam after sone  
 Unto the welle and by the mone  
 He found her wimpel blódy there.  
 Cam never yet to mannés ere

<sup>1</sup> *Wimpel*, neck-covering.

<sup>2</sup> *Straught*, stretched.

<sup>3</sup> *Mewe*, cage for moulting birds,

Tidingé ne to mannés sight  
 Merveillé which so sore aflight<sup>1</sup>  
 A mannés herte, as it tho dede  
 To him, whiche in the samé stede  
 With many a woful cómpleigníngé  
 Began his hondés for to wringe  
 As he which deemeth sikerly  
 That she he dede. And sodeinly  
 His swerd all naked out he braide  
 In his Foolhaste and thus he saide :  
 ‘ I am cause of this felonie,  
 So it is reson that I deic,  
 And she is dede by cause of me.’  
 And with that worde upon his kne  
 He fell, and to the goddés alle  
 Up to the heven he gan to calle  
 And praié, sithen<sup>2</sup> it was so  
 That he may nought his love as tho<sup>3</sup>  
 Have in this world, that of her grace  
 He might her have in other place,  
 For heré wolde he nought abide,  
 He saith. But as it shall betide,  
 The pomel of his swerd to ground  
 He set and through his hert a wound  
 He made up to the baré hilde,  
 And in this wisé him self spilte  
 With his Foolhaste, and deth he  
 nam.<sup>4</sup>

For she within a whilé cam,  
 Where he lay dede upon his knife,  
 So woful yet was never life  
 As Tisbé was. Whan she him sigh,  
 She mighté nought one worde on  
 high

Out speké, for her herté shette,  
 That of her life no pris she sette  
 But dedé swounend down she felle ;  
 Till after whan it so befelle,  
 That she out of her traunce awoke,  
 With many a wofull pitous loke  
 Her eye alway among she caste  
 Upon her love and atté laste  
 She caught her breth and saide thus :

<sup>1</sup> *Aflight*, afflicted.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

<sup>3</sup> *Sithen*, since.

<sup>4</sup> *Nam*, took.



' O thou, which clepéd art Venús,  
Goddesse of Love, and thou Cupide,  
Which Lovés cause hast for to guide,  
I wot now wel that ye be blinde,  
Of thilke unhap whiche I nowe finde  
Only betwene my love and me.  
This Piramus, whiche here I se  
Bledend, O, what hath he deserved?  
For he your hest hath kept and  
served,

And was yonge and I both also,  
Alas, why do ye with us so?  
Ye set our hertés both on fire  
And made us suché thing desire  
Wherof that we no skillé couthe.  
But thus our freshé lusty youthe  
Withouten joy is all despended,  
Which thing may never ben  
amended.

For as for me this woll I say,  
That me is lever for to deie  
Than live after this sorwefull day.  
And with this word where as he lay  
Her love in armés she embraseth  
Her owné deth and so purchaseth,  
That now she wepte and now she  
kiste,

Till atté laste, 'ere she it wiste,  
So great a sorwe is to her falle  
Whiche overgoth her wittés alle,  
And she, which mighté nought  
asterte,

The swerdés pointe ayein her herte  
She set and fell down therupon,  
Wherof that she was dede anone.  
And thus both on a<sup>1</sup> swerd bledend  
They weré founden dedé liggend.

" Now thou, my sone, hast herd  
this tale

Beware that of thin owné bale  
Thou be nought cause in thy Fool-  
haste,

And kepe that thou thy Wit newaste  
Upon thy thought in aventure,

<sup>1</sup> A, one.

Wherof thy livés forfeiture  
May falle. And if thou have so  
thought

Erthis, tell on and hide it nought."—

" My fader, upon Lovés side  
My consciéce I wol nought hide,  
How that for love of puré wo  
I have ben ofté moved so  
That with my wishes if I might  
A thousand timés, I you plight,  
I haddé storven<sup>1</sup> in a day.

And therof I me shrivé may,  
Though Lové fully me ne slough,  
My will to deié was enough.  
So am I of my Will coupáble,  
And yet is she nought merciáble  
Which may me yivé life and hele,  
But that her list nought with me dele  
I wot by whos conséil it is

And him wolde I long time er this,  
And yet I wolde and ever shall,  
Sleen and destrúe in speciáll.  
The golde of niné kingés londes  
Ne shulde him savé fro min hondes,  
In my powér if that he were.  
But yet him stant of me no fere,  
For nought that ever I can manáce  
He is the hinderer of my grace,  
Til he be dede I may nought spede.  
So mote I nedés taken hede  
And shape how that he were away,  
If I therto may finde a wey."—

" My soné, tell me now forthy  
Whiche is that mortal enemy,  
That thou manácest to be dede."—

" My fader, it is suche a quede<sup>2</sup>  
That where I come, he is to-fore  
And doth so that my cause is lore."

" What is his name?" " It is  
Daunger,

Whiche is my ladies counseiler,  
For I was never yet so sligh  
To come in any placé nigh

<sup>1</sup> Storven, died.

<sup>2</sup> Quede, foul one.

Where as she was, by night or day,  
That Daunger ne was redy ay,  
With whom for speché ne for mede  
Yet might I never of Lové spede.  
For ever I this findé soth,  
All that my lady saith or doth  
To me Daunger shall make anende.  
And that maketh al my world mis-  
wende,

And ever I axe his helpe, but he  
May be wel clepéd sauns pité.  
For ay the more I to him bowe,  
The lasse he woll my tale allowe.  
He hath my lady so engleued<sup>1</sup>  
She woll nought, that he be re-  
meued.

For ever he hongeth on her saile  
And is so privé of counseile,  
That ever whan I have ought bede,  
I findé Daunger in her stede  
And min answer of him I have.  
But for no mercy that I crave,  
Of mercy never a point I hadde.  
I find his answer ay so badde,  
That worsé might it never be.  
And thus between Daungér and me  
Is ever werré til he deie.  
But might I ben of such maistrie,  
That I Daungér had overcome,  
With that were all my joié come.  
Thus wolde I wonde for no sinne  
Ne yet for all this world to winne,  
If that I mighté finde a sleight  
To lay all min estate in weight  
I wolde him fro the Court desever  
So that he come ayeinward never,  
Therefore I wisshe and woldé fain  
That he were in some wisé slain,  
For while he stant in thilké place  
Ne gete I nought my ladies grace.  
Thus hate I dedely thilké Vice  
And wolde he stood in none office  
In placé where my lady is.  
For if he do, I wot wel this,

<sup>1</sup> Engleued, fastened to him.

That outhér he shall deie or I  
Within a while, and nought forthy  
On my lady full ofte I muse,  
Now that she may her self excuse.  
For if I deie in suche a plite  
Me thenketh she might nought be  
quite,<sup>1</sup>

That she ne were an homicide.  
And if it shuldé so betide,  
As god forbede it shuldé be,  
By double way it is pité.  
For I, which all my Will and Wit  
Have yove and servéd ever yit,  
And than I shuld in suche a wise,  
In rewardíng of my servíce  
Be dede, me thenketh it were routh.  
And furthermore I tellé trouth,  
She that hath ever be wel named,  
She were worthy than to be blamed  
And of resón to ben appeled,  
Whan with o word she might have  
heled

A man, and suffreth him to deie.  
Ha, who sigh ever such a way?  
Ha, who sigh ever such destresse?  
Withouté pité gentillesse,  
Withoute mercy womanhede,  
That woll so quite<sup>2</sup> a man his mede  
Whiche ever hath be to Lové trewe.  
“ My godé fader, if ye rewe  
Upon my talé, tell me now,  
And I wot stinte and herken  
you.”—

“ My sone, attempre thy coráge  
Fro Wrath and letthin hert assuage,  
For who so wol him underfonge,  
He may his grace abidé longé  
Or he of Lové be received  
And eke also, but it be weived,<sup>3</sup>  
There mighté mochel thing befallé  
That shuldé make a man to fallé  
Fro Love, that never afterwarde  
Ne durst he loké thiderwarde.

<sup>1</sup> Quite, acquitted.

<sup>2</sup> So requite.

<sup>3</sup> Unless it (Wrath) be put aside.

In hardé waiés men gon softe,  
And er they climbe avise hem ofte,  
And men seen all day, that rape<sup>1</sup>  
reweth.

And who so wicked alé breweth  
Full ofte he mot the worsé drinke ;  
Better it is to flete than sinke ;  
Better is upon the bridel chewe  
Than if he fel and overthrewe  
The hors and stickéd in the mire ;  
To casten water in the fire  
Better is than brenne upal the hous.  
The man whiche is malicioús  
And foolhastif, full ofte he falleth.  
And selden is whan Love him calleth.  
Forthý better is to suffre a throwe<sup>2</sup>  
Than to be wilde and overthrewe.  
Suffraunce hath ever be the best  
To wishen him that secheth rest.  
And thus if thou wolt Lové spede,  
My soné, suffre, as I the rede.  
What may the mous ayein the cat ?  
And for this cause I axé that,  
Who may to Lové make a werre,  
That he ne hath him self the werre ?  
Love axeth pees and ever shall,  
And who that fighteth most withall,  
Shall lest conquere of his emprise.  
For this they tellen that ben wise,  
Whiche is to strive and have the  
werse

To hasten, is nought worth a kerse.<sup>3</sup>  
Thing that a man may nought  
acheve,

That may nought wel be done at eve,  
It mot abidé till the morwe.  
Ne hasté nought thine owné sorwe,  
My sone, and take this in thy witte,  
He hath nought lost that wel abitte.<sup>4</sup>  
Ensampler, that it falleth thus,

<sup>1</sup> *Rape*, haste. Icelandic "hrapa," headlong hurry. It is the word used in the phrase "rap out an oath."

<sup>2</sup> *A throwe*, for a time.

<sup>3</sup> *Kerse*, cress.

<sup>4</sup> *Abitte*, abides, waits (like our "everything comes to him who waits").

Thou might well take of Piramus,  
Whan he in haste his swerd out  
drough

And on the point him selven slough  
For love of Tisbé pitously  
For<sup>1</sup> he her wimpel fond bloodý  
And wende a beste her haddé slain,  
Where as him ought have be right  
fain,

For she was there al sauf beside.  
But for he woldé nought abide,  
This mischef fell. Forthý beware,  
My sone, as I thee warné dare,  
Do thou no thinge in suche a rees,<sup>2</sup>  
For suffraunce is the well of pees,  
Though thou to Lovés Court pursue,  
Yet sit it wel that thou escheue  
That thou the Court nought over-  
haste,

For so thou might thy timé waste.  
But if<sup>3</sup> thin hap therto be shape,  
It may nought helpé for to rape,  
Therefore attempre, thy coráge,  
Foolhasté doth none avauntage,  
But ofte it set a man behinde  
In cause of love, and thus I finde  
By olde ensample as thou shalt here  
Touchend of love in this matere.

**A** maiden whilom there was one,  
Which Daphné hight, and such was  
none

Of beaute thán, as it was saide.  
Phebús his love hath on her laide,  
And therupon to her he sought  
In his Foolhaste and so besought  
That she with him no resté hadde,  
For ever upon her love he gradde,<sup>4</sup>  
And she said ever unto him nay.  
So it befelle upon a day  
Cupidé, whiche hath every chauce  
Of love under his governaunce,  
Sigh Phebus hasten him so sore,  
And for he shulde him hasté more

<sup>1</sup> *For*, because.

<sup>3</sup> *But if*, unless.

<sup>2</sup> *Rees*, rush.

<sup>4</sup> *Gradde*, cried out.

And yet nought speden atté laste  
A dart throughout his hert he caste,  
Which was of golde and all a fire,  
That made him many fold desire  
Of lové moré than he dede.

To Daphne eke in the samé stede  
A dart of led he caste and smote,  
Which was all colde and no thing  
hote.

And thus Phebús in lové brenneth  
And in his haste abouté renneth  
To loken if that he might winne.  
But he was ever to beginne,  
For ever away fro him she fled,  
So that he never his lové sped.  
And for to make him full beleve,  
That no Foolhasté might acheve  
To geté love in such degre,  
This Daphne into a lorer tre  
Was tornéd, whiche is ever grene  
In token, as yet it may be sene,  
That she shall dwelle a maiden stille  
And Phebus failen of his wille.  
By suche ensamples as they stonde,  
My soné, thou might understande  
To hasten love is thing in vein  
Whan that Fortúne is there ayein,  
To také where a man hath leve  
Good is, and ellés he mot leve.  
For whan a mannés happés failen,  
There is none hasté may availen.”—

“My fader, graunt mercý of this.  
But while I se my lady is  
No tree, but holde her owné forme,  
There may me no man so enforme,  
To whether part Fortúné wende,  
That I unto my livés ende  
Ne wol her serven evermo.”—

“My soné, sithen it is so,  
I say no more, but in this cas  
Beware, howe it with Phebus was.  
Nought only upon Lovés chauce,  
But upon every governaunce,  
Which falleth unto mannés dede,  
Foolhaste is ever for to drede,

And that a man good counseil take  
Er he his purpose undertake,  
For counseil put Foolhaste away.”—

“Now godé fader, I you prey,  
That for to wissé me the more,  
Some good ensample upon this lore  
Ye wold me telle, of that is writ,  
That I the better mighté wit,  
Howe I Foolhasté shulde escheue  
And the wisdóme of counseil suc.”—

“My sone, that thou might  
enforme

Thy paciéncie upon the forme  
Of olde ensamples as they felle,  
Nowe understand, what I shall telle.

“When noble Troié was belein  
And overcome, and home ayein  
The Gregois tornéd fro the siege,  
The kingés found her owné liege  
In many places, as men saide,  
That hem forsoke and disobeide.  
Among the whiché fell this case  
To Demephon and Athemas,  
That weren kingés bothé two  
And bothé weren servéd so,  
Her leges wolde hem nought re-  
ceive,

So that they mote alगतés weive<sup>1</sup>  
To seché londe in other place  
For theré foundé they no grace.  
Wherof they token hem to rede  
And soughten frepdés atté nede,  
And eche of hem assureth other  
To helpe as to his owné brother  
To vengen hem of thilke oultráge  
And winne ayein her heritáge.  
And thus they ride abouté faste  
To geten hem helpe, and atté laste  
They hadden power suffisaunt  
And maden than a covenaut,  
That they ne shuldé no life save,  
Ne prest, ne clerk, ne lord, ne  
knave,

Ne wife, ne childe of that they finde

<sup>1</sup> Weive, turn aside.

Which bereth viságe of mannés kinde,  
So that no life shall be socoured,  
But with the dedelys werd deuoured.  
In such Foolhaste her ordinaunce  
They shaper for to do vengeance.  
Whan this purpóse was wist and knowe

Among here host, tho was there blowe

Of wordés many a speche aboute.  
Of yongé men the lusty route  
Were of this talé glad inough,  
There was no caré for the plough;  
As they that weren foolhastif  
They ben accorded to the strife  
And sain, it may nought ben to great  
To vengen hem of such forfét.  
Thus saith the wilde unwise tonge  
Of hem that theré weren yonge.

“But Nestor, which was olde hore,

The salvé sigh to-fore the sore  
As he that was of counseil wise.  
So that anone by his advise  
There was a privé counseil nome,  
The lordés ben to-gider come.

“This Demephon and Athemas  
Her purpos tolden as it was.  
They setten allé still and herde,  
Was non but Nestor hem answérde.  
He badde hem, if they wolden winne,  
They shulden se, er they beginne,  
Her ende and set her first entent  
That they hem after ne repent.  
And axeth hem this questiön,  
To what fináll conclusiön  
They woldé regné kingés there,  
If that no people in londé were?  
And saith, it were a wonder wierd<sup>1</sup>  
To seen a king become an hierd,  
Where no life is but only beste  
Under the legeaunce of his heste.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Wierd*, destiny.

<sup>2</sup> Only beasts under allegiance to his command.

For who that is of man no kinge  
The remenaunt is as no thinge.  
He saith eke, if they pourpose holde  
To slee the people, as they two wolde,  
Whan they it mighté nought restore,  
All Grece it shulde abeggé sore<sup>1</sup>  
To se the wildé besté wone<sup>2</sup>

Where whilom dwelt a mannés sone.  
And for that cause he bad hem trete  
And stint of tho manáces grete.  
‘Bet is to winne by fairé speche,’  
He saith, ‘than such vengeance séche.

For whan a man is most above,  
Him nedeth most to gete him love.’

“Whan Nestor hath this talé saide,

Ayein him was no word withsaide;  
It thought hem all he saidé wele;  
And thus Fortúne her dedly whele  
Fro werré torneth into pees.  
But forth they wenten nethéles,  
And whan the contrees herdé sain,  
How that her kingés be besein  
Of suche a power as they ladde,  
Was none so bold that hem ne dradde  
And for to seché pees and grith<sup>3</sup>  
They sende and praide anon forth-  
with,

So that the kingés ben appesed  
And every mannés hert is esed.  
All was foryete and nought recorded,  
And thus they ben to-gider accorded.  
The kingés were ayein received,  
And pees was take and wrathé  
weived  
And all through counseil which was  
good

Of him that reson understood.

“By this ensample, sone, at-  
tempre

Thin hert and let no Will distempre

<sup>1</sup> *Abegge sore*, aby, — pay for — it sorely.

<sup>2</sup> *Wone*, dwell.

<sup>3</sup> *Grith* was a secured interval of peace;  
“frith” was peace generally.

Thy Wit, and do no thing by might,  
Which may be do by love and  
right.

Foolhaste is cause of mochel wo,  
Forthý my soné, do nought so.  
And as touchend of homicide.  
Which toucheth unto Lovés side,  
Ful ofte it falleth unavised  
Through Will which is nought wel  
assised,

Whan Wit and Reson ben away  
And that Foolhaste is in the wey,  
Wherof hath fallé great yenge-  
aunce.

Forthý take into remembrance  
To love in suche a maner wise,  
That thou deservé no juisse.  
For woul I wot, thou might nought  
lette,

That thou ne shalt thin herté sette  
To lové, where<sup>1</sup> thou wolt or none.  
But if thy wit be overgone,  
So that it torne unto malſce,  
There wot no man of thilké Vice,  
What perill that there may befallé.  
Wherof a tale amongés alle  
Whiche is great pité for to here  
I thenké for to tellen here,  
That thou such mordre might with-  
stonde,

Whan thou the tale hast under-  
stonde.

**Of Troie** at thilké noble towne,  
Whose famé stant yet of renowne  
And ever shall to mannés ere,  
The siegé lasté longé there  
Er that the Grekes it mighté winne,  
While Priamús was king therinne.  
But of the Grekes that lien aboute,  
Agámenon lad all the route.  
This thinge is knowen overall,  
But yet I thenke in speciall  
To my matéré therupon  
Telle in what wise Agámenon

<sup>1</sup> *Where*, whether.

Through chauncé which may nought  
be weived

Of love untrewé was deceived.  
An oldé sawe is : who that is sligh  
In placé where he may be nigh  
He maketh the ferré levé loth<sup>1</sup>  
Of love, and thus ful ofte it goth.  
There while Agámenon bátáilleth  
To winné Troie and it assaileth  
From home and was long timé fer,  
Egistus drough his quené ner  
And with the leiser whiche he hadde  
This lady at his will he ladde.  
Climestré was her righté name,  
She was therof greatly to blame  
To lové there it may nought laste,  
But fell to mischefe atté laste.  
For whan this noble worthy knight  
Ero Troié came, the firsté night  
That he at home a beddé lay  
Egistus longe er it was day,  
As this Climestre him had assent  
And weren bothe of one assent,  
By treson slough him in his bed.  
But morder, which may nought ben  
hed,

Sprong out to every mannés ere,  
Wherof the lond was full of fere.

Agámenon hath by this quene  
A sone, and that was after sene.  
But yet as than he was of youth  
A babé which no reson couth,  
And as God wolde, it felle him thus,  
A worthy knight Taltibius  
This yongé childe hath in keepíng.  
And whan he herde of this tidíng,  
Of this tresón, of this misdede,  
He gan within him self to drede  
In aunter if this false Egiste  
Upon him come er he it wiste  
To take and morder of his malice  
This child whiche he hath to norice;  
And for that cause in allé haste

<sup>1</sup> The cunning man who can come near makes  
loathed the loved one who is farther off.

Out of the londe he gan him haste  
 And to the kinge of Crete he straught  
 And him this yongé lorde betaught<sup>1</sup>  
 And praid him for his faders sake,  
 That he this child wolde undertake  
 And kepe him till he be of age,  
 So as he was of his lignage,  
 And told him over all the cas,  
 How that his fader morthred was,  
 And how Egistus, as men saide,  
 Wasking, to whom the londe obeide.

“And whan Ydomeneus the kinge  
 Hath understanding of this thinge,  
 Which that this knight him haddé  
 told,

He madé sorwé manyfold  
 And toke the childe unto his warde  
 And saide he wolde him kepe and  
 warde,

Till that he were of such a might  
 To handle a swerde and ben a knight  
 To venge him at his owné will.  
 And thus Horestes dwelleth still,  
 Such was the childés righté name,  
 Whiche after wroughté mochel  
 shame

In vengeance of his faders deth.

“The time of yerés overgeth  
 That he was man of brede and  
 lengthe,

Of wit, of manhode, and of strengthe,  
 A fair persone amongés alle.  
 And he began to clepe and calle  
 As he which comé was to man,  
 Unto the kinge of Creté than  
 Praiéndé that he wold him make  
 A knight and power, with him take,  
 For lenger wolde he nought beleve,<sup>2</sup>  
 He saith, but praith the kinge of  
 leve

To gone and claim his heritáge  
 And vengen him of thilke oultráge  
 Which was unto his fader do.  
 The kinge assenteth well therto

<sup>1</sup> *Betaught*, entrusted.

<sup>2</sup> *Beleve*, remain.

With great honouír and knight him  
 maketh

And great powér to him betaketh,<sup>1</sup>

And gan his journé for to caste  
 So that Horestes atté laste

His levé toke and forth he goth  
 As he that was in herté wroth.

His firsté pleinté to bemene<sup>2</sup>

Unto the citee of Athene

He goth him forth and was re-  
 ceived,

So theré was he nought deceived.

The duke and tho that weren wise

They profren hem to his servíce,

And he hem thonketh of her proffer

And saith him self he wol gone offer

Unto the goddés for his spede,

And allé men him yivé rede.

So goth he to the temple forth,

Of yiftés that be mochel worth

His sacrifice and his offrínge

He made. And after his axínge

He was answerde, if that he wolde

His state recover, than he sholde

Upon his modér do vengeance

So cruel, that the rémembraúnce

Therof might evermore abide,

As she that was an homicide

And of her owné lord mordrice.

Horestes, whiche of thilke office

Was nothing glad, as than he  
 praide

Unto the goddés there and saide,

That they the jugément devise,

How she shall také the júise.<sup>3</sup>

And therupon he had answére,

That he her pappés shulde of-tere

Out of her breast his owné hondes,

And for ensample of allé londes

With hors she shuldé be to-drawe,

Till houndés had her bonés gnawe

Withouten any sepultúre.

This was a wofull aventure.

<sup>1</sup> *Betaketh*, entrusted.    <sup>2</sup> *Bemene*, bemoan.

<sup>3</sup> *Júise*, judgment (judicium).

“And whan Horestes hath all  
herde,  
How that the goddés have an-  
swérde,  
Forth with the strengthé whiche he  
lad,

The duke and his powér he had  
And to a citee forth they gone,  
The which was clepéd Cropheone,  
Where as Phorcús was lord and sire,  
Which profreth him withouten hire  
His helpe and all that he may do,  
As he that was right glad therto  
To greve his mortal enemy,  
And tolde him certain causé why,  
How that Egiste in mariáge  
His daughter whilom of full age  
Forlay and afterward forsoke,  
Whan he Horestes moder toke.  
Men sain : old sinné newé shame.  
Thusmore and more arose the blame  
Ayein Egiste on every side.

“Horestes with his host to ride  
Began, and Phorcus with him wente,  
I trowe Egist him shall repente.  
They riden forth unto Micene,  
There lay Climestré thilké quene,  
The whiche Horestes moder is.  
And whan she herdé telle of this,  
The gatés weré fasté shette,  
And they were of her entré lette.<sup>1</sup>  
Anone this citee was withoute  
Belain and siegéd all aboute,  
And ever among they it assaile  
Fro day to night, and so travaile  
Till atté lasté they it wonne ;  
Tho was there sorwe inough be-  
gonne.

“Horestes did his moder calle  
Anone to-fore the lordés alle  
And eke to-fore the people also,  
To her and tolde his talé tho  
And saide : ‘O cruel beste unkinde,  
How mightest thou thin herté finde,

<sup>1</sup> Hindered from entering.

For any luste of lovés draught  
That thou accordest to the slaught  
Of him which was thin owné lorde?  
Thy treson stant of such recorde,  
Thou might thy werkés nought  
forsake,

So mote I for my faders sake  
Vengeaunce upon thy body do,  
As I commaunded am therto.  
Unkindély for thou hast wrought,  
Unkindélich it shall be bought :  
The soné shall the moder slee,  
For that whilom thou saydest ye  
To that thoushuldest nay have said.<sup>7</sup>  
And he with that his honds hath laid  
Upon his moder breast anone  
And rent out from the baré bone  
Her pappés both and caste away  
Amiddés in the carté way,  
And after toke the dedé cors  
And lete it be drawe away with hors  
Unto the hounde, unto the raven,  
She was none other wise graven.<sup>1</sup>

“Egistus, which was ellés where,  
Tidingés comen to his ere,  
How that Micené was belain,  
But what was more herd he nought  
sain.

With great manáce and mochel boste  
He drough powér and made an hoste  
And came in the rescousse<sup>2</sup> of the  
town.

But all the sleight of his tresón  
Horestes wist it by a spie  
And of his men a great partie  
He made in busshément abide  
To waite<sup>3</sup> on him in suche a tide,  
That he ne might her hond escape.  
And in this wise as he hath shape  
The thing befell, so that Egist  
Was take er he him selfe it wist,  
And was forth brought his hondés  
bonde,

<sup>1</sup> Graven, buried. <sup>2</sup> Rescousse, rescue.

<sup>3</sup> Waite, watch.



As whan men have a traitor fonde.  
 And tho that weren with him take,  
 Whiche of tresón were overtake,  
 To-gider in one sentence falle.  
 But false Egiste above hem alle  
 Was deméd to diversé peine,  
 The worsté that men couthe ordeigne,

And so forth after by the lawe  
 He was unto the gibet drawe,  
 Where he above all other hongeth,  
 As to a traitor it belongeth.  
 The Famé with her swifté winges  
 Abouté fliþ and bare tidinges  
 And made it couth in allé londes,  
 How that Horestes with his hondes  
 Climestre his owné moder slough.  
 Somé sain, he did well enough,  
 And somé sain, he did amis,  
 Divers opiniön there is ;  
 That she is dede they speken alle,  
 But pleynly howe it is befallé  
 The matere in so litel throwe <sup>1</sup>  
 In sothé there might no man knowe  
 But they that weren at the dede.  
 And comunlich in every nede  
 The worsté speche is rathest herde  
 And levéd,<sup>2</sup> till it be answerde.  
 The kingés and the lordés great  
 Begonne Horestes for to threat  
 To putten him out of his regne,—  
 He is nought worthy for to regne,  
 The child which slough his moderso,  
 They said ; and therupon also  
 The lordés of común assent  
 The timé sette of parlément,  
 And to Athenés king and lorde  
 To-gider come of one accorde,  
 To knowe how that the sothé was,  
 So that Horestes in this cas  
 They senden after, and he come.

“ King Menelay the wordés nome  
 And axeth him of this matere.  
 And he, that all it mighten here,

<sup>1</sup> In so short a time.    <sup>2</sup> *Levéd*, believed.

Answerde and tolde his tale at large,  
 And how the goddés in his charge  
 Commaunded him in suche a wise  
 His owné hond to do juise.<sup>1</sup>  
 And with this tale a duke arose,  
 Which was a worthy knight of lose,<sup>2</sup>  
 His namé was Menesteús,  
 And saide unto the lordés thus :  
 ‘ The wreché<sup>3</sup> whiche Horestes  
 dede,

It was thinge of the goddés bede  
 And nothinge of his cruelté :  
 And if there were of my degre  
 In all this placé suche a knight  
 That woldé sain it was no right,  
 I woll it with my body prove.’  
 And therupon he cast his glove  
 And eke this noble duke alleide  
 Full many an other skill<sup>4</sup> and saide,  
 She haddé well deserved wreche,  
 First for the cause of spouse breche,<sup>5</sup>  
 And after wrought in suche a wise,  
 That all the worlde it ought agrise,<sup>6</sup>  
 Whan that she for so foul a vice  
 Was of her owné lord mordrice.  
 They sitten allé still and herde,  
 But therto was no man answerde,  
 It thought hem all he saidé skille,  
 There is no man withsay it wille.  
 Whan they upon the reson musen  
 Horestes allé they excusen,  
 So that with great solempnité  
 He was unto his dignité  
 Receivéd and corounéd kinge.  
 And tho befell a wonder thinge.  
 Egfona whan she it wiste,  
 Which was the daughter of Egiste  
 And suster on the moder side  
 To this Horest, at thilké tide,  
 Whan she herde how her brother  
 sped,

For puré sorwé whiche her led,

<sup>1</sup> *Juise*, judgment.    <sup>2</sup> *Lose*, praise, fame.

<sup>3</sup> *Wreche*, vengeance.    <sup>4</sup> Alleged . . . reason.

<sup>5</sup> *Spouse breche*, adultery.

<sup>6</sup> *Agrise*, to terrify.

That he ne haddé ben exiled,  
 She hath her owné life beguiled  
 Anone and henge her selfé tho.  
 It hath and shall ben evermo  
 To mordre who that woll assente  
 He may nought failé to repente.  
 This false Egóna was one  
 Whiché to mordre Agámenon  
 Yaf her accorde and her assent,  
 So that by goddés jugement,  
 Though other noné man it wolde,  
 She toke her juise as she sholde,  
 And as she to an other wrought  
 Vengeaúnce upon herself she sought  
 And hath of her unhappy wit  
 A modre with a modre quit.  
 Suche is of modre the vengeaunce.

“Forthy my sone, in remem-  
 braunce

Of this ensample take good hede,  
 For who that thenketh his lovéspe-  
 With mordre, he shall with worldés  
 shame

Him self ande ke his lovés shame.”—

“My fader, of this aventure,  
 Whiche ye have tolde, I you assure  
 My herte is sory for to here ;  
 But onely for I woldé lere  
 What is to done and what to leve,  
 And over this now by your leve.  
 That ye me woldé telle I pray,  
 If there be leful any way  
 Withouté sinne a man may slee.”—

“My sone, in sondry wisé ye,<sup>1</sup>  
 What man that is of traierie  
 Of mordre or ellés robberie  
 Atteint, the jugé shal not let  
 But he shal seen of puré det<sup>2</sup>  
 And doth great sinne if that he  
 wonde.<sup>3</sup>

For who, that lawe hath upon honde,  
 And spareth for to do justice  
 For mercy, doth nought his office,

<sup>1</sup> Ye, yea.      <sup>2</sup> Det, debt, obligation.  
<sup>3</sup> Wonde, turn aside.

That he his mercy so bewareth,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whan for o shrewé, whiche he  
 spareth,

A thousand godé men he greveth ;  
 With such mercý who that beleveth  
 To plesé God, he is deceived  
 Or ellés reson mot be weived.  
 The lawé stoo-<sup>2</sup>de or we were bore,  
 How that a kingés swerde is bore  
 In signé that he shall defende  
 His trué people and make an ende  
 Of suche, as wolden hem devoure.

“Lo, thus my soné, to succour  
 The lawe, and comun right to winne,  
 A man may slee withouté sinne  
 And do therof a great almesse  
 So for to kepé rightwisnesse.  
 And over this<sup>3</sup> for his contree  
 In time of werre a man is free  
 Him self, his house, and eke his  
 londe

Defendé with his owné hondé  
 And sleen, if that he may no bet,  
 After the lawé whiche is set.”—

“Now fader, than I you beseche  
 Of hem that dedly werrés seche  
 In worldés cause and sheden blood,  
 If suche an homicide is good ?”—

“My sone, upon thy questiön  
 The trouth of min opiniön,  
 Als ferforth as my wit arecheth  
 And as the plainé lawé techeth,  
 I wol thee telle in evidence  
 To reulé with thy consciéce.

**The highé god** of his justice  
 That ilké foul horrible Vice  
 Of Homicide he hath forbede  
 By Moíses, as it was bede.  
 Whan Goddés sone also was bore  
 He sent his aungel down therfore,  
 Whom the shephérdés herden singe :  
 ‘Pees to the men of welwillinge  
 In erthé be amonge us here.’

<sup>1</sup> Bewareth, expends.      <sup>2</sup> Or, ere.  
<sup>3</sup> Over this, beyond this.

So for to speke in this matére  
 After the lawe of charité,  
 There shall no dedly werré be.  
 And eke Natúre it hath defended  
 And in her lawé Pees commended,  
 Whiche is the chefe of mannés welth,  
 Of mannés life, of mannés helth.  
 But dedly Werre hath his covíne  
 Of Pestilence and of Famíne,  
 Of Pouerte and of allé wo,  
 Wherof this world we blamen so  
 Which now the werre hath under  
 fote,

Till God him self therof do bote.<sup>1</sup>  
 For allé thing, which God hath  
 wrought,

In erthé, Werre it bringeth to nought.  
 The chirche is brent, the prest is  
 slain,

The wife, the maide is eke forlain,  
 The lawe is lore and God unserved:  
 I not<sup>2</sup> what mede he hath deserved,  
 That suché werrés ledeth inne.

If that he do it for to winne,  
 First to accompte his greté coste,  
 Forth with the folke that he hath  
 loste

As to the worldés reckeninge,  
 There shall he findé no winninge.  
 And if he do it to purcháce  
 The heven, mede of suche a grace  
 I can nought speké, nethéles  
 Crist hath commaunded Love and  
 Pees.

And who that worcheth the revers,  
 I trowe his mede is full divers.  
 And sithen thanné that we finde,  
 That werrés in her owné kinde  
 Ben toward God of no deserte  
 And eke they bringen in pouerte  
 Of worldés good, it is merveile  
 Among the men what it may eile  
 That they a pees ne connen sette,  
 I trowé Sinné be the lette,

<sup>1</sup> Do bote, cause remedy.    <sup>2</sup> Not, know not.

And every mede of Sinne is deth.  
 So wote I never howe it geth.  
 But we, that ben of o<sup>1</sup> beleve  
 Among us self, this wolde I leve,<sup>2</sup>  
 That better it were Pees to chese  
 Than so by double weié lese.

I not if that it now so stonde,  
 But this a man may understonde,  
 Who that these oldé bokés redeth,  
 That covetise is one which ledeth  
 And broughté first the werrés inne.  
 At Grece if that I shall beginne,  
 There was it provéd howe it stood  
 To Persé, whiche was full of good.  
 They maden werre in speciall  
 And so they didden over all  
 Where great richessé was in londe,  
 So that they leften nothing stonde  
 Unwerréd, but onliche Archade.

For theré they nó werrés made  
 Because it was barein and pouer,  
 Wherof they mighté nought recouer  
 And thus pouerté was forboré,  
 He that nought had nought hath  
 loré.

But yet it is a wonder thinge,  
 Whan that a riché worthy kinge  
 Or other lord, what so he be,  
 Woll axe and claimé proprieté  
 In thing to whiche he hath no right  
 But only of his greté might.  
 For this may every man well wite,  
 That bothé Kinde and Lawé write  
 Expressely stonden there ayein.  
 But he mot nedés somewhat sain,  
 All though there be no reson inne,  
 Which secheth causé for to winne.  
 For Wit that is with Will oppressed,  
 Whan covetise him hath adressed  
 And allé reson put away,  
 He can well findé such a way  
 To werré where as ever him liketh,  
 Wherof that he the worde entriketh,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O, one.

<sup>2</sup> Leve, believe.

<sup>3</sup> Entriketh, deceives by intrigue.

That many a man of him com-  
pleigneth.

But yet alway some cause he  
feigneth

And of his wrongfull herte he  
demeth

That all is well what ever him  
semeth

Be so that he may winne inough.

For as the true man to the plough

Only to the gainage entendeth,

Right so the warioúr despendeth

His time and hath no consciéce,

And in this point for evidence

Of hem that suché werrés make,

Thou might a great ensample take

How they her tirannie excusen

Of that they wrongfull werrés usen,

And how they stonde of one ac-  
corde,

The souldeour forth with the lorde,

The pouér man forth with the riche,

As of coragé they ben liche

To maké werrés and to pille

For lucre and for none other skille,<sup>1</sup>

Wherof a propre tale I rede,

As it whilom befelle in dede.

“**Of him**, whom all this erthé  
dradde

Whan he the world so overladde

Through werré, as it fortunéd is,

King Alisaundre, I redé this,

How in a marché where he lay

It fell parchaunce upon a day

A rover of the see was nome,<sup>2</sup>

Which many a man had overcome

And slain and take her good away.

This pilour as the bokés say,

A famous man in sondry stede

Was of the werkés whiche he dede.

This prisoner to-fore the kinge

Was brought, and therupon this  
thinge

In audiéce he was accused,

<sup>1</sup> *Skille*, reason.

<sup>2</sup> *Nome*, taken.

And he his dede hath nought excused

And praid the king to done him right

And said : ‘ Sire, if I were of might,

I have an herté liche to thine ;

For if thy power weré mine,

My wille is most in speciall

To rife and geten over all

The largé worldés good about.

But for I lede a pouer route

And am as who saith at mischefe,

The name of pilour and of thefe

I bere, and thou which routés great

Might lede and také thy beyete<sup>1</sup>

And dost right as I woldé do,

Thy name is nothing clepéd so,

But thou art naméd emperour.

Our dedés ben of one colour

And in effecte of one desérte,

But thy richesse and my pouérte

They be nought taken evenliche,

And nethéles he that is riche

This day, to morwe he may be pouer,

And in contrarie also recouer

A pouer man to greté richesse.

Men sain forthy let rightwisenesse

Be peiséd even in the balaúnce.’

“The king his hardy contenance

Behelde, and herd his wordés wise,

And said unto him in this wise :

‘Thin answeere I have understonde,

Wherof my will is, that thou stonde

In my servyce and stille abide.’

And forth with al the same tide

He hath him terme of life witholde

The more and for he shuld ben bolde,

He made him knight and yaf him

lond,

Whiche afterward was of his honde

An orpéd<sup>2</sup> knight in many a stede

And great prowésse of armés dede,

As the croniquéés it recorden.

And in this wisé they accorden,

The whiche of her condición

Be set upon destructión,

<sup>1</sup> *Beyete*, gains.

<sup>2</sup> *Orpéd*, distinguished.

Such capitain such retenue,<sup>1</sup>  
 But for to see to what issie  
 The king befalleth at the laste,  
 It is great wonder that men caste  
 Her herte upon such wrong to winne  
 Where no beyeté may ben inne  
 And doth disese on every side ;  
 But whan Resón is put aside  
 And Will govérneth the coráge,  
 The faucon which fleéth ramáge<sup>2</sup>  
 And suffreth no thing in the way  
 Wherof that he may take his pray,  
 Is nought more set upon ravine  
 Than thilké man whiche his covine  
 Hath set in suche a maner wise.  
 For all the world ne may suffice  
 To Wil whiche is nought reson-  
 áble.

Wherof ensample concordáble  
 Lich to this point of which I mene  
 Was upon Alisaundre sene,  
 Whiche haddé set all his entent  
 So as Fortúné with him went,  
 That Reson might him non govérne,  
 But of his Wille he was so sterne,  
 That all the worlde he overran  
 And what him list he toke and wan.  
 In Yndé the superioúr  
 Whan that he was full conqueroúr  
 And had his wilfull pourpos wonne  
 Of all this erth under the sonne,  
 This king homward to Macedoine  
 Whan that he cam to Babiloine  
 And wendé moste in his empire,  
 As he which was hole lorde and  
 sire,  
 In honour for to be received,  
 Most sodenliche he was deceived  
 And with strong poison envenfmed.  
 And as he hath the world mistimed  
 Nought as he shuldé with his wit,  
 Nought as he wolde it was acquit.  
 Thus was he slain that whilom  
 slough,

<sup>1</sup> Like master like man.    <sup>2</sup> *Ramdge*, wild.

And he which riché was inough  
 This day, to morwe hehaddé nought.  
 And in such wise as he hath wrought  
 In disturbaunce of worldés pees,  
 His werre he fond than endéles,  
 In which for ever discomfite  
 He was. Lo, now for what profite  
 Of werre it helpeth for to ride,  
 For covetfse and worldés pride  
 To slee the worldés men aboute  
 As bestés, whiché gone there oute.  
 For every life which reson can<sup>1</sup>  
 Oweth wel to knowé that a man  
 Ne shuldé through no tirannie  
 Lich to these other bestés deie  
 Til Kindé<sup>2</sup> woldé for him sende.  
 I not how he it might amende  
 Which taketh away for evermore  
 The life that he may nought restore.

“Forthy my sone, in allé wey  
 Be wel aviséd I thee prey  
 Of slaughter that thou be coupáble  
 Withouté causé resonáble.”—

“My fader, understonde it is,  
 That ye have said, but over this  
 I pray you telle me nay or ye,  
 To passe over the greaté see  
 To werre and sle the Sarasin  
 Is that the lawé?”—“Soné min,  
 To preche and suffre for the feith  
 That I have herd the gospel saith,—  
 But for to sle, that here I nought.  
 Crist with his ownédeth hath bought  
 All other men and made hem fre  
 In token of parfit charité,  
 And after<sup>3</sup> that he taught him selve  
 Whan he was dede these other twelve  
 Of his apostles went aboute  
 The holy feith to prechen oute,  
 Wherof the deth in sondry place  
 They suffre, and so God of his grace  
 The feith of Crist hath made arise.  
 But if they wolde in other wise

<sup>1</sup> Everybody capable of reason.

<sup>2</sup> *Kindé*, Nature.    <sup>3</sup> *After*, according to.

By werre have brought in the  
creaunce,

It haddé yet stonde in balaunce.  
And that may proven in the dede ;  
For what man the cronqués rede,  
Fro first that Holy Chirche hath  
weived<sup>1</sup>

To preche and hath the swerd re-  
ceived,

Wherof the werrés ben begonne,  
A great partie of that was wonne  
To Cristés feith stant now miswent.

God do therof amendément  
So as he wot what is the best.

But sone, if thou wilt live in rest  
Of consciencé well assised,  
Er that thou slee, be wel avised ;

For man, as tellen us the clerkes,  
Hath God above all erthly werkes  
Ordeignéd to be principáll,

And eke of soule in speciáll  
He is made lich to the godhede :  
So sit it wel to taken hede

And for to loke on every side  
Er that thou falle on homicide,  
Which sinne is now so generall

That it wel nigh stant overall  
In Holy Chirche and elles where.  
But all the while it is so there,  
The world mot nedé fare amis.

For whan the well of pité is  
Through covetise of worldés good  
Defouled with shedfng of blood,

The remenaunte of folke about  
Unnethé stonde in any doubt  
To werre eche other and to slee,

So it is all nought worth a stre,<sup>2</sup>  
The Charité wherof we prechen,  
For we do no thing as we techen.

And thus the blindé consciéce  
Of Pees hath lost thilke evidence  
Which Crist upon this erthé taught.

Now may men se mordre and man-  
slaught

<sup>1</sup> *Weived*, put aside.

<sup>2</sup> *Stre*, straw.

Liche as it was by daiés olde,  
Whan men the sinnés bought and  
solde.

“ *In Grece* aforé Cristés feith,  
I rede as the cronqué saith  
Touchend of this matéré thus,  
In thilké time how Peleús  
His owné brother Phocus slough.  
But for he haddé gold inough  
To yive, his sinné was despensed  
With golde wherof it was com-  
pensed.

Achastus, which with Venus was  
Her prest, assoilé<sup>1</sup> in that cas  
Al weré there no répentance.  
And as the boke maketh rémem-  
braunce,

It telleth of Medee also,  
Of that she slough her sonés two  
Egeús in the samé plite

Hath made her of her sinné quite.<sup>2</sup>  
The sone eke of Amphíoras,  
Whose righté name Almeús was,

His moder slough Eriphelé,  
But Achilo the prest and he,  
So as the bokés it fecorden,

For certain some of golde accorden  
That thilke horriblé sinfull dede  
Assoilé<sup>1</sup> was; and thus for mede  
Of worldés good it falleth ofte,

That homicide is set alofte  
Here in this life : but after this  
There shall be knowe, how that it is

Of hem that suché thingés wirche,  
And how also that Holy Chirche  
Let suché sinnés passé quite,

And how they wolde hem self acquite  
Of dedely werrés, that they make.  
For who that wold ensample take,

The lawé whiche is naturel,  
By wey of Kindé sheweth wel  
That homicide in no degre

Which werreth ayein charité  
Among the menné shuldé dwelle.

<sup>1</sup> *Assoilé*, absolved.    <sup>2</sup> *Quite*, acquitted.

For after that the bokés telle,  
To seche in all the worldé riche  
Men shall nought finde upon his  
liche<sup>1</sup>

A besté for to take his prey,  
And sithen Kind hath suche a wey,  
Than is it wonder of a man,  
Which kindé hath and reson can,  
That he woll outhere more or lasse  
His kinde and reson óverpasse  
And slee that is to him sembláble.  
So is the man nought resonáble  
Ne kinde, and that is nought  
honéste,

Whan he is worsé than a beste.

“Among the bokés which I finde  
Solins speketh of a wonder kinde  
And saith of foulés there is one,  
Whiche hath a face of blood and  
bone

Like to a man in ressemblaunce.  
And if it fallé so parchaunce,  
As he whiche is a foule of pray,  
That he a man finde in his way,  
He woll him sleen if that he may.  
But afterward the samé day  
Whan he hath eten all his felle  
And that shall be beside a welle  
In whiché he woll drinké take  
Of his viságe and seeth the make  
That he hath slain, anone he  
thenketh

Of his misdede, and it forthenketh  
So greatly that for puré sorwe  
He liveth nought till on the morwe.  
By this ensample it may well sue,  
That man shall homicide escheuc,  
For ever is mercy good to take.  
But if the lawe it hath forsake  
And that justíce is there ayein,  
Ful offtime I have herd sain  
Amongés hem that werrés hadden,  
That they somwhile her causé  
ladden

<sup>1</sup> Upon his own kind.

By mercy, whan they might have  
slain,

Wherof that they were after sain.  
And sone, if that thou wolt recorde  
The vertue of misericorde,  
Thou sighé never thilké place,  
Where it was uséd lacké grace;  
For every lawe and every kinde  
The mannés wit to mercy binde,  
And namély the worthy knightes,  
Whan that they stonden most up-  
rightes

And ben most mighty for to greve,  
They shulden thanné most releve  
Him whom they mighten over-  
throwe,  
And by ensample a man may  
knowe

He may nought failen of his mede  
That hath mercý. For this I rede.  
**In a cronique** I findé thus,  
Whan Áchillés with Thelaphus  
His soné toward Troié were,  
It fell hem er they comen there  
Ayein Theucér the kinge of Mese  
To maké werre and for to sese  
His lond as they that wolden regne  
And Theucer put out of his regne.  
And thus the marches they assail,  
But Theucer yaf to hem bataile.  
They foughten on both sidés faste,  
But so it hapneth atté laste  
This worthy Greke this Áchillés  
The king amonge all other ches,  
As he that was cruél and felle,  
With swerd in honde on him he felle  
And smote him with a dethés  
wounde,

That he unhorséd fell to grounde.  
Achilles upon him alight  
And wolde anone, as he wei might,  
Have slain him fulliche in the place,  
But Thelaphus his faders grace  
For him besought, and for pité  
Praith that he woldé let him be,

And cast his shield betwene hem  
two.

Achilles axeth him why so,  
And Thelaphus his causé tolde  
And saith, that he is mochel holde,  
For whilom Theucer in a stede  
Great gráce and socour to him dede,  
And saith that he him wolde acquite  
And praith his fader to respite.  
Achilles tho withdrough his honde;  
But all the power of the londe  
Whan that they sigh her king thus  
take

They fled and han the feld forsake.  
The Grekes unto the chacé fallé  
And for the mosté part of alle  
Of that contré the lordés great  
Theytoke and wonne a great beyete.  
Anone after this victorie,  
The king, whiche haddé memorie,  
Upon the greté mercy thought  
Which Thelaphus toward him  
wrought,

And in preséncé of all the londe  
He toke him fairé by the honde  
And in this wise he gan to say:  
'My sone, I mot by double way  
Love and desiré thin encrees,  
First for thy fader Áchilles  
Whilom full many a day ere this  
Whan that I shulde have fare amis  
Rescoussé did in my quarele  
And kept all min estate in hele,  
How so there fallé now distaúnce  
Amongés us, yet rémembraúnce  
I have of mercy whiche he dede  
As than, and thou nowe in this stede  
Of gentillesse and of fraunchise  
Hast do mercý the samé wise;  
So woll I nought that any tímé  
Be lost of that thou hast do by me,  
For how so this fortuné falle  
Yet stant my truste aboven alle,  
For the mercý whiche now I finde,  
That thou wolt after this be kinde;

And for that suche is min espeir  
And for my sone and for min heire  
I thee receive, and all my londe  
I yive and sese into thin honde.'  
And in this wisé they accorde,  
The causé was misericorde,  
The lordes do her obeisaúnce  
To Thelaphus, and purveaúnce  
Was madé so that he was coróned  
And thus was mercy reguerdóned  
Whiche he to Theucer did to-fore.

"Lo, this ensample is made  
therfore,  
That thou might také rémem-  
braunce,  
My sone, and, whan thou seest a  
chaunce,

Of other mennés passiön  
Take pité and compassiön,  
And let nothing to the be lef  
Which to another man is gref.  
And after this if thou desire  
To stonde ayein the Vice of Ire,  
Counsilé thee with paciëncé  
And take into thy consciëncé  
Mercý to be thy gouvour,  
So shalt thou felé no rancour,  
Wherof thin herté shall debate  
With Homicidé ne with hate  
For Chestre or for Maléncolie,  
Thou shalt be softe in compaignie  
Withouté Contek or Foolhaste,  
For ellés might thou longé waste  
Thy time, er that thou have thy wille  
Of Lové; for the weder stille  
Men preise, and blamé the tem-  
pestes."—

"My fader, I woll do your hestes,  
And of this point ye have me taught  
Toward my self the better saught<sup>1</sup>  
I thinké be while that I live.  
But for als mochel as I am shrive  
Of Wrath and all his circumstaunce,  
Yef what ye list to my penaunce

<sup>1</sup> Saught, reconciled.



And axeth further of my life,  
If other wise I be gyltíf  
Of any thing, that toucheth sinne.”—

“My sone, er we depart a twinne,<sup>1</sup>  
I shall behindé no thing leve.”—

“My gode fader, by your leve  
Than axeth forth what so ye liste,  
For I have in you such a triste<sup>2</sup>  
As ye that be my soulé hele,  
That ye fro me nothing wol hele,<sup>3</sup>  
For I shall tellé you the trouthe.”—

“My sone, art thou culpable of  
Slouthe  
In any point, which to him long-  
eth?”—

“My fader, of tho points me  
longeth<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A twinne*, separated.    <sup>2</sup> *Triste*, trust.

<sup>3</sup> *Hele*, conceal.

<sup>4</sup> I long to know plainly.

To wité plainly what they mene,  
So that I may me shrivé clene.”—

“Now herken, I shal tho points  
devise,

And understand well min apprise.

For shrífte stant of no valúe  
To him that woll him nought  
vertue

To leve of Vicé the folie,  
For worde is wind, but the mais-  
trie

Is that a man him self defende  
Of thing whiché is nought to com-  
mende,

Whereof ben fewé now a day.

And nethéles so as I may  
Make unto thy mémorie know

The points of Slouthé thou shalt  
knowe.

Book II.

OF SLOTH.

**U**pon the Vices to procede  
After the cause of mannés  
dede

The firsté point of Slouth I calle  
Lachesse,<sup>1</sup> and is the chefe of alle  
And hath this properlich of kind  
To leven allé thing behind,  
Of that he mighté do nowe here  
He tarieth all the longé yere  
And evermore he saith : ‘ To mor-  
we,’

And so he woll his timé borwe  
And wissheth after: God mesende,<sup>2</sup>  
That whan he weneth have an ende,  
Than is he furthest to beginne.  
Thus bringeth he many a mischefe  
inne

Unware, till that he be mischéved  
And may nought thanné be releved.  
And right so nouthere more ne lesse  
It stant of Love and of Lachesse.  
Some time he sloutheth on a day,  
That he never after geté may.

“ Now, sone, as of this ilké thing  
If thou have any knouleching  
That thou to Love hast done er this,  
Tell on.”—“ My godé fader, yis.  
As of Lachesse I am beknowe,  
That I may stonde upon his rowe,  
As I that am clad of his suite,  
For whanne I thoughté my pursuite  
To make, and therto set a day

To speke unto that sweté may,<sup>1</sup>  
Lachessé bad abidé yit  
And bare on honde it was no Wit  
Ne timé for to speke as tho.<sup>2</sup>  
Thus with his talés to and fro  
My time in tarieng he drough ;  
Whan there was timé good inough,  
He said another time is better,  
Thou shalt now senden her a letter  
And par cas writé moré plein  
Than thou by mouthé durstest sain.  
Thus have I letté timé slide  
For slouthe, and kepté nought my  
tide,

So that Lachessé with his vice  
Full oft hath made my wit so nice,  
That what I thought to speke or do  
With tarieng he held me so  
Til whan I wolde and mighté  
nought.

I not what thing was in my thought  
Or it was drede, or it was shame,  
But ever in earnest and in game  
I wit there is long timé passed,  
But yet is nought the lové lassed,  
Whiche I unto my lady have ;  
For though mytunge is slow to crave  
At allé time, as I have bede,  
Min hert stant ever in o stede  
And axeth besiliché grace,  
The whiche I may nought yet em-  
brace,

<sup>1</sup> *Lachesse*, slackness.    <sup>2</sup> For a godsend.

<sup>1</sup> *May*, maid.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

And god wot that is malgré min.  
For this I wot right well afin,<sup>1</sup>  
My gracé cometh so selde aboute,  
That is the Slouthé, which I doubté  
More than of all the remenaunt  
Whiche is to Love appartenaunt.

“And thus as touchend of Lachesse,

As I have tolde, I me confesse  
To you, my fader; I beseche  
That furthermore ye wol me teche,  
And if there be to this matere  
Some goodly talé for to here,  
How I may do Lachesse away,  
That ye it wolden telle, I prey.”—

“To wisséthe, mysone, and rede,<sup>2</sup>  
Among the talés whiche I rede,  
An olde ensample therupon  
Now herken, and I wol telle on.

“**Ayein lachesse** in Lovés cas  
I finde, how whilom Eneás,  
Whom Anchisés to soné hadde,  
With great navié, which he ladde,  
Fro Troie arriveth at Cartage.  
Wherfore a while his herbergage  
He toke, and it betiddé so  
With her which was a quené tho  
Of the citee, his ácqueintaunce  
He wan, whos name in remembrance

Is yet, and Dido was she hote,  
Which loveth Éneás so hote  
Upon the wordés whiche he saide,  
That all her hert on him she laide  
And did all holy what he wolde.  
But after that, as it be sholde,  
Fro thenne he goth toward Itaile  
By ship and there his arrivaile  
Hath take and shope him for to ride.

But she, which may nought longe abide

The hoté peíne of lovés throwe,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Afin, at last.      <sup>2</sup> Rede, counsel.  
<sup>3</sup> Throuwe, throe.

Anon within a litel throwe<sup>1</sup>  
A letter unto her knight hath write  
And did him pleynly for to wite  
If he made any tarieng  
To drecche<sup>2</sup> of his ayein comming,  
That she ne might him fele and se,  
She shuldé stonde in such degre  
As whilom stood a swan to-fore  
Of that she hadde her maké lore<sup>3</sup>  
For sorwe a fether into her brain  
She shof and hath her selvé slain.  
As king Menander in a lay  
The soth hath foundé, where she lay  
Spraulend with her wingés twey  
As she which shuldé thanné deie  
For love of him which was her make.  
And so shal I do for thy sake  
This quené saidé, wel I wote.

“Lo, to Eneë thus she wrote  
With many another word of pleint.  
But he which had his thoughtés feint  
Towardés Love and full of Slouthe,  
His timé let, and that was routhe.  
For she, which loveth him to-fore,  
Desireth ever more and more  
And whan she sigh him tary so,  
Her herté was so full of wo,  
That compleignend manyfolde  
She hath her owné talé tolde  
Unto her self and thus she spake:  
‘Ha, who found ever suche a lacke  
Of Slouth in any worthy knight?  
Now wote I well my deth is dight  
Through him, which shuld have be  
my life.’

But for to stinten all this strife  
Thus whan she sigh none other bote,  
Right even unto her herté rote  
A naked swerd anone she threste  
And thus she gat her selvé reste  
In remembrance of allé slowe.

“Wherof, my soné, thou might knowe,

<sup>1</sup> Throwe, space of time.      <sup>2</sup> Drecche, delay.  
<sup>3</sup> Maké lore, lost her mate.

How tarieng upon the nede  
 In Lovés cause is for to drede,  
 And that hath Dido sore abought,  
 Whosedeth shall ever be bethought,  
 And evermore if I shal seche  
 In this matere another speche  
 In a cronique I finde write  
 A talé, whiche is good to wite.

“*At Troie* whan king Ylixés  
 Upon the sieg, among the pres  
 Of hem that worthy knightés were,  
 Abodé long time stillé there,  
 In thilké time a man may se,  
 How goodly that Penelope,  
 Which was to him his trewé wife,  
 Of his Lachessé was pleintife,  
 Wherof to Troié she him sende  
 Her will by letter, thus spekende :

‘My worthy love and lord also,  
 It is and hath ben ever so,  
 That where a woman is alone  
 It maketh a man in his persone  
 The more hardy for to wowe,  
 In hopé that she woldé bowe  
 To such thinge as his willé were,  
 While that her lord were ellés where.  
 And of my self I tellé this,  
 For it so longé passéd is  
 Sith first that ye fro homé wente,  
 That well nigh every man is wente  
 To there I am while ye be oute,  
 Hath made and eche of hem aboute  
 Which lové can my lové seche  
 With great praiére and me be-  
 seche.

And somé maken great manáce,  
 That if they mighten come in place,  
 Where that they mighten her<sup>1</sup> will  
 have,

There is no thing me shuldé save,  
 That they ne woldé werché thinges.  
 And somé tellen me tidinges,  
 That ye ben dede, and somé sain,  
 That certainly ye ben besain<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Her*, their.

<sup>2</sup> *Besain*, resolved.

To love a newe and levé me.  
 But how as ever that it be,  
 I thonke unto the goddés alle  
 As yet for ought that is befallé,  
 May no man do my chekés rede.  
 But nethéles it is to drede,  
 That Lachesse in continuaunce  
 Fortuné mighté suche a chaunce,  
 Which noman aftersholde amende.’

“Lo, thus this lady compleignénde  
 A letter unto her lord hath write  
 And praid him, that he woldé wite  
 And thenke how that she was al his,  
 And that he tarié nought in this,  
 But that he wold his love acquite  
 To her ayeinward, and nought write  
 But come him self in allé haste,  
 That he none other paper waste,  
 So that he kepe and holde his  
 trouthe

Withouté let of any Slouthe.

“Unto her lord and lové liege  
 To Troié, where the greté sieg  
 Was laid, this letter was conveied.  
 And he, which wisdome hath pur-  
 veied

Of all that to resón belongeth,  
 With gentil herte it underfongeth.  
 And whan he hath it overrad,  
 In parte he was right inly glad  
 And eke in parte he was disesed.<sup>1</sup>  
 But love his hert hath so through  
 sesed

With pure ymaginación,  
 That for none ocupación  
 Whiche he can take on other side  
 He may nought flit his herte aside  
 Fro that his wife him had enformed,  
 Wherof he hath him self conformed  
 With all the will of his coráge  
 To shape and také the viáge  
 Homeward, what timé that he may.  
 So that him thenketh of a day  
 A thousand yere till he may se

<sup>1</sup> *Disesed*, made uneasy,

The visage of Penelope,  
Whiche he desirith most of alle.  
And whan the time is so befalle  
That Troié was distruied and brent,  
He madé non delaiément,  
But goth him home in alle hie,<sup>1</sup>  
Where that he found to-fore his eye  
His worthy wife in good estate,  
And thus was cesséd the debate  
Of Love, and Slouthé was excused;  
Which doth great harm wher it is  
used,  
And hindreth many a cause honést.

“For of the greté clerk Grostest  
I rede how busy that he was  
Upon the clergie an heved<sup>2</sup> of bras  
To forge and make it for to telle  
Of suché thingés as befelle.  
And seven yerés besinesse  
He laidé, but for the Lachesse  
Of half a minute of an heure  
Fro firsté he began labouére  
He lost all that he haddé do.  
And other while it fareth so  
In Lovés causé, who is slowe,  
That he without under the wowe<sup>3</sup>  
By nighté stant full oft a colde,  
Which mighte, if that he haddé  
wolde

His timé kept, have be withinne.

But Slouthé may nought profit  
winne,

But he may singe in his caróle,  
How latewar camé to the dole,<sup>4</sup>  
Where he no good receivé might.  
And that was provéd well by night  
Whilome of the maidens five,  
Whan thilké lord came for to wive,  
For that her<sup>5</sup> oilé was away  
To light her lampés in his wey,  
Her Slouthé brought it so aboute  
Fro him that they be shet withoute.

<sup>1</sup> *Hie*, haste.

<sup>2</sup> *Heved*, head.

<sup>3</sup> *Wowe*, wall.

<sup>4</sup> Late-aware came to the sharing.

<sup>5</sup> *Her*, their.

“Wherof, my soné, be thou ware,  
Als ferforth as I tellé dare.  
For Lové musté ben awaited,  
And if thou be nought well affaited<sup>1</sup>  
In Lové to escheué Slouthe,  
My soné, for to tellé trouthe  
Thou might nought of thy self ben  
able

To winné love or make it stable,  
All though thou mightest love  
acheve.”—

“My fader, that I may well leve.  
But me was never assignéd place  
Where yet to geten any grace,  
Neme was non such time appointed,  
For than I wolde I were unjointed  
Of every limmé that I have  
And I ne shuldé kepe and save  
Min houré bothe and eke my stede,  
If my lady it haddé bede.  
But she is otherwise avised  
Than graunté suche a time assised.  
And nethelless of my Lachesse  
There hath be no default I gesse  
Of timé loste, if that I mighte.  
But yet her liketh nought alighte  
Upon no luré which I caste.  
For ay the more I crié faste  
The lasse her liketh for to here.  
So for to speke of this matere  
I seché that I may nought finde,  
I haste and ever I am behinde  
And wot nought what it may  
amounte.

But fader, upon min accompte,  
Whiche ye ben set to examéne  
Of shrifte after the discipléne,  
Say what your besté counseile is.”—

“My soné, my counseil is this.  
How so it stonde of timé go,  
Do forth thy besinesé so,  
That no Lachesse in thee be founde,  
For Slouthe is mighty to con-  
founde

<sup>1</sup> *Affaited*, adapted to the purpose.

The spede of every mannés werke.  
 For manya Vice, as saith the clerke,  
 There hongen upon Slouthés lappe  
 Of suche as make a man mishappe  
 To pieigne and tell of had-I-wist.<sup>1</sup>  
 And therupon if that thee list  
 To knowe of Slouthes causé more  
 In speciál yet overmore  
 There is a Vicé full grevable  
 To him which is therof coulpatible,  
 And stant of allé Vertue bare  
 Here after as I shall declare.

“**Toucheñd of slouth** in his  
 degré,

There is yet Pusillamité,  
 Which is to say in this langáge  
 He that hath litel of coráge  
 And dare no mannés werk beginne;  
 So may he nought by reson winne.  
 For who that nought dare undertake  
 By right he shall no profit take.  
 But of this Vicé the natúre  
 Dare nothing set in aventure,  
 Him lacketh bothé worde and dede,  
 Wherof he shuld his causé spede.  
 He woll no manhode understonde,  
 For ever he hath drede upon honde  
 All is perill that he shall say,  
 Him thenketh the wolfeis inthe way.  
 And of ymaginación  
 He maketh his excusación  
 And feigneth cause of puré drede  
 And ever he faileth atté nede  
 Till all be spilt that he with deleth.  
 He hath the sore which no man  
 heleth,  
 The whiche is clepéd lacke of herte;  
 Though every grace about him  
 sterte,  
 He woll nought onés stere his fote,  
 So that by reson lese he mote  
 That woll nought aunter for to  
 winne.

<sup>1</sup> *Had-I-wist*, if I had only known. See note 1, page 75.

“And so forth, sone, if we be-  
 ginne

To speke of Love and his servíce,  
 There ben truanes in suche a wise,  
 That lacken herté whan best were  
 They spoken of Love, and right for  
 fere

They waxen dombe and dare nought  
 telle,

Withouten soun as doth the belle  
 Whiche hath no clapper for to  
 chime.

And right so they as for the time  
 Ben hertélés withouté speche  
 Of Love and dare nothing beseche:  
 And thus they lese and winné  
 nought.

Forthý, my sone, if thou art ought  
 Coupláble as toucheñd of this  
 Slouthe,

Shrive thee therof and tell me  
 trouthe.”—

“My fader, I am all beknowe  
 That I have ben one of the slowe  
 As for to telle in Lovés cas.  
 Min herte is yet and ever was  
 As though the world shuld al to-  
 breke,

So ferful that I dare nought speke  
 Of what purpós that I have nome  
 Whan I toward my lady come,  
 But let it passe and overgo.”—

“My soné, do no moré so.  
 For after that a man pursueth,  
 To Lové so Fortúné sueth  
 Ful oft and yiveth her happy  
 chaunce

To him which maketh continu-  
 aunce

To preié love and to beseche,  
 As by ensample I shall the teche.

¶ **finde**, how whilom there was  
 one,

Whose namé was Pigmaleón,  
 Which was a lusty man of youthe.

The werkés of entaile<sup>1</sup> he couthe  
 Above all other men as tho.  
 And through Fortúne it felle him so  
 As he, whom Lové shall travaile,  
 He made an ymage of entaile  
 Lich to a woman in semblaunce  
 Of fature and of contenance,  
 So faire yet never was figúre.  
 Right as a livés creatúre  
 She semeth, for of yvor white  
 He hath it wrought of such delite,  
 That she was rody on the cheke  
 And rede on both her lippés eke,  
 Wherof that he him self beguileth,  
 For with a goodly loke she smileth:  
 So that through pure impressiön  
 Of his ymaginatiön  
 With all the herte of his coráge  
 His love upon this faire ymáge  
 He set, and her of lové preide.  
 But she no worde ayeinward said.  
 The longé day what thing he dede  
 This ymage in the samé stede<sup>2</sup>  
 Was ever by, that atté mete  
 He wold her serve and praide herete  
 And put unto her mouth the cup.  
 And whan the bord was taken up,  
 He did as he would her embrace.  
 And ever among he axeth grace,  
 As though she wisté what it mente.  
 And thus him self he gan tormente  
 With such disese of lovés peine,  
 That no man might him moré peine.  
 But how it were of his penaúnce  
 He madé such continuaunce  
 Fro day to night and praid so longe,  
 That his praiére is underfonge,  
 Which Venus of her gracé herde  
 By night, and whan that he worst  
 ferde  
 And it lay in his naked arme,  
 The cold ymáge he feeleth warme  
 Of flesshe and bone and full of life.  
 Lo, thus he wanne a lusty wife,

<sup>1</sup> Entaile, carving, sculpture. <sup>2</sup> Stede, place.

Whiche obeisaúnt was at his will.  
 And if he wolde have hold him still  
 And nothing spoke, he shuld have  
 failed.

“By this ensample thou might  
 finde,

That word may worche abové  
 kinde.

Forthý, my sone, if that thou spare  
 To speké, lost is all thy fare,  
 For Slouthé bringeth in allé wo.

“And over this to loke also,  
 It semeth Love is welwillénde  
 To hem that ben continuénde  
 With besy herté to pursue  
 Thing which that is to Lové due.  
 Wherof, my sone, in this matere  
 Thou might ensample taken here,  
 That with thy greté besinesse  
 Thou might atteigné the richesse  
 Of Lové, that there be no Slouth.”—

“But fader, so as it is right  
 In forme of shrifité to beknowe  
 What thing belongeth to the  
 slowe,

Your faderhode I woldé pray,  
 If there be further any way  
 Touchend unto this ilké Vice.”—

**My sone, ye,** of this office  
 There serveth one in speciál,  
 Which lost hath his memoriál,  
 So that he can no wit witholde  
 In thing which he to kepe is holde,  
 Wherof full ofte him self he gre-  
 veth.

And who that most upon him leveth,  
 Whan that his wittés ben so weived,  
 He may full lightly be deceived.

To serve Accidie in his office,  
 There is of Slouth an other Vice,  
 Which cleped is Foryetelnesse,  
 That nought may in his herte im-  
 presse

Of vertue, which resón hath set,  
 So clene his wittés he foryete.

For in the tellinge of his tale  
 No more his herté than his male<sup>1</sup>  
 Hath remembraunce of thilké forme  
 Wherof he sholde his wit enforme  
 As than, and yet ne wot he why.  
 Thus is his purpos nought forthý  
 Forlore, of that he woldé bidde,  
 And scarsely if he saith the thridde<sup>2</sup>  
 To love of that he haddé ment.  
 Thus many a lover hath be shent.  
 Telle on therefore, hast thou ben  
 one  
 Of hem that Slouth hath so be-  
 gonne?"—

"Ye fader, ofte it hath ben so,  
 That whan I am my lady fro  
 And thenké me toward her drawe,  
 Than cast I many a newé lawe  
 And all the world torne up so down  
 And so recorde I my lessoun  
 And write in my memoriall  
 What I unto her tellé shall,  
 Right all the mater of my tale.  
 But all nis worth a nuttëshale.  
 For whan I comé there she is,  
 I have it all foryete iwis  
 Of that I thoughté for to telle;  
 I can nought than unnethés spelle  
 That I wénde altherbest have rad,  
 So sore I am of her adrad.  
 For as a man that sodeinly  
 A gost beholdeth so fare I,  
 So that for fere I can nought gete  
 My wit, but I my self foryete,  
 That I wot never what I am,  
 Ne whider I shall, ne whenne I  
 cam,  
 But muse as he that were amased.  
 Lich to the boke in whiche is rased  
 The letter and may nothing be rad  
 So ben my wittés overlad,  
 That what as ever I thought have  
 spoken,

It is out of min herté stoken,

<sup>1</sup> Male, bag.

<sup>2</sup> Thridde, third.

And stonde as who saith doumbe  
 and defe,

That all nis worth an yvy lefe  
 Of that I wendé well have saide.  
 And atté last I make abraide,<sup>1</sup>  
 Cast up min heed and loke aboute  
 Right as a man that were in doubté  
 And wot not where he shall become.  
 Thus am I oft all overcome  
 There as I wendé best to stonde.  
 But after, whan I understonde  
 And am in other place alone,  
 I make maný a wofull mone  
 Unto my self and speke so :

'Ha fool, where was thine herté  
 tho

Whan thou thy worthy lady sigh,  
 Were thou aferéd of her eye?  
 For of her hond there is no drede,  
 So well I knowe her womanhede,  
 That in her is no more outrage  
 Than in a childe of thre yere age.  
 Why hast thou drede of so good one,  
 Whom allé vertue hath begone,<sup>2</sup>  
 That in her is no violence  
 But goodlyhede and innocence  
 Withouten spot of any blame.  
 Ha, nicé herté, fy for shame,  
 A cowarde herte of love unerled,  
 Wherof art thou so sore afered,  
 That thou thy tungé suffrest fresé  
 And wolt thy godé wordés lese,  
 Whan thou hast foundé time and  
 space :

How sholdest thou deservé grace,  
 Whan thou thy self darst axé none,  
 But all thou hast foryete anone?'  
 And thus dispute in Lovés lore,  
 But helpene finde I nought the more,  
 But stomble upon min owné treine  
 And make an eking<sup>3</sup> of my peine.

<sup>1</sup> Make abraide, start suddenly, as from sleep.

<sup>2</sup> Begone, gone round about, wholly occupied, as in "woe-begone."

<sup>3</sup> Eking, increasing.



For ever whan I thenke amonge,  
 Howe all is on my self alonge  
 I say: 'O fool of allé fooles  
 Thoufares as he betwene two stoles  
 That woldé sit and goth to grounde.  
 It was ne never shall be founde  
 Betwene Foryetelnesse and Drete,  
 That man shulde any causé spede.'  
 And thus, min holy fater dere,  
 Toward my self, as ye may here,  
 I pleigne of my foryetelnesse.  
 But ellés all the businesse,  
 That may betake of mannés thought,  
 My herté taketh and is through  
 sought

To thenken ever upon that swete  
 Withouté Slouthe I you behete.  
 For what so falle or wel or wo,  
 That thought foryete I nevermo,  
 Where so I laugh or so I loure  
 Nought half a minute of an houre  
 Ne might I lette out of my minde  
 But if I thought upon that ende:  
 Therof me shall no Slouthé lette,  
 Till Deth out of this world me fette,  
 All though I had on suche a ring,  
 As Moises through his échanting  
 Sometime in Ethiopé made,  
 Whan that he Tharbis wedded had,  
 Which ringé bare of oblivión  
 The name, and that was by resón,  
 That were it on a finger sate,  
 Anone his Love he so foryate,  
 As though he had it never knowe.  
 And so it fell that ilké throwe,  
 Whan Tharbis had it on her honde,  
 No knoueleching of him she fonde,  
 But all was clene out of memoire,  
 As men may reden in histoire.  
 And thus he wenté quite away,  
 That never after that ilké day  
 She thought, that there was such a  
 one;

All was foryete and overgone.  
 But in good feith so may nought I.

For she is ever fasté by  
 So nigh, that she min herté toucheth  
 That for no thing that Slouthé  
 voucheth

I may foryete her, lese ne loth.  
 For over all where as she goth,  
 Min herté folweth her aboute.  
 Thus may I say withouten doubte,  
 For bet, for wers, for ought, for  
 nought

She passeth never fro my thought.  
 But whan I am there as she is,  
 Min hert, as I you said er this,  
 Sometime of her is sore adrad  
 And sometime it is overglad  
 All out of reule and out of space.  
 For whan I se her goodly face  
 And thenke upon her highé pris,  
 As though I were in paradis,  
 I am so ravished of the sight,  
 That speke unto her I ne might  
 As for the timé, though I wolde.  
 For I ne may my witte unfolde  
 To finde o worde of that I mene,  
 But all it is foryeté clene.

And though I stonéd there a mile,  
 All is foryeté for the while;  
 A tunge I have and wordés none.  
 And thus I stonde and thenke alone  
 Of thing that helpeth ofte nought.  
 But what I had aforé thought  
 To speké, whan I comé there,  
 It is foryete, as nought ne were.  
 And stoné amaséd and assotéd,  
 That of no thing which I have notéd  
 I can nought than a noté singe,  
 But all is out of knouelechinge.  
 Thus what for joy and what fordrede  
 All is foryeten atté nede,  
 So that, my fader, of this Slouthe  
 I have you said the pleiné trouthe,  
 Ye may it, as ye list, redresse.  
 For thus stant my foryetelnesse  
 And eke my pusillamité.

Say now forth what ye list to me,

For I wol only do by you."—

"My sone, I have wel herd, how thou

Hast said, and that thou must amende.

For Love his gracé wol nought sende  
To that man which dare axé none.  
For this we knowen everychone,  
A mannés thought withouté speche  
God wot, and yet that man beseche  
His will is.<sup>1</sup> For withouté bedes  
He doth his grace in fewé stedes.  
And what man that foryete himselfe,  
Among a thousand be nought twelve  
That wol him take in remembraunce,  
But let him falle and take his  
chaunce.

Forthý pull up a besy herte,  
My sone, and let no thing asterte  
Of Lové fro thy besinesse.

For touching of foryetelesse,  
Which many a love hath set behinde,  
A tale of great ensample I finde,  
Wherof it is pité to wite  
In the manér as it is write.

**Sing Demephon** whan he by  
ship

To Troié ward with felaship  
Sailend goth upon his wey,  
It hapneth him at Rodepey,  
As Eolus him haddé blowe  
To londe and rested for a throwe.  
And fell that ilké timé thus,  
That the daughter of Líurgús,  
Which quené was of the contré,  
Was sojournéd in that citee  
Within a castel nigh the stronde,  
Where Demephon cam up to londe.  
Phillis she hight and of yong age  
And of statúre and of viságe  
She had all that her best besemeth.  
Of Demephon right wel her que-  
meth,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although God knows our thoughts, yet his will is that we utter them in prayer.

<sup>2</sup> Her quemeth, is agreeable to her.

Whan he was come and made him  
chere.

And he, that was of his manere  
A lusty knight, ne might asterte  
That he ne set on her his herte,  
So that within a day or two  
Hê thought, how ever that it go,  
He wolde assaié the fortune;  
And gan his herté to comune  
With goodly wordés in her ere,  
And for to put her out of fere  
He swore and hath his trouthé  
plight

To be for ever her owné knight.  
And thus with her he stille abode  
There, while his ship on anker rode,  
And had inough of time and space  
To speke of love and seché grace.  
This lady herd all that he saide,  
And how he swore and how he  
praide,

Which was as an enchaument  
To here, that was as innocent.  
As though it weré trouthe and feith  
She leveth all that ever he saith,  
And as her in fortuné sholde  
She graunteth him all that he wolde.  
Thus was he for the time in joie,  
Til that he shuldé go to Troie,  
But tho she madé mochel sorwe  
And he his trouthé laid to borwe<sup>1</sup>  
To come and if that he live may  
Ayein within a monthé day.  
And therupon they kisten bothe,  
But were hem leef or were hem lothe  
To ship he goth, and forth he went  
To Troy, as was his first entent.  
The daiés go, the monthé passeth,  
Her love encreseth and his lasseth;  
For him she lefté slepe and mete,  
And he his time hath all foryete,  
So that this wofull yongé quene,  
Which wot nought what it mighté  
mene,

<sup>1</sup> To borwe, in pledge.

A letter send and praid him come  
And saith how she is overcome  
With strengthe of love in suche a  
wise,

That she nought longé may suffice  
To liven out of his preséncé,  
And put upon his consciéncé  
The trouthé whiche he hath behote,  
Wherof she loveth him so hote,  
She saith, that if he lenger lette  
Of such a day as she him sette,  
She shuldé sterven in his Slouthe,  
Which were a shame unto his  
trouthe.

This letter is forth upon her sonde,  
Wherof somdele comfórt on honde  
She toke, as she that wolde abide  
And waite upon that ilké tide  
Which she hath in her letter write.  
But now is pité for to wite,  
As he did erst, so he foryate  
His time eftsoné and over-sate.  
But she, which mighté nought do so,  
The tide awaiteth evermo  
And cast her eye upon the see.  
Somtimé nay, somtimé ye,  
Somtime he cam, somtimé nought.  
Thus she disputeth in her thought  
And wot nought what she thenké  
may.

But fastend all the longé day  
She was into the derké night ;  
And tho she hath do set up light  
In a lanterné on high alofte  
Upon a toure, where she goth ofte  
In hopé that in his commfinge  
He shuldé se the light brennfinge,  
Wherof he might his weis right  
To comé where she was by night.  
But all for nought, she was deceived,  
For Venus hath her hopé weived  
And shewéd her upon the sky  
How that the day was fasté by,  
So that within a litel throwe  
The daiés light she mighté knowe ;

Tho she beheld the see at large :  
And whan she sigh there was no  
barge

Ne ship, als fer as she may kenne,  
Down fro the tour she gan to renne  
Into an herber all her owne,  
Where many a wonder wofull mone  
She madé, that no life it wist,  
As she which all her joié mist,  
That now she swouneth, now she  
pleigneth,

And all her facé she disteigneth  
With terés, whiche as of a welle  
The stremés from her eyen felle.  
So as she might, and ever in one,  
She clepéd upon Demephon  
And said : ' Alas, thou slowé wight,  
Where was there ever suche a  
knight,

That so through his ungentilesse  
Of Slouthe and of Foryetelnesse  
Ayein his trouthé brak his steven.'<sup>1</sup>  
And tho her eye up to the heven  
She cast and saide : ' O thou un-  
kinde,  
Here shalt thou through thy Slouthé  
finde,

If that the list to come and se,  
A lady dede for love of the,  
So as I shall my selve spille,  
Whome, if it haddé be thy wille,  
Thou mightest savé well inough.  
With that upon a grené bough  
A ceinte of silke, which she there had,  
She knette, and so her self she lad  
That she about her white swere<sup>2</sup>  
It did, and henge her selven there.  
Wherof the goddés were amoved,  
And Demephon was so reproved,  
That of the goddés providence  
Was shapé suche an evidence  
Ever afterward ayein the slowe,  
That Phillis in the samé throwe<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Steven, voice.

<sup>2</sup> Swere, neck.

<sup>3</sup> Throwe, space of time.

Was shape into a nutté-tre,  
That allé men it mighté se,  
And after Phillis philliberd<sup>1</sup>  
This tre was clepéd in the yerd,  
And yet for Demephon to shame  
Into this day it bereth the name.  
This wofull chaunce how that it ferde  
Anone as Demephon it herde  
And every man it hadde in speche,  
His sorwe was nought tho to seche,  
He gan his Slouthé for to banne,<sup>2</sup>  
But it was all to laté thanne.

“Lo, thus, my soné, might thou  
wite

Ayein this Vice how it is write,  
For no man may the harmés gesse,  
That fallen through Foryetelnesse,  
Wherof that I thy shrift have herd.  
But yet of Slouthé how it hath ferd  
In other wise I thenke oppose,  
If thou have gilt, as I suppose.

Fulfilled of Slouthes exempla  
There is yet one his secretaire,  
And he is clepéd Negligence,  
Which woll nought loke his evi-  
dence,

Wherof he may beware to-fore.  
But whan he hath his causé lore  
Than is he wise after the honde,  
Whan helpé may no maner bonde  
Than atté firsté wold he binde.  
Thus evermore he stant behinde,  
Whan he the thing may nought  
amende,

Than is he ware, and saith at ende:  
‘Ha, wolde god I hadde knowe,’  
Wherof bejapéd with a mowe<sup>3</sup>  
He goth, for whan the greté stede  
Is stolé than he taketh hede  
And maketh the stable-doré fast.  
Thus ever he pleith an after cast  
Of all that he shall say or do.

<sup>1</sup> *Philliberd*, filbert.

<sup>2</sup> *Banne*, put under interdict.

<sup>3</sup> *Mowe*, mouth, grimace.

He hath a maner eke also,  
Him list nought lerné to be wise,  
For he sette of no vertu prise  
But as him liketh for the while,  
So feleth he ful ofté guile  
Whan that he weneth siker to  
stonde.

And thus thou might wel under-  
stonde,

My sone, if thou art suche in love  
Thou might nought come at thin  
above

Of that thou woldest wel acheve.”—

“Min holy fader, as I leve,  
I may wel with sauf consciéce  
Excusé me of Negligence  
Towardés Love in allé wise.  
For though I be none of the wise,  
I am so truly amoroús,  
That I am ever curioús  
Of hem that conné best enforme  
To knowe and witen all the forme,  
What falleth unto Lovés craft.  
But yet ne fond I nought the haft  
Which might unto the blade accorde.  
For never herd I men recorde  
What thinge it is that might availe  
To winné love withouté faile.  
Yet so fer couthe I never finde  
Man that by reson ne by kinde  
Me couthé teché suche an arte,  
That he ne failéd of a parte.  
And as toward min owné wit  
Contrive I couthé never yit  
To finden any sikernesse,  
That me might other more or lesse  
Of Lové maké for to spede.  
For leveth wel withouten drede,  
If that there weré suche a wey  
As certainly as I shall deie  
I hadde it lernéd longe ago;  
But I wot wel there is none so.  
And nethéles it may wel be  
I am so rude in my degré  
And eke my wittés ben so dull,

That I ne may nought to the full  
 Atteigne unto so highe a lore.  
 But this I dar say overmore,  
 All though my Wit ne be nought  
 stronge,

It is nought on my Will alonge ;  
 For that is besy night and day  
 To lerne all that he lerné may,  
 How that I mighté Lové winne.  
 But yet I am as to beginne  
 Of that I woldé make an ende,  
 And for I not<sup>1</sup> how it shall wende,  
 That is to me my mosté sorwe.  
 But I dare také God to borwe,  
 As after min entendement  
 None other wisé negligent  
 Than I you say have I nought be.  
 Forthý pur sainté charité  
 Tell me, my fader, what you  
 semeth."—

“In good feith, soné, wel me  
 quemeth,

That thou thy self hast thus acquit  
 Toward this Vice in which no wit  
 Abidé may, for in an houre  
 He lest<sup>2</sup> all that he may laboure  
 The longé yere, so that men sain  
 What ever he doth it is in vein.  
 For through the Slouth of Negli-  
 gence

There was yet never such sciéce  
 Ne vertue which was bodely,  
 That nis destrued and lost therby.  
 Ensamble that it hath be so,  
 In boke I findé write also.

**P**hebus, which is the sonnéd hote,  
 That shineth upon erthé hote  
 And causeth every livés helth,  
 He hadde a sone in all his welth,  
 Which Pheton hight, and he de-  
 sireth

And with his moder he conspireth,  
 The which was clepéd Clemene,  
 For helpe and counseil, so that he

<sup>1</sup> Not, know not.

<sup>2</sup> Lest, lost.

His faders carté<sup>1</sup> ledé might  
 Upon the fairé daiés light.  
 And for this thing they bothé praide  
 Unto the fader, and he saide,  
 He wolde wel, but forth with all  
 Three points he bad in speciall  
 Unto his sone in allé wise,  
 That he him shuldé wel avise  
 And take it as by wey of lore.  
 First was, that he his hors to sore  
 Ne prike; and over that he tolde,  
 That he the reines fasté holde;  
 And also that he be right ware  
 In what manér he lede his chare,  
 That he mistaké nought his gate,  
 But upon avisement algate  
 He shuldé bere a siker eye,  
 That he to lowé ne to high  
 His carté drive at any throwe,  
 Wherof that he might overthrowe.  
 And thus by Phebus ordenaunce  
 Toke Pheton into governaunce  
 The sonnéd carté, which he ladde.  
 But he such veiné glorie hadde  
 Of that he was set upon high,  
 That he his own estate ne sigh  
 Through negligence, and toke none  
 hede.

So might he welnought longé spede.  
 For he the hors withouten lawe  
 The carté let abouté drawe  
 Where as hem liketh wantonly,  
 That atté lasté sodeinly,  
 For he no reson woldé knowe,  
 This fry cart he drove to lowe  
 And fireth all the worlde aboute;  
 Wherof they weren all in doubté,  
 And to the god for helpé criden  
 Of suche unhappés as betiden.  
 Phebus, which sigh the negligéce,  
 How Pheton ayein his defence<sup>2</sup>  
 His chare hath drive oute of the wey  
 Ordeigneth that he fel away

<sup>1</sup> Carte, chariot.

<sup>2</sup> Defence, forbidding.

Out of the cart into the flood  
 And dreinté. Lo now, how it stood  
 With him, that was so negligent,  
 That fro the highé firmament,  
 For that he woldé go to lowe,  
 He was anone down overthrowe.  
 In high estate it is a Vice  
 To go to lowe, and in servíce  
 It greveth for to go to high,  
 Wherof a tale in poesie

**I** finde, how whilom Dedalus  
 Whiche hadde a sone and Icharus  
 He hight, and though hem thoughté  
 lothe

In such prisón they weren bothe  
 With Minotaurus, that aboute  
 They mighten no where wenden  
 oute.

So they begonné for to shape  
 How they the prison might escape.  
 This Dedalus, which fro his youthe  
 Was taught and many craftés couthe,  
 Of fetters and of other things  
 Hath made to flee diversé winges  
 For him and for his sone also ;  
 To whome he yaf in chargé tho  
 And bad him thenké therupon,  
 How that his wingés ben set on  
 With wax, and if he toke his flight  
 To high, all sodeinlich he might  
 Make it to melté with the sonne.  
 And thus they have her flight be-  
 gone

Out of the prison faire and softe.  
 And whan they weren both alofte,  
 This Icharus began to mounthe  
 And of the counseil none acompte  
 He setté whiche his fader taught,  
 Til that the sonne his wingés caught,  
 Wherof it malt, and fro the hight  
 Withouten helpe of any flight  
 He fell to his destructiön.  
 And lich to that conditiön  
 There fallen ofte times fele  
 For lacke of governaunce in wele

Als wel in love as other wey.”—

“Now godé fader, I you prey,  
 If there be more in this matere  
 Of Slouthé, that I might it here.”—

“My sone, as for thy diligence,  
 Whiche every mannés consciéce  
 By reson shuldé reule and kepe,  
 If that thee list to také kepe,  
 I wol thee tell aboven alle,  
 In whom no vertu may befallé,  
 Whiche yiveth unto the Vices rest  
 And is of Slouthé the slowest.

**A**mong these other of Slouthés  
 kinde,

Whiche allé labour set behinde,  
 And hateth allé besinesse,  
 There is yet one, whiche Idelnesse  
 Is clepéd, and is the norfice  
 In mannés kinde of every Vice,  
 Which secheth esés many folde.

In winter doth he nought for colde ;  
 In somer may he nought for hete ;  
 So wether that he frese or swete,  
 Or be he in, or be he oute,  
 He woll ben idel all aboute,  
 But if he pleié ought at dees.  
 For who as ever také fees  
 And thenketh worship to deserve,  
 There is no lord whome he woll serve  
 As for to dwelle in his servíce,  
 But if it were in suche a wise,  
 Of that he seeth par aventure,  
 That by lordship and coverture  
 He may the moré stondé stille  
 And use his Idelnesse at wille.  
 For he ne woll no travail take  
 To ridé for his ladies sake,  
 But liveth all upon his wisshes,  
 And as a cat wold été fisshes  
 Withoute weting of his cles,  
 So wolde he do, but nethéles  
 He faileth ofte of that he wolde.

“My sone, if thou of suche a molde  
 Art made, now tell me plain thy  
 shrift.”—

“ Nay fader, god I yive a yift,  
That toward Love, as by my wit  
All idel was I never yit,  
Ne never shall, while I may go.”—

“ Now, soné, tellé me than so,  
What hast thou done of beship  
To Love and to the ladyship  
Of heré which thy lady is ? ”—

“ My fader, ever yet er this  
In every place, in every stede,  
What so my lady hath me bede,  
With all min herte obedient  
I have therto be diligent.  
And if so is that she bid nought,  
What thing that than into my  
thought

Cometh first, of that I may suffise,  
I bowe and profre my servíce.  
Somtime in chambre, somtime in  
halle,

Right so as I se the tímés falle,  
And whan she goth to heré masse  
That tímé shall nought overpasse,  
That I napproche her ladyhede  
In aunter if I may her lede  
Unto the chapel and ayein,  
Than is nought all my wey in vein.  
Somdele I may the better fare,  
Whan I, that may nought fele her  
bare,

May lede her clothéd in min arme.  
But afterwarde it doth me harme  
Of pure ymaginación,  
For thanne this collatióin  
I make unto my selven ofte  
And say: ‘ Ha lord, how she is softe,  
How she is round, how she is small,  
Now woldé God, I hadde her all  
Withouté daunger at my wille ! ’  
‘ And than I sike and sitté stille,  
Of that I se my besy thought  
Is tornéd idel into nought.  
But for all that let I ne may,  
Whan I se time another day,  
That I ne do my besnesse

Unto my ladies worthinesse.  
For I therto my wit affaite<sup>1</sup>  
To se the tímés and awaite  
What is to done, and what to leve.  
And so whan time is, by her leve  
What thing she bit me don, I do,  
And where she bit me gon, I go,  
And whan her list to clepe, I come.  
Thus hath she fulliche overcome  
Min Idelnessé til I sterve,  
So that I mot her nedés serve.  
For as men sain, nede hath no lawe,  
Thus mote I nedely to her drawe ;  
I serve, I bowe, I loke, I loute,  
Min eyé folweth her aboute.  
What so she wollé so woll I,  
Whan she woll sit, I kneléd by,  
And whan she stont, than woll I  
stonde,  
And whan she taketh her werk on  
honde  
Of weving or of embrouderie,  
Than can I nought but muse and  
prie  
Upon her fingers longe and smale.  
And nowe I thenke, and nowe I tale,  
And nowe I singe, and nowe I sike,  
And thus my contenance I pike.<sup>2</sup>  
And if it falle, as for a tímé  
Her liketh nought abidé by me  
But busien her on other thinges,  
Than make I other tarienges  
To drecché forth the longé day,  
For me is loth departe away.  
And than I am so simple of port,  
That for to feigné some desporte  
I pleié with her litel hound  
Nowe on the bed, nowe on the  
ground,  
Now with the briddés in the cage,  
For there is none so litel page  
Ne yet so simple a chamberere,  
That I ne make hem allé chere,

<sup>1</sup> *Affaite*, bring to fitness.

<sup>2</sup> *Pike*, make peep.

All for they shuldé speké wele.  
 Thus mow ye se my besy whele,  
 That goth nought ideliche aboute.  
 And if her list to riden oute  
 On pelrinage or other stede,  
 I comé, though I be nought bede,  
 And take her in min arme alofte  
 And set her in her sadel softe  
 And so forth lede her by the bridel,  
 For that I woldé nought ben idel.  
 And if her list to ride in chare,  
 And than I may therof beware,  
 Anone I shapé me to ride  
 Right even by the charés side.  
 And as I may, I speke amonge,  
 And other while I singe a songe,  
 Whiche Ovide in his bokés made,  
 And said : ' O whiché sorwés glad,  
 O which wofúll prosperité  
 Belongeth to the propreté  
 Of Lové? Who so wold him serve,  
 And yet therefromay no manswerve,  
 That he ne mot his lawe obey.'  
 And thus I ridé forth my wey  
 And am right besy overall  
 With herte, and with my body all,  
 As I have saide you here to-fore.  
 My godé fader tell therfore  
 Of Idelnesse if I have gilt."—

"My soné, but thou tellé wilt  
 Ought elles than I may now here,  
 Thou shalt have no penauncé here.  
 And nethéles a man may se,  
 How now a daiés that there be  
 Full many of such hertés slowe,  
 That woll nought besien hem to  
 knowe

What thing Love is, til atté last,  
 That he with strengthe hem over-  
 cast

That malgré hem they mot obey  
 And done all idelship away  
 To servé wel and besiliche.

But, soné, thou art none of sich,  
 For Lové shall thee wel excuse,

But otherwise if thou refuse  
 To lové thou might so par cas  
 Ben idel, as somtimé was  
 A kingés doughter unavised,  
 Til that Cupide her hath chastised,  
 Wherof thou shalt a talé here  
 Accordant unto this matere.

**Of Armenie** I redé thus,  
 There was a king whiche Herupus  
 Was hote, and he a lusty maide  
 To doughter had, and as men saide  
 Her namé was Rosiphelé,  
 Which tho was of great renomé.  
 For she was bothé wise and faire  
 And shuldé ben her faders heire.  
 But she had o defaulte of Slouthe  
 Towardés Love, and that was routhe.  
 For so well couthé no man say  
 Which mighté set her in the way  
 Of Lovés occupación  
 Through none ymaginación ;  
 That scolé woldé she nought knowe.  
 And thus she was one of the slowe  
 As of suche hertés besinesse,  
 Till whanné Venus the goddessse,  
 Which Lovés Court hath for to  
 reule,  
 Hath brought her into better reule  
 Forth with Cupide, and with his  
 might,

For they merveile of suche a wight,  
 Which tho was in her lusty age  
 Desireth not of mariáge.

For he, that highé hertés loweth,  
 With frydartés whiche hethroweth,  
 Cupidé, whiche of Love is god,  
 In chastisinge hath made a rod  
 To drive away her wantonnesse,  
 So that within a while I gesse  
 She had on suche a chauncé sporned<sup>1</sup>  
 That all her mod was overturned,  
 Which first she had, of slowe  
 manere.

For thus it felle, as thou shalt here.

<sup>1</sup> Sporned, stumbled against.



Whan comé was the month of  
 May,  
 She woldé walke upon a day,  
 And that was er the sonne arist,  
 Of women but a fewe it wist.  
 And forth she wenté prively  
 Unto the park was fasté by,  
 All softé walkend on the gras,  
 Till she came there the laundé<sup>1</sup> was,  
 Through which ther ran a great  
 rivere.  
 It thought her faire and saidé :  
 ‘ Here  
 I woll abide under the shawe,’  
 And bad her women to withdrawe  
 And there she stood aloné stille  
 To thenké what was in her wille.  
 She sigh the swoté flourés springe,  
 She herdé gladdé foulés singe,  
 She sigh the bestés in her kinde,  
 The buck, the doo, the hert, the  
 hinde,  
 The malé go with the femele.  
 And so began there a quarele  
 Betwené Love and her owne herte,  
 Fro which she couthé nought asterte.  
 And as she cast her eye aboute,  
 She sigh clad in one sute a route  
 Of ladies, where they comen ride  
 A longe under the wodés side.  
 On faire amblendé hors they set,  
 That were all whité, faire and great,  
 And everychoné ride on side.  
 The sadels were of suche a pride  
 With perle and gold so well begone,  
 So riché sigh she never none.  
 In kirtles and in copés riche  
 They weren clothéd alle aliche,  
 Departed even of white and blewé  
 With allé lustés that she knewé  
 They were embrouded over all.  
 Her bodies weren longe and small,  
 The beauté fair upon her<sup>2</sup> face  
 It may none erthly thing deface,

<sup>1</sup> *Laundé*, lawn.<sup>2</sup> *Her*, their.

Corounés on her hede they bere  
 As eche of hem a quené were,  
 That all the golde of Cresus halle  
 The lesté coronall of alle  
 Ne might have bought after the  
 worth.

Thus comen they ridéndé forth.  
 The kingés doughter, which this  
 sigh,

For pure abasshé drewe her adrigh<sup>1</sup>  
 And helde her close under a bough  
 And let hem passen stille inough,  
 For as her thought in her avise,  
 To hem that weren of suche a price  
 She was nought worthy to axen there  
 Fro whenne they come, or what  
 they were ;

But lever than this worldés good  
 She wolde have wist how that it  
 stood

And put her hede a litel out,  
 And as she lokéd her aboute,  
 She sigh coménd under the linde  
 A woman upon an hors behinde.  
 The hors on which she rode was  
 black,

All lene and galled upon the back  
 And halted as he were encloied,<sup>2</sup>  
 Wherof the woman was annoied.  
 Thus was the hors in sory plight,  
 But for all that a sterré whit  
 Amiddés in her front she hadde.  
 Her sadel eke was wonder badde,  
 In which the wofull woman sat.  
 And nethéles there was with that  
 A riché bridel for the nones  
 Of golde and preciouúsé stones ;  
 Her coté was somdele to-tore,  
 About her middel twenty score  
 Of horsé halters and well mo  
 There hingen atté timé tho.  
 Thus whan she came the lady nigh,  
 Than toke she better hede and sigh

<sup>1</sup> *Adrigh*, aside.<sup>2</sup> *Encloied*, hurt with a nail in shoeing.

The woman fair was of viságe,  
 Fresh, lusty, yong and tendre of age.  
 And so this lady, there she stood,  
 Bethought her well and understood,  
 That this, which came ridénde tho,  
 Tidíngés couthé telle of tho  
 Whiche as she sigh to-foré ride,  
 And put her forth and praide abide  
 And said : ' Ha suster, let me here,  
 What ben they that ridén now here  
 And ben so richély arraied ?'

This woman, which came so esmaied,<sup>1</sup>

Answerdé with full softé speche  
 And said : ' Madame, I shall you  
 teche,

These are of tho, that whilom were  
 Servaúnts to love and trouthé bere  
 There as they had their hertés sette.  
 Fare well, for I may nought be lette.  
 Madame, I go to my servíce,  
 So must I haste in allé wise,  
 Forthý madamé, yif me leve.  
 I may nought longé with you leve.'<sup>2</sup>

' Ha, gode suster, yet I prey,  
 Tell me, why ye be so besey  
 And with these halters thus begone?'

' Madame, whilom I was one,  
 That to my fader hadde a king.  
 But I was slowe and for no thing  
 Me listé nought to Love obey,  
 And that I now full sore abey,<sup>3</sup>  
 For<sup>4</sup> I whilom no lové hadde,  
 My hors is now feble and badde  
 Aud all to-tore is min array,  
 And every yere this fresshé May  
 These lusty ladies ride aboute,  
 And I must nedés sue her route  
 In this manér, as ye now se  
 And trusse her halters forth with me  
 And am but as her horsé knave.

<sup>1</sup> *Esmained*, troubled, but possibly a-Maying, for "esmaier" meant also in old French to crown with green leaves.

<sup>2</sup> *Leve*, remain.

<sup>3</sup> *Abey*, pay for.

<sup>4</sup> *For*, because.

None other office I ne have,  
 Hemthenketh I am worthý no more,  
 For I was slowe in Lovés lore  
 Whan I was able for to lere  
 And woldé nought the talés here  
 Of hem that couthen Lové teche.'

' Nowtell me than, I you beseche,  
 Wherof that riché bridel serveth ?'  
 With that her chere away she  
 swerveth

And gan to wepe and thus she tolde :  
 ' This bridel, which ye now beholde,  
 So riche upon min horsé hed ;  
 Madame, afore er I was dede,  
 Whan I was in my lusty life,  
 There fell into min hert a strife  
 Of lové, which me overcome,  
 So that therafter hede I nome  
 And thought I woldé love a knight ;  
 That lasté well a fourténight,  
 For it no lenger mighté laste,  
 So nigh my life was atté laste.  
 But nowe alas to laté ware  
 That I ne had him loved ere,  
 For deth cam so in hasté by me,  
 Er I therto had any timé,  
 That it ne mighté ben achieved.  
 But for all that I am releved  
 Of that my will was good therto  
 That Lové suffreth it be so  
 That I shall such a bridel were.  
 Nowe have ye herd all min answeré,  
 To God, madame, I you betake,<sup>1</sup>  
 And warneth alle for my sake,  
 Of Lové that they be nought idel,  
 And bid hem thenke upon my bridel.'  
 And with that worde all sodeinly  
 She passeth ás it were a skie<sup>2</sup>  
 All clene out of this ladies sight.  
 And tho for fere her herte aflight  
 And saide to her self : ' Helas !  
 I am right in the samé cas.  
 But if I live after this day,  
 I shall amende it if I may.'

<sup>1</sup> *Betake*, entrust, commend.    <sup>2</sup> *Skie*, shadow.

And thus homwárd this lady went  
 And chaungéd all her first entent  
 Within her herte, and gan to swere  
 That she no halters woldé bere.

“Lo sone, here might thou taken  
 hede,

How Idelnesse is for to drede,  
 Nameliche of love, as I have write.  
 Fo thou might understonde and  
 wite,

Among the gentil nación  
 Love is an ocupaciòn  
 Which for to kepe his lustés save  
 Shold every gentil herté have ;  
 For as the lady was chastised,  
 Right so the knight may ben avised  
 Which idel is and woll nought serve  
 To Love, he may par cas deserve  
 A greater peiné than she hadde,  
 Whan she abouté with her ladde  
 The horsé halters ; and forthý  
 Good is to be waré therby.

But for to loke aboven alle  
 These maidenés how so it falle,  
 They shulden take ensample of this,  
 Whiche I have tolde, for soth it is.  
 And thilké Love is well at ese,  
 Which set is upon mariáge,  
 For that dare shewen the visage  
 In allé places openly.

A great merveile it is forthý,  
 How that a maiden woldé lette  
 That she her timé ne besette  
 To haste unto that ilké feste,  
 Wherof the Love is all honeste.  
 Men may recover loss of good,  
 But so wise man yet never stood  
 Which may recover time ilore.  
 So may a maiden well therefore  
 Ensamble take, of that she straun-  
 geth

As thou hast understonde above.”—

“My fader, as toward the love  
 Of maidens for to tellé trouthe,  
 Ye havé thilké Vice of Slouthe

Me thenketh right wonder wel de-  
 clared,

That ye the women have nought  
 spared

Of hem that tarien so behinde.  
 But yet it falleth in my minde  
 Toward the men, how that ye speke  
 Of hem that woll no travail seke  
 In cause of Love, upon deserte,  
 To speke in wordés so coverte  
 I not what travail that ye ment.”—

“My sone, and after min entent  
 I woll the tellé what I thought,  
 How whilom men her lovés bought  
 Through great travaile in straungé  
 londes,

Where that they wroughten with  
 her hondes

Of armés many a worthy dede  
 In sondry place, as men may rede,

“That every love of puré kinde  
 Is first forth drawé, well I finde.  
 But nethéless yet over this  
 Deserté doth so, that it is  
 The rather had in many place.  
 Forthý who secheth Lovés grace  
 Where that these worthy women  
 are,

Hemaynought than him selvés spare  
 Upon his travail for to serve  
 Wherof that he may thank de-  
 serve ;

Where as these men of armés be  
 Sometime over the Greté See,  
 So that by londe and eke by ship  
 He mot travailé for worship  
 And maké many hastif rodes,  
 Somtime in Pruse, sometime in  
 Rodes,

And some time into Tartarie,  
 So that these heralds on him crie :  
 ‘Vailant, vailant, lo, where he  
 goth !’

And than he yiveth hem golde and  
 cloth,

So that his famé mighté springe  
 And to his ladies eré bringe  
 Some tiding of his worthinesse ;  
 So that she might of his prowessse  
 Of that she herdé men recorde  
 The better unto his love accorde  
 And daunger put out of her mood,  
 Whan allé men recorden good,  
 And that she wot well for her sake  
 That he no travail woll forsake.

“ Mysoné, of this travaile I mene ;  
 Now shrif the, for it shall be sene,  
 If thou art idel in this cas.”—

“ My fader ye, and ever was  
 For as me thenketh truély,  
 That every man doth more than I  
 As of this point, and if so is,  
 That I have ought so done er this,  
 It is so litel of accompt

As who saith it may nought amount  
 To winne of love his lusty yifte.

For this I tellé you in shrifte,  
 That me were lever her lové winne  
 Than Kaire and all that is therinne.

And for to sleen the hethen alle  
 I not<sup>1</sup> what good there mighté  
 falle,

So mochel blood though ther be  
 shad.

This finde I writen, how Crist bad  
 That no man other shuldé slee.

What shulde I winne over the see,  
 If I my lady lost at home ?

But passé they the salté fome  
 To whom Crist bad they shulden  
 preche

To all the world and his feith teche.  
 But now they rucken<sup>2</sup> in her nest

And resten as hem liketh best  
 In all the swetenesse of delices.

Thus they defenden<sup>3</sup> us the Vices  
 And sit hem selven all amidde ;

To sleen and fighten they us bidde

<sup>1</sup> Not, know not.

<sup>2</sup> Rucken, squat.

<sup>3</sup> Defenden, forbid.

Hem whom they shuld, as the boke  
 saith,

Converten unto Cristés feith.

But herof have I great merveile,  
 How they wol biddé me traveile.

A Sarazin if I slee shall,

I slee the soulé forth withall,

And that was never Cristes lore.

But now Ho<sup>1</sup> there, I say no more.

But I woll speke upon my shrifte

And to Cupide I make a yifte,

That who as ever pris deserve

Of armés, I wol Lové serve,

As though I shuld hem bothé kepe,

Als well yet wolde I také kepe,

Whan it were timé to abide

And for to travaile and to ride,

For how as ever a man labouére,

Cupide appointed hath his houére.

“ For I have herdé tell also,

Achilles left his armés so

Both of him self and of his men

At Troié for Polixenen

Upon her lové whan he felle,

That for no chauncé that befelle

Among the Grekes or up or down

He woldé nought ayein the town

Ben arméd, for the love of her.

And so me thenketh, levé sir,

A man of armés may him reste

Somtime in hopé for the beste,

If he may finde a werré ner ;

What shulde I thanné go so fer

In straungé londes many a mile

To ride, and lese at home there

while

My love ? it were a short beyete<sup>2</sup>

To winné chaffe and lese whete.

But if my lady biddé woldé,

That I for her lové sholdé

Travail, me thenketh truély,

I mighté flee through out the sky

And go through out the depé see,

<sup>1</sup> Ho! was the cry for stopping in the chase.

<sup>2</sup> Beyete, gain.

For all ne sette I at a stre,<sup>1</sup>  
 What thank that I might ellés gete.  
 What helpeth a man havé mete,  
 Where drinké lacketh on the borde,  
 What helpeth any mannés worde  
 To say howe I travailé faste,  
 Where as me failéth atté laste  
 That thing whiche I travailé fore.  
 O, in good timé were he bore,  
 That might atteigné suche a mede.  
 But certés if I mighté spede  
 With any maner besinesse  
 Of worldés travail, than I gesse  
 There shuldé me none idelship  
 Departen from her ladyship.  
 But this I se on daiés now,  
 The blindé god, I wot nought how,  
 Cupido, which of love is lorde,  
 He set the thingés in discorde,  
 That they that lest to love entende  
 Full ofte he woll hem yive and sende  
 Most of his grace, and thus I finde,  
 That he that sholdé go behinde,  
 Goth many a timé fer to-fore.  
 Sowote I nought right well therfore,  
 On whether bord that I shall saile.  
 Thus can I nought myself counseile,  
 But all I set on aventure  
 And am, as who saith, out of cure  
 For ought that I can say or do ;  
 For evermore I finde it so,  
 The moré besinesse I lay,  
 The moré that I knele and pray  
 With godé wordés and with softe,  
 The more I am refuséd ofte  
 With besinesse and may nought  
 winne,  
 And in good feith that is great sinne.  
 For I may say of dede and thought,  
 That idel man have I be nought,  
 For how as ever I be deslaied,  
 Yet evermore I have assaied.  
 But though my besinessé laste,  
 All is but idel atté laste,

<sup>1</sup> *Stre*, straw.

For whan theeffect is Idelnesse,  
 I not what thing is besinesse.  
 Say what avaieth all the dede,  
 Which nothing helpeth atté nede?  
 For the Fortúne of every fame  
 Shall of his endé bere a name.  
 And thus for ought is yet befallé,  
 An idel man I woll me calle  
 As after min entendément.  
 But upon your amendément,  
 Min holy fader, as you semeth  
 My reson and my causéd demeth.”—  
 “My sone, I have herde of thy  
 matere,  
 Of that thou hast thee shriven  
 here.  
 And for to speke of idel fare  
 Me semeth that thou tharst<sup>1</sup> nought  
 care,  
 But only that thou might nought  
 spede.  
 And therof, sone, I woll thee rede,  
 Abide and hasté nought to faste,  
 Thy dedes ben every day to caste,  
 Thou nost,<sup>2</sup> what chauncé shall  
 betide.  
 Better is to waite upon the tide  
 Than rowe ayein the stremés  
 stronge.  
 For though so be thee thenketh  
 longe,  
 Par cas the revolución  
 Of heven and thy condición  
 Ne be nought yet of one accorde.  
 But I dare maké this recorde  
 To Venus, whose prest that I am,  
 That sithen that I hider cam  
 To here, as she me bad, thy life,  
 Wherof thou ellés be giltife,  
 Thou might herof thy consciéce  
 Excuse and of great diligence,  
 Which thou to love hast so dis-  
 pended,  
 Thou oughtest wel to be comended.

<sup>1</sup> *Tharst*, needst. <sup>2</sup> *Nost*, knowest not.

But if so be that there ought faile,  
Of that thou sloutheest to travaile  
In armés, for to ben absént, †  
And for thou makest an argument  
Of that thou saidest here above,  
How Achillés through strength of  
love

His armés lefté for a throwe,  
Thou shalt an other talé knowe,  
Whiche is contrarie, as thou shalt  
wite.

For this a man may findé write,  
Whan that knighthodé shall be  
werred,

Lust may nought thanné be pre-  
ferred,

The bed mot thanné be forsake  
And shield and spere on hondé take,  
Which thing shall make hem after  
glad,

Whan they be worthy knightés  
made,

Wherof, so as it cometh to honde,  
A talé thou shalt understonde,  
How that a knight shall armés sue,  
And for the while his ese eschue.

“**Upon knighthode** I redé thus,  
How whilom whan the king Nau-  
plus,

The fader of Palamides,  
Came for to preien Ulixes  
With other Gregois eke also,  
That he with hem to Troié go,  
Where that the siegé shuldé be,  
Anone upon Penelope,  
His wife, whom that he loveth hote,  
Thenkend, woldé hem nought be-  
hote.

But he shope than a wonder wile  
How that he shulde hem best be-  
guile,

So that he mighté dwellé stille  
At home and weld his love at wille.  
Wherof erly the morwe day  
Out of his bed where that he lay

Whan he was up, he gan to fare  
Into the felde and loke and stare  
As he which feigneth to be wode,<sup>1</sup>  
He toke a plough where that it stood,  
Wherin anone in stede of oxes  
He let do yoken greté foxes,  
And with great salt the londe he sewe.  
But Nauplus, which the causé knewe,  
Ayein the sleighté which he feigneth  
Another sleight anone ordeigneth.  
And fell that time Ulixes hadde  
A childe to sone, and Nauplus radde  
How men that soné také sholde  
And setten him upon the molde,  
Where that his fader held the plough  
In thilké furgh which he tho drough.  
For in such wise he thought assay  
Howe it Ulixes shuldé pay,  
If that he weré wode or none.  
The knightés for this child forth  
gone,

Telemacus anone was fette  
To-fore the plough and even sette,  
Where that his fader shuldé drive.  
But whan he sigh his childe as blive<sup>2</sup>  
He drof the plough out of the way,  
And Nauplus tho began to say  
And hath half in a japé cried:

‘O Ulixés, thou art aspied,  
What is all this thou woldest mene?  
For openlich it is now sene  
That thou hast feigné all this thing,  
Which is great shamé to a king  
Whan that for lust of any slouthe  
Thou wolt in a quarel of trouthe  
Of armés thilke honouér forsake  
And dwelle at home for lovés sake.  
For better it were honouér to winne  
Than lové which likinge is inne.  
Forthý také worshp on honde  
And ellés thou shalt understonde  
These other worthy kingés alle  
Of Grecé, which unto thee calle,  
Towardés thee wol be right wroth

<sup>1</sup> Wode, mad.

<sup>2</sup> As blive, quickly.

And grevé the par chauncé both,  
Which shall be to thee double shame  
Most for the hindringe of thy name,  
That thou for slouthe of any love  
Shalt so thy lustés set above  
And leve of armés the knighthode,  
Whiche is the prise of thy manhode  
And oughté first to be desired.'

"But he, which had his herté  
fired,

Upon his wife, whan he this herd,  
Nought o<sup>1</sup> word there ayein an-  
swerd,

But torneth home halving ashamed  
And hath within him self so tamed  
His herté, that all the sotie  
Of lové for chivalerie

He lefte, and be him leef or loth  
To Troié with hem forth he goth  
That he him mighté nought excuse.  
Thus stant it, if a knight refuse  
The lust of armés to travaile ;  
There may no worldés ese availe,  
But if worshpé be with all.

And that hath shewéd overall,  
For it sit wel in allé wise

A knight to ben of high emprise  
And putten allé drede away,  
For in this wise I have herd say,

"**The worthy knight** Prothe-  
salay

On his passagé where he lay  
Towardés Troié thilké siege  
She which was all his owné liege  
Laodomie his lusty wife,  
Which for his lové was pensife  
As he whiche all her herté hadde,  
Upon a thing wherof she dradde.  
A letter for to make him dwelle  
Fro Troié send him, thus to telle,  
How she hath axéd of the wise  
Touchend of him in suche a wise,  
That they have done her under-  
stonde,

<sup>1</sup> O, one.

Towardés other how so it stonde,  
The destiné it hath so shape,  
That he shall nought the deth escape  
In cas that he arrive at Troy.

Forthý as to her worldés joy  
With all her herté she him preide  
And many another cause alleide,  
That he with her at home abide.  
But he hath cast her letter aside  
As he which tho no maner hede  
Toke of her wommanisché drede  
And forth he goth, as nought ne  
were,

To Troy, and was the firsté there  
Which londeth and toke arrivaile,  
For him was lever in the bataile  
He saith to deien as a knight  
Than for to live in all his might  
And be reprovéd of his name.  
Lo, thus upon the worldés fame  
Knighthode hath ever yet beset,  
Which with no cowardis is let.

"**Of kingé Saul** also I finde,  
Whan Samuel out of his kinde,  
Through that the Phitonesse hath  
lered,

In Samarié was arered<sup>1</sup>  
Long time aftér that he was dede.  
The kingé Saul him axeth rede,  
If that he shall go fight or none.  
And Samuel him said anone :  
The firsté day of the bataile  
Thou shalt be slain withouté faile  
And Jonathas thy sone also.  
But how as ever it felle so,  
This worthy knight of his coráge  
Hath undertaké the viáge  
And woldé nought his knighthode  
let<sup>2</sup>

For no perill he couthé set ;  
Wherof that bothe his sone and he  
Upon the mounte of Gelboé  
Assemblen with her enemies.  
For they knighthode of such a pris

<sup>1</sup> Arered, raised up.

<sup>2</sup> Let, hinder.

By oldé daiés thanné helden,  
That they none other thing be-  
helden.

And thus the fader for worshíp  
Forth with his sone of felashíp  
Through lust of armés weren dede  
As men may in the bible rede,  
They whos knighthode is yet in  
mínde

And shall be to the worldés ende.

“And for to loken overmore  
It hath and shall ben evermore,  
That of knighthodé the prowess  
Is groundé upon hardiesse  
Of him that dare wel undertake.  
And who that wolde ensample take  
Upon the forme of knightés lawe,  
How that Achilles was forth drawe  
With Chiro, which Centaurus hight,  
Of many a wonder here he might.  
For it stood thilké tímé thus,  
That this Chiro this Centaurus  
Within a largé wilderness,  
Where was león and leonesse,  
The lepard and the tigre also  
With hert and hindé, buk and doo,  
Had his dwelling as tho befell  
Of Peleon upon the hill,  
Wherof was thanné mochel speche,  
There hath Chiro this child to teche  
What time he was of twelve yere  
age.

Wherfore to maken his corage  
The more hardý by other wey  
In the forést to hunt and pley,  
Whan that Achilles walké wolde  
Centaurus bad that he ne sholde  
After no besté make his chas  
Which woldé fleen out of his place  
As buk and doo and hert and hinde,  
With which he may no werré finde.  
But tho that wolden him withstonde,  
There shuld he with his dart on  
honde

Upon the tigre and the león

Purchase and make his venisón,<sup>1</sup>  
As to a knight is accordaúnt.  
And therupon a coveñaunt  
This Chiro with Achilles set,  
That every day withouten let  
He shuldé such a cruel beste  
Or sle or wouden atté leste,  
So that he might a token bring  
Of blood upon his home comíng.  
And thus of that Chiro him taught  
Achilles such an herté caught,  
That he no more a leon drad  
Whan he his dart on hondé had  
Than if a león were an asse.  
And that hath made him for to passe  
All other knightés of his dede,  
Whan it cam to the greté nede,  
As it was afterward wel knowe.

“Lo, thus, my soné, thou might  
knowe

That the coragé of hardiesse  
Is of knighthodé the prowess,  
Which is to Lové suffisaúnt  
Aboven all the remenaunt  
That unto Lovés Court pursue.  
But who that wol no Slouth eschue  
Upon knighthode and nought tra-  
vaile

I not what love him shuld availe,  
But every labour axeth why  
Of some reward, wherof that I  
Ensamples couthé tel inough  
Of hem that toward lové drough  
By oldé daiés, as they shulde.”—

“My fader, therof here I  
wolde.”—

“My sone, it is wel resonable  
In placé which is honourable  
If that a man his herté sette,  
That than he for no Slouthé lette  
To do what longeth to manhede.  
For if thou wolt the bokés rede  
Of Launcelot and other mo,  
Theremight thou seen how it was tho

<sup>1</sup> *Venison*, hunted game.



Of armés, for they wold atteigne  
 To Lové which withouten peine  
 May nought be get of Idelnesse,  
 And that I také to witnessé  
 An old cronique in speciall,  
 The whiche into memoriall  
 Is writé, for his loves sake  
 How that a knight shal under-  
 take.

**Ther was a king**, which Oënes  
 Was hoten and he under pees  
 Held Calidoine in his empire  
 And had a doughter Deianire ;  
 Men wist in thilké timé none  
 So fair a wight as she was one.  
 And as she was a lusty wight,  
 Right so was than a noble knight,  
 To whom Mercúrie fader was.  
 This knight the two pillérs of bras,  
 The whiché yet a man may finde,  
 Set up in the desért of Ynde,  
 That was the worthy Hercules,  
 Whos namé shall be endéles  
 For the merveiles which he wrought.  
 This Hercules the lové sought  
 Of Deianire, and of his thing  
 Unto her fader which was king  
 He spake touchénd of mariáge.  
 The king knowénd his high lignáge  
 And drad also his mightés sterne  
 To him ne durst his doughter  
 werne<sup>1</sup>

And nethéles, this he him saide,  
 How Achelous, er he, first preide  
 To wedden her, and in accorde  
 They stood, as it was of recórde.  
 But for all that this he him graunt-  
 eth,  
 That which of hem that other  
 daunteth

In armés, him she shuldé take,  
 And that the king hath undertake.  
 This Achelous was a geaúnt,  
 A subtil man, a déceivaúnt,

<sup>1</sup> *Werne*, refuse.

Which through magique and sor-  
 cerie

Couth all the worlde of trecherie,  
 And whan that he this talé herde,  
 How upon that the king answerde,  
 With Hercules he musté feight,  
 He trusteth nought upon his sleight  
 Al onely, whan it cometh to nede ;  
 But that which voideth allé drede  
 And every noble herté stereth,  
 The lové that no life forbereth  
 For his lady whom he desireth,  
 With hardiesse his herté fireth,  
 And send him word withouté faile,  
 That he wold také the bataile.  
 They setten day, they chosen felde,  
 The knightés covered under shelde  
 To-gider come at timé sette  
 And eche one is with other mette.  
 It fel they foughten both on foot,  
 There was no stone, there was no  
 root,

Whiche mighté letten hem the wey,  
 But all was voide and take away.  
 They smiten strokés but a fewe,  
 For Hercules, which wolde shewe  
 His greté strengthe as for the nones,  
 He stert upon him all at ones  
 And caught him in his armés  
 stronge.

This geaunt wote he may nought  
 longe

Endure under so hardé bondes,  
 And thought he wold out of his  
 hondes

By sleight in some manér escape.  
 And as he couthe him self forshape,  
 In likeness of an adder he slipte  
 Out of his honde and forth he  
 skipte ;

And efte, as he that fighté wolle,  
 He torneth him into a bolle  
 And gan to belwe in suche a soune,  
 As though the world shuld al go  
 doune.

The grounde he sporneth and he  
traunceth,

His largé hornés he avauceth  
And cast hem here and there  
aboute.

But he which stant of hem no  
doubte

Awaiteth wel whan that he cam  
And him by bothé hornes nam  
And all at onés he him caste  
Unto the grounde and held him  
faste,

That he ne mighté with no sleight  
Out of his hond get upon heicht,  
Till he was overcome and yolde,  
And Hercules hath what he wolde.  
The kinge him graunteth to fulfille  
His axing at his owné wille ;  
And she, for whom he haddé served,  
Her thought he hath her wel de-  
served.

“**Cneas** eke within Itaile  
Ne had he wonné the bataile  
And done his might so besily  
Ayein king Turne his enemy,  
He haddé nought Laviné wonne,  
But for he hath him over ronne  
And gete his pris, he gat her love.

“By these ensamples here above  
Lo, now, my sone, as I have told,  
Thou might wel se, who that is bold  
And bar travaile and undertake  
The cause of Love, he shall be take  
The rather unto Lovés grace ;  
For comunliche in worthy place  
The women loven worthinesse  
Of manhode and of gentillesse,  
For the gentils ben most desired.”—

“**My fader**, but I were enspired  
Through lore of you, I wot no way  
What gentillesse is for to say,  
Wherof to telle I you besече.”—

“The ground, my soné, for to  
seche  
Upon this diffinición

The worldes constitucion  
Hath set the name of gentillesse  
Upon the fortune of richesse,  
Which of long time is falle in age.  
Than is a man of high lignage  
After the forme as thou might here  
But no thing after the matére.  
For who that reson understand  
Upon richesse it may nought stond,  
For that is thing which faileth ofte.  
For he that stant to day alofte  
And all the worlde hath in his  
wones,<sup>1</sup>

To morwe he falleth all at ones  
Out of richesse into pouerte ;  
So that therof is no deserte,  
Which gentilessé maketh abide.  
And for to loke on other side  
How that a gentilman is bore,  
Adam, whiche allé was to-fore  
With Eve his wife, as of hem two,  
All was aliché gentil tho ;  
So that of generacion,  
To maké declaracion,  
There may no gentilessé be.  
For to the reson if we se  
Of mannés birthé the mesure,  
It is so comun to natúre,  
That it yiveth every man aliche,  
As well to the pouer as to the riche,  
For naked they ben boré bothe ;  
The lorde hath no more for to clothe  
As of him self that ilké throwe,  
Than hath the pouerest of the rowe.  
And whan they shullen bothé passe,  
I not of hem whiche hath the lasse  
Of worldés good, but as of charge  
The lorde is moré for to charge,  
Whan God shall his accompté here,  
For he hath had his lustés here.  
But of the body which shall deie,  
All though there be diversé wey  
To deth, yet is there but one ende,  
To which that every man shall wende

<sup>1</sup> *Wones, dwellings.*

As well the begger as the lorde  
 Of o<sup>1</sup> natúre, of one accorde.  
 She, which our oldé moder is,  
 The erthé bothé that and this  
 Receiveth and alich devoureth,  
 That she to nouter part favouéreth.  
 So wote I nothing after kinde,  
 Where I may gentilessé finde,  
 For lacke of vertue lacketh grace,  
 Wherof richesse in many place  
 Whan men best wené out for stonde  
 All sodeinly goth out of honde:  
 But vertue set in the coráge,  
 There may no world be so salváge,  
 Which might it take and done away  
 Till whanné that the body deie;  
 And than he shall be richéd so,  
 That it may failé nevermo.  
 So that may well be gentillesse,  
 Which yiveth so great a sikernesse,  
 For after the condiciön  
 Of resonáble entenciön,  
 The which out of the soulé groweth  
 And the Vertue fro Vicé knoweth,  
 Wherof a man the Vice eschueeth  
 Withouté Slouth, and Vertue sueth,  
 That is a verray gentilman;  
 And nothing ellés whiche he can  
 Ne which he hath, ne which he may.  
 But for all that yet now a day  
 In Lovés Court to taken hede,  
 The pouer Vertue shall nought  
 spede,  
 Where that the riché Vicé woweth.  
 For selde it is, that Love alloweth  
 The gentil man withouten good,  
 Though his condition be good.  
 But if a man of bothé two  
 Be riche and vertuoús also,  
 Than is he well the moré worth.  
 But yet to put him selvé forth  
 He must done al his besinesse,  
 For nouter good ne gentillesse  
 May helpen hem whiche idel be.

1 O, one.

But who that woll in his degre  
 Travailé so as it belongeth,  
 It happeth osté that he fongeth  
 Worshíp and esé bothé two.  
 For ever yet it hath be so,  
 That love honést in sondry wey  
 Proffiteth, for it doth away  
 The Vice, and as the bokés sain,  
 It maketh curteis to the viláin  
 And to the coward hardiesse  
 It yiveth, so that the verrayprowesse  
 Is causéd upon Lovés reule  
 To him that can manhodé reule,  
 And eke toward the womanhede,  
 Who that therof woll taken hede.  
 For they the better affaited be  
 In every thinge, as men may se,  
 For love hath ever his lustés grene  
 In gentil folke, as it is sene,  
 Which thing there may no kind  
 areste.

I trowé, that there is no beste,  
 If he with lové shulde acqueint,  
 That he ne woldé make it quaint  
 As for the whilé that it laste.  
 And thus I conclude atté laste,  
 That they ben idel, as me semeth,  
 Whiche unto thing that Lové  
 demeth

Forslouthen that they shulden do;  
 And over this, my sone, also  
 After the Vertue morall eke  
 To speke of Love, if I shall seke,  
 Among the holy bokés wise,  
 I findé write in suche a wise  
 Who loveth nought is here as dede,  
 For Love above all other is hede,  
 Whiche hath the Vertues for to  
 lede,

Of all that unto mannés dede  
 Belongeth. For of idelshíp  
 He hateth all the felashíp,  
 For Slouthé is ever to despise,  
 Whiche in disdeigne hath all ap-  
 prise,

And that accordeth nought to man,  
 For he that wit and reson can,  
 It sit him wel that he travaile  
 Upon such thing which might availe,  
 For idelship is nought comended,  
 But every law it hath defended.<sup>1</sup>  
 And in ensamplé thereupon  
 The noble wisé Salomon,  
 Whiche had of every thing insight,  
 Saith : ' As the briddes to the flight  
 Ben madé, so the man is bore  
 To labour, ' whiche is nought forbore  
 To hem that thenken for to thrive.  
 For we, whiché nowe are alive,  
 Of hem that besy whilom were  
 Als wel in scole as ellés where  
 Now every day ensample take,  
 That if it weré now to make  
 Thing which that they first founden  
 out,

It sholdé nought be brought about.  
 Her<sup>2</sup> livés thanné weré longé,  
 Her wittés great, her mightés  
 stronge,  
 Her hertés full of businesse,  
 Wherof the worldés redinesse  
 In body both and in coráge  
 Stant ever upon his avauntáge.  
 And for to drawe into memoire  
 Her namés both and her histoire,  
 Upon the vertu of her dede  
 In sondry bokés thou might rede.

“**Of every wisdom** the parfit  
 The highé God of his spirít  
 Yaf unto men in erthé here  
 Upon the forme and the matere  
 Of that he woldé make hem wise.  
 And thus cam in the first apprise  
 Of bokés and of allé good  
 Through hem that whilom under-  
 stood

The loré which to hem was yive,  
 Wherof these other thát now live  
 Ben every day to lerné new.

<sup>1</sup> *Defended*, forbidden.      <sup>2</sup> *Her*, their.

But er the timé that men sue<sup>1</sup>  
 And that the labour forth it bróught,  
 There was no corn, though men it  
 sought,

In none of all the feldés oute.  
 And er the wisdom cam aboute  
 Of hem that first the bokés write,  
 This may wel every wise man wite,  
 There was great labour eke also.  
 Thus was none idel of the two :  
 That one the plough hath undertake  
 With labour which the hond hath  
 take ;

That other toke to studie and muse  
 As he which woldé nought refuse  
 The labour of his wittés alle.  
 And in this wise it is befallé  
 Of labour which that they begonne  
 We be now taught of that we conne.  
 Her businesse is yet to sene,  
 That it stant ever aliché grene,  
 All be it so the body deie  
 The name of hem shall never away.  
 In the croniquéés as I finde  
 Cham, whos labouír is yet in minde,  
 Was he which first the letters fonde  
 And wrote in Hebreu with his honde,  
 Of natural philosophy  
 He found first also the clergý.  
 Cadmus the letters of Gregois  
 First made upon his owné choise.  
 Theges of thing which shal befallé  
 He was the first augure of alle.  
 And Philemon by the viságe  
 Found to descrivé the coráge.  
 Claudius, Esdras and Sulpicés,  
 Trismégist, Pyth'g'ras, Frige  
 Dares,<sup>2</sup>

Menander and Epícúrus,  
 Solinus, Pandas, Josephús

<sup>1</sup> *Sue*, sowed seed.

<sup>2</sup> *Frigidilles* of the MS. is evidently Phrygian Dares, whose Trojan Chronicle was then of high authority. As Epicurus was a friend of Menander's—they were born in the same year—he must be the writer whom the MS. calls Ephiloquorus.

The firsté were of enditoúrs  
 Of old cronque and eke auctoúrs.  
 And Herodot in his sciéce  
 Of metre, of rime and of cadence  
 The firsté was of which men note.  
 And of musique also the note  
 In mannés voice or softe or sharpe  
 That founde Jubál. And of the harpe  
 The mery soune, whiche is to like,  
 That foundé Paulius with phisique.  
 Zeuxis found first the portreture,  
 And Promethéús the sculptúre,  
 After what formé that hem thought  
 The resemblaunce anon they  
 wrought.

Tubal in iron and in stele  
 Found first the forge and wrought  
 it wele,

And Jadahel, as saith the boke,  
 First madé nette and fisshes toke.  
 Of hunting eke he found the chace,  
 Which now is knowe in manyplace;  
 A tent of cloth with corde and stake  
 He set up first and did it make.  
 Berconius of cokerie  
 First madé the delfcacie.  
 The craft Minerve of wollé fonde  
 And madé cloth her owné honde.  
 And Delbora made it of line,<sup>1</sup>  
 The women were of great engne.<sup>2</sup>  
 But thing which yiveth us mete and  
 drinke

And doth the labour for to swinke  
 To till the londes and set the vines,  
 Wherof the cornés and the wines  
 Ben sustenaúncé to mankinde,  
 In oldé bokés as I finde,  
 Saturnus of his owné wit  
 Hath foundé first, and moré yit  
 Of chapmenhode he found the wey  
 And eke to coigné the money  
 Of sondry metal, as it is,  
 He was the firsté man of this.  
 But how that metal cam a place

<sup>1</sup> *Line*, linen.<sup>2</sup> *Engne*, ingenuity.

Through mannés wit and goddés  
 grace

The route of philosóphres wise  
 Contreveden by sondry wise  
 First for to get it out of mine  
 And after for to trie and fine.  
 And also with great diligence  
 They foundé thilke experience,  
 Which clepéd is alconomy,<sup>1</sup>  
 Wherof the silver multiply  
 They made, and eke the golde also.  
 And for to telle howe it is so,  
 Of bodies seven in speciáll  
 With fouré spirits joint withall  
 Stant the substance of this matére.  
 The bodies whiche I speke of here  
 Of the planetés ben begonne.  
 The golde is titled to the Sonne,  
 The Mone of silver hath his part,  
 And iron that stond upon Mart,  
 The leed after Satorne groweth,  
 And Jupiter the brass bestoweth,  
 The copper set is to Venús,  
 And to his part Mercuriús  
 Hath the quick silver, as it falleth,  
 The whiche after the boke it calleth  
 Is first of thilké fouré named  
 Of spirités which ben proclaimed.  
 And the spirft, whiche is secounde  
 In sal ammoniak is founde.  
 The thridde spirit sulphur is,  
 The fourthé suende after this  
 Arsenicum by name is hote.  
 With blowing and with firés hote  
 In thesé thingés, whiche I say,  
 They worchen by diversé way.  
 For as the philosóphre tolde,  
 Of golde and silver they ben holde  
 Two principal extremities,  
 To whiche all other by degrees  
 Of the metalles ben accordaúnt.  
 And so through kindé ressemblaúnt,  
 That what man couthe awaié take  
 The rust of which they waxen blacke,

<sup>1</sup> *Alconomy*, alchemy.

And the savour of the hardnesse,  
 They shulden také the likenesse  
 Of golde or silver parfitly.  
 But for to worche it sikerly  
 Betwene the corps and the spirít,  
 Er that the metall be parfst,  
 In seven formés it is set  
 Of all. And if that one be let<sup>1</sup>  
 The remenaunt may nought availe,  
 But other wise it may nought faile.  
 For they by whom this art was  
 founde,

To every point a certain bounde  
 Ordeignen, that a man may finde  
 This craft is wrought by wey of  
 kinde

So that there is no fallas inne.  
 But what man that this werk be-  
 ginne,

He mote awaite at every tide,  
 So that nothíng be left aside.  
 First of the distillatiön  
 Forth with the congelatiön  
 Soluciön, discentiön,  
 And kepe in his ententiön  
 The point of sublimatiön,  
 And forth with calcinatiön  
 Of verray approbatiön  
 Do that there be fixatiön  
 With tempred hetés of the fire,  
 Till he the parfst elixire  
 Of thilké philosóphres stone  
 May gete, of which that many one  
 Of philosóphres whilom write.  
 And if thou wolt the namés wite  
 Of thilké stone with other two  
 Whiche as the clerkés maden tho,  
 So as the bokés it recorden,  
 The kinde of hem I shall recorden.

“These olde philosóphres wise  
 By wey of kinde in sondry wise  
 Thre stonés madé through clergy.<sup>2</sup>  
 The firste if I shall specify,  
 Was clepéd *vegetabilis*,

<sup>1</sup> *Let*, impeded.

<sup>2</sup> *Clergy*, learning.

Of which the propre vertue is  
 To mannés helé for to serve  
 As for to kepe and to preserve  
 The body fro sikenesses alle,  
 Till deth of kinde upon him falle.

“The stone secönde I thee behote  
 Is *lapis animalis* hote,  
 The whose vertue is propre and  
 couth

For ere and eye and nase and mouth,  
 Wherof a man may here and se  
 And smelle and taste in his degre.  
 And for to fele and for to go  
 It helpeth a man, of bothé two  
 The wittés five he underfongeth  
 To kepe as it to him belongeth.

“The thriddé stone in speciáll  
 By name is clepéd *minerall*,  
 Which the métalles of every mine  
 Attempreth till that they ben fine,  
 And pureth hem by such a wey  
 That all the vicé goth away  
 Of rust, of stinke and of hardnesse.  
 And whan they ben of such clen-  
 nesse,

This mineráll, so as I finde,  
 Transformeth all the firsté kinde  
 And maketh hem able to conceive  
 Through his vertúe and to receive  
 Both in substaünce and in figure  
 Of golde and silver the natúre.  
 For they two ben thextremities  
 To whiche after the propeties  
 Hath every metal his desire  
 With helpe and comfört of the fire  
 Forth with this stone, as it is said,  
 Which to the Sonne and Mone is laid;  
 For to the redde and to the white  
 This stone hath power to profite,  
 It maketh multiplicatiön  
 Of golde and the fixatiön  
 It causeth, and of his habite  
 He doth the werke to be parfite  
 Of thilke elixir: which men calle  
 Alconomy, as is befallé

To hem that whilom weré wise.  
 But nowe it stant all otherwise.  
 They spoken fast of thilké stone,  
 But how to make it now wot none  
 After the sothe experiéce.  
 And nethéles great diligéce  
 They setten upon thilké dede  
 And spillen moré than they spede.  
 For allé way they finde a lette<sup>1</sup>  
 Which bringeth in pouerte and dette  
 To hem, that riché were afore.  
 The loss is had, the lucre is lore,  
 To get a pound they spenden five,  
 I not how such a craft shall thrive  
 In the manér as it is used.  
 It weré better be refused  
 Than for to worchen upon wene<sup>2</sup>  
 In thing which stant nought as they  
 wene.

But nought forthy, who that it knewe,  
 The science of him self is trewe  
 Upon the forme as it was founded,  
 Wherof the namés yet be grounded  
 Of hem that first it founden out.  
 And thus the famé goth about  
 To such as soughten besinesse  
 Of vertue and of worthinesse,  
 Of whom if I the namés calle,  
 Hermes was one the first of alle,  
 To whom this art is most applied.  
 Geber therof was magnified  
 And Ortolan and Morien,  
 Among the which is Avicen,  
 Which found and wrote a great  
 partie

The practique of alconomie.  
 Whose bokés plainly, as they stonde  
 Upon this craft, few understonde;  
 But yet to put hem in assay,  
 There ben full many now a day  
 That knowen litei what they mene.  
 It is nought one to wite and wene  
 In forme of wordes they it trete,  
 But yet they failen of beyete,

<sup>1</sup> Lette, hindrance.    <sup>2</sup> Wene, expectation.

For of to moche or of to lite  
 There is algate found a wite,<sup>1</sup>  
 So that they folwe nought the line  
 Of the parfité medicíne,  
 Which grounded is upon natúre.  
 But they that writen the scripture  
 Of Greke, Arabe and of Caldee,  
 They were of suche auctorité,  
 That they first founden out the way  
 Of all that thou hast herd me say,  
 Wherof the cronique of her lore  
 Shall stonde in prise for evermore.  
 But toward ouré marches here  
 Of the Latíns, if thou wolt here  
 Of hem that whilom vertuouís  
 Were and therto laboriouís,  
 Carmenté made of her engine  
 The firsté letters of Latine,  
 Of which the tungé Romain cam,  
 Wherof that Aristarchus nam  
 Forth with Donat and Dindimus  
 The firsté reule of scole, as thus  
 How that Latín shall be compounéd  
 And in what wise it shall be sounéd,  
 That every word in his degré  
 Shall stond upon congruité.  
 And thilké time at Rome also  
 Ther was Tullíus Cicero  
 That writeth upon rethorique,  
 How that men shuld her wordés  
 pike

After the forme of eloquence,  
 Which is, men sain, a great pru-  
 dence.

And after that out of Hebrew  
 Jeromé, which the langage knew,  
 The Biblein which the lawe is closed  
 Into Latine he hath transposed.  
 And many an other writer eke  
 Out of Caldee, Arabe and Greke  
 With great labour the bokes wise  
 Translateden. And otherwise  
 The Latins of hem self also  
 Her study at thilké timé so

<sup>1</sup> Wite, blame.

With great travaile of scolé toke  
 In sondry formé for to boke,  
 That we may take her evidences  
 Upon the lore of the sciences,  
 Of craftes bothe and of clergie ;  
 Among the whiche in poesie  
 To the lovérs Ovidé wrote  
 And taught, if lové be to hote,  
 In what maner it shulde akele.

“Forthy my sone, if that thou fele,

That Lové wringé the to sore,  
 Behold Ovide and take his lore.”—

“My fader, if they mighté spede  
 My love, I wolde his bokés rede,  
 And if they techen to restreigne  
 My love, it were an idel peine  
 To lerne a thing which may nought  
 be.

For lich unto the grené tre  
 If that men take his root away,  
 Right so min herté shuldé deie  
 If that my lové be withdrawe.  
 Wherof touchénd unto this sawe  
 There is but onely to pursue  
 My Love, and Idelship escheue.”—

“My godé soné, soth to say,  
 If there be siker any way  
 To lové, thou hast said the best.  
 For who that woll have all his rest  
 And do no travaile at the nede,  
 It is no reson that he spede  
 In Lovés causé for to winne.  
 For he which dare nothing beginne,  
 I not what thinge he shulde acheve.  
 But over this thou shalt beleve,  
 So as it sit thee well to knowe,  
 That there ben other Vices slowe,  
 Which unto Lové don great lette,  
 If thou thin hert upon hem sette.

¶ Toward the slowé progeny  
 There is yet one of compaigny,  
 And he is clepéd Sompnolence,  
 Which doth to Slouth his reverence  
 As he which is his chamberlein,

That many an hunderd time hath  
 lein

To slepé whan he shuldé wake,  
 He hath with Lové trewes take,  
 That waké who so waké will,  
 If he may couche adown his bill  
 He hath all wowéd what him list,  
 That oft he goth to bed unkist  
 And saith, that for no druéry  
 He woll nought leve his sluggardy.  
 For though no man it wold allowe,  
 To slepé lever than to wowe  
 Is his manér, and thus on nightes,  
 Whan he seeth the lusty knightes  
 Revelen where these women are,  
 Awey he skulketh as an hare  
 And goth to bed and laith himsofte ;  
 And of his Slouth he dremeth ofte,  
 How that he sticketh in the mire,  
 And how he sitteth by the fire  
 And claweth on his baré shankes,  
 And how he climeth up the bankes  
 And falleth in the slades<sup>1</sup> depe.  
 But thanné who so také kepe  
 Whan he is fall in suche a dreme  
 Right as a ship ayein the streme  
 He routeth with a slepy noise  
 And brustleth as a monkés froise<sup>2</sup>  
 Whan it is throwe into the panne.  
 And otherwhilé seldé whanne  
 That he may dreme a lusty sweven,  
 Him thinketh as though he were  
 in heven

And as the world were holy his ;  
 And thanhe speketh of that and this  
 And maketh his expositiön  
 After his dispositiön  
 Of that he wold, in such a wise  
 He doth to Love all his servise,  
 I not what thank he shall deserve.  
 But sone, if thou wolt Lové serve,  
 I redé that thou do nought so.”—

“Ha, godé fader, certés no.  
 I haddé lever by my trowth,

<sup>1</sup> Slades, valléys.

<sup>2</sup> Froise, pancake.



Er I were set on such a Slouth  
 And beré such a slepy snout,  
 Bothe eyen of my hede were out.  
 For me were better fully deie  
 Than I of suché sluggardie  
 Had any namé, God me shielde.  
 “For certes, fader Genius,  
 Yet unto now it hath be thus  
 At allé time if it befelle  
 So that I mighté come and dwelle  
 In placé there my lady were,  
 I was nought slow ne slepy there.  
 For than I dare well undertake,  
 That whan her list on nightés wake  
 In chambre as to caróle and daunce,  
 Me thenketh I may me more  
 avauce  
 If I may gone upon her honde,  
 Than if I wonne a kingés londe.  
 For whan I may her hond beclippe,  
 With such gladnése I daunce and  
 skippe  
 Me thenketh I touché nought the  
 floor,  
 Theroo, which renneth on the moor,  
 Is thanné nought so light as I.  
 So mow ye witen all forthý,  
 That for the timé slepe I hate.  
 And whan it falleth other gate,  
 So that her liké nought to daunce,  
 But on the dees to casté chaunce,  
 Or axe of Lové some demaunde,  
 Or ellés that her list commaunde  
 To rede and here of Troilus,—  
 Right as she wold, or so or thus,  
 I am all redy to consent.  
 And if so is, that I may hent  
 Somtime amonge a good leisr,  
 So as I dare of my desír  
 I telle a part, but whan I prey,  
 Anone she biddeth me go my wey  
 And saith: ‘It is fer in the night:’  
 And I swere, it is even light.  
 But as it falleth atté laste,  
 There may no worldés joié laste,

So mote I nedés fro her wende  
 And of my wacché make an ende.  
 And if she thanné hedé toke  
 How pitouslich on her I loke,  
 Whan that I shall my levé take,  
 Her ought of mercy for to slake  
 Her daunger, which saith ever nay.  
 But he saith often, ‘Have good day,’  
 That loth is for to take his leve.  
 Thérforé while I may beleve,<sup>1</sup>  
 I tarie forth the night alonge.  
 For it is nought on me alonge  
 To slepé that I so soone go  
 Till that I mote algaté so,  
 And thanne I biddé: ‘God her se,’  
 And so down knelende on my kne  
 I také leve, and if I shall  
 I kisse her and go forth withall.  
 And other while, if that I dore,<sup>2</sup>  
 Er I come fully atté dore,  
 I torne ayein and feigne a thing,  
 As though I haddé lost a ring  
 Or somewhat ellés, for I wolde  
 Kisse her eftsoné, if that I sholde.  
 But selden is, that I so spede.  
 And whan I se that I mot nede  
 Departen, I departe, and thanne  
 With all my herte I curse and  
 banne  
 That ever slepe was made for eye.  
 For as me thenketh I might drie<sup>3</sup>  
 Withouté slepe to waken ever  
 So that I shuldé nought dissever  
 Fro her in whom is all my light.  
 And than I curse also the night  
 With all the will of my coráge  
 And say: ‘Away thou black ymage,  
 Which of thy derké cloudy face  
 Makest all the worldés light deface  
 And causeth unto slepe a way,  
 By which I mot now gone away  
 Out of my ladies compaignie.  
 O slepy night, I thee defie,

<sup>1</sup> *Beleve*, remain.      <sup>2</sup> *Dore*, dare.  
<sup>3</sup> *Drie*, endure.

And woldé that thou lay in presse  
 With Proserpiné the goddesse  
 And with Pluto the hellé king.  
 For till I se the daiés spring,  
 I setté slepe nought at a risshe.<sup>7</sup>  
 And with that worde I sigh and  
 wisshe

And say : ' Ha, why ne were it day,  
 For yet my lady than I may  
 Beholdé, though I do no more.  
 But slepe,—I not wherof it serveth,  
 Of which no man his thank de-  
 serveth

To get him love in any place,  
 But is an hindrer of his grace  
 And maketh hem dede as for a  
 throwe

Right as a stoke were overthrowe.  
 And so, my fader, in this wise  
 The slepy nightés I despise  
 And ever amiddeés of my tale  
 I thanke upon the nightingale,  
 Which slepeth nought by wey of  
 kinde

For love, in bokés as I finde.  
 Thus atté last I go to bedde  
 And yet min herté lith to wedde  
 With her where as I camé fro,  
 Though I departe he wolle nought so.  
 There is no lock may shet him out,  
 Him nedeth nought to gon about  
 That percé may the hardé wal,  
 Thus is he with her overall.  
 And thus my selven I torment,  
 Til that the dedé slepe me hent.  
 But thanné by a thousand score  
 Wel moré than I was to-fore  
 I am tormented in my slepe,  
 But that I dreme is nought on shepe,  
 For I ne thanké nought on wulle,  
 But I am drecched<sup>1</sup> to the fulle  
 Of Lové that I have to kepe,  
 That now I laugh and now I wepe  
 And now I lèse and now I winne

<sup>1</sup> Drecched, troubled, vexed.

And now I ende and now beginne.  
 And other while I dreme and mete,<sup>1</sup>  
 That I aloné with her mete  
 And that Daunger is left behinde.  
 And than in slepe such joy I finde,  
 That I ne bedé never awake.  
 But after, whan I hedé take,  
 And shall arise upon the morwe,  
 Than is all tornéd into sorwe,  
 Nought for the cause I shall arise,  
 But for I mette<sup>2</sup> in suche a wise,  
 And atté last I am bethought,  
 That all is vein and helpeth nought,  
 But yet me thanketh by my wille  
 I wold have lay and slepé stille<sup>3</sup>  
 To meten ever of such a sweven,<sup>3</sup>  
 For than I had a slepy heven."—

"My sone, and for thou tellest so,  
 A man may finde of time ago,  
 That manya sweven hath becertain,  
 All be it so that som men sain  
 That swevens ben of no credence.  
 But for to shewe in evidence  
 That they full ofté sothé thinges  
 Betoken, I thanke in my writnges  
 To telle a talé therupon,  
 Which fell by oldé daiés gone.

**This finde I** written in poesý.  
 Ceix the king of Troceny  
 Hadde Alceoné to his wife,  
 Which as her owné hertés life  
 Him loveth. And he had also  
 A brother, which was clepéd tho  
 Dedalion, and he par cas  
 Fro kinde of man forshapé was  
 Into a goshauke for likenesse ;  
 Wherof this king great hevinessé  
 Hath take and thought in his coragé  
 To gone upon a pelrináge  
 Into a straungé región,  
 Where he hath his devoción  
 To doné his sacrifice and prey  
 If that he might in any wey

<sup>1</sup> Mete, dream.

<sup>2</sup> Mette, dreamt.

<sup>3</sup> Sweven, a dream.

Toward the goddés findé grace  
 His brothers helé to purchase,  
 So that he mighté be reformed  
 Of that he haddé be transformed.  
 To this purpóse and to this ende  
 This king is redy for to wende  
 As he which woldé go by ship.  
 And for to done him felaship  
 His wife unto the see him brought  
 Withall her herte, and him besought  
 That he the time her woldé sain  
 Whan that he thoughté come ayein.  
 Within, he saith, two monthés day.  
 And thus in allé haste he may  
 He toke his leve and forth he saileth,  
 Wepend and she her self bewaileth  
 And torneth home there she camfro.  
 But whan the monthés were ago,  
 The which he set of his comíng,  
 And that she herdé no tidíng,  
 There was no caré for to seche  
 Wherof the goddés to beseche.  
 Tho she began in many a wise  
 And to Juno her sacrifice  
 Above all other most she dede  
 And for her lord she hath so hede  
 To wite and knowe how that he ferd,  
 That Juno the goddesse her herde  
 Anone, and upon this matere  
 She badde Yrís her messagere  
 To Slepés hous that she shal wende  
 And bid him that he make an ende  
 By sweven, and shewe all the cas  
 Unto this lady how it was.

“This Yris fro the highé stage,  
 Whiche undertake hath the mes-  
 sage,  
 Her reiny copé did upon,  
 The which was wonderly begone  
 With colours of diversé hewe  
 An hunderd mo than men it knewe,  
 The heven liche unto a bowe  
 She bende, and she cam downé lowe  
 The God of Slepe where that she  
 fond,

And that was in a straungé lond  
 Which marcheth<sup>1</sup> upon Chimery.  
 For there, as saith the poesy,  
 The God of Slepe hath made his  
 hous,

Whiche of entaile is merveilous.  
 “Under an hill there is a cave  
 Which of the sonné may nought  
 have,  
 So that no man may knowe aright  
 The point betwene the day and  
 night.

There is no fire, there is no sparke,  
 There is no doré which may charke,<sup>2</sup>  
 Wherof an eyé shulde unshet,  
 So that inwárd there is no let.  
 And for to speke of that withoute,  
 Therestant no great tre nigh aboute,  
 Wheron there mighté crowe or pie  
 Alighté for to clepe or crie.  
 There is no cock to crowe day,  
 Ne besté none which noisé may  
 The hille, but all abouté round  
 There is growénd upon the ground  
 Poppy, which bereth the sede of  
 slepe,

With other herbés suche an hepe.  
 A stillé water for the nones  
 Rennénd upon the smallé stones,  
 Which hight of Lethés the rivér,  
 Under that hille in such manér  
 There is, which yiveth great ap-  
 petite

To slepe. And thus ful of delite  
 Slepe hath his hous, and of his  
 couche

Within his chambre if I shall touche  
 Of hebenus that slepy tre  
 The bordés all abouté be,  
 And for he shuldé slepé softe  
 Upon a fether bed alofte  
 He lith with many a pilwe of doun,  
 The chambre is strowéd up and  
 doun

<sup>1</sup> Marcheth, borders.    <sup>2</sup> Charke, creak.

With swevenés many a thousand  
fold.

Thus came Yrís into this holde,  
And to the bed, whiche is all black,  
She goth, and ther with Slepe she  
spake,

And in this wise as she was bede  
The message of Junó she dede.  
Full ofte her wordés she reherceth,  
Er she his slepy erés perceth  
With mochel wo. But atté laste  
His slombrend eyen he upcaste  
And said her, that it shal be do,  
Wherof amonge a thousand tho  
Within his hous that slepy were  
In speciáll he chese out there  
Thre, whiché shulden do this dede.  
The first of hem, so as I rede,  
Was Morpheus, the whose natúre  
Is for to také the figúre  
Of that personé that him liketh,  
Wherof that he ful ofte entriketh<sup>1</sup>  
The life which slepé shal by night.  
And Ithecus that other hight,  
Which hath the vois of every souné,  
The chere and the condicioun  
Of every life what so it is,  
The thriddé suend after this  
Is Panthasas, which may transforme  
Of every thing the righté forme  
And chaunge it in another kinde.  
Upon hem thre, so as I finde,  
Of swevens stant all thápparéncé,  
Which other while is evidence  
And other whilé but a jape.<sup>2</sup>  
But nethéles it is so shape,  
That Morpheús by night alone  
Appereth unto Alceone  
In likenesse of her husébonde  
Al naked dede upon the stronde,  
And hów he dreint<sup>3</sup> in speciáll  
These other two it shewen all.  
The tempest of the blácké cloude

<sup>1</sup> *Entriketh*, deceives.      <sup>2</sup> *Jape*, trick, jest.  
<sup>3</sup> *Dreint*, was drowned.

The wodé<sup>1</sup> see, the windés loude  
All this she met,<sup>2</sup> and sigh him  
deien,

Wherof that she began to crien  
Slepend abeddé there she lay.  
And with that noise of her affray  
Her women sterten up aboute,  
Whiche of her lady were in doubté  
And axen her how that she ferde.  
And she right as she sigh and herde  
Her sweven hath tolde hem every  
dele.

And they it halsen<sup>3</sup> alle wele  
And sain, it is a token of good ;  
But til she wist how that it stood,  
She hath no comfort in her herte.  
Upon the morwe and up she sterte  
And to the see where as she met<sup>2</sup>  
The body lay withoute lete  
She drough, and whanné she cam  
nigh  
Starke dede, his armés sprad, she  
sigh

Her lord fleténd upon the wawe,  
Wherof her wittés be withdrawe.  
And she which toke of deth no kepe,  
Anone forth lepte into the depe  
And wold have caught him in her  
arme.

This infortúne of double harme  
The goddés from the heven above  
Beheld, and for the trouthe of love  
Whiche in this worthy lady stood,  
They have upon the salté flood  
Her dreinté lorde and her also  
Fro deth to lifé torned so,  
That they ben shapen into briddes  
Swimmend upon the wawe amidés.  
And whan she sigh her lord livénd  
In likenesse of a bird swimménd,  
And she was of the samé sort,  
So as she mighté do disport  
Upon the joié which she hadde,

<sup>1</sup> *Wodé*, raging.      <sup>2</sup> *Met*, dreamed.  
<sup>3</sup> *Halsen*, embrace.

Her wingés both abrode she spradde  
 And him so as she may suffise  
 Beclipt and kist in suche a wise  
 As she was whilome wont to do,  
 Her wingés for her armés two  
 She toke and for her lippés softe  
 Her hardé bille, and so ful ofte  
 She fondeth in her briddés forme,  
 If that she might her self conforme  
 To do the plesaunce of a wife  
 As she did in that other life.  
 Forthoug she hadde her power lore  
 Her will stood as it was to-fore,  
 And serveth him so as she may.  
 Wherof into this ilké day  
 To-gider upon the see they wone,<sup>1</sup>  
 Where many a doughter and a sone  
 They bringen forth of briddés  
 kinde.

And for men shulden take in minde  
 This Alceon the trewé quene,  
 Her briddés yet as it is sene  
 Of Alceón<sup>2</sup> the namé bere.

“Lo thus, my sone, it may thee  
 stere

Of swevens for to také kepe ;  
 For ofté time a man a slepe  
 May se what after shall betide.  
 Forthý it helpeth at some tide  
 A man to slepe as it belongeth ;  
 But Slouthé no life underfongeth  
 Whiche is to Love appertenaunt.”—

“My fader, upon the covenaunt  
 I daré wel make this avowe,  
 Of allé my life into nowe  
 Als fer as I can understonde  
 Yet took I never slepe on honde  
 When it was timé for to wake,  
 For though min eye it woldé take,  
 Min herte is ever there ayein.  
 But nethéles to speke it plein  
 All this that I have said you here  
 Of my wakíngé, as ye may here,  
 It toucheth to my lady swete,

<sup>1</sup> *Wone*, dwell.

<sup>2</sup> *Alceon*, halcyon.

For other wise I you behete,<sup>1</sup>  
 In straungé placé whan I go  
 Me list no thing to waké so.  
 For whan the women listen play  
 And I her se nought in the way  
 Of whome I shuldé merthé take,  
 Me list nought longé for to wake  
 But if it be for puré shame  
 Of that I wolde escheue a name,  
 That they ne shuld have causé none  
 To say : ‘ Ha, wheré goth such one  
 That hath forlore his contenaunce,’  
 And thus among I singe and daunce  
 And feigné lust thereas none is.  
 For ofté sith I felé this,  
 Of thought which in min herté  
 falleth,  
 Whan it is night min hede ap-  
 palleth,<sup>2</sup>

And that is for I se her nought  
 Whiche is the waker of my thought.  
 And thus as timelich as I may  
 Ful oft, whan it is brodé day,  
 I take of all these other leve  
 And go my wey, and they beleve<sup>3</sup>  
 That seen par cas her lovés there,  
 And I go forth as nought ne were  
 Unto my bed, so that alone  
 I may there liggé, sigh and grone  
 And wisshen all the longé night,  
 Til that I see the daiés light.  
 I not if that be Sompnolence,  
 But upon youré consciéce,  
 Min holy fader, demeth ye.”—

“My sone, I am well paid<sup>4</sup> with  
 the,

Of slepe that thou the sluggardy  
 By night in lovés compaignie  
 Eschuéd hast, and do thy pain  
 So that thy lové dare nought pleine.  
 But only slepé helpeth kind  
 Somtime in phisque as I finde,

<sup>1</sup> *I you behete*, I promise you.

<sup>2</sup> *Appalleth*, becomes weak.

<sup>3</sup> *Beleve*, remain.

<sup>4</sup> *Paid*, pleased.

Whan it is take by mesúre,  
 But he which can no slepe mesúre  
 Upon the reule as it belongeth  
 Ful ofte of sodein chaunce he fongeth  
 Suche infortuné that him greveth.  
 But who these oldé bokés leveth  
 Of Sompnolence howe it is write,  
 There may a man the sothé wite,  
 If that he wolde ensample take,  
 That other while is good to wake ;  
 Wherof a tale in poesý  
 I thanké for to specify.

“ *Ovidé telleth* in his sawes,  
 How Jupiter by oldé dawes  
 Lay by a maidé whiche Yo  
 Was clepéd, wherof that Juno  
 His wife was wrothe and the god-  
 desse

Of Yo torneth the likenesse  
 Into a cow to gon there oute  
 The largé feldés all aboute  
 And gette her mete upon the grene.  
 And therupon this highé quene  
 Betoke her Argus for to kepe,  
 For he was selden wont to slepe ;  
 And yet he had an hunderd eyen,  
 And all aliché wel they sighen.  
 Now herke how that he was be-  
 guiled.

Mercúry, which was all affiled<sup>1</sup>  
 This cow to stele, he camed disguised  
 And had a pipé wel devised  
 Upon the notés of musique,  
 Wherof he might his érés like.  
 And over that he had affaited  
 His lusty talés and awaited  
 His time. And thus into the felde  
 He came, where Argus he behelde  
 With Yo, which beside him went,  
 With that his pipe anon he hent  
 And gan to pipe in his manére  
 Thing which was slepy for to here.  
 And in his piping ever amonge  
 He tolde him such a lusty songe,

<sup>1</sup> *Affiled*, adapted.

That he the fool hath brought a slepe,  
 There was none eyé that might  
 kepe

His hede, which Mercury of-smote.  
 And forth withall anone foot hote  
 He stale the cow whiche Argus  
 kepte,

And all this fel for that he slepte.  
 Ensample it was to many mo,  
 That mochel slepe doth ofte wo  
 Whan it is timé for to wake.

For if a man this Vicé take  
 In Sompnolence and him delite,  
 Men shuld upon his doré write  
 His epitaphe and on his grave,  
 For he to spille and nought to save  
 Is shape as though he weré dede.

“ Forthý my sone, hold up thin  
 hede

And let no slepe thin eye englue,  
 But whan it is to reson due.”—

“ My fader, as touchénd of this  
 Right so as I you tolde it is,  
 That ofte abeddé whan I sholde  
 I may nought slepé though I wolde.  
 For Love is ever fasté by me,  
 Which taketh none hede of due timé,  
 For whan I shall min eyen close,  
 Anone min hert he woll oppose  
 And hold his scole in such a wise  
 Till it be day that I arise,  
 That selde it is whan that I slepe.  
 And thus fro Sompnolence I kepe  
 Min eye. And forthý if there be  
 Ought ellés more in this degre  
 Now axeth forth.”—“ My soné, yis.  
 For Slouthé, whiche as moder is  
 The forth drawer and the noríce  
 To man of many a dredful Vice,  
 Hath yet another, last of alle,  
 Which many a man hath made to  
 falle

Where that he might never arise,  
 Wherof for thou thee shalt avise  
 Er thou so with thy self misfare,

What Vice it is I woll declare.

“**Whan Slouth** hath don all  
that he may

To drivé forth the longé day,  
Till it becomé to the nede,  
Than atté last upon the dede  
He loketh how his time is lore,  
And is so wo begone therfore  
That he within his thought con-  
ceiveth

Tristesse, and so him self deceiveth  
That he **Wanhopé**<sup>1</sup> bringeth inne,  
Where is no comfort to beginne.  
But every joy him is deslaied,  
So that within his herte affraied  
A thousand timé with one breth  
Wepénd he wissheth after deth,  
Whan he **Fortúné** fint adverse.  
For than he woll his hope reherse,  
As though his world were all forlore,  
And saith, ‘Alas, that I was bore,  
How shall I live? how shall I do?  
For now **Fortúne** is thus my fo,  
I wot well God me woll nought  
helpe,

What shulde I than of **joié**s yelpe,<sup>2</sup>  
Whan there no bote<sup>3</sup> is of my care;  
So overcast is my welfare,  
That I am shapen all to strife;  
Helas, that I nere of this life,  
Er I be fullich overtake!’

And thus he woll his sorwe make,  
As God him mighté nought availe.  
But yet ne woll he nought travaile  
To helpe him self at suche a nede,  
But sloutheth under suche a drede  
Whiche is affermé in his herte  
Right as he mighté nought asterte  
The worldés wo which he is inne.  
Also whan he is falle in sinne,  
Him thenketh he is sofer coupláble,  
That god woll nought be merciáble  
So great a sinné to foryive,

<sup>1</sup> *Wanhope*, despair.      <sup>2</sup> *Yelpe*, boast.

<sup>3</sup> *Bote*, remedy.

And thus he leveth to be shrive.  
And if a man in thilké throwe  
Wold him counseile, he wol nought  
knowe

The sothé, though a man it finde.  
For Tristesse is of suche a kinde,  
That for to mainten his folý,  
He hath with him obstínacý,  
Which is within of suche a Slouth  
That he forsaketh alle trouth  
And woll unto no reson bowe.  
And yet ne can he nought abowe<sup>1</sup>  
His owné skillé, but of hede  
Thus dwineth<sup>2</sup> he till he be dede,  
In hindring of his owne estate.  
For where a man is obstinate,  
Wanhopé folweth atté laste,  
Whiché maynoughtlonge afterlaste  
Till Slouthé make of him an ende.  
But God wot whider he shall wende!

“My sone, and right in such  
manere,

There be lovérs of hevý chere,  
That sorwen moré than is nede,  
Whan they be taried of her spede  
And conné nought hem selven rede,  
But lesen hopé for to spede  
And stinten lové to pursue.  
And thus they faden hide and hewe  
And lustles in her hertés waxe.  
Herof it is that I wolde axe,  
If thou, my sone, arte one of tho?”—

“Ha, godé fader, it is so,  
Outtake o point, I am beknowe,<sup>3</sup>  
For ellés I am overthrowe  
In all that ever ye have saide;  
My sorwe is evermore unteide  
And secheth over all my veines.  
But for to counseile of my peines,  
I can no boté do therto.  
And thus withouten hope I go,  
So that my wittés ben empeired  
And I as who saith am dispeired

<sup>1</sup> *Abowe*, maintain.

<sup>2</sup> *Dwineth*, wastes, pines.

<sup>3</sup> I confess, except as to one point.

To winné love of thilké swete,  
 Withouté whom, I you behete,  
 Min herté that is so bestadde  
 Right inly never may be gladde.  
 For by my trouth I shall nought lie  
 Of puré sorwe whiche I drie<sup>1</sup>  
 Forthat she saith she will menought,  
 With drecching<sup>2</sup> of min owné  
 thought

In suche a Wanhope I am falle,  
 That I ne can unnethés calle  
 As for to speke of any grace  
 My ladies mercy to purcháce.  
 But yet I saié nought for this  
 That all in my default it is  
 That I can never yet in stede  
 Whan timé was, that I my bede  
 Ne saide and as I dorsté tolde.  
 But never found I that she wolde  
 For ought she knewe of min entent  
 To speke a goodly worde assent.  
 And nethéles this dare I say,  
 That if a sinfull woldé prey  
 To God of his foryivénesse  
 With half so great a besinesse  
 As I have do to my lady  
 In lack of axing of mercý,  
 He shuldé never come in helle.  
 And thus I may you sothly telle,  
 Sauf only that I crie and bidde,  
 I am in Tristesse all amidde  
 And fulfilléd of desperaunce.  
 And therof yef me my penaunce,  
 Min holy fader, as you liketh."—

"My sone, of that thin hertésiketh  
 With sorwe might thou nought  
 amende,  
 Till Love his gracé woll thee sende,  
 For thou thin owné cause empeirest  
 What time as thou thy self despeirest.  
 I not what other thinge availeth  
 Of hopé whan the herté faileth,  
 For suche a sore is incuráble,  
 And eke the goddés ben vengeáble,

<sup>1</sup> *Drie*, endure.<sup>2</sup> *Drecching*, vexing.

And that a man may right well  
 frede,<sup>1</sup>

These oldé bokés who so rede  
 Of thing which hath befalle er this,  
 Now here, of what ensample it is.

**Philom** by oldé daiés fer  
 Of Mesé was the king Theucer,  
 Whiche had a knight to sone Iphis.  
 Of love and he so mastred is,  
 That he hath set all his coráge  
 As to reward of his lignáge  
 Upon a maide of lowe estate.  
 But though he were a potestate  
 Of worldés good, he was subgit  
 To love and put in suche a plite  
 That he exceedeth the mesúre  
 Of reson, that him self assure  
 He can nought. For the more he  
 praid,

The lassé love on him she laid.  
 He was with love unwise con-  
 streignéd,

And she with reson was restreignéd.  
 The lustés of his herte he sueth,  
 And she for dredé shame eschueth,  
 And as she shuldé, toke good hede  
 To save and kepe her womanhede.  
 And thus the thing stood in debate  
 Betwene his lust and her estate,  
 He yaf, he send, he spake by mouth,  
 But yet for ought that ever he couth  
 Unto his spede he found no wey,  
 So that he cast his hope away.  
 Within his hert he gan despeire  
 Fro day to day and so empeire  
 That he hath lost all his delite  
 Of lust, of slepe, of appetite,  
 That he through strength of lové  
 lasseth,

His wit and reson overpasseth  
 As he whiche of his life ne rought,<sup>2</sup>  
 His deth upon him self he sought,  
 So that by night his wey he nam,  
 There wisté none where he becam.

<sup>1</sup> *Frede*, feel.<sup>2</sup> *Rought*, recked.



The night was derk, there shone  
no mone,

To-fore the gatés he cam sone,  
Where that this yongé maiden was,  
And with this wofull worde, 'Helas,'  
His dedly pleintés he began  
So stillé that there was no man  
It herde, and than he saidé thus :  
'O thou Cupide, O thou Venús,  
Fortúnéd by whose ordenaunce  
Of love is every mannés chaunce,  
Ye known all min holé hert,  
That I ne may your hond astert,  
On you is ever that I crie,  
And you deigneth nought to plie  
Ne toward me your ere encline.

Thus for I se no medicíne  
To make an ende of my quarele,  
My deth shall be in stede of hele.  
Ha, thou my wofull lady dere,  
Which dwellest with thy fader here  
And slepest in thy bedde at ese,  
Thou wost nothing of my disese,  
How thou and I be now unmete.  
Ha lord, what sweven shalt thou  
mete ?

What dremés hast thou now on  
honde ?

Thou slepest there, and I here  
stonde,

Though I no deth to thee deserve.  
Here shall I for thy lové sterve,  
Here shall I a kings soné deie  
For love and for no felony ;  
Where thoutherof have joy or sorwe,  
Here shalt thou se me dede to  
morwe.

O herté hard aboven alle,  
This deth, which shall to me befallé,  
For that thou wol nought do my  
grace,

Yet shall be tolde in many a place ;  
That I am dede for love and trouth  
In thy defaulté and in thy slouth,  
Thy daunger shall to many mo

Ensample be for evermo,  
Whan they my wofull deth recorde.'  
And with that worde he toke a corde  
With which upon the gaté tre  
He henge him self, that was pité.  
The morwe cam, the night is gone,  
Men comen out and sigh anone,  
Where that this yongé lord was dede.  
There was an hous withouté rede,  
For no man knewe the causé why,  
There was wepingé, there was cry.  
This maiden, whan that she it herde  
And sigh this thing howe it mis-  
ferde,

Anone she wisté what it ment,  
And all the causé how it went  
To all the world she tolde it out  
And preith to hem that were about  
To take of her the vengeaunce,  
For she was cause of thilké chaunce  
Why that this kingés sone is spilt,<sup>1</sup>  
She taketh upon her self the gilt  
And is all redy to the peine  
Whiche any man her wold ordeigne.  
And but if any other wolde,  
She saith, that she her selvé sholde  
Do wreché with her owné honde,  
Through out the worlde in every  
londe

That every life<sup>2</sup> therof shall speke  
How she her self it shuld wreke.  
Shewepeth, she crieth, she swouneth  
ofte,

She cast her eyen up alofte  
And said among full pitously :  
'O god, thou wost wel it am I,  
For whom Iphis is thus beseine,  
Ordeigné so, that men may saine  
A thousand winter after this,  
How suche a maiden did amis,  
And as I diddé do to me  
For I ne diddé no pite  
To him which for my love is lore,  
Do no pité to me therfore.'

<sup>1</sup> *Spilt*, destroyed.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, body.

And with this word she fell to  
grounde

A swoune, and there she lay  
astounde.

“The goddés, which her pleintés  
herd

And sigh how wofully she ferd,  
Her life they toke away anone  
And shopen her into a stone  
After the forme of her ymage  
Of body both and of visage.

And for the merveile of this thing  
Unto this placé came the king  
And eke the quene and many mo,  
And whan they wisten it was so,

As I have tolde it here above,  
How that Iphis was dede for love  
Of that he haddé be refused,  
They helden allé men excused  
And wondren upon the vengeaúnce.

And for to kepé remembraúnce  
This faire ymage maiden liche,  
With compaignié noble and riche  
With torche and great solempnité  
To Salaminé the cité,

They lede and carie forth withall  
This dede corps, and saine it shall  
Besidé thilke ymage have  
His sepulture and be begrave.<sup>1</sup>

This corps and this ymage thus  
Into the cité to Venús,  
Where that goddesse her temple  
had,

To-gider bothé two they lad,  
This ilke ymage as for mirácle  
Was set upon an high pinácle  
That allé men it mighté knowe,  
And under that they maden lowe  
A tombé riché for the nones  
Of marbre and eke of jaspre stones,  
Wherin that Iphis was beloken  
That evermore it shall be spoken.  
And for men shall the sóthé wite  
They have her epitaphé write

<sup>1</sup> *Begrave*, buried.

As thing which shulde abidé stable,  
The letters graven in a table  
Of marbre were and saiden this :  
‘Here lith, which sloughe him self,

Iphis

For love of Araxarathen,  
And in ensample of tho women  
That suffren men to deié so,  
Her forme a man may se also,  
How it is tornéd flesshe and bone  
Into the figure of a stone.

He was to neiss<sup>1</sup> and she to harde,  
Beware forthy here afterwarde,  
Ye men and women, bothé two,  
Ensampléth you of that was tho.’

“Lo thus, my sone, as I thee say  
It greveth by diversé way  
In Desespeire a man to falle,  
Which is the lasté branch of alle  
Of Slouthe, as thou hast herd devise,  
Wherof that thou thy self avise  
Good is, er that thou be deceived  
Wher that the grace of hope is  
weived.”—

“My fader, how so that it stonde,  
Now have I pleynly understonde  
Of Slouthés Court the properté,  
Wherof touchénd in my degre  
For ever I thinké to beware.  
But over this so as I dare  
With all min hert I you beseche,  
That yem wolde enforme and teche,  
What there is more of your apprise  
In Love als well as otherwise,  
So that I may me clené shrive.”—

My soné, while thou art alive  
And hast also thy fullé minde,  
Among the Vices, which I finde,  
There is yet one such of the Seven  
Which all this world hath set uneven  
And causeth many thingés wronge  
Where he the cause hath underfonge;  
Wherof hereafter thou shalt here  
The formé bothe and the matére.

<sup>1</sup> *Neiss*, delicate.

## Book V.

### OF AVARICE.

**F**irst whan the highé God began  
This worlde and that the kind  
of man

Was fall into no gret encess,  
For worldés good was tho<sup>1</sup> no press  
But all was set to the comune,  
They speken than of no fortune  
Or for to lese or for to winne,  
Till Avaricé brought it inne.  
And that was whan the world was  
woxe

Of man, of hors, of shepe, of oxe,  
And that men knewen the monéy,  
Tho wenté pees out of the wey  
And werré came on every side,  
Whiche allé lové laid aside  
And of común his propré made,  
So that in stede of shovel and spade  
Thesharpéswerd wastake onhonde.  
And in this wise it cam to londe  
Wherof men maden diches depe  
And highé wallés for to kepe  
The gold which Avarice encloseth.  
But all to litel him supposeth,  
Though he might all the world purcháse.

For what thing that he may embrace  
Of golde, of catel or of londe,  
He let it never out of his honde,  
But get him more and halt it fast,  
As though the world shuld ever last.

<sup>1</sup> *Tho*, then.

So is he lich unto the helle,  
For as these olde bokés telle,  
What cometh ther in lass or more  
It shall departé nevermore.

Thus whan he hath his cofre loken,  
It shall nought after ben unstoken<sup>1</sup>  
But whan him list to have a sight  
Of gold, how that it shineth bright,  
That he theron may loke and muse,  
For otherwise he dare nought use  
To take his part or lasse or more.

So is he pouer, and evermore  
Him lacketh that he hath inough.  
An oxé draweth in the plough  
Of that him self hath no profitte,  
A shep right in the samé plite  
His wolle bereth, but on a day  
An other taketh the flees away.  
Thus hath he, that he nought ne  
hath,

For he therof his part ne tath,<sup>2</sup>  
To say how suche a man hath good  
Who so that reson understood  
It is unproperliché said ;  
That good hath him and halt him  
taid<sup>3</sup>

That he ne gladdeth nought withall,  
But is unto his good a thrall  
And a subgit ; thus serveth he  
Where that he shuldé maister be :

<sup>1</sup> *Unstoken*, unbarred. <sup>2</sup> *Tath*, taketh.

<sup>3</sup> *Taid*, tied.

Suche is the kinde of thavarous.

"My sone, as thou art amorous,  
Tell if thou fare of Lové so."—

"My fader, as it semeth, no,  
That avarous yet never I was,  
So as ye setten me the cas.  
For as ye tolden here above  
In full possessiön of love  
Yet was I never here to-fore,  
So that me thenketh well therefore  
I may excusé well my dede.  
But of my will withouté drede  
If I that tresor mighté gete  
It shuldé never be foryete  
That I ne wolde it fasté holde,  
Till God of Love him selvé wolde  
That deth us shuld departe atwo.  
For leveth well, I love her so,  
That even with min owné life,  
If I that sweté lusty wify  
Might onés welden at my wille,  
For ever I wold holde her stille.  
And in this wisé, taketh kepe,  
If I her had I wolde her kepe ;  
And yet no friday wolde I fast,  
Though I her kepte and heldé fast.  
Fy on the baggés in the kist,  
I had inough if I her kist.  
For certés if she weré min,  
I had her lever than a mine  
Of gold, for all this worldes riche  
Ne mighté maké me so riche  
As she, that is so inly good  
I setté nought of other good ;  
For might I getté such a thing,  
I had a tresor for a king,  
And though I wolde it fasté holde,  
I weré thanné wel beholde.  
But I might pipé now with lasse  
And suffre that it overpasse,  
Nought with my will, for thus I  
wolde

Ben avarous if that I sholde.  
But fader, I you herdé say,  
How thavarous hath yet some way,

Wherof he may be glad. For he  
May, whan him list, his tresor se  
And grope and fele it all aboute.  
But I full ofte am shet theroute,  
There as my worthy tresor is,  
So is my life lich unto this  
That ye me tolden here to-fore,  
How that an oxé his yoke hath bore  
For thing that shulde him nought  
availe ;

And in this wise I me travaile.  
For who that ever hath the welfare  
I wot wel that I have the care,  
For I am had and nought ne have  
And am as who saith lovés knave.  
Now demeth in your owné thought,  
If this be avarice or nought."—

"My sone, I have of thee no  
wonder,  
Though thou to servé be put under  
With Lové, which to kinde ac-  
cordeth.

But so as every boke recordeth,  
It is to findé no plesaunce  
That man above his sustenaunce  
Unto the gold shall serve and bowe,  
For that may no resón avowe.  
But Avaricé nethéles,  
If he may geten his encreés  
Of gold, that wold he serve and  
kepe,  
For he taketh of nought ellés  
kepe,

But for to fille his baggés large ;  
And all is to him but a charge,  
For he ne parteth nought withall,  
But kepeth it as a servaunt shall,  
And thus though that he multiply  
His goldé, without tresory  
He is, for man is nought amended  
With gold but if it be despended  
To mannés use, wherof I rede  
A tale and take therof good hede  
Of that befell by oldé tide,  
As telleth us the clerke Ovide.

Bachus, which is the god of wine,  
 Accordant unto his divine  
 A prest the which Cillenus hight  
 He had, and fell so, that by night  
 This prest was drunke and goth  
 astraied,  
 Wherof the men were evil apaied  
 In Phrigilond, where as he went.  
 But atté last a cherle him hent  
 With strength of other felaship,  
 So that upon his drunkeship  
 They bounden him with cheines  
 faste  
 And forth they lad him also faste  
 Unto the king, which highté Mide.  
 But he that wolde his Vicé hide  
 This curteis king toke of him hede  
 And bad, that men him shuldé lede  
 Into a chambere for to kepe,  
 Till he of leiser haddé slepe.  
 And tho this prest was sone unbound  
 And up a couché fro the ground  
 To slepe he was laid soft inough.  
 And whan he woke, the king him  
 drough  
 To his preséncé and did him chere,  
 So that this prest in such manere  
 While that him liketh ther he  
 dwelleth,  
 And al this he to Bachus telleth  
 Whan that he cam to him ayein.  
 And whan that Bachus herdé sain  
 How Mide bath done his curtesy,  
 Him thenketh, it were a vilany  
 But he reward him for his dede,  
 So as he might of his godhede.  
 Unto this king this god appereth  
 And clepeth, and that other hereth.  
 This god to Midé thonketh faire  
 Of that he was so debonaire  
 Toward his prest, and bad him say  
 What thinge it were he woldé pray  
 He shulde it have, of worldés good.  
 This king was glad and stillé stood

And was of his axinge in doute  
 And all the worlde he cast aboute,  
 What thing was best for his estate.  
 And with him self stood in debate  
 Upon thre pointés, which I finde  
 Ben levest unto mannés kinde.  
 The first of hem it is delite,  
 The two ben worship and profite.  
 And than he thought, if that I crave  
 Delite, though I delite may have,  
 Delite shall passen in my age;  
 That is no siker avauntage.  
 For every joié bodely  
 Shall ende in wo, delite forthy  
 Woll Inoughtchese. And if worshp  
 I axe and of the world lordshp,  
 That is an occupatiön  
 Of proude ymaginatiön,  
 Which maketh an herté vein with-  
 inne;  
 There is no certain for to winne,  
 For lorde and knave is all o wey  
 Whan they be bore and whan they  
 deie.  
 And if I profite axé wolde,  
 I not in what manér I sholde  
 Of worldés good have sikernesse,  
 For every these upon richesse  
 Awaiteth for to robbe and stele.  
 Such good is cause of harmés fele;  
 And also though a man at ones  
 Of all the world within his wones<sup>1</sup>  
 The tresor might have every dele,  
 Yet had he but one mannés dele  
 Toward him self, so as I thinke,  
 Of clothing and of mete and drinke,  
 For more, out také vanité,  
 There hath no lord in his degre.  
 And thus upon these points  
 diverse  
 Diverselich he gan reherce,  
 What point it thought him for the  
 best,  
 But pleynly for to get him rest

<sup>1</sup> Wones, dwellings.

He can no siker waié cast,  
 And nethéles yet atté laste  
 He fell upon the covetise  
 Of gold, and than in sondry wise  
 He thought, as I have said to-fore,  
 How tresor may be soné lore,  
 And hadde an inly great desir  
 Touchénde of such recoverír,  
 How that he might his cause availe  
 To gete him gold withouté faile.  
 Within his hert and thus he preiseth  
 The gold, and saith how that he  
 peiseth

Above all other metal most.

The gold, he saith, may lede an  
 hoste

To maké werre ayein a king,  
 The gold put under allé thing  
 And set it whan him list above,  
 The gold can make of haté love  
 And werre of pees and right of wrong  
 And long to short and short to long.  
 Withouté gold may be no fest,  
 Gold is the lord of man and best  
 And may hem bothé beie and selle,  
 So that a man may sothly telle  
 That all the world to golde obeieth.

“Forthý this king to Bachus  
 preieth

To graunt him gold, but he ex-  
 cedeth

Mesuré moré than him nedeth.  
 Men tellen, that the malady,  
 Which clepéd is ydropesy  
 Resembled is unto this Vice  
 By way of kinde of Avarice.  
 The more ydropesié drinketh,  
 The more him thursteth, for him  
 thinketh

That he may never drink his fille.  
 So that there may no thing fulfille  
 The lustés of his appetíte,  
 And right in such a maner plite  
 Stant Avarice and ever stood ;  
 The more he hath of worldés good,

The more he wolde it kepé streite  
 And ever more and more coveite,  
 And right in such condiciön  
 Withouté good discreciön

This king with Avarice is smitte,  
 That all the worlde it mighté witte.  
 For he to Bachus thanné preide,  
 That therupon his honde he leide,  
 It shuldé through his touche anone  
 Becomé gold ; and therupon  
 This god him graunteth as he bad.  
 Tho was this kinge of Phrigé glad.  
 And for to put it in assay

With all the hasté that he may  
 He toucheth that, he toucheth this,  
 And in his hond all gold it is ;

The stone, the tre, the leef, the gras,  
 The flour, the fruit, all gold it was.  
 Thus toucheth he while he may laste  
 To go, but hunger atté laste

Him toké so, that he must nede  
 By wey of kinde his hunger fede.  
 The cloth was laid, the bord was set  
 And all was forth to-fore him set  
 His dissh, his cup, his drink, his  
 mete,

But whan he wolde or drinke or ete  
 Anone as it his mouth cam nigh  
 It was all gold, and than he sigh  
 Of Avaricé the folie.

And he with that began to crie  
 And preidé Bachus to foryive  
 His gilt and suffre him for to live  
 And be such as he was to-fore,  
 So that he weré nought forlore.  
 This god which herd of this gre-  
 vaúnce

Toke routhe upon his repentaúnce  
 And bad him go forth redély  
 Unto a flood was fasté by,  
 The which Pactolé thanné hight,  
 In whiche als clene as ever he might  
 He shuld him wasshen overall,  
 And said him thanné that he shall  
 Recover his first estate ayein.

This king right as he herdé sain  
 Into the flood goth fro the lond  
 And wiss him bothé fote and hond,  
 And so forth all the remenaunt  
 As him was set in covenaunt.  
 And than he sigh merveilés straunge,  
 The flood his colourgan to chaunge,  
 The gravel with the smalé stones  
 To gold they torné both atones,  
 And he was quite of that he hadde,  
 And thus Fortúne his chauncé ladde.  
 And whan he sigh his touch away,  
 He goth him home the righté wey  
 And liveth forth as he did er  
 And put all Avarice afer  
 And the richesse of gold despiseth  
 And saith, that mete and cloth  
 suffiseth. ·

Thus hath this king experiéce,  
 How foolés done the reveréce  
 To gold, which of his owné kinde  
 Is lassé worth than is the rinde  
 To sustenance of mannés food.  
 And than he madé lawés good  
 And all his thing set upon skille,  
 He bad his people for to tille  
 Her lond and live under the lawe,  
 And that they shulde also forth drawe  
 Bestaile and seché none encrees  
 Of gold, whiche is the breche of pees.  
 For this a man may findé write,  
 To-fore the time, er gold was smite  
 In coigne, that men the florein  
 knewe,

There was wel nighenoman untrewé.  
 Tho was there nouthér shield né  
 spere

Né dedly wepen for to bere ;  
 Tho was the town withouten walle,  
 Whiche nowé is closéd over alle ;  
 Tho was there no brocáge in lond,  
 Which now taketh every cause on  
 hond.

So may men knowe how the florein  
 Was moder first of malengin

And bringer in of allé werre,  
 Wherof this world stant out of herre,<sup>1</sup>  
 Through the counseil of Avarice,  
 Whiche of his owné propré Vice  
 Is as the hellé wonderful,  
 For it may nevermore be full,  
 That what as ever cometh therinne  
 Away né may it never winne.

“Butsonémin, dothounoughtso,  
 Let all suche Avaricé go  
 And take thy part of that thou hast.  
 I biddé nought that thou do wast,  
 But hold largesse in his mesúre.  
 And if thou se a créature,  
 Which through pouerte is falle in  
 nede,

Yef him some good, for this I rede  
 To him that wol nought yeven here  
 What peine he shal have elles where.  
 There is a pein amongés alle  
 Benethe in hellé, which men calle  
 The wofull peine of Tantalý,  
 Of which I shall thee redely  
 Devisé how men therin stonde.  
 In hellé thou shalt understonde  
 There is a flood of thilk office,  
 Which serveth all for Avaríce.  
 What man that stondé shall therinne  
 He stant up even to the chinne,  
 Above his hede also there hongeth  
 A fruit which to that peiné longeth,  
 And that fruit toucheth ever in one  
 His overlippe, and therupon  
 Such thirst and hunger him as-  
 saileth,

That never his appetite né failéth.  
 But whan he wolde his hunger fede  
 The fruit withdraweth him at nede,  
 And though he heve his hede on high  
 The fruit is ever aliché nigh,  
 So is the hunger wel the more.  
 And also though him thursté sore  
 And to the water bowe adown,  
 The flood in such condiciön

<sup>1</sup> Unhinged.

Avaeth,<sup>1</sup> that his drinke arecche  
 He may nought. Lo now, whiche  
 a wreche,  
 That meteand drinkeis him so couth  
 And yet ther cometh none in his  
 mouth !

Lich to the peiné of this flood  
 Stant Avarice in worldés good,  
 He hath inoughand yet himnedeth,  
 For his scarcenésse it himforbedeth  
 And ever his hunger after more  
 Travaieth him aliché sore,  
 So is he peiné overall,  
 Forthý thy goodés forth withal,  
 My soné, loké thou despende,  
 Wherof thou might thy self amende  
 Both here and eke in other place.  
 And also if thou wolt purcháce  
 To be belovéd, thou must use  
 Largéssé, for if thou refuse  
 To yivé for thy lovés sake,  
 It is no reson that thou take  
 Of lové that thou woldest crave.  
 Forthý if thou wolt gracé have,  
 Be gracioús and do largesse,  
 Of Avarice and <sup>2</sup> the sikennesse  
 Escheue above all other thinge,  
 AndtakeensampleofMidethekinge  
 And of the flood of helle also,  
 Where is inough of allé wo.  
 And though there weré no matére  
 But onely that we finden here,  
 Men oughten Avarice eschue ;  
 For what man thilké Vicé sue,  
 He gete him self but litel rest.  
 For how so that the body rest,  
 The hert upon the gold traváileth,  
 Whom many a nightés drede as-  
 saileth,  
 For though he ligge a beddé naked,  
 His herte is evermore awaked  
 And dremeth as he lith to slepe

<sup>1</sup> *Avaeth*, goes lower.

<sup>2</sup> *Of Avarice and, &c.*; And *Escheue, &c.*  
 See note, page 61. This construction is fre-  
 quent throughout the poem,

How besy that he is to kepe  
 His tresor, that no thefe it stele ;  
 Thus hath he but a wofull wele.  
 And right so in the samé wise,  
 If thou thy self wolt wel advise,  
 There be lovérs of suche inow,  
 That wollen unto reson bowe  
 If so be that they come above,  
 Whan they ben maisters of her love  
 And that they shulden be most glad  
 With lové, they ben most bestad,  
 So fain they wolden holde it all.  
 Her herte, her eye is overall,  
 And wenen every man be these  
 To stele away that hem is lefe ;  
 Thus through her owné fantasy  
 They fallen into jelousy.  
 Than hath the ship to-brok his cable  
 With every winde and is mev-  
 áble." <sup>1</sup>—

“ My fader, for that ye now telle,  
 I have herd oftetimé telle  
 Of Jelousy, but what it is  
 Yet understode I never er this,  
 Wherfore I woldé you besече,  
 That yemewolde enforme andteche  
 What maner thing it mighté be.”—

“ *My soné*, that is hard to me,  
 But nethéles as I have herd  
 Now herke, and thou shalt be  
 answerd.

Among the men lack of manhode  
 In mariáge upon wif-hode  
 Maketh that a man him self de-  
 ceiveth,

Wherof it is that he conceiveth  
 That ilke unsely malady,  
 The whiche is cleped Jelousý,  
 Of whiche if I the propreté  
 Shall telle after the nicété  
 So as it worcheth on a man,—  
 A fever it is cotidian,  
 Whiche every day wol come aboute  
 Where so a man be in or oute,

<sup>1</sup> And is to be moved by every wind.



At home if that a man wol wone  
 This fever is than of comun wone<sup>1</sup>  
 Most grevous in a mannés eye,  
 For than he maketh him tote and  
 pry;

Where so as ever his lové go,  
 She shall nought with her litel to  
 Misteppe, but he se it all.  
 His eye is walkend overall,  
 Where that she singe or that she  
 daunce,

He seeth the lesté countenance ;  
 If she loke on a man aside  
 Or with him rowne at any tide,  
 Or that she laugh or that she loure,  
 His eye is there at every houre.

And whan it draweth to the night,  
 If she than be withouté light,  
 Anone is all the gamé shent.  
 For than he set his parlement  
 To speke it whan he cometh to bed  
 And saith : ' If I were now to wed,  
 I wolde never more have wife.'

And so he torneth into strife  
 The lust of lovés dueté  
 And al upon diversité.  
 If she be fresshe and well arraied,  
 He saith her banner is desplayed

To clepe in gestes by the way ;  
 And if she be nought wel besey<sup>2</sup>  
 And that her list nought to be glad,  
 He bereth on honde that she is  
 mad

And loveth nought her husébonde ;  
 He saith, he may wel understonde,  
 That if she wolde his compaignie,  
 She shuldé than afore his eye  
 Shew all the plesure that she might.  
 So that by daié ne by night  
 She not what thing is for the best,  
 But liveth out of allé rest.

For what as ever him list to saine,  
 She dare nought speke o worde  
 ayein,

<sup>1</sup> Wone, custom.

<sup>2</sup> Besey, clothed.

But wepeth and holt her lippés  
 close.

She may wel writé, ' Sans repose,'  
 The wife, which is to such one  
 maried.

Of allé wome be he waried,<sup>1</sup>  
 For with his fever of jealousy  
 His eché daiés fantasý  
 Of sorwe is ever aliché grene,  
 So that there is no lové sene  
 While that him list at home abide.  
 And whan so is he woll out ride,  
 Than hath he redy his aspy  
 Abiding in her compaigny  
 A jangler, an ill mouthéd one,  
 That she ne may no whider gone  
 Ne speke o word, ne onés loke,  
 But he ne wol it wende and croke  
 And torne after his owne entent,  
 Though she no thing but honour  
 ment.

Whan that the lord cometh home  
 ayein

The jangler musté somewhat saine.  
 So what withoute and what withinne  
 This fever is ever to beginne,  
 For where he cometh he can nought  
 ende

Til deth of him hath made an ende.  
 For though so be that he ne here,  
 Ne se, ne wite, in no manere  
 But all honouére and womanhede,  
 Therof the jelous taketh none hede,  
 But as a man to Love unkinde  
 He cast his stafe and as the blinde  
 And fint defaulté where is none ;  
 As who so dremeth on a stone  
 How he is laid, and groneth ofte  
 Whan he lieth on his pilwes softé.  
 So is there nought but strife and  
 chest,

Whan Lové shuldé make his fest.  
 I wot the time is ofté cursed,  
 That ever was the gold unpursed,

<sup>1</sup> Waried, cursed.

The which was laid upon the boke,  
Whan that all other she forsoke  
For love of him, but all to late  
She pleigneth, for as than algate  
She mot forbere and to him bowe,  
Though he ne woldé that allowe ;  
For man is lord of thilké faire,  
So may the woman but empeire  
If she speke ought ayein his wille,  
And thus she bereth her peine stille.  
But if this fever a woman take  
She shall be wel more hardé shake,  
For though she bothé se and here  
And finde that there is no matere,  
She dare but to her selvé pleigne,  
And thus she suffreth double peine.

“Lo thus, my sone, as I have  
write,

Thou might of jalousié wite  
His fever and his condiciön,  
Which is full of suspiciön,  
But wherof that this fever groweth,  
Who so these oldé bokés troweth,  
There may he findé how it is.  
For they us teche and tellé this,  
How that this fever of jealousy  
Somdele it groweth of sotý<sup>1</sup>  
Of love and somdele of untrust,  
For as a sikman lest his lust,<sup>2</sup>  
And whan he may no savour gete  
He hateth than his owné mete,  
Right so this feverous malady,  
Which causéd is of fantasý,  
Maketh the jeloüs in feble plite  
To lese of love his appetite  
Through feignéñ enformaciön  
Of his ymaginaciön.  
But finally to taken hede  
Men may wel make a likyhede  
Betwene him whiche is avarouüs  
Of golde and him that is jeloüs  
Of lové, for in o degre  
They stondé both, as semeth me ;

<sup>1</sup> Sotý (*sottise*), folly.

<sup>2</sup> Loses his enjoyment.

That one wold have his baggés still  
And nought departen<sup>1</sup> with his will  
And dare nought for the thevé slege  
So faine he wolde his tresor kepe ;  
That other may nought well be glad,  
For he is evermore adrad  
Of these lovés that gone aboute,  
In aunter if they put him oute.  
So have they bothé litel joy  
As wel of love as of money.

“Now hast thou, sone, of my  
teching

Of jealousy a knouleching,  
That thou might understandé this,  
Fro whenne he cometh and what  
he is,

And eke to whom that he is like.  
Beware forthý thou be not sike  
Of thilké fever, as I have spoke,  
For it woll in him self be wroke.  
For Lové hateth no thing more,  
As men may findé by the lore  
Of hem that whilom weré wise,  
How that they speke in many  
wise.”—

“My fader, soth is that ye sain ;  
But for to loké there ayein  
Before this timé how it is falle,  
Wherof there might ensample falle  
To suché men as ben jeloüs  
In what manér it is grevouüs,  
Right fain I wolde ensample  
here.”—

“My godé sone, at thy praiere  
Of suche ensamples as I finde,  
So as they comen now to minde  
Upon this point of timé gone,  
I thenké for to tellen one.

¶ **Ovide wrote** of many things,  
Among the whiche in his writings  
He told a tale in poesy,  
Which toucheth unto jealousy  
Upon a certain cas of Love.  
Among the goddés al above.

<sup>1</sup> *Departen*, distribute.

It felle at thilké timé thus.  
 The god of fire, which Vulcanus  
 Is hote and hath a craft forth with  
 Assigned for to be the smith  
 Of Jupiter, and his figúre  
 Both of viságe and of staturé  
 Is lothly and malgracious ;  
 But yet he hath within his hous  
 As for the liking of his life  
 The fairé Venus to his wife.  
 But Mars, which of bataillés is  
 The god, an eye had unto this,  
 As he which was chivalerous.  
 It felle him to ben amorous,  
 And thought it was a great pité  
 To se so lusty one as she  
 Be coupled with so lourd<sup>1</sup> a wight,  
 So that his peiné day and night  
 He did, if he her winne might.  
 And she that had a good insight  
 Toward so noble a knightly lord  
 In lové fel of his accord.  
 Theré lacketh nought but time and  
 place,

That he nis siker of her grace,  
 But whan two hertés fallen in one,  
 So wise a wait<sup>2</sup> was never none  
 That at sometímé they ne mete ;  
 And thus this fairé lusty swete  
 With Mars hath ofté compaigny.  
 But thilke unkindé jelousy,  
 Which evermore the herte opposeth,  
 Maketh Vulcanús that he supposeth  
 That it is nought wel overall ;  
 And to him self he said, he shall  
 Aspié better, if that he may.  
 And so it felle upon a day,  
 That he this thing sosomeightly ledde,  
 He founde hem bothé two abedde.  
 With stronge chéinés he hem  
 bounde,

As he to-gíder hem had founde,  
 And lefté hem both liggé so  
 And gan to clepe and crié tho

<sup>1</sup> *Lourd*, dull, heavy.    <sup>2</sup> *Wait*, watch.

Unto the goddés all aboute.  
 And they assembled in a route  
 Come all at onés for to se,  
 But none amendés haddé he,  
 But was rebukéd here and there  
 Of hem that lovés frendés were,  
 And saiden that he was to blame,  
 For if there felle him any shame  
 It was through his misgovernance,  
 And thus he losté contenance  
 This god and let his causé falle,  
 And they to scorne him laughen alle.

Forthý my sone, in thine office  
 Beware, that thou be nought jelous,  
 Whiche ofté time hath shent the  
 hous.”—

“Myfader, this ensample is hard,  
 How such thing to the hevenward  
 Among the goddés mighté falle.  
 For there is but o god of alle,  
 Which is the lord of heven and helle.  
 But if it liké you to telle  
 How suché goddés cóme aplace,  
 Ye mighten mochel thank purchase,  
 For I shall be wel taught with-  
 all.”—

“My sone, it is thus overall  
 With hem, that stonden misbeveled,  
 That suché goddés ben beveled  
 In sondry placé sondry wise.  
 Amongés hem which be unwise,  
 There is betaken of credence,  
 Wherof that I the difference  
 In the manér as it is write  
 Shall do thee plainly for to wite.

“**Er Crist was bore** among us  
 here  
 Of the belevés that tho were,  
 In fouré formés thus it was.  
 They of Caldee as in this cas  
 Had a belevé by hem selve,  
 Which stood upon the signés twelve,  
 Forth eke with the planetés seven,  
 Whiche as they sighen upon the  
 heven

Of sondry constellaci3n  
 In her ymaginaci3n  
 With sondry kerfe and portreture  
 They made of goddés the figúre.  
 In thelementes and eke also  
 They hadden a belevé tho.  
 And all was that unresonáble,  
 For thelementes ben servisáble  
 To man. And ofte of accidence,  
 As men may se thexperience,  
 They ben corrupt by sondry way,  
 So may no mannés reson say  
 That they ben god in any wise.  
 And eke if men hem wel advise,  
 The sonne and mone eclipsen both,  
 That be hem lef or be hem loth  
 They suffre, and what thing is pas-  
 síble<sup>1</sup>

To ben a god is inpossíble.  
 These elements ben creátúres,  
 So ben these hevenly figúres,  
 Wherof may wel be justified,  
 That they may nought ben deified.  
 And who that taketh away thonour,  
 Which due is to the créatour,  
 And yiveth it to the créature,  
 He doth to great a forfeiture.  
 But of Caldée nethéles  
 Upon this feith though it be lesse  
 They holde afferméed the creauunce,  
 So that of hellé the penaunce,  
 As folk which stant out of beleve,  
 They shall receive, as we beleve.

“Of the Caldees so in this wise  
 Stant the beleve out of assise.  
 But in Egipté worst of alle  
 The feith is fals, how so it falle,  
 For they diversé bestés there  
 Honoúr, as though they goddes were.  
 And nethélesse yet forth withall  
 Thre goddés most in speciall  
 They havé forth with a goddesse,  
 In whome is all her síkernesse.  
 Tho goddés be yet clepéd thus

<sup>1</sup> *Possible*, capable of suffering.

Orus, Tiphon and Isirus.  
 They weré brethren allé thre  
 And the goddesse in her degre  
 Her suster was and Ysis hight,  
 Whom Isirus forlay by night  
 And helde her after as his wife.  
 So it befell, that upon strife  
 Tiphon hath Isre his brother slain,  
 Which had a child to sone, Orain,  
 And he his faders deth to herte  
 So toke, that it may nought asterte  
 That he Tiphón after ne slough,  
 Whan he was ripe of age enough.  
 But yet thegipcienés trowe  
 For all this errour, which they knowe,  
 That thesé brethern ben of might  
 To sette and kepe Egípt upright  
 And overthrowe if that hem like.  
 But Ysis, as saith the croníque,  
 Fro Grece into Egipté cam  
 And she than upon hondé nam  
 To teche hem for to sowe and ere,  
 Which no man knew to-foré there.  
 And whanné thegipcíens sigh  
 The feldés full afore her eye,  
 And that the lond began to greine,  
 Which whilom haddé be bareine,  
 For therthé bare after the kinde  
 His dué chargé, this I finde,  
 That she of berthé the goddesse  
 Is clepéd, so that in distresse  
 The women therupon childing  
 To her they clepe and her offring  
 They beren whan that they ben light.  
 Lo, howe Egipt all out of sight  
 Fro reson stant in misbeleve,  
 For lacke of lore as I beleve.

“Among the Grekes out of the wey  
 As they that reson put away  
 There was, as the croníque saith,  
 Of misbeleve an other feith,  
 That they her goddés and goddeses  
 As who saith token all to gesses  
 Of suche as weren full of vice,  
 To whom they madé sacrifice.

“The Highé God, so as they saide,  
 To whom they mosté worship laide,  
 Saturnus hight, and king of Crete  
 He haddé be. But of his sete  
 He was put down as he which stood  
 In frenésy and was so wode<sup>1</sup>  
 That fro his wife, which Rea hight,  
 His owné children he to plight<sup>2</sup>  
 And ete hem of his comune wone.<sup>3</sup>  
 But Jupiter, which was his sone  
 And of full age, his fader bonde  
 And kut of with his owné honde  
 His genitals, whiche also faste  
 Into the depé see he caste,  
 Wherof the Grekes afferme and say  
 That, whan they weré cast away  
 Came Venus forth by wey of kinde.  
 And of Saturne also I finde,  
 Howe afterwarde into an ile  
 This Jupiter him didde exile,  
 Where that he stood in great mis-  
 chéfe.  
 Lo, what a god they maden chefe!  
 And sithen that suche one was he  
 Which stood most high in his degre  
 Among the goddés, thou might know  
 These other that ben moré low  
 Ben litel worth, as it is founde.  
 “For Jupiter was the secoúnde,  
 Whiche Juno had unto his wife.  
 And yet a lechour all his life  
 He was and in avouerie<sup>4</sup>  
 He wroughté many a trecherie.  
 And for he was so full of vices,  
 They clepéd him God of Delices,  
 Of whom if thou wolt moré wite  
 Ovidé the poéte hath write.  
 But yet her sterrés bothé two  
 Saturne and Jupiter also  
 They have, although they ben to  
 blame,  
 Attitled to her owné name.

<sup>1</sup> *Wode*, mad.    <sup>2</sup> *To plight*, plucked to pieces.

<sup>3</sup> *Of his comune wone*, as his usual custom.

<sup>4</sup> *Avouerie*, adultery.

“Mars was an other in that lawe,  
 The which in Dacé was forth drawe,  
 Of whom the clerk Vegecius  
 Wrote in his boke and toldé thus,  
 Howe he into Itailé came  
 And such fortuné there he nam,  
 That he a maiden hath oppressed,  
 Whiche in her ordre was professed  
 As she which was the prioresse  
 In Vestés temple the goddesse,  
 So was she well the more to blame.  
 Dame Ylia this ladye name  
 Men clepe, and eke she was also  
 The kingés daughter, that was tho,  
 Which Minitor by namé hight.  
 So that ayein the lawés right  
 Mars thilké time upon her that  
 Remús and Romulus begat,  
 Whiche after, whan they come in  
 age,  
 Of knighthode and of vasselage  
 Itaile al hole they overcome  
 And foundeden the greté Rome.  
 In armés and of suche emprise  
 They weren, that in thilké wise  
 Her fader Mars for the merveile  
 The God is clepéd of Bataile.  
 They were his children bothé two,  
 Through hem he toke his namé so,  
 There was none other causé why.  
 And yet a sterre upon the sky  
 He hath unto his name applied,  
 In which that he is signified.  
 “An other god they hadden eke,  
 To whom for counseil they beseke,  
 The which was brother to Venús,  
 Apollo men him clepé thus.  
 He was an hunte upon the hilles,  
 There was with him no vertue elles  
 Wherof that any bokés carpe,  
 But only that he couthé harpe,  
 Which whan he walkéd over londe  
 Full ofté time he toke on honde  
 To get him with his sustenaunce  
 For lack of other purveaunce.

And otherwhile of his falskede  
 He feigneth him to conne arede  
 Of thing which afterward shuld falle,  
 Wherof among his sleightés alle  
 He hath the leudé<sup>1</sup> folk deceived,  
 So that the better he was received.  
 Lo now, through what creaciön  
 He hath deificaciön  
 And clepéd is the God of Wit,  
 To suche as be the foolés yet.

“An other god, to whom they  
 sought,  
 Mercúrie hight, and him ne rought  
 What thing he stale, ne whom he  
 slough.

Of sorcery he couthe inough,  
 That whan he wold him self trans-  
 forme,

Full ofté time he toke the forme  
 Of woman and his owné lefte.  
 So did he well the moré thefte.  
 A great spekér in allé thinges  
 He was also and of lesinges  
 An autor, that men wisté none  
 An other suche as he was one.  
 And yet they maden of this thefe  
 A god which was unto hem lefe,  
 And clepéd him in tho beleves  
 The God of Marchants and of  
 Theves.

But yet a sterre upon the heven  
 He hath of the planetés seven.

But Vulcanus, of whom I spake,  
 He had a courbe<sup>2</sup> upon the back,  
 And therto he was hippe-halt,  
 Of whom thou understandé shalt,  
 He was a shrew in al his youth  
 And he none other vertue couth  
 Of craft to helpe him selvé with  
 But only that he was a smith  
 With Jupiter, whiche in his forge  
 Diversé thingés made him forge ;  
 So wote I nought for what desire  
 They clepen him the God of Fire.

<sup>1</sup> *Leudé*, unlearned.    <sup>2</sup> *Courbe*, hump.

King of Cicile Ypolitus  
 A sone he had, and Eolus  
 He hight, and of his faders graunt  
 He held by way of covenaut  
 The governaunce of every ile  
 Which was longénd unto Cicile,  
 Of hem that fro the lond forein  
 Lay ope the windés alle pleine.<sup>1</sup>  
 And fro thilke iles into the londe  
 Full ofté cam the wind to honde ;  
 After the name of him forthý  
 The windés clepéd Eoly  
 They were, and he the God of Winde.  
 Lo now, how this beleve is blinde.

The king of Creté Jupiter,  
 The samé, whiché I spake of er,  
 Unto his brother, which Neptune  
 Was hote, it list him to comune  
 Parte of his good, so that by ship  
 Hemade him stronge of the lordship  
 Of all the see in tho parties,  
 Where that he wrought his tiran-  
 nies,

And the straunge ilés aboute  
 Hewan, that everyman hath doubté  
 Upon his marché<sup>2</sup> for to saile.  
 For he anone hem wolde assaile  
 And robbé what thing that they  
 ladden,

Hissauf conduit but if<sup>3</sup> they hadden.  
 Wherof the comun vois aros  
 In every lond, that suche a los  
 He caught, all nere it worth a stre,  
 That he was cleped of the See  
 The God by name, and yet he is  
 With hem that so beleve amis.  
 This Neptune eke was thilke also,  
 Which was the firsté founder tho  
 Of noble Troy, and he forthý  
 Was well the moré letté by.

The lorésman of the shephérdes  
 And eke of hem that ben nethérdes,  
 Was of Archade and highté Pan,

<sup>1</sup> Laid up a full store of all the winds.

<sup>2</sup> *Marché*, borders.

<sup>3</sup> *But if*, unless.

Of whom hath spoké many a man,  
 For in the wode of Nonartigne  
 Encloséd with the trees of pigne  
 And on the mount of Parasie  
 He had of bestés the bailie,<sup>1</sup>  
 And eke beneth in the valéy,  
 Where thilké river, as mèn maysay,  
 Which Ladon highté, made his  
 cours,

He was the chefe of governours  
 Of hem that kepten tamé bestes,  
 Wherof they maken yet the festes  
 In the citee of Stimfalides.  
 And forth withall yet nethéles  
 He taughté men the forth drawing  
 Of bestaile and eke the making  
 Of oxen and of hors the same,  
 How men hem shuldé ride and tame,  
 Of foulés eke, so as we finde,  
 Full many a subtil craft of kinde  
 He found, which no man knew to-  
 fore.

Men did him worship eke therfore,  
 That he the first in thilké londe  
 Was, which the melodië fonde  
 Of reedés whan they weren ripe,  
 With double pipés for to pipe.  
 Therof he yaf the firsté lore,  
 Till afterward men couthé more ;  
 To every crafte of mannés helpe  
 He had a redy wit to helpe  
 Through natural experieñce.  
 And thus thurh nicé reverence  
 Of foolés, whan that he was dede,  
 The foot was tornéd to the hede  
 And clepen him God of Natúre,  
 For so they maden his figúre.

“ An other god, so as they fele,  
 Whiche Jupiter upon Semele  
 Begat in his avouterie,  
 Whom, for to hide his lecherie  
 That none therof shall také kepe,  
 In a mountaigné for to kepe  
 Which Dion hight and was in Ynde

<sup>1</sup> *Bailie*, custody.

He send, in bokés as I finde,  
 And he by namé Bachus hight,  
 Which afterward, whan that he  
 might,

A wastor was and all his rent  
 In wine and bordel<sup>1</sup> he despent.  
 But yet all were he wonder bad  
 Among the Grekes a name he had,  
 They clepéd him the God of Wine  
 And thus a gloton was divine.

“ There was yet Esculapius  
 A god in thilké time as thus.  
 His craft stood upon surgerie,  
 But for the luste of lecherie,  
 That he to Dairés daughter drough,  
 It fell that Jupiter him slough.  
 And yet they made him nought  
 forthy

A god, and wist no causé why.  
 In Rome he was long timé so  
 A god among the Romains tho,  
 For as they saide of his preséñce  
 There was destruied a pestilénce  
 Whan they to thile of Delphos went ;  
 And that Apollo with him sent  
 This Esculapius his sone  
 Among the Romains for to wone ;  
 And there he dwelté for a while,  
 Till afterwarde into that ile  
 Fro when he cam ayeine he torneth,  
 Where all his life that he sojórñeth  
 Among the Grekes till that he  
 deiede.

And they upon him thanné leide  
 His name, and God of Medicíne  
 He hatte after that ilké line.

“ An other god of Hercules  
 They madé, which was nethéles  
 A man, but that he was so stronge  
 In al this world that brode and longe  
 So mighty was no man as he.  
 Merveilés twelve in his degre,  
 As it was couth in sondry londes,  
 He didé with his owné hondes

<sup>1</sup> *Bordel*, revelry.

Ayein geaúnts and monstres both,  
The whiche horrible were and loth.  
But he with strength hem overcam,  
Wherof so great a price he nam,  
That they him clepe amongés alle  
The God of Strengthe and to him  
calle.

And yet there is no reson inne,  
For he a man was full of sinne,  
Which provéd was upon his ende,  
For in a rage him self he brende.  
And suche a cruell mannés dede  
Accordeth nothing with godhede.

They had of goddés yet an other,  
Which Pluto hight, and was the  
brother

Of Jupiter, and he fro youth  
With every word which cam to  
mouth,

Of any thing, whan he was wroth,  
He woldé swere his comun othe  
By Lethen and by Flegeton,  
By Cochitum and Acheron,  
The whiche after the bokés telle  
Ben the chefe floodés of the helle ;  
By Segne and Stige he swore also,  
That ben the depé pittés two  
Of hellé the most principall.

Pluto these othés over all  
Swore of his comun custumaúnce,  
Till it befelle upon a chaunce,  
That he for Jupiterés sake  
Unto the goddés let do make  
A sacrifice, and for that dede  
One of the pittés for his mede  
In hell of whiche I spake of er  
Was graunted him, and thus he  
there

Upon the fortune of this thinge  
The namé toke of Hellé Kinge.

“Lo, thesé goddés and well mo  
Among the Grekés they had tho,  
And of goddés many one,  
Whose namés thou shalt hereanone,  
And in what wisé they deceiven

The foolés, whiche her feith receiven.

“So as Saturne is souveraine  
Of falsé goddés, as they saine,  
So is Cybeles of goddés  
The moder, whom withouté gesses  
The folké prein, honoúr, and serve  
As they the whiche her lawe observe.  
But for to knowen upon this,  
Fro when she cam and what she is,  
Bethincia the contré hight,  
Where she cam first to mannés sight.  
And after was Saturnés wife,  
By whom thre children in her life  
She bare, and they were clepéd tho  
Juno, Neptunus and Pluto,  
The which of nicé fantasý  
The people woldé deify.

And for her children weren so  
Cybelés thanné was also  
Made a goddesse, and they her calle  
The Moder of the Goddés alle.  
So was that namé boré forth,  
And yet the cause is litel worth.

A vois unto Saturné tolde,  
How that his owné sone him sholde  
Out of his regné put away,  
And he because of thilké wey  
That him was shapé suche a fate,  
Cybele his wife began to hate  
And eke her progenië bothe.  
And thus while that they weré wrothe  
By Philerem upon a day  
In his avouterie he lay,  
On whom he Jupiter begat.  
And thilké child was after that  
Which wrought al that was pro-  
phecied,

As it to-fore is specified.  
So whan that Jupiter of Crete  
Was king, a wife unto him mete  
The daughter of Cybele he toke,  
And that was Juno, saith the boke  
Of his deficcatiön  
After the fals opiniön  
That I have tolde, so as they mene.



And for this Juno was the quene  
Of Jupiter and suster eke,  
The foolés unto hiré seke  
And sain, that she is the Goddesse  
Of Regnés bothe and of Richesse,  
And eke she, as they understonde,  
The water nymphés hath in honde  
To leden at her owné heste.  
And whan her list the sky tempéste  
The reinbowe is her messagere.  
Lo, which a misbeleve is here  
That she goddésse is of the sky,  
I wot none other causé why.

“An other goddesse is Minerve,  
To whom the Grekes obey and  
serve.

And she was nigh the greaté lay<sup>1</sup>  
Of Triton foundé, where she lay  
A child for-cast, but what she was  
There knew no man the sothé cas.  
But in Aufriqué she was laide  
In the manér as I have saide  
And caried fro that ilké place  
Into an ilé fer in Trace,  
The which Palléné thanné hight,  
Where a noríce hir kepte and dight.  
And after for she was so wise,  
That she found first in her avise  
The cloth makíng of woll and line,  
Men saiden that she was divine,  
And the Goddesse of Sapience  
They clepen her in that credence.

Of the goddésse, which Pallas  
Is clepéd, sondry speché was.  
One saith her fader was Pallaunt,  
Whiche was in his time a geaunt,  
A cruell man, a batailous.  
An other saith, how in his hous  
She was the causé why he deiede.  
And of this Pallas some eke saide  
That she was Martés wife, and so  
Among the men that weren tho  
Of misbeleve in the riot  
The Goddesse of Batailés hote

<sup>1</sup> Lay, lake.

She was, and yet she bereth the  
name.

Now loke, how they be for to blame.

“Saturnus after his exile  
Fro Creté cam in great perile  
Into the londés of Itaile  
And there he didé great merveile,  
Wherof his namé dwelleth yit.  
For he founde of his owné wit  
The firsté crafte of plough tillíng,  
Of ering<sup>1</sup> and of corn sowing,  
And how men shulden setté vines  
And of the grapés make wines;  
All this he taught. And it fell so  
Hiswife, the which cam with him tho,  
Was clepéd Cereres by name,  
And for she taught also the same  
And was his wife that ilké throwe,  
As it was to the people knowe,  
They made of Ceres a goddesse,  
In whom her tilthé yet they blesse  
And sain that Tricolonius  
Her soné goth amongés us  
And maketh the corn good chepe  
or dere,

Right as her list, from yere to yere,  
So that this wife because of this  
Goddesse of Cornés cleped is.

“King Jupiter, which his líkíng  
Whilom fulfilled in allé thing,  
So priveliche about he ladde  
His lust, that he his willé hadde  
Of Latoná and on her that  
Diane his daughter he begat  
Unknowen of his wife Juno.  
But afterward she knewe it so,  
That Latoná for dredé fled  
Into an ilé, where she hid  
Her wombé which of childé aros.  
Thilke ilé clepéd was Delos,  
In which Diana was forth brought  
And kept so that her lacketh nought.  
And after whan she was of age,  
She toke none hede of mariáge,

<sup>1</sup> Ering, ploughing.

But out of mannés compaigny  
 She toke her all to venery<sup>1</sup>  
 In forest and in wildernesse,  
 For there was all her besnesse  
 By day and eke by nightés tide  
 With arwés brode under the side  
 And bow in honde, of which she  
 slough

And toke all that her list inough  
 Of bestés which ben chaceable.  
 Wherof the cronique of this fable  
 Saith that the gentils most of alle  
 Worshipped her, and to her calle  
 And the Goddesses of highé Hilles,  
 Of grené trees, of fressshé welles  
 They clepen her in that beleve,  
 Which that no reson may acheve.

“Prosérpina, which daughter was  
 Of Cereres, befell this cas :  
 While she was dwelling in Cicile,  
 Her moder in that ilké while  
 Upon her blessing and her hest  
 Bad that she shuldé ben honést  
 And lerné for to weve and spinne  
 And dwell at home and kepe her  
 inne.

But she cast all that lore away,  
 And as she went her out to pley  
 To gader flourés in a pleine,  
 And that was under the mountaigne  
 Of Ethna, fell the samé tide  
 That Pluto cam that waie ride.  
 And sodeinly, er she was ware,  
 He toke her up into his chare,<sup>2</sup>  
 And as they riden in the felde,  
 Her greté beauté he behelde,  
 Which was so plesaunt in his eye,  
 That for to holde in compaignie  
 He wedded her, and helde her so  
 To ben his wife for evermo.  
 And as thou hast to-fore herde telle,  
 How he was clepéd God of Helle,  
 So is she clepéd the Goddesses  
 Because of him, ne more ne lesse.

<sup>1</sup> Venery, hunting.    <sup>2</sup> Chare, car, chariot.

“Lo thus, my sone, as I the tolde  
 The Grekes whilóm by daiés olde  
 Her goddés had in sondry wise,  
 And through the lore of her apprise<sup>1</sup>  
 The Romains helden eke the same  
 And in the worshippe of her name  
 To every god in speciáll  
 They made a temple forth withall  
 And eche of hem his yerés day  
 Attitled hadde. And of array  
 The temples weren than ordeigned,  
 And eke the people was con-  
 streigned

To come and done her sacrifice.  
 The prestés eke in her office  
 Solempné maden thilké festes.  
 And thus the Grekés lich to bestes  
 The men in stede of God honour,  
 Which mighten nought hem self  
 soccour

While that they were alivé here.

“And over this as thou shalt here  
 The Grekes fulfilled of fantasy  
 Sain eke that of the hilles high  
 The goddés ben in speciall,  
 But of her name in generall  
 They hoten allé Satiry.

“There ben of Nimphés proprely  
 In the beleve of hem also :  
 Oréadés they saiden tho  
 Attitled ben to the montaignes ;  
 And for the wodés in demeines  
 To kepé tho ben Driadés ;  
 Of fressshé wellés Naiadés ;  
 And of the nimphés of the see  
 I finde a tale in proprete,  
 How Dorus whilom king of Grece,  
 Whiche had of infortune a piece,  
 His wife forth with his daughter alle  
 So as the happés shulden falle  
 With many a gentilwoman there  
 Dreint in the salté see they were,  
 Wherof the Grekés that time saiden  
 And such a name upon hem laiden,

<sup>1</sup> Apprise, teaching.

Nereïdes that they ben hote,  
 The nimphés whiché that they note  
 To regne upon the stremés salte.  
 Lo now, if this belevé halte.  
 But of the nimphés as they telle,  
 In every placé where they dwelle  
 They ben all redy obeisaúnt  
 As damisellés attendaúnt  
 To the goddéses, whose servíse  
 They mote obey in allé wise,  
 Wherof the Grekes to hem beseke  
 With tho that ben goddesses eke,  
 And have in hem a great credénce.  
 And yet without experience  
 Saufe onely of illusiún,  
 Which was to hem dampnaciún.

“For men also that weré dede  
 They hadden goddés as I rede,  
 And tho by namé Manes highten,  
 To whom ful great honouúr they  
 dighten,

So as the Grekés lawé saith,  
 Which was ayein the righté feith.

“Thus have I tolde a great partie,  
 But all the holé progenie  
 Of goddés in that ilké time  
 To longe it weré for to rime.  
 But yet of that which thou hast herde  
 Of misbeleve, howe it hath ferde,  
 There is a great diversité.”—

“My fader, right so thenketh me.  
 But yet o thinge I you beseche,  
 Which stant in allé mennés speche,  
 The God and the Goddesse of Love,  
 Of whom ye nothing here above  
 Have told, ne spoken of her fare,  
 That ye me woldé now declare,  
 How they first comé to that name.”—

“My sone, I have it left for shame,  
 Because I am her owné prest.  
 But for they stondé nigh thy brest  
 Upon the shrifte of thy matere,  
 Thou shalt of hem the sothé here,  
 And understond now well the cas.  
 Venus Saturnés doughter was,

Which allé Daunger put away  
 Of Love and found to lust a wey,  
 So that of her in sondry place  
 Diversé men fell into grace,  
 And such a lusty life she ladde,  
 That she diversé children hadde,  
 Now one by this, now one by that.  
 Of her it was that Mars begat  
 A child which clepéd was Armene,  
 Of her cam also Andragene,  
 To whom Mercúrie father was.  
 Anchises begat Eneás  
 Of her also, and Ericon  
 Biten begatte, and therupon  
 Whan that she sigh ther was none  
 other

By Jupiter her owné brother  
 She lay, and he begat Cupíde.  
 And thilké sone upon a tide,  
 Whan he was come unto his age,  
 He had a wonder fair viságe  
 And founde his mother amorous,  
 And he was also lecherous.  
 So whan they weren bothe alone,  
 As he whiche eyen haddé none  
 To se reson, his mother kist,  
 And she also that nothing wist  
 But that whiche to his lust be-  
 longeth,

To bene her love him underfongeth.  
 Thus was he blinde and she unwis.  
 But nethéles this cause it is  
 Which Cupide is the god of love,  
 For he his mother derste love,  
 And she, which through her lustes  
 fonde

Diversé lovés toke on honde  
 Wel mo than I the tellé here.  
 And for she wolde her selvé skere,<sup>1</sup>  
 She madé comun that disporte  
 And set a lawe of such a porte  
 That every woman mighté take  
 What man her list and nought  
 forsake

<sup>1</sup> Skere, clear, free.

To ben as comun as she wolde.  
 She was the first also which tolde  
 That women shulde her body selle.  
 Semiramis so as men telle  
 Of Venus kepté thilke apprise.  
 And so did in the samé wise  
 Of Romé fairé Neabólie,  
 Which lift her body to Rególie.  
 She was to every man felawe  
 And held the lust of thilké lawe  
 Which Venus of her self beganne,  
 Wherof that she the namé wanne  
 Why men her clepen the Goddessse  
 Of Love and eke of gentillesse,  
 Of worldés lust and of plesaunce.

“Se now the foulé miscreaunce  
 Of Grekes in thilké timé tho,  
 Whan Venus toke her namé so.  
 There was no cause under the mone  
 Of which they hadden tho to done  
 Of wel or wo where so it was,  
 That they ne token in that cas  
 A god to helpe or a goddessse,  
 Wherof to také my witesse,

“The king of Bragman Dindimus  
 Wrote unto Alisaundre thus  
 In blaminge of the Grekés feith  
 And of the misbeleve he saith  
 How they for every membre hadden  
 A sondry god, to whom they  
 spradden

Her armés and of help besoughten.

“Minervé for the hede they  
 soughten,

For she was wise, and of a man  
 The wit and reson which he can  
 Is in the cellés of the brain,  
 Wherof they made her sovereign.

“Mercúrie, which was in his  
 dawes

A great spekér of falsé lawes,  
 On him the keping of the tunge  
 They laiden, whan they speke or  
 sunge.

“For Bachus was a gloten eke

Him for the throté they beseke,  
 That he it woldé wasshen ofte  
 With suoté drinkés and with softe.

The god of sholders and of armes  
 Was Hercules, for he in armes  
 The mightiesté was to fight,  
 To him tho limmés they behight,  
 The god whom that they clepen Mart  
 The brest to kepe hath for his part,  
 For with the herte in his ymage  
 That he addresse to his corage.  
 And of the gallé the goddessse,  
 For she was ful of hastinesse,  
 Of wrath and light to greve also,  
 They made and said, it was Juno.

“Cupidé, which the brond of fire  
 Bare in his hond, he was the sire  
 Of the stomáck, which boileth ever,  
 Wherof the lustés ben the lever.

“Thus was dispers in sondry  
 wise  
 The misbeleve as I devise  
 With many an ymage of entaile<sup>1</sup>  
 Of suche as might hem nought  
 availle.

For they withouté livés chere  
 Unmighty ben to se or here  
 Or speke or do or ellés fele,  
 And yet the foolés to hem knele  
 Whiche is her owné handés werke.  
 Ha lord, how this beleve is derke  
 And fer fro resonáble wit,  
 And nethéles they don it yit.  
 That was o day a ragged tre  
 To morwe upon his magesté  
 Stant in the temple wel besein ;  
 How might a mannés reson sain,  
 That such a stock may helpe or  
 greve ?

But they that ben of such beleve  
 And unto suché goddés calle,  
 It shall to hem right so befallé  
 And failen atté mosté nede.  
 But if thee list to taken hede

<sup>1</sup> Graven image.

And of the first ymáge.wite,  
 Petronius therof hath write  
 And eke Nigargorus also,  
 And they afferme and writé so,  
 That Prométhéús was craft  
 And foundé the first craft therfore,  
 And Cirophánes, as they telle,  
 Through counseil which was take  
 in helle,

In remembraunce of his lignage  
 Let setten up the first ymáge.  
 Of Cirophánes saith the boke  
 That he for sorwe which he toke  
 Of that he sigh his soné dede,  
 Of comfort knew none other rede  
 But let do make in remembraunce  
 A faire ymáge of his semblaunce  
 And set it in the market place,  
 Which openly to-fore his face  
 Stood every day to done him ese.  
 And they that thanné wolde plesé  
 The fader, shulden it obey<sup>1</sup>  
 Whan that they comen thilké wey.

“And of Ninús king of Assire  
 I redé, how that in his empire  
 He was, next after, the secound  
 Of hem that first ymáges found.  
 For he right in sembláble cas  
 Of Belus, which his fader was  
 Fro Nembroth in the righté line,  
 Let make of gold and stonés fine  
 A precíous ymáge riche  
 After his fader evenliche,  
 And therupon a law he sette  
 That every man of puré dette  
 With sacrifice and with truáge  
 Honouré shuldé thilk ymáge,  
 So that withinné time it felle  
 Of Belus cam the name of Belle,  
 Of Bel cam Belzebub and so  
 The misbelevé wenté tho.

“The thrid ymáge next to this  
 Was whan the king of Grece, Apis,  
 Was dede, they maden a figúre

<sup>1</sup> Make obeisance to.

In resemblaunce of his statúre.  
 Of this king Apis saith the boke,  
 That Serapis his namé toke,  
 In whom through long continuaunce  
 Of misbeleve a great creaunce  
 They hadden and the reverence  
 Of sacrifice and of encence  
 To him they made. And as they  
 telle

Among the wonders that befelle,  
 Whan Alisaundre fro Candace  
 Cam ridend in a wildé place  
 Under an hille a cave he fonde,  
 And Candalus, whiche in that lond  
 Was bore and was Candaces sone,  
 Him told, how that of comun wone  
 The goddés were in thilké cave.  
 And he that wolde assay and have  
 A knouelching if it be soth,  
 Light of his hors and in he goth  
 And fond therinné that he sought.  
 For through the fendés sleight him  
 thought

Amongés other goddés mo  
 That Sérapis spake to him tho,  
 Whom he sigh there in great array.  
 And thus the fend fro day to day  
 The worship of ydolatrie  
 Drough forth upon the fantasie  
 Of hem that weren thanné blinde  
 And couthen nought the trouthé  
 finde.

Thus hast thou herd in what degre  
 Of Grece, and Egipte and Caldee  
 The misbelevés whilom stood,  
 And how so that they be nought  
 good

Ne trewé, yet they sprongen oute,  
 Wherof the widé worlde aboute  
 His parte of misbelevé toke.  
 Til so befelle, as saith the boke,  
 That God a people for him selve  
 Hath chose of the lignáges twelve,  
 Wherof the sothé redely,  
 As it is write in Genesy,

I thinké telle in suche a wise,  
That it shall be to thin apprise.

“**After the flood**, fro which Noë  
Was sauf, the worlde in his degré  
Was made as who saith new ayein  
Of flour, of fruit, of gras, of grein,  
Of beest, of brid and of mankinde,  
Whiche ever hath be to God unkinde.  
For nought withstanding all the fare  
Of that this world was made so bare,  
And afterward it was restored,  
Among the men was nothing more<sup>1</sup>  
Towardés God of good living,  
But all was tornéd to liking  
After the flessch, so that foryete  
Was he which yaf hem life and mete,  
Of heven and erthé créatour.  
And thus cam forth the great error,  
That they the highé God ne knewe,  
But maden other goddés newe,  
As thou hast herd me said to-fore.  
There was no man that timé bore,  
That he ne had after his choise  
A god to whom he yaf his voise,  
Wherof the misbelevéd cam  
Into the time of Abraham.  
But he found out the righté wey,  
Howe only men shulden obey  
The highé God, which weldeth all  
And ever hath done and ever shall  
In heven, in erth and eke in helle,  
There is no tunge his might may telle.  
This patriarch to his lignage  
Forbad that they to none ymage  
Encliné sholden in no wise,  
But her offrende and sacrificise  
With all the holé hertés love  
Unto the mighty God above  
They shuldé yive and to no mo.  
And thus in thilké timé tho  
Began that sect upon this erthe,  
Whiche of belevés was the ferthe.  
Of rightwisenesse it was conceived,  
So must it nedés be received

<sup>1</sup> *Mored*, increased.

Of him that alle right is inne,  
The highé God, which woldé winne  
A people unto his owné feith.  
On Abraham the ground he laith  
And made him for to multiply  
Into so great a progeny,  
That they Egipte all over spradde.  
But Pharaö with wrong hem ladde  
In servitude ayein the pees,  
Til God let sendé Moises  
To maké the deliveraunce.  
And for his people great vengeaunce  
He toke, which is to here a wonder.  
The king was slain, the lond put  
under,

God bad the Reddé See divide,  
Which stood upright on every side  
And yaf unto his people a wey  
That they on foot it passéd drey  
And gone so forth into désért,  
Where for to kepe hem in covert  
The daiés whan the sonné brent  
A largé cloude hem over went,  
And for to wissen hem by night  
A firy piller hem alight.  
And whan that they for hunger  
pleigne,

The mighty God began to reine  
Manna fro heven down to grounde,  
Wherof that eche of hem hath founde  
His foodé such right as him list.  
And for they shuld upon him trist  
Right as who set a tonne abroche  
He percedé the hardé roche  
And spronge out water all at wille,  
That man and beste hath dronk his  
fille.

And afterward he yaf the lawe  
To Moises, that hem withdrawe  
They shuldé nought fro that he bad.  
And in this wisé they be lad,  
Til they toke in possessiön  
The londés of promissiön,  
Where that Caleph and Josué  
The marches upon such degré

Departen<sup>1</sup> after the lignage  
 That eche of hem as heritage  
 His purparty<sup>2</sup> hath underfonge.  
 And thus stood this belevé longe,  
 Whiche of prophétés was govérned.  
 And they had eke the people lerned  
 Of great honouér that shuld hem  
 falle,

But atté mosté nede of alle  
 They faileden, whan Crist was bore.  
 But how that they her feith have lore  
 It nedeth nought to tellen all,  
 The matere is so generall.

“Whan Lucifer was best in heven  
 And oughté most have stonde in  
 even,

Towards God he toke debate,  
 And for that he was obstinate  
 And woldé nought to trouth encline  
 He fel for ever into rufne.

“And Adam eke in Paradis,  
 Whan he stood most in all his pris  
 After the state of innocence,  
 Ayein the God brake his defence<sup>3</sup>  
 And fell out of his place away.

And right by such a maner wey  
 The Jewés in her besté plite,  
 Whan that they sholden most parfite  
 Have stonde upon the prophecý,  
 Tho fellen they to most folý

And him which was fro heven come  
 And of a maid his flessch hath nome  
 And was among hem bore and fed,  
 As men that wolden nought be sped  
 Of Goddés Soné, with o vois  
 They heng and slough upon the  
 crois,

Wherof the parfite of her lawe  
 Fro thenné forth hem was with-  
 drawe,

So that they stonde of no mérit,  
 But in a truage<sup>4</sup> as folk subgt

<sup>1</sup> *Departen*, divide.

<sup>2</sup> *Purparty*, share.

<sup>3</sup> *His defence*, his prohibition (that which was “defendu”).

<sup>4</sup> *Truage*, homage.

Withouté propreté of place  
 They liven oute of Goddés grace,  
 Dispers in allé londés oute.  
 And thus the feith is come aboute,  
 That whilome in the Jewés stood,  
 Whiche is nought parfitché good.  
 To speke as it is now befallé  
 There is a feith aboven alle,  
 In which the trouthe is compre-  
 hended,

Wherof that we ben all amended.

“The high almighty magesté  
 Of rightwisnesse and of pité  
 The sinné which that Adam wrought,  
 Whan he sigh time, ayein he bought  
 And send His Sone fro the heven  
 To setté mannés soule in even,  
 Which thanné was so soré fall  
 Upon the point which was befall  
 That he ne might him self arise.

“*Gregoire saith* in his apprise:  
 It helpeth nought a man be bore,  
 If Goddés Soné were unbore,  
 For thanné through the firsté sinne,  
 Which Adam whilom brought us  
 inne,

There shulden allé men be lost;  
 But Crist restoreth thilké lost  
 And bought it with his flesshe and  
 blood.

And if we thenken how it stood  
 Of thilké raunson which he paid,  
 As saint Gregoire it wrote and said,  
 All was behovely to the man.  
 For that wherof his wo began  
 Was after cause of all his welth,  
 Whan he which is the welle of  
 helth,

The highé creatoúr of life,  
 Upon the nede of such a strife  
 So wolde he for his creäture  
 Take on him self the forfeitüre  
 And suffre for the mannés sake.  
 Thus may no reson wel forsake<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Forsake*, deny.

That ilké sinne original  
 Ne was the cause in speciall  
 Of mannés worship atté last  
 Which shall withouten endé last.  
 For by that causé the godhede  
 Assembled was to the manhede  
 In the Virginé, where he nome  
 Our flesshe and verray man become  
 Of bodély fraternité,  
 Wherof the man in his degré  
 Stant moré worth, as I have told,  
 Than he stood erst by many fold,  
 Through baptisme of the newélawe,  
 Of which Crist lord is and feláwe.  
 And thus the Highé Goddés might,  
 Which was in the Virgine alight,  
 The mannés soule has reconciled,  
 Which haddé longé ben exiled.  
 So stant the feith upon beleve  
 Withouté which may non acheve.  
 But this beleve is so certain  
 To biggé<sup>1</sup> mannés soule ayein,  
 So full of grace and of vertu,  
 That what man clepeth<sup>2</sup> to Jesú  
 In clené life forth with goode dede,  
 He may nought faile of Heven mede  
 Which taken hath the righté feith.  
 For ellés, as the gospel saith,  
 Salvaciön there may be none.  
 And for to preché therupon  
 Crist bad to his apostles alle,  
 The whos powér as now is falle  
 On us that ben of holy chirche,  
 If we the godé dedés werche ;  
 For feith only sufficeth nought  
 But if good dede also be wrought.

“Now were it good, that thou  
 forthý,

Which through baptismé proprely  
 Art unto Cristés feith professed,  
 Beware that thou be nought op-  
 pressed

With anticristés Lollarðie.  
 For as the Jewés prophécie

<sup>1</sup> *Bigge*, buy.

<sup>2</sup> Whatever man calls.

Was set of God for avautáge,  
 Right so this newé tapinage<sup>1</sup>  
 Of Lollarðié goth aboute  
 To setté Cristés feith in doubté.  
 The saints that weren us to-fore,  
 By whom the feith was first up bore  
 That holy thirché stood releved,  
 They oughten better be beleved  
 Than thesé whiché that men knowe  
 Nought holy, though they feigne  
 and blowe

Her Lollardy in mennés ere.  
 But if thou wolt live out of fere  
 Such newé lore I rede escheue,  
 And hold forth right the wey and sue  
 As thin auncéstrés did er this,  
 So shalt thou nought beleve amis.  
 Crist wroughté first and after taught  
 So that the dede his word araught,  
 He yaf ensample in his persóné  
 And we tho wordés have alone,  
 Like to the tree with levés grene  
 Upon the which no fruit is sene.

“The prest Thoas, which of  
 Minerve

The temple haddé for to serve  
 And the Palladion of Troy  
 Kept under keié, for monaie  
 Of Anthenor whiche he hath nome  
 Hath suffred Anthenor to come  
 And the Palladion to stele,  
 Wherof the worship and the wele  
 Of the Troiáns was overthrowe.  
 But Thoas atté samé throwe,  
 Whan Anthenor this jeuele toke,  
 Winkendé cast away his loke  
 For a deceipté and for a wile,  
 As he that shuld him self beguile  
 He hid his eyen fro the sight  
 And wendé wel that he so might  
 Excuse his falsé consciënce.  
 I wot nought if thilke evidence  
 Now at this time in her estates  
 Excusé mighté the prelates,

<sup>1</sup> *Tapinage*, secret skulking.



Knowend how that the feith dis-  
creseth

And allé morál vertu ceseth  
Wherof that they the keiés bere.  
But yet hem liketh nought to stere  
Her gostlich eyé for to se  
The worlde in his adversité ;  
They wol no laboure undertake  
To kepé that hem is betake.<sup>1</sup>  
Crist deidé him self for the feith,  
But now our ferful prelate saith ;  
'The life is swete,' and that he  
kepeth

So that the feith unholpé slepeth,  
And they unto her ese entenden  
And in her lust her life despenden,  
And every man doth what him list.  
Thus stant this world fulfilled of  
mist,

That no man seeth the righté wey.  
The wardés of the churché key  
Through mishandlingé ben mis-  
wreint,<sup>2</sup>

The worldés wawe<sup>3</sup> hath welnigh  
dreint

The ship which Peter hath to stere,  
The forme is kept, but the matere  
Transforméd is in other wise.

But if they weren gostly wise  
And that the prelats weren good,  
As they by oldé daiés stood,  
It weré thanné litel nede  
Among the men to taken hede  
Of that they heren Pseudo<sup>4</sup> telle,  
Which now is comé for to dwelle  
To sowé cockel with the corn  
So that the tilthe is nigh forlorn,  
Which Crist sew first his owné hond.  
Now stant the cockel in the lond,  
Where stood whilom the godé  
greine,

For the prelats now, as men saín,

<sup>1</sup> *Betake*, entrusted.

<sup>2</sup> *Miswreint*, wrenched out of shape.

<sup>3</sup> *Wawe*, wave.      <sup>4</sup> *Pseudo*, false.

Forslouthen<sup>1</sup> that theysholden tille.  
And that I trowé be the skille<sup>2</sup>  
Whan there is lacke in hem above,  
The people is straungéd to the love  
Of trouth in cause of ignoraunce.  
For where there is no purveaunce  
Of light, men erren in the derke.  
But if the prelats wolden werke  
Upon the feith which they us teche,  
Men sholden nought her waié seche  
Withouté light as now is used ;  
Men se the charge all day refused  
Whiche holy chirche hath under-  
take.

But who that wolde ensample  
take,

Gregoire upon his Omelie  
Ayein the Slouthé of Prelacie  
Compleigneth him and thus he saith :  
'Whan Peter, fader of the feith,  
At domésday shall with him bring  
Judeam, which through his preching  
He wan, and Andrew with Achay  
Shall come his detté for to pay,  
And Thomas eke with his beyete  
Of Ynde, and Paul the routés grete  
Of sondry londés to present,  
And we fulfilled of londe and rent  
Whiche of this worlde we holden  
here,

With voidé hondés shall appere,  
Touchend our curé spirituall  
Whiche is our charge in speciall,  
I not what thing it may amounte  
Upon thilke ende of our accompte  
Where Crist him self is auditour,  
Which taketh none hede of vein  
honour.

Thoffice of the chauncéllerie  
Or of the kingés tresorie  
Ne for ne write ne for ne taile<sup>3</sup>  
To warrant may nought than availe.

<sup>1</sup> *Forslouthen*, waste by their slouth.

<sup>2</sup> *Skille*, reason.

<sup>3</sup> *Taile*, tally, used for checking of accounts.

The world which now so wel we trow  
 Shall make us thanné but a mowe,  
 So passé we withouté mede,  
 That we none otherwisé spede  
 But as we redé that he spedde,  
 Thewhiche his lordés besant<sup>1</sup> hadde  
 And therupon gat none encres.  
 But at his timé nethéles  
 What other man his thank deserve  
 The world so lusty is to serve  
 That we with him ben all accorded,  
 And that is wist and well recorded  
 Through out this erthe in allé londes;  
 Let knightés winné with her hondes,  
 For ouré tungé shall be still  
 And stande upon the flesshés will;  
 It were a travail for to preche  
 The feith of Crist, as for to teche  
 The folké painim; it woll nought be:  
 But every prelate holde his see  
 With allé such as he may gete  
 Of lusty drinke and lusty mete,  
 Wherof the body fat and full  
 Is unto gostly labour dull  
 And slough to handle thilké plough.  
 But ellés we ben swifte inough  
 Toward the worldés Avarice.  
 And that is as a sacrifice,  
 Which after that tha postle saith  
 Is openly ayein the feith  
 Unto the ydols yove and graunted,  
 But netheles as it is now haunted  
 And vertue chaungéd into vice,  
 So that Largesse is Avarice,  
 In whose chapitre now we trete.”—

“My fader, this matere is bete  
 So far, that ever while I live  
 I shall the better hedé yive  
 Unto my self by many wey.  
 But over this now wolde I prey  
 To wité, what the braunches are  
 Of Avarice, and how they fare  
 Als well in love as othérwise.”—

“My sone, and I the shall devise

<sup>1</sup> *Besant*, a gold coin of Byzantium; talent.

In suche a maner as they stonde,  
 So that thou shalt hem understonde.

“**Dame Avarice** is nought so-  
 leine,<sup>1</sup>

Which is of gold the capiteine.  
 But of her Courte in sondry wise  
 After the scole of her apprise  
 She hath of servaunts many one,  
 Wherof that Covetise is one,  
 Which gôth the largé worlde about  
 To seché thavauntáges out  
 Where that he may the profit winne  
 To Avarice and bringeth it inne.  
 That one halt and that other draweth,  
 There is no day which hem be-  
 daweth<sup>2</sup>

No more the sonné than the mone,  
 Whan there is any thing to done,  
 And namély with Covetise,  
 For he stant out of all assise  
 Of resonáble mannes fare  
 Where he purpóseth him to fare  
 Upon his lucre and his beyete.  
 The smallé path, the largé strete,  
 The furlonge and the longé mîle,  
 All is but one for thilké while.  
 And for that he is such one holde,  
 Dame Avarice him hath witholde,<sup>3</sup>  
 As he which is the principall  
 Outward,<sup>4</sup> for he is over all  
 A purveioür and an espy.  
 For right as of an hungry py  
 The storvé bestés ben awaited,  
 Right so is Covetise affaited  
 To loké where he may purchase,<sup>5</sup>  
 For by his will he wolde embrace  
 All that this widé world beclippeth.  
 But ever he somewhat overhippeth<sup>6</sup>  
 That he ne may nought all fulfille  
 The lustés of his gredy wille.  
 But where it falleth in a londe,

<sup>1</sup> *Soleine*, single.

<sup>2</sup> *Bedaweth*, awakes.

<sup>3</sup> *Witholde*, held with.

<sup>4</sup> *Outward*, watcher outside.

<sup>5</sup> *Purchase*, get booty.

<sup>6</sup> *Overhippeth*, hops over.

That Covetise in mighty honde  
Is set, it is full hard to fede.  
For than he taketh none other hede  
But that he may purcháce and gete,  
His consciéce hath all foryete  
And nought what thing it may  
amounte

That he shall afterwarde accompte.  
But as the luce<sup>1</sup> in his degre  
Of tho that lassé ben than he  
The fishes greedily devoureth,  
So that no water hem soccoureth,  
Right so no lawé may rescowe  
Fro him that woll no right allowe.  
For where that such one is of might,  
His will shall stonde in stede of right.  
Thus be the men destruied full ofte,  
Till that the greté God alofte  
Ayein so great a Covetise  
Redresse it in his owné wise.  
And in ensample of allé tho  
I finde a talé writé so,  
The which for it is good to lere  
Herafterward thou shalt it here.

“**Whan Rome stood** in noble  
plite,

Virgilé, which was tho parfite,  
A Mirroure made of his clergie<sup>2</sup>  
And sette it in the townés eye  
Of marbre on a pillér without,  
That they by thritty mile about  
By day and eke also by night  
In that Mirroure beholdé might  
Her ennemies, if any were,  
With all her ordenauncé there  
Which they ayein the citee cast.  
So that while thilké Mirroure last,  
Ther was no lond which might  
acheve

With werré Romé for to greve,  
Wherof was great envié tho.  
And fell that ilké timé so,  
That Romé haddé werrés stronge  
Ayein Cartáge, and stoden longe

<sup>1</sup> Luce, pike.

<sup>2</sup> By his learning.

The two citees upon debate.  
Cartagé sigh the strong estate  
Of Rome in thilké mirroure stonde,  
And thought all prively to fonde  
To overthrowe it by some wile.  
And Hanibal was thilké while  
The prince and leader of Cartáge,  
Which haddé set all his coráge  
Upon knighthode in such a wise  
That he by worthy and by wise  
And by none other was counseiled,  
Wherof the world is yet merveiled  
Of the maistriés that he wrought  
Upon the marches which he sought.  
And fell in thilké time also,  
The kinge of Puilé, which was tho,  
Thought ayein Romé to rebelle,  
And thus was také the quarelle,  
How to destruie the Mirroure.  
Of Romé tho was emperour  
Crassus, which was so covetous,  
That he was ever desirous,  
Of gold to geté the pilage,  
Wherof that Puile and eke Cartage  
With philosóphres wise and great  
Beginne of this matere to treat.  
And atté last in this degre  
There weren philosóphres thre  
To do this thing whiche undertoke;  
And therupon they with hem toke  
A great tresúre of gold in cofres  
To Rome, and thus these philo-  
sóphres  
To-gider in compaignie went,  
But no man wisté what they ment.  
Whan they to Romé comé were,  
So prively they dwelté there  
As they that thoughten to deceive;  
Was none that might of hem per-  
ceive  
Till they in sondry stedés have  
Her gold under the erth begrave  
In two tresórs that to beholde  
They sholden seme as they were  
olde.

And so forth than upon a day  
 All openly in good array  
 To themperour they hem present  
 And tolden it was her entent  
 To dwellen under his servise ;  
 And he hem axeth in what wise,  
 And they him told in such a plite<sup>1</sup>  
 That eche of hem had a spirite  
 The which slepénd anight appereth  
 And hem by sondry dremés lereth  
 After the world that hath betid,  
 Under the grounde if ought be hid  
 Of old tresór at any throwe,  
 They shall it in her swevenes<sup>2</sup>  
 knowe.

And upon this conditió  
 Theysain, what gold under the town  
 Of Rome is hid, they woll it finde,  
 There shuldé nought beleft behinde  
 Be so that he the halvé dele  
 Hem graunt, and he assenteth wele.  
 And thus cam Sleighté for to dwelle  
 With Covetise as I the telle.  
 This emperour had redély,  
 That they be logéd faste by,  
 Where he his owné body lay.  
 And when it was at morwe day,  
 That one of hem saith that he mette<sup>3</sup>  
 Where he a gold hord shuldé fette,  
 Wherof this emperour was glad.  
 And therupon anone he bad  
 His minours for to go and mine,  
 And he him self of that covine  
 Goth forth withall, and at his honde  
 The tresor redy there he fonde  
 Where as they said it shuldé be.  
 And who was thanné glad but he ?

“ Upon that other day secounde  
 They have an other gold hord founde,  
 Which the secondé maister toke  
 Upon his sweven and undertoke.  
 And thus the soth experiéce  
 To themperour yaf such credénce,

<sup>1</sup> *Plite*, promise.    <sup>2</sup> *Swevenes*, dreams.  
<sup>3</sup> *Mette*, dreamed.

That all his trust and all his feith  
 So sikerliche on hem he laith  
 Of that he found him so releved,<sup>1</sup>  
 That they ben parfitly beleved,  
 As though they weré goddés thre.  
 Now herkeneth the subtilite  
 The thriddé maister shuldé mete,  
 Whiche as they saiden was unmete<sup>2</sup>  
 Above hem all, and couthé most,  
 And he withouté noise or bost  
 All privelech, so as he wolde,  
 Upon the morwe his swevenes tolde  
 To themperour right in his ere  
 And said him, that he wiste where  
 A tresor was so plenteóus  
 Of golde and eke so precioús  
 Of jeuellés and of rich stones,  
 That unto all his hors at ones  
 It were a chargé suffisaunt.  
 This lord upon this covenaunt  
 Was glad and axeth where it was :  
 The maister said, under the glas.  
 He tolde him eke as for the mine  
 He wolde ordeigné such engine,  
 That they the werk shulde under-  
 sette

With timber, and withouté lette  
 Men may the tresor saufly delve,  
 So that the Mirroure by him selve  
 Without empeirément shal stonde.  
 All this the maister upon honde  
 Hath undertake in allé wey.  
 This lord, whiche had his wit away  
 And was with Covetisé blent,  
 Anone therto yaf his assent.  
 And thus they miné forth withall,  
 The timber set up over all,  
 Wherof the piller stood upright ;  
 Till it befell upon a night  
 These clerkés, when they weré ware  
 How that the timber only bare  
 The piller where the Mirroure  
 stood,—

<sup>1</sup> *Releved*, enriched, as by reliefs and fines.  
<sup>2</sup> *Unmete*, immeasurably.

Her sleighté no man understood,—  
They go by night unto the mine  
With pitch, with sulphre and rosine,  
And whan the citee was aslepe,  
A wildé fire into the depe  
They cast among the timber werke,  
And so forth while the night was  
derke

Desguiséd in a pouer array  
They passeden the towne er day.  
And whan they come upon an hille,  
They sighen how the Mirroure felle,  
Wherof they madé joy inough,  
And eche of hem with other lough  
And saiden, 'Lo, what Covetise  
May do with hem that be nought  
wise !'

And that was provéd afterwarde,  
For every lond to Romé warde,  
Whiche haddé be subgit to-fore,  
Whan this Mirroure was so forlore  
And they the wonder herdé say,  
Anone begunné disobey  
With werrés upon every side.  
And thus hath Romé lost his pride  
And was defouléd over all.  
For this I finde of Hanibal,  
That he of Romains in a day  
Whan he hem found out of array,  
So great a multitudé slough,  
That of gold ringes which he drough  
Of gentil hondés that ben dede  
Busshellés fullé thre I rede  
He filled, and made a brigge also  
That he might over Tiber go  
Upon the corps that dedé were  
Of the Romains whiche he slough  
there.

"But now to speke of the juise,  
The which after the Covetise  
Was take upon this emperour,  
For he destruíéd the Mirroure,  
It is a wonder for to here.  
The Romains maden a chaiere  
And set her emperour therinne

And saiden, for he woldé winne  
Of gold the superfluité,  
Of golde he shuldé such plenté  
Receivé till he saidé 'ho.'  
And with gold which they haddé tho  
Boilendé hot within a panne,  
Into his mouth they pouré thanne.  
And thus the thirst of gold was  
queint

With gold whiche haddé ben atteint.  
"Wherof, my soné, thou might  
here,

Whan Covetise hath lost the stere  
Of resonáble governaunce,  
There falleth ofté great grevaunce.  
For there may be no worsé thing  
Than Covetise about a king.

If it in his personé be  
It doth the more adversité ;  
And if it in his conseil stonde  
It bringeth all day mischéfe to  
honde

Of comun harme ; and if it growe  
Within his court, it woll be knowe,  
For thanné shall the king be pilled.<sup>1</sup>  
The man, whiche hath his londé  
tilled,

Awaiteth nought more redély  
The hervest, than they gredily  
Nemaken thannéwarde and wacche  
Where they the profit mighten  
cacche.

And yet full oft it falleth so,  
As men may sene among hem tho,  
That he which most coveteth fast  
Hath leest avauntage atté last.  
For whan fortúne is there ayein,  
Though he coveite it is in veine,  
The happés ben nought allé liche,  
One is made pouer, an other riche,  
The court to some it doth profite,  
And some ben ever in o plite.  
And yet they both aliché sore  
Coveité, but fortúne is more

<sup>1</sup> Pilled, fleeced.

Unto that o part favouráble ;  
 And though it be nought resonáble,  
 This thing a man may sene al day,  
 Wherof that I the tellé may  
 After ensample in remembraunce,  
 How every man may take his  
 chaunce

Or of richesse or of pouerte,  
 How so it stonde of the deserte.  
 Here is nought every thing acquit,  
 For oft a man may se this yit  
 That who best doth lest thank shal  
 have ;

It helpeth nought, the world to  
 crave,

Whiche out of reule and of mesúre  
 Hath ever stonde in aventure  
 Als well in court as ellés where ;  
 And how in oldé daiés there  
 It stood so as the thingés felle,  
 I thinke a talé for to telle.

“**In a crouqué** this I rede :

About a kinge as it must nede  
 There was of knightés and squiérs  
 Great route and eke of officérs.  
 Some of long time him haddén served  
 And thoughtén that they have de-  
 served

Avauncément and gone withoute ;  
 And some also ben of the route  
 That comen but a while agone,  
 And they avauncéd were anone.  
 These oldé men upon this thing  
 So as they durst ayein the king  
 Among hem self compleignén ofte.  
 But there is nothing said so softe,  
 That it ne cometh out at last.  
 The king it wist anone als fast  
 As he which was of high prudence.  
 He shope therefor an evidence  
 Of hem that pleignén in that cas,  
 To knowe in whose défaut it was.  
 And all within his owne entent,  
 That no man wisté what it ment  
 Anone he let two cofres make

Of one semblaunce and of o make,  
 So lich that no life thilké throwe<sup>1</sup>  
 That one may fro that other knowe.  
 They were into his chambre  
 brought,

But no man wot why they be  
 wrought.

And nethéles the king hath bede,  
 That they be set in privé stede,  
 As he that was of wisdom sligh.  
 Whan he therto his timé sigh  
 All priveilich, that none it wist,  
 His owné hondés that o kist  
 Of fine golde and of fine perrie,  
 The which out of his tresorie  
 Was take, anone he fildé full,  
 That other cofre of strawe and mull<sup>2</sup>  
 With stonés meind he filde also.  
 Thus be they fullé bothé two.

So that erliche upon a day  
 He bad withinné where he lay  
 There shuldé be to-fore his bedde  
 A borde up set and fairé spredde.  
 And than he let the cofres fet,  
 Upon the borde and did hem set.<sup>3</sup>  
 He knew the namés well of tho,  
 The whiche ayein him grucché so  
 Both of his chambre and of his  
 halle,

Anone and sendé for hem alle  
 And saidé to hem in this wise :  
 ‘There shall no man his hap  
 despise ;  
 I wot well ye have longé served,  
 And God wot what ye have de-  
 served.

But if it is along on me  
 Of that ye unavauncéd be  
 Or ellés it belonge on you,  
 The sothé shall be proved now  
 To stoppé with your evil worde.  
 Lo here two cofres on the borde,

<sup>1</sup> Nobody at that time.

<sup>2</sup> *Mull*, dirt, rubbish.

<sup>3</sup> And caused them to be set upon the board.

Chese whiche you list of bothé two  
 And witeth well, that one of tho  
 Is with tresór so full begon  
 That if ye happé therupon  
 Ye shal be riché men for ever.  
 Now chese and take whiche you is  
 lever.

But be well ware, er that ye take,  
 For of that one I undertake  
 There is no maner good therinne  
 Whereof ye mighten profit winne.  
 Now goth to-gider of one assent  
 And taketh your advisément,  
 For but I you this day avaunce  
 It stant upon your owné chaunce :  
 All only in default of grace  
 So shall be shewed in this place  
 Upon you allé well and fine,  
 That no defaulté shall be mine.'

"They knelen all and with one  
 vois

The king they thonken of this chois.  
 And after that they up arise  
 And gon aside and hem advise  
 And atté lasté they accorde,  
 Wherof her talé to recorde  
 To what issué they be falle  
 A knight shall speké for hem alle.  
 He kneleth down unto the king  
 And saith, that they upon this thing  
 Or for to winne or for to lese  
 Ben all aviséd for to chese.

"Tho toke this knight a yerd on  
 hond

And goth there as the cofres stond  
 And with thassent of everychone  
 He laith his yerde upon one  
 And saith the king how thilké same  
 They chese in reguerdón by name,  
 And preith him that they might it  
 have.

The king, which wold his honour  
 save,

When he hath herd the comun vois  
 Hath graunted hem her owné chois

And toke hem therupon the key.  
 But for he wolde it weré say  
 What good they have as they sup-  
 pose,  
 He bad anone the cofre uncloze,—  
 Which was fulfilled with straw and  
 stones,

Thus be they servéd all at ones.  
 This king than in the samé stede  
 Anone that other cofre undede,  
 Where as they sighen great richesse  
 Wel moré than they couthen gesse.  
 'Lo,' saith the king, 'now may ye se,  
 That there is no defaulte in me,  
 Forthý my self I woll acquite  
 And bereth ye your owné wite<sup>1</sup>  
 Of that fortune hath you refused.'  
 Thus was this wisé king excused,  
 And they lefte of her evil speche  
 And mercy of her king beseche.

"**Gomdele** to this materé like  
 I finde a tale, how Frederike,  
 Of Romé that time emperour,  
 Herde, as he went, a great clamour  
 Of two beggers upon the way,  
 That one of hem began to say :  
 'Ha lord, wel may the man be riche,  
 Whom that a king list for to riche.'  
 That other said : 'No thingé so,  
 But he is riche and well bego,  
 To whom that God wol sendé wel.'  
 And thus they maden wordés fele,  
 Wherof this lord hath hedé nome  
 And did hem bothé for to come  
 To the paleis where he shall ete,  
 And bad ordeigné for her mete  
 Two pastees which he let do make ;  
 A capon in that one was bake,  
 And in that other, for to winne,  
 Of floreins all that may withinne  
 He let do put a great richesse,  
 And even aliche as man may gesse  
 Outward they weré bothé two.  
 This begger was commaunded tho,

<sup>1</sup> *Wite*, blame.

He that which held him to the king,  
 That he first chese upon this thing.  
 Hesigh hem, but he felt hem nought,  
 So that upon his owne thought  
 He chese the capon and forsoke  
 That other, which his felaw toke.  
 But whan he wist how that it ferde,  
 He said aloud, that men it herde :  
 ' Now have I certainly conceived,  
 That he may lightly be deceived  
 That tristeth unto mannes helpe.  
 But wel is him, that God wol helpe,  
 For he stant on the siker side,  
 Whiche ellés shuldé go beside.  
 I se my felaw wel recouer,  
 And I mot dwellé stillé pouer.  
 Thus spake the begger his entent,  
 And pouer he cam and pouer he went,  
 Of that he hath richessé sought  
 His infortúne it woldé nought.  
 So may it shewe in sondry wise  
 Betwene Fortune and Covetise  
 The chaunce is cast upon a dee,  
 But yet full oft a man may see  
 Inough of suché nethéles  
 Which ever put hem self in pres  
 To get hem good, and yet they faile.  
 "And for to speke of this entaile  
 Touchend of Love in thy matere,  
 My godé sone, as thou might here,  
 That right as it with tho men stood  
 Of infortúne of worldés good,  
 As thou hast herd me tell above,  
 Right so full ofte it stant by Love ;  
 Though thou coveite it evermore  
 Thou shalt nought have o dele the  
 more,  
 But only that which the is shape,  
 The remenaunt is but a jape.  
 And nethéles inough of tho  
 There ben that now coveiten so  
 That where as they a woman se,  
 To ten or twelvé though there be,  
 The love is now so unaviséd  
 That where the beauté stant assised

The mannes herte anone is there  
 And rouneth<sup>1</sup> talés in her ere  
 And saith, how that he loveth streite.  
 And thus he set him to coveite,  
 An hundred though he sigh a day,  
 So wolde he moré than he may.  
 So for the greté Covetise  
 Of soty<sup>2</sup> and of fool emprise  
 In eche of hem he fint somewhat,  
 That pleseth him, or this or that :  
 Some one, for she is white of skinne,  
 Some one, for she is noble of kinne,  
 Someone, for she hath a rody cheke,  
 Some one, for that she semeth meke,  
 Some one, for she hath eyen grey,  
 Someone, for she can laugh and pley,  
 Some one, for she is longe and small,  
 Some one, for she is lithe and tall,  
 Some one, for she is pale and bleche,  
 Some one, for she is softe of speche,  
 Some one, for that she is camused,<sup>3</sup>  
 Some one, for she hath nought ben  
 used,  
 Some one, for she can daunce and  
 sing,  
 So that some thing of his liking  
 He fint ; and though no more he  
 fele  
 But that she hath a litel hele,  
 It is inough, that he therfore  
 Her love ; and thus an hundred score,  
 While they be new, he wolde he had,  
 Whom he forsaketh she shall bebad.  
 The blindé man no colour demeth,  
 But all is one right as him semeth ;  
 So hath his lust no jugément  
 Whom Covetise of Lové blent.<sup>4</sup>  
 Him thinketh, to his Covetise,  
 How all the world ne may suffice,  
 For by his will he wolde have all,  
 If that it mighté so befall.  
 So is he comun as the strete,

<sup>1</sup> *Rouneth*, whisper.      <sup>2</sup> *Soty*, folly.

<sup>3</sup> *Camused*, with a curve in the nose.

<sup>4</sup> *Blent*, blinds.



I setté nought of his beyete.  
My sone, hast thou such covetise?<sup>1</sup>—

“Nay fader, such love I despise,  
And while I livé shal don éver,  
For in good feith yet had I lever  
Than to covete in suche a wey  
To ben for ever till I deie  
As pouer as Job and lovéles  
Out taken one, for havéles  
His thonkés<sup>1</sup> is no man alive,  
For that a man shulde all unthrive  
There ought no wisé man covete,  
The lawé was nought set so streite.  
Forthý my self withall to save  
Suche one there is I woldé have  
And none of all this other mo.”—

“My sone, of that thou woldest so,  
I am nought wroth; but over this  
I woll the tellen howe it is.  
For there be men which other wise  
Right only for the covetise  
Of that they seen a woman riche,  
There wol they all her love affiche.  
Nought for the beauté of her face,  
Ne yet for vertu, ne for grace,  
Which she hath ellés right inough,  
But for the parke and for the plough  
And other thing which therto  
longeth,

For in none other wise hem longeth  
To lové but<sup>2</sup> they profit finde.  
And if the profit be behinde,  
Her<sup>3</sup> love is ever lesse and lesse,  
For after that she hath richesse  
Her love is of proportiön.  
If thou hast such condiñiön,  
My soné, tell right as it is.”—

“Min holy fader, nay iwis,  
Condiñiön such have I none.  
For truly fader, I love one  
So well, with all min hertés thought,

<sup>1</sup> *Havéles his thonkes*, wanting possession, with his own good will.

<sup>2</sup> *But*, unless.

<sup>3</sup> *Her* their.

That certés though she haddé  
nought

And were as pouer as Medeá,  
Which was exiléed for Creusá,  
I wolde her nought the lassé love;  
Ne though she were at her above  
As was the riché quene Candace,  
Which to deservé love and grace  
To Alisaundre that was king  
Yaf many a worthy riché thing;  
Or ellés as Pantasilee,  
Which was the quene of Feminee  
And great richessé with her nam  
Whan she for love of Hector cam  
To Troy in rescousse of the town;  
I am of such condiñiön,  
That though my lady of her selve  
Were al so riche as suché twelve,  
I couthe nought though it were so  
No better love her than I do.  
For I love in so pleine<sup>1</sup> a wise,  
That for to speke of Covetise  
As for pouerte or for richesse  
My love is nouthér more ne lesse.  
For in good feith I trowé this,  
So covetous no man there is  
For why and he my lady sigh  
That he through loking of his eye  
Neshuld have such a stroke withinne  
That for no gold he mighté winne  
He shuldé nought her love asterte  
But if he lefté there his herte:  
Be so it weré such a man  
That couthé skille of a womán.  
For there ben men so rudé some  
Whan they among the women come  
They gon under protectiön,  
That love and his affectiön  
Neshal nought take hem by the sleve  
For they ben out of that beleve;  
Hem lusteth of no lady chere,  
But ever thenken there and here  
Where that her golde is in the cofre  
And wol none other lové profer.

<sup>1</sup> *Pleine*, full.

But who sowot what love amounteth  
 And by resón truliche accompteth,  
 Than may he knowe and taken hede  
 That all the lust of womanhede  
 Which may ben in a ladies face  
 My lady hath, and eke of grace,  
 If men shuld yiven her apprise  
 They may wel say how she is wise  
 And sober and simple of coun-  
 tenaunce,

And all that to good governaunce  
 Belongeth of a worthy wight  
 She hath plainly. For thilké night  
 That she was bore as for the nones  
 Natúré set in her at ones  
 Beauté with bounté so besain,  
 That I may well afferme and sain,  
 I sigh yet never creatúre  
 Of comlyhede and of fetúre  
 In any kingés región  
 Be liche her in comparisón.  
 And therto, as I have you tolde,  
 Yet hath she more a thousand folde  
 Of bounté, and shortlý to telle  
 She is the puré hede and welle  
 And mirroure and ensample of good;  
 Who so her vertues understood  
 Me thenketh it ought inough suffise  
 Withouten other Covetise  
 To lové suche one and to serve,  
 Which with her cheré can deserve  
 To be belovéd better iwis  
 Than she par cas that richest is  
 And hath of golde a millión.  
 Suche hath be min opinión  
 And ever shall. But nethéles  
 I say she is nought havéles,<sup>1</sup>  
 That she nis riche and well at ese  
 And hath inough wherwith to plesé  
 Of worldés good whom that her list,  
 But o thing wold I wel ye wist,  
 That never for no worldés good  
 Min hert unto ward hiré stood,  
 But only right for puré love,

<sup>1</sup> *Havéles*, wanting possessions.

That wot the highé God above.  
 Now fader, what say ye therto?"—

"My sone, I say it is wel do.  
 For take of this right good beleve,  
 What man that wol him self releve  
 To love in any other wise  
 He shall wel finde his Covetise  
 Shall soré greve him atté laste,  
 For such a lové may nought laste.  
 But now men sain in ouré daies  
 Men maken but a few assaies  
 But if the causé be richesse,  
 Forthý the love is well the lesse.  
 And who that wold ensamples telle  
 By oldé daiés as they felle,  
 Than might a man wel understonde  
 Such lové may nought longé stonde.  
 Now herken, sone, and thou shalt  
 here

A great ensample of this matere.  
**To frete upon** the cas of love,  
 So as we tolden here above,  
 I findé write a wonder thing.  
 Of Puilé whilom was a king,  
 A man of high complexion  
 And yong, but his affection  
 After the nature of his age  
 Was yet not falle in his coráge  
 The lust of women for to knowe.  
 So it betid upon a throwe,  
 This lord fell into great sikenesse.  
 Phisique hath done the besinesse  
 Of sondry curés many one  
 To make him hole, and therupon  
 A worthy maister which there was,  
 Yaf him conseil upon this cas,  
 That if he wolde have parfite hele,  
 He shuldé with a woman dele.  
 For than he said him redely,  
 That he shal be al hole therby,  
 And other wise he knew no cure.  
 The king, which stood in aventure  
 Of life and deth for medicine,  
 Assented was, and of covine  
 His steward, whom he trusteth well,

He toke and told him every dele,  
 How that this maister haddé said.  
 And therupon he hath him praid  
 And chargéd upon his legeaunce,  
 That he do maké purveaunce  
 And badde him, how that ever it  
 stood,

That he shall sparé for no good,  
 For his will is right well to pay.  
 The steward said, he wolde assay.

“ But now here after thou shalt  
 wite,

As I finde in the bokés write,  
 What Covetise in Lové doth.  
 This steward, for to tellé soth,  
 Amongés all the men alive  
 A lusty lady hath to wive,  
 Which nethéles for gold he toke  
 And nought for love, as saith the  
 boke.

A riché marchaunt of the londe  
 Her fader was, and he her fonde  
 So worthély and such richesse  
 Of worldés good and such largesse  
 With her he yaf in mariáge,  
 That only for thilke avauntáge  
 Of good the steward hath her take,  
 For lucre and nought for lovés sake.  
 And that was afterward wel sene.  
 Nowe herken, what it woldé mene.  
 This steward in his owné hert  
 Sigh that his lord may nought astert  
 His maladië but he have  
 A lusty woman him to save,  
 And tho he woldé yive inough  
 Of his tresor ; wherof he drough  
 Great Covetise into his minde  
 And set his honour fer behinde.  
 Thus he whom gold hath oversette  
 Was trappéd in his owné nette.  
 The gold hath made his wittés lame,  
 So that sechénd his owné shame  
 He rouneth in the kingés ere  
 And said him that he wisté where  
 A gentil and a lusty one

Tho was, and thider wold he gone,  
 But he mote yivé yeftés great,  
 For but it be through great beyete  
 Of gold, he said, he shuld nought  
 spede.

The king him bad upon the nede  
 That take an hundred pound he  
 sholde

And yive it wheré that he wolde,  
 Be so it were in worthy place.

And thus to stonde in lovés gráce  
 This king his gold hath abandóned.  
 And whan this tale was full rouned,  
 The steward toke the gold and went  
 Within his herte and many a went<sup>1</sup>  
 Of covetisé than he caste,

Wherof a purpos atté laste  
 Ayein love and ayein his right  
 He toke and saide, how thilké night  
 His wife shall liggé by the king.

And goth thenkénd upon this thing  
 Toward his inn till he cam home  
 Into the chambre, and than he nome  
 His wife and tolde her al the cas.  
 And she, which red for shamé was,  
 With bothe her hondés hath him  
 praid

Knelénd and in this wise said,  
 That she to reson and to skill  
 In what thing that he biddé will  
 Is redy for to done his heste  
 But<sup>2</sup> this thing that were nought  
 honéste,

That he for gold her shuldé selle.  
 And he tho with his wordés felle  
 Forth with his gastly countenaunce  
 Saith, that she shall done obeisaunce  
 And folwe his wille in every place.  
 And thus through strength of his  
 manáce

Her innocéce is overladdé,  
 Wherof she was so sore adradde,  
 That she his will mot nede obey.  
 And therupon was shape a wey.

<sup>1</sup> Went, turn.

<sup>2</sup> But, except.

When it was nigh upon the day  
The steward thanné where she lay  
Cam to the bed and in this wise  
Hath biddé that she shulde arise.  
The king saith: 'Nay, she shall  
nought go.'

The steward said ayein: 'Noughtso,  
For she mot gone er it be knowe,  
And so I swore at thilké throwe,  
Whan I her fetté to you here.'

The king his talé wol nought here  
And saith how that he hath her  
bought

Forthý she shall departé nought,  
But who she was he knew nothing.  
Tho cam the steward to the king  
And praid him that withouté shame  
In saving of her godé name

He mighté leaden home ayeine  
This lady, and hath told him pleine  
How that it was his owné wife.

The king his ere unto this strife  
Hath leid, and whan that he it herde,  
Well nigh out of his wit he ferde  
And said: 'Ha, caitif most of alle,  
Where was it ever er this befallé,  
That any cokard in this wise  
Betoke his wife for covetise.

Thou hast bothe her and me beguiled  
And eke thin own estate reviled,  
Wherof that buxom unto the  
Here after shall she never be.  
For this avow to God I make  
After this day, if I the take,  
Thou shalt be hongéd and to-drawe.  
Now loke anone thou be withdrawe,  
So that I se the never more!'

This steward thanné drad him sore,  
With all the hasté that he may  
And fled away the samé day,  
And was exilé out of lond.

Lo, there a nicé husébond,  
Which thus hath loste his wife for  
ever.

But nethéles she hadde a lever;

The king her weddeth and honou-  
eth,

Wherof her namé she soçcoureth,  
Which erst was lost through covetise  
Of him that lad her other wise  
And hath him self also forlore.

"My soné, be thou ware therfore,  
Where thou shalt love in any place,  
That thou no Covetise embrace,  
The which is nought of Lovés kinde.  
But for all that a man may finde  
Now in this time of thilké rage  
Full great disese in mariáge,  
Whan venim medleth with the sucre  
And mariáge is made for lucre  
Or for the lust or for the hele,  
What man that shall with other dele  
He may nought failé to repent."—

"My fader, such is min entent.  
But nethéles good is to have,  
For good may ofté timé save  
The lové which shulde ellés spille.  
But God which wot min hertes wille  
I dar wel také to witnésse,  
Yet was I never for richesse  
Beset with mariáge none,  
For all min herte is upon one  
So frely that in the persone  
Stant all my worldés joy alone.  
I axé nouthér park ne plough,  
If I her hadde, it were inough,  
Her lové shuldé me suffise  
Withouten other Covetise.

Lo now, my fader, as of this  
Touchend of me right as it is  
My shrifte I am beknowé plain,  
And if ye wol ought elles sain  
Of Covetise if there be more  
In Love, agropeth out the sore.

**My soné,** thou shalt under-  
sonde,

How Covetise hath yet on honde  
In speciáll two counseilors,  
That ben also his prócurors.  
The first of hem is Fals Witnesse,

Which ever is redy to wnesse  
 What thing his maister woll him  
 hote.<sup>1</sup>

Perjúrie is the second hote,<sup>2</sup>  
 Which spareth nought to swere an  
 othe

Though it be fals and God be  
 wrothe,

That oné shall fals wnesse bere,  
 That other shall the thing forswere  
 When he is chargéd on the boke.  
 So what with hoke and what with  
 croke

They make her maister ofte winne  
 And woll nought knowé what is sinne  
 For Covetise, and thus men sain  
 They maken many a fals bargaín.  
 There may no trewé quarel arise  
 In thilké queste of thilke assise  
 Where as they two the people en-  
 forme.

For they kepe ever o<sup>3</sup> maner forme,  
 That upon golde her <sup>4</sup> consciéce  
 They founde and take her evidéce.  
 And thus with Fals Wnesse and  
 othes

They winne hem meté, drink and  
 clothes.

Right so there be, who that hem  
 knewe,

Of these lovérs ful many untrewé.  
 Now may a woman finde inow,  
 That eche of hem whan he shall  
 wowe

Anone he woll his hand down lain  
 Upon a boke and swere and sain  
 That he woll feith and trouthé bere.  
 And thus he profreth him to swere  
 To serven ever till he deie,  
 And all is verray trechery.

For whan the soth him selven trieth,  
 The more he swereth the more he  
 lieth,

<sup>1</sup> *Hote*, command.  
<sup>3</sup> *O*, one.

<sup>2</sup> *Hote*, called.  
<sup>4</sup> *Her*, their.

Whan he his feith maketh allther-  
 mest,<sup>1</sup>

Than may a woman trust him lest,  
 For till he may his will acheve,  
 He is no lenger for to leve.

Thus is the trouth of love exiled,  
 And many a good womán beguiled.

“And eke to speke of Fals Wit-  
 nesse

There be now many such I gesse,  
 That lich unto the provisoúrs  
 They make her privé procuroúrs  
 To tell how there is such man,  
 Which is worthy to love and can  
 All that a good man shuldé conne,  
 So that with lesing is begonne  
 The cause, in which they woll  
 procede.

And al so siker as the Crede  
 They make of that they knowen fals,  
 And thus full oft about the hals<sup>2</sup>  
 Love is of falsé men embraced.  
 But lové which is so purcháced,  
 Cometh afterward to litel prise.  
 Forthý, my sone, if thou be wise,  
 Now thou hast herd this evidéce,  
 Thou might thin owné consciéce  
 Oppose, if thou hast be such one.”—

“Nay God wot, fader, I am none  
 Ne never was, for, as men saith,  
 Whan that a man shall make his feith  
 His hert and tungé must accorde.  
 For if so be that they discorde  
 Than he is fals, and ellés nought,  
 And I dare say as of my thought  
 In love it is nought discordáble  
 Unto my word, but accordáble.  
 And in this wisé, fader, I  
 May righté well swere and sauflý,  
 That I my lady lové well,  
 For that accordeth every dele ;  
 It nedeth nought to my soth sawe  
 That I wnesse shuldé drawe

<sup>1</sup> *Allthermost*, most of all.  
<sup>2</sup> *Hals*, neck.

Into this day, for ever yit  
 Ne might it sinke into my wit  
 That I my counseil shouldé say  
 To any wight or me bewrey<sup>1</sup>  
 To sechen helpe in such manere,  
 But onely for my lady dere.  
 And thougha thousand men it wiste  
 That I her love, and than hem liste  
 With me to swere and to witnésse,  
 Yet weré that no fals witnésse.  
 For I dare unto this trouth dwelle,  
 I love her more than I can telle.  
 Thus am I, fader, giltéles,  
 As ye have herde, and nethéles  
 In youré dome I put it all.”—

“My soné, wite in speciall  
 It shall nought comunliché faile,  
 All though it for a time availle  
 That Fals Witnessé his causé spede  
 Upon the point of his falschede ;  
 It shall well afterward be kid,  
 Wherof so as it is betid  
 Ensamplé of such thingés blinde  
 In a croniqué write I finde.

**The goddesse of the see** Thetis,  
 She had a sone, and his name is  
 Achilles, whom to kepe and warde,  
 While he was yonge, and into warde  
 She thought him sauffy to betake  
 As she which draddé for his sake  
 Of that was said of prophécie,  
 That he at Troié sholdé deie  
 Whan that the citee was belein.  
 Forthý so as the bokés sain,  
 She cast her wit in sondry wise,  
 How she him mighté so disguise  
 That no man shuld his body knowe.  
 And so befell that ilké throwe  
 While that she thought upon this  
 dede,

There was a king, which Lichomede  
 Was hote, and he was well begone  
 With fairé daughters many one  
 And dwelté fer out in an ile.

<sup>1</sup> *Me bewrey*, disclose myself.

Now shalt thou here a wonder wile.  
 This quené which the mother was  
 Of Áchillés, upon this cas  
 Her sone as he a maiden were  
 Let clothen in the samé gere,  
 Which longeth unto womanhede.  
 And he was yonge and toke none  
 hede

But suffreth all that she him dede,  
 Wherof she hath her women bede  
 And chargeth by her othés alle,  
 How so it afterward befalle,  
 That they discover nought this thing,  
 But feigne and make a knouleching  
 Upon the counseil which was nome,  
 In every placé where they come  
 To telle and to witnésse this,  
 Howe he her ladies doughter is.  
 And right in such a maner wise  
 She bad they shuld her don servíse,  
 So that Achilles underfongeth  
 As to a yong lady belongeth  
 Honoúr, servíce and reverence.  
 For Thetis with great diligence  
 Him hath so taught and so affaited  
 That, how so that he were awaited,  
 With sobre and goodly contenance  
 He shuld his womanhede avaunce  
 That none the sothé knowé might,  
 But that in every mannés sight  
 He shuldé seme a puré maide.  
 And in such wise as she him said  
 Achilles, which that ilké while  
 Was yonge, upon him selfe to smile  
 Began, whan he was so besein.  
 And thus after the bokés sain  
 With frette of perle upon his hede  
 All fressshé betwene white and red,  
 As he which tho was tender of age,  
 Stood the colóur in his viságe,  
 That for to loke upon his cheke  
 And seen his childly maner eke  
 He was a woman to beholde.  
 And than his moder to him tolde,  
 That she him haddé so begone

By causé that she thoughté gone  
 To Lichomede at thilké tide,  
 Where that she said, he shulde abide  
 Amonge his daughters for to dwelle.  
 Achilles herd his moder telle  
 And wisté nought the causé why.  
 And nethéles full buxomly  
 He was redy to that she bad,  
 Wherof his moder was right glad.  
 To Lichomede and forth they went,  
 And whan the king knewe her entent  
 And sigh this yongé daughter there,  
 And that it came unto his ere  
 Of such recórd, of such witesse,  
 He haddé right a great gladnése  
 Of that he bothé sigh and herde,  
 As he that wot nought how it ferde  
 Upon the conseil of the nede.  
 But for all that king Lichomede  
 Hath toward him his daughter take  
 And for Thetís his moder sake  
 He put her into compaigny  
 To dwellé with Deïdamy,  
 His owné daughter the eldést,  
 The fairest and the comliest  
 Of al his daughters which he had.  
 Lo, thus Thetís the causé lad  
 And lefté there Achilles feigned,  
 Ashe which hath himself restreigned  
 In all that ever he may and can  
 Out of the maner of a man  
 And toke his womanish chere,  
 Wherof unto his beddéfere  
 Deïdamy he hath by night,  
 Where kindé will him selvé right  
 After the philosóphres sain,  
 There may no wight be there ayein.  
 And it befell that ilké throwe  
 At Troié, where the siegé lay  
 Upon the cause of Menelay  
 And of his quené dame Heleine,  
 The Gregois hadden mochel peine  
 All day to fight and to assaile.  
 But for they mighten nought availe  
 So noble a citee for to winne

A privé conseil they beginne  
 In sondry wisé where they treat  
 And atté laste among the great  
 They fellen unto this accorde,  
 That Protheus of his recorde,  
 Which was an astronomien  
 And eke a great magicien,  
 Shulde of his calculatió  
 Sechen of constellatió  
 How they the citee mighten gette;  
 And he, which haddé nought foryete  
 Of that belongeth to a clerke,  
 His study set upon this werke.  
 So longe his wit about he caste,  
 Till that he founde out atté laste,  
 But if they hadden Achilles  
 Her werré shall ben endéles.  
 And over that he tolde hem pleine  
 In what manér he was beseine  
 And in what place he shall be founde;  
 So that within a litel stounde<sup>1</sup>  
 Ulixes forth with Diomede  
 Upon this point to Lichomede  
 Agámenon to-gider sente,  
 But Ulixes, er he forth wente,  
 Which was one of the mosté wise  
 Ordeinéde hath in such a wise,  
 That he the mosté riche array  
 Wherof a woman may be gay  
 With him he toké manifolde;  
 And overmore, as it is tolde,  
 An harneis for a lusty knight,  
 Which burnéd was as silver bright,  
 Of swerde, of plate, and eke of maile,  
 As though he shuldé do bataile,  
 He toke also with him by ship.  
 And thus to-gider in felaship  
 Forth gone this Diomede and he  
 In hopé till they mighten se  
 The placé where Achilles is,  
 The wind stood thannénought amis,  
 But every topsailecole<sup>2</sup> it blewe,  
 Till Ulixés the marches knewe,

<sup>1</sup> *Stounde*, interval of time, hour.

<sup>2</sup> *Topsailecole*. *Cole*, in Godefroy's *Dictionnaire de l'Antienne Langue Française*, is an

Where Lichomede his regné had.  
The stirésman so well him lad  
That they ben comen sauf to londe,  
Where they gone out upon the  
stronde

Into the burgh, where that they  
founde  
The king; and he which hath  
facounde,<sup>1</sup>

Ulixes, didé the messáge.  
But the counseile of his coráge,<sup>2</sup>  
Why that he came, he toldé nought,  
But underneath he was bethought  
In what manér he might aspíe  
Achilles fro Deïdamý  
And fro these other that there were,  
Full many a lusty lady there.

"They plaide hem there a day  
or two,

And as it was fortunéd so,  
It fell that time in suche a wise  
To Bachus that a sacrifice  
These yongé ladies shulden make.  
And for the straungé mennés sake  
That comen fro the siege of

Troy,

They maden well the moré joy.  
There was revéll, there was daunc-  
ing,

And every life<sup>3</sup> which couthé sing  
Of lusty women in the route  
A fressh caróll hath song aboute.  
But for all this yet nethéles  
The Grekes unknowe of Achilléus  
So weren, that in no degre  
They couthen wité which was he  
Ne by his vois, ne by his pas.  
Ulixes than upon the cas  
A thing of high prudéce hath  
wrought.

unexplained word illustrated by this passage:  
"Se mistrent en barges, et alerent aux sa-  
landres, et en prisrent les xvii. et l'une echapa,  
qui estoit a la cole."

<sup>1</sup> *Facounde*, eloquence.

<sup>2</sup> *Coráge*, thought in his heart.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, body.

For thilk array which he hath  
brought

To yive among the women there  
He let do fetten<sup>1</sup> all the gere  
Forth, with a knightés harneis eke.  
In all the contré for to seke  
Men sholden nought a fairer se.  
And every thing in his degré  
Endelong upon a bourde he laide.  
To Lichomede and than he preide,  
That every lady chesé sholde  
What thing of allé that she wolde  
And take it as by way of yift,  
For they hem self it shuldé shift  
He saide after her owné wille.  
Achilles thanné stood nought stille,  
Whan he the brighté helm behelde,  
The swerd, the hauberk and the  
shelde,

His herté fell therto anone,  
Of all that other wold he none;  
The knightés gere he underfongeth  
And thilke array which that be-  
longeth

Unto the women he forsoke.  
And in this wise, as saith the boke,  
Theyknowen thanné whiche he was,  
For he goth forth the greté pas  
Into the chambre where he lay,  
Anone and madé no delay,  
He armeth him in knightly wise,  
That better can no man devise.  
And as fortuné shulde falle,  
He came so forth to-fore hem alle  
As he which tho was glad inough.  
But Lichoméde nothing lough<sup>2</sup>  
Whan that he sigh how that it ferde.  
For than he wisté well and herde  
His daughter haddé be forlain.  
But that he was so oversein  
The wonder overgoth his wit.  
For in cronique is writé yit  
Thing which shall never bē foryete,

<sup>1</sup> *Let do fetten*, caused to be fetched.

<sup>2</sup> *Lough*, laughed.



How that Achilles hath begete  
 Pirrús upon Deidamý,  
 Wherof came out the trechery  
 Of Fals Witnessé when he saide  
 How that Achilles was a maide.  
 But that was nothing sené tho,  
 For he is to the siegé go  
 Forth with Ulixes and Diomede.

“Lo, thus was provéd in the dede  
 And fully spoke at thilké while,  
 If o woman an other beguile  
 Where is there any sikernesse,  
 Whan Thetis which was than god-  
 desse

Deidamý hath so bejaped,  
 I not how it shall bene escaped  
 With tho womén whose innocence  
 Is now al day through such credence  
 Deceivéd ofte as it is sene  
 With men that such untrouthé mene.  
 For they ben sligh in suche a wise,  
 That they by sleight and by queintise  
 Of fals witnessé bringen inne  
 That doth hem ofté for to winne  
 Where they ben nought worthy  
 therto.

Forthy, my soné, do nought so.”—

“My fader, as of fals witnessé  
 The trouth and the matere expresse  
 Touchénd of love, howe it hath ferde,  
 As ye have tolde I have well herde.  
 But for ye saiden other wise,  
 How thilké Vice of Covetise  
 Hath yet Perjúrie of his accorde,  
 If that you list of some recorde  
 To tellen an other tale also  
 In Lovés cause of time ago,  
 What thing it is to be forswore,  
 I woldé preié you therfore,  
 Wherof I might ensample take.”—

“**My godé sone**, and for thy  
 sake  
 Touchend of this I shall fulfill  
 Thin axing at thin owné will  
 And the matere I shall declare

How the womén deceived are  
 Whan they so tendre hertés bere  
 Of that they heren men so swere.  
 But whan it cometh unto thassay,  
 They finde it fals another day,  
 As Jason did unto Medee,  
 Which stant yet of auctorité  
 In token and in memoriall,  
 Wherof the tale in speciáll  
 Is in the boke of Troié write,  
 Which I shall do the for to wite.

“In Grecé whilom was a king,  
 Of whom the fame and knoueleching  
 Beleveth<sup>1</sup> yet, and Peleús  
 He highté, but it fell him thus,  
 That his Fortúne her whele so lad,  
 That he no childe his owné had  
 To regnen after his decess.  
 He had a brother nethéles,  
 Whose righté namé was Eson,  
 And he the worthy knight Jason  
 Begat, the which in every londe  
 All other passéd of his honde  
 In armés, so that he the best  
 Was naméd and the worthiest.  
 He soughté worship over all.  
 Now herken, and I tellé shall  
 An adventuré that he sought,  
 Which afterward full dere he bought.

There was an ilé, which Colchós  
 Was clepéd, and therof aros  
 Great speche in every londe aboute,  
 That such merveilé was none oute  
 In all the widé world no where  
 As tho was in that ilé there.  
 There was a shepe, as it was tolde,  
 The which his flees bare all of  
 golde,

And so the goddés had it sette  
 That it ne might away be fette  
 By power of no worldés wight.  
 And yet full many a worthy knight  
 It had assaiéd as they dorste,  
 And ever it fell hem to the worste.

<sup>1</sup> *Beleveth*, remains.

But he that wolde it nought forsake  
 But of his knighthode undertake  
 To do what thing therto belongeth,  
 This worthy Jason, sore alongeth  
 To se the straungé regions  
 And knowé the conditions  
 Of other marches where he went,  
 And for that cause his hole entent  
 He setté Colchos for to seche  
 And therupon he made a speche  
 To Peleús his eme<sup>1</sup> the king.  
 And he wel paid was of that thing  
 And shope anone for his passáge  
 And such as were of his lignáge  
 With other knightés whiche he chees  
 With him he toke, and Hercules  
 Which full was of chiválerie  
 With Jason went in compaignie,  
 And that was in the month of May  
 Whan coldé stormes were away ;  
 The wind was good, the ship was  
 yare,  
 They toke her leve and forth they fare  
 Towárd Colchós. But on the way  
 What hem befelle is long to say,  
 How Lamedon the king of Troy,  
 Which oughté well have made hem  
 joy  
 Whan they to rest a while him preide,  
 Out of his lond he them congeide.  
 And so fell the dissention  
 Whiche after was destruction  
 Of that citee, as men may here.  
 But that is nought to my matere,  
 But thus the worthy folk Gregois  
 Fro that king which was nought  
 curtois  
 And fro his londe with sail updrawe  
 They went hem forth, and many a  
 sawe  
 They made and many a great  
 manáce ;  
 Till atté last into that place  
 Which as they soughté they arrive,

<sup>1</sup> *Eme*, uncle.

And striken sail and forth as blive<sup>1</sup>  
 They sent unto the king and tolden  
 Who weren there and what they  
 wolden.

Oëtés, which was thanné king,  
 Whan that he herdé this tidfng  
 Of Jason which was comen there,  
 And of these other what they were,  
 He thoughté done hem great  
 worshíp.

For they anone come out of ship  
 And straught unto the king they  
 wente

And by the honde Jason he hente,  
 And that was at the paleis gate,  
 So fer the king came on his gate  
 Toward Jason to done him chere.  
 And he, whom lacketh no manere,  
 Whan he the king sigh in presénce  
 Yaf him ayein such reverence  
 As to the kingés state belongeth.  
 And thus the king him under-  
 fongeth

And Jason in his arme he caught  
 And forth into the hall he straught,  
 And there they sit and speke of  
 thinges.

And Jason tolde him tho tidinges  
 Why he was come, and faire him  
 preide

Tohaste his time, and the king saide :

‘ Jason, thou art a worthy knight,  
 But it lieth in no mannés might  
 To done that thou art comé fore.  
 There hath bene many a knight  
 forlore

Of that they wolden it assaie.’

But Jason wolde him nought esmaie  
 And saide : ‘ Of every worldés cure  
 Fortúné stant in aventúre,  
 Paraunter<sup>2</sup> well, paraunter wo.  
 But how as ever that it go,  
 It shall be with min honde assaied.

<sup>1</sup> *As blive*, quickly.

<sup>2</sup> *Paraunter*, peradventure

The king tho helde him nought  
wel paied,

For he the Grekés soré dredde,  
In aunter if Jason ne spedde  
He mighté therof bere a blame,  
For tho was all the worldés fame  
In Grece as for to speke of armes.  
Forthý he drad him of his harmes  
And gan to prechen and to prey.  
But Jason woldé nought obey,  
But said, he wolde his purpos holde  
For ought that any man him tolde.  
Theking whan he these wordés herde  
And sigh how that this knight  
answérde,

Yet for he woldé make him glad,  
After Medea gone he bad,  
Which was his doughter, and she  
cam

And Jason, which good hedé nam,  
Whan he her sigh ayein her goth.  
And she, which was him nothing loth,  
Welcóméd him into that londe  
And softé toke him by the honde  
And down they setten bothé same.<sup>1</sup>  
She had herd spoken of his name  
And of his greté worthinesse,  
Forthý she gan her eye impresse  
Upon his face and his statúre  
And thought, how never creátúre  
Was so welfarend as was he.  
And Jason right in such degré  
Ne mighténought witholdé his loke,  
But so good hede on her he toke  
That him ne thought under the  
heven

Of beauté sigh he never her even  
With all that felle to womanhede.  
Thus eche of other token hede  
Though there no word was of re-  
corde,

Her hertés both of one accorde  
Ben sette to loven, but as tho  
There mighten ben no wordés mo.

<sup>1</sup> *Bothé same*, both together.

The king made him great joy and  
fest,

To all his men he yaf an hest,  
So as they wolde his thank deserve  
That they shulde allé Jason serve  
While that he woldé theré dwelle.  
And thus the day, shortly to telle,  
With many merthés they dispent,  
Till night was come, and tho they  
went ;

Echone of other toke his leve,  
Whan they no lenger mighten leve.<sup>1</sup>  
I not<sup>2</sup> how Jason that night slepe,  
But well I wot, that of the shepe  
For which he cam into that ile  
He thoughté but a litel while ;  
All was Medea that he thought,  
So that in many wise he sought  
His wit, wakénd er it was day,  
Some timé ye, some timé nay,  
Some timé thus, some timé so,  
As he was steréd to and fro  
Of love and eke of his conquest,  
As he was holde of his behest.  
And thus he rose up by the morwe  
And toke him self seint John to  
borwe<sup>3</sup>

And saide, he woldé first beginne  
At love, and after for to winne  
The flees of gold for which he come,  
And thus to him good herte henome.

“Medea right the samé wise  
Till day cam, that she must arise,  
Lay and bethought her all the night  
How she that noble worthy knight  
By any waié mighté wedde.  
And wel she wist, if he ne spedde  
Of thing which he had undertake,  
She might her self no purpose take.  
For if he deiede of his bataile,  
She musté than algaté faile

<sup>1</sup> *Leve*, remain.

<sup>2</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>3</sup> *Seint John to borwe*, St. John for surety, a common way of invoking a saint in the Middle Ages. Jason swore, like a good knight, by St. John.

To geten him, whan he were dede.  
 Thus she began to setté rede  
 And torne about her wittés all  
 To loke how that it mighté fall,  
 That she with him had a leisfr  
 To speke and telle of her desfr.  
 And so it fell the samé day  
 That Jason with that sweté may<sup>1</sup>  
 To-gider set and hadden space  
 To speke, and he besought her  
 grace.

And she his talé goodly herde  
 And afterward she him answérde  
 And saidé: 'Jason, as thou wilt  
 Thou might be sauf, thou might  
 be spilt,

For witté well, that never man,  
 But if he couthé that I can,  
 Ne mighté that fortune acheve,  
 For which thou comest. But as I  
 leve,

If thou wolt holdé covenaut  
 To love of all the remenaunt,  
 I shall thy life and honour save,  
 That thou the flees of gold shalt  
 have.'

He said: 'Al at your owné wille,  
 Madame, I shall trulý fulfille  
 Your hesté, while my life may last.  
 Thus longe he praid and atté last  
 Shegraunteth, and behight him this,  
 That whan night cometh and it  
 time is

She wolde him sendé certainly  
 Such one that shulde him prively  
 Alone into her chambre bringe.  
 He thonketh her of that tidíngé,  
 For of that grace is him begonne  
 Him thinketh al other thingés  
 wonne.

"The day made ende and lost  
 his sight

And comen was the derké night,  
 Whiche all the daiés eyé blent.

<sup>1</sup> *May*, maid.

"Jason toke leve and forth he  
 went,

And whan he cam out of the prees  
 He toke to counseil Hercules  
 And tolde him how it was betid,  
 And praide it shuldé well ben hid,  
 And that he woldé loke about  
 The whilés that he shall be out.  
 Thus as he stood and hedé name,  
 A maiden fro Medea came,  
 The fairest and the wisest eke.

And she with simple chere and  
 meke,

Whan she him sigh, wax all ashamed.

Tho was her talé newe entamed  
 For sikernesse of mariáge,  
 She fette forth a riche ymáge,  
 Was the figúre of Jupitér,  
 And Jason swore and saidé there,  
 That also wis god shuld him helpe,  
 That if Medea did him helpe,  
 That he his purpose mighté winne,  
 They shuldé never part atwinne,  
 But ever while him lasteth life,  
 He woldé holde her for his wife.  
 They hadden bothe what they wolde.

And than at leiser she him tolde  
 And gan fro point to point enforme  
 Of this bataile and all the forme,  
 Whiche as he shuldé findé there,  
 Whan he to thilé<sup>1</sup> comé were.

She saide, at entré of the pás  
 How Mars, which God of Armés was,  
 Hath set two oxen sterne and stoute,  
 That casten fire and flame aboute  
 Both atté mouth and at the nase,  
 So that they setten all on blase  
 What thing that passeth hem be-  
 twene.

And furthermore upon the grene  
 There goth, the flees of gold to kepe,  
 A serpent which may never slepe.  
 Thus who that ever it shulde winne,  
 The fire to stoppe he mot beginne

<sup>1</sup> *Thilé*, the island.

Which that the fiercé bestés caste,  
And daunt he mot hem atté laste,  
So that he may hem yoke and drive,  
And there upon he mot as blive  
The serpent with such strength  
assaile

That he may sleen him by bataile,  
Of which he mot the teeth outdrawe,  
As it belongeth to that lawe.

And than he must the oxen yoke  
Til they have with a plough to-broke  
A furgh of lond, in which arow  
The teeth of thadder he must sow.  
And therof shull arisé knightes  
Well arméd at allé rightes ;  
Of hem is nought to taken hede,  
For eche of hem in hastihede  
Shall other slee with dethés wounde.  
And thus whan they ben laid to  
grounde

Than mot he to the goddés pray  
And go so forth and take his pray.  
But if he faile in any wise  
Of that ye heré me devise,  
There may be set non other wey,  
That he ne must algatés deie.

‘ Now have I told the peril all  
I woll you tellen forth withall,  
Quod Medea to Jason tho,  
‘ That ye shull knowen er ye go  
Ayein the venim and of fire,  
What shall be the recoverire.  
But, siré, for it is nigh day,  
Ariseth up, so that I may  
Deliver you what thing I have  
That may your life and honour save.’  
Tho toke she forth a riché tie<sup>1</sup>  
Made all of gold and of perrie,  
Out of the which she nam a ring,  
The stone was worth all other thing.  
She saidé, while he wold it were,  
There mighté no perfl him dere ;<sup>2</sup>  
In water may it nought be dreint,  
Where as it cometh the fire is queint,

<sup>1</sup> *Tie*, casket.

<sup>2</sup> *Dere*, injure.

It daunteth eke the cruel heste,  
There may none quad<sup>1</sup> that man  
areste,

Where so he be on see or londe,  
That hath this ring upon his honde.  
And over that she gan to sain,  
That if a man will ben unsein,  
Within his hond hold close the  
stone

And he may invisble gone.  
The ring to Jason she betaught<sup>2</sup>  
And so forth after she him taught  
What sacrifice he shuldé make.  
And gan out of her cofre take  
Him thought an hevenly figúre,  
Which all by charme and by conjúre  
Was wrought, and eke it was through  
writ

With namés which he shuldé wite,  
As she him taughté tho to rede,  
And bad him as he woldé spede  
Withouté rest of any while,  
Whan he were loded in that ile,  
He shuldé make his sacrifice  
And rede his carect<sup>3</sup> in the wise  
As she him taught, on knees down  
bent

Thre sithés<sup>4</sup> toward orient.  
For so shuld he the goddés plesse  
And win him selven mochel ese.  
And whan he had it thriés radde  
To open a buist<sup>5</sup> she him badde,  
That she there toke him in present,  
And was full of such oignément  
That there was fire ne venim none  
That shuldé fastné him upon  
Whan that he were anoint withall.  
Forthý she taught him how he shall  
Anoint his armés all aboute,  
And for he shuldé nothing doubte  
She toke him than a maner<sup>6</sup> glue  
The which was of so great vertúe

<sup>1</sup> *Quad*, evil.

<sup>2</sup> *Betaught*, entrusted.

<sup>3</sup> *Carect*, written charm.

<sup>4</sup> *Sithés*, times.

<sup>5</sup> *Buist*, box.

<sup>6</sup> *A maner*, a kind of.

That where a man it shuldé cast  
 It shuldé binde anon so fast  
 That no man might it done away,  
 And that she bad by allé way  
 He shulde into the mouthés throw  
 Of tho twein oxen that fire blow,  
 Therof to stoppen the malíce  
 The glue shall serve of that office.  
 And over that, her oignément  
 Her ring and her enchaútement  
 Ayein the serpent shulde him were,<sup>1</sup>  
 Till he him slee with swerd or spere.  
 And than he may sauflý inough  
 His oxen yoke into the plough  
 And the teeth sowe in such a wise  
 Till he the knightés se arise,  
 And eche of other down be laide  
 In suche a maner as I have saide.

“Lo, thus Medea for Jason  
 Ordeineth, and praieth therupon  
 That he nóthing foryeté sholde,  
 And eke she praieth him that he  
 wolde,

Whan he hath all his armés done,  
 To groundé knele and thonkeanone  
 The goddés, and so forth by ese  
 The flees of golde he shuldé sese.  
 And whan he had it seséd so,  
 That than he weré sone ago  
 Withouten any tarieng.

Whan this was said, into weping  
 She fel, as she that was through-  
 nome

With love and so fer overcome  
 That all her worlde on him she  
 sette.

But whanshe sigh there was nolette,  
 That he mot nedés part her fro,  
 She toke him in her armés two  
 An hunderd times and gan him kisse  
 And said: ‘O, all my worldes blisse,  
 My trust, my lust, my life, min hele,  
 To ben thin helpe in this quarele  
 I pray unto the goddés alle!’

<sup>1</sup> *Were*, protect.

And with that word she gan down  
 falle

Of swoone, and he her uppé nam,  
 And forth with that the maiden cam,  
 And they to bed anone her brought,  
 And thanné Jason her besought  
 And to her saide in this manere:  
 ‘My worthy lusty lady dere,  
 Comfórteth you, for by my trouth  
 It shall nought fallen in my slouth  
 That I ne woll throughout fulfillé  
 Your hestés at your owné wille.  
 And yet I hopé to you bringe  
 Within a whilé such tidfngé,  
 The which shall make us bothé  
 game.’

“Butfor he woldé kepe her name,  
 Whan that he wist it was nigh day,  
 He saide, ‘Adewe my sweté may.’  
 And forth with him he nam his gere  
 Which as she haddé take him there,  
 And straught unto his chambre went  
 And goth to bedde and slepe him  
 hent<sup>1</sup>

And lay that no man him awoke,  
 For Hercules hede of him toke,  
 Till it was underne<sup>2</sup> high and more.  
 And than he gan to sighé sore  
 And sodeinlich he braide of slepe,  
 And they than token of him kepe;  
 His chamberleins ben soné there  
 And maden redy all his gere,  
 And he arose and to the king  
 He went and said how to that thing  
 For which he cam he woldé go.  
 The king therof was wonder wo  
 And for he wolde him fain withdraw,  
 He told him many a dredefull sawe.  
 But Jason wolde it nought recorde  
 And atté lasté they accorde.  
 Whan that he woldé nought abide,  
 A bote was redy atté tide,

<sup>1</sup> *Hent*, seized.

<sup>2</sup> *Underne*, time of a light refreshment between breakfast and dinner, or between dinner and supper.

In which this worthy knight of Grece,  
Full arméd up at every piece  
To his batail which belongeth,  
Toke ore in hond and sore him  
longeth  
Till he the water passéd were.

“Whan he cam to that ilé there,  
He set him on his knees down  
straught

And his carecte, as he was, taught,  
He rad and made his sacrifice  
And sith anoint him in that wise  
As Médeá him haddé bedé ;  
And than arose up fro that stede,  
And with the glue the fire he queint ;  
And anone after he atteint  
The greté serpent and him slough.  
But erst he haddé sorwe inough,  
For that serpént made him travaile  
So hard and sore of his bataile,  
That now he stood and now he fell,  
For longé time it so befell  
That with his swerd and with his  
spere

He mighté nought that serpent dere,  
He was so sherded<sup>1</sup> all aboute  
It held all eggé tole<sup>2</sup> withoute,  
He was so rude and hard of skin  
There might no thingé go therein.  
Venim and fire to-gider he cast,  
That he Jasón so sore ablást  
That if ne were his oignément,  
His ring and his enchauntément,  
Which Médeá toke him before,  
He haddé with that worm be lore.<sup>3</sup>  
But of vertu which therof cam  
Jasón the dragon overcam  
And he anone the teeth out drough  
And set his oxen in his plough,  
With which he brake a piece of lond  
And sewe hem with his owné hond.  
Tho might he great merveilé se,  
Of every toth in his dégré

<sup>1</sup> Sherded, scaled.    <sup>2</sup> Egge tole, edge tools.  
<sup>3</sup> Lore, lost.

Sprong up a knight with spere and  
sheld,

Of which anone right in the feld  
Echone slough other, and with that  
Jason Medea not foryat,  
On both his knees he gan down falle  
And yaf thank to the goddés alle.  
The flees he toke and goth to bote,  
The sonné shineth bright and hote,  
The flees of gold shone forth with  
all,

The water glistred over all.  
Medea wept and sighéd ofte  
And stood upon a toure alofte ;  
All privly within her selve,  
There herd it nouthen ten ne twelve,  
She praid and said : ‘O, god him  
spede,

The knight, which hath my maiden-  
hede.’

And ay she loketh toward thile,  
But whan she sigh within a while  
The flees glistrénd ayein the sonne,  
She said : ‘Ha lord, now all is  
wonne,

My knight the feld hath overcome,  
Now woldé god, he weré come.

Ha lord, I wold he were alonde.’  
But I dare také this on honde,  
If that she haddé wings two,  
She wold have flowe unto him tho  
Straught there he was unto the bote.  
The day was clere, the sonné hote,  
The Gregois weren in great doubt  
The whilé that her lord was out,  
They wisten nought what shuld  
betide,

But waited ever upon the tide  
To se what endé shuldé falle.  
There stoden eke the nobles alle  
Forth with the comunes of the town,  
And as they loken up and down,  
They weren ware within a throwe  
Where cam the bote which they  
wel knowe,

And sigh how Jason brought his prey,  
 And tho they gonnén allé say  
 And criden allé with o steven :<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘Ha, where was ever under the heven  
 So noble a knight, as Jason is?’  
 And wel nigh allé saiden this,  
 That Jason was a fairé knight,  
 For it was never of mannés might  
 The flees of gold so for to winne,  
 And thus to tellen they beginne,  
 With that the king cam forth anone  
 And sigh the flees, how that it shone.  
 And whan Jasón cam to the londe,  
 The kinge him selvé toke his honde  
 And kist him and great joy him  
 made.

The Gregois weren wonder glade  
 And of that thing right merry hem  
 thought

And forth with hem the flees they  
 brought,

And eche on other gan to ligh.<sup>2</sup>  
 But wel was him that mighté nigh  
 To se there of the propreté,  
 And thus they passen the citee  
 And gone unto the paleis straught.

“Medea, which foryat her  
 nought,

Was redy there and said anon :  
 ‘Welcome, O worthy knight Jasón!’  
 She wolde have kist him wonder fain,  
 But shamé tornéd her ayein,  
 It was nought the manere as tho,<sup>3</sup>  
 Forthý she dorsté nought do so.  
 She toke her leve, and Jason went  
 Into his chambre and she him sent  
 Her maiden to sene how he ferde.  
 The which whan that she sigh and  
 herde,

How that he haddé faren out  
 And that it stood well all about,  
 She tolde her lady what she wist,  
 And she for joy her maiden kist.

<sup>1</sup> Steven, voice.

<sup>2</sup> Ligh, laugh.

<sup>3</sup> Tho, then.

The bathés weren than araided  
 With herbés tempred and assaied  
 And Jason was unarméd sone  
 And dide as it befell to done ;  
 Into his bathe he went anone  
 And wisshe him clene as any bone,  
 He toke a soppe and out he cam  
 And on his best array he nam  
 And kempt his hede whan he was  
 clād,  
 And goth him forth all merry and  
 glad

Right straught into the kingés halle.  
 The king cam with his knightés alle  
 And maden him glad welcomfing.  
 And he hem toldé tho tiding  
 Of this and that, how it befell,  
 Whan that he wan the shepés fell.  
 Medea whan she was asent<sup>1</sup>  
 Come soné to that parlément,  
 And whan she mighte Jason se,  
 Was none so glad of all as she.  
 There was no joié for to seche,  
 Of him made every man a speche,  
 Some man said oné, some said other,  
 But though he weré goddés brother  
 And mighté maké fire and thonder,  
 There mighté be no moré wonder  
 Than was of him in that citee.

Echone taught other ‘This is he  
 Whiche hath in his powér withinne  
 That all the world ne mighté winne!  
 Lo, here the best of allé good!’  
 Thus saiden they, that theré stood  
 And eke that walkéd up and down  
 Both of the court and of the town.

“The time of souper cam anon,  
 They wisschen and therto they gon ;  
 Medea was with Jason set,  
 Tho was there many a deinté fet  
 And set to-fore hem on the bord,  
 But none so liking as the word  
 Which was there spoke among hem  
 two,

<sup>1</sup> Asent, sent for.



So as they dorsté speké tho.  
 But though they hadden litel space,  
 Yet they accorden in that place  
 How Jason shuldé come at night,  
 Whan every torche and every light  
 Were out, and than of other thinges  
 They speke aloud for súpposinges  
 Of hem that stoden there aboute,  
 For love is evermore in doubté,  
 If that it be wisly govérned  
 Of hem that ben of lové lérned.  
 Whan al was done, that dissh and  
 cup

And cloth and bord and all was up,  
 They waken while hem list to wake,  
 And after that they levé take  
 And gon to beddé for to reste.  
 And whan him thoughté for the  
 beste,

That every man was fast a slepe,  
 Jason, that wolde his timé kepe,  
 Goth forth stalkénd all privély  
 Unto the chambre and redely  
 There was a maidé, which him kept,  
 Medea woke and no thing slept,  
 So that they hadden joy inow.  
 And tho they setten whan and how  
 That she with him away shal stele,  
 With wordés such and other fele.<sup>1</sup>  
 Whan all was treted to an ende,  
 Jason toke leve and gan forth wende  
 Unto his owné chambre in pees.  
 There wist it non but Hercules.

“He slept and ros, whan it was  
 time,

And whan it fel towardés prime,  
 He toke to him such as he triste  
 In secré, that none other wiste,  
 And told hem of his conseil there  
 And saidé that his willé were,  
 That they to ship had allé thing  
 So privelich in thevening,  
 That no man might her<sup>2</sup> dede aspie  
 But tho that were of compaignie,

<sup>1</sup> *Fele*, many.

<sup>2</sup> *Her*, their.

For he woll go withouté leve  
 And lenger woll he nought beleve,<sup>1</sup>  
 But he ne wolde at thilké throwe  
 The king or quené shulde it knowe.  
 They said, all this shall well be do.  
 And Jason trusté well therto.

“Medea in the mené while,  
 Which thought her fader to beguile,  
 The tresor which her fader hadde  
 With her all privély she ladde  
 And with Jason at timé set  
 Away she stale and found no let  
 And straught she goth her into ship  
 Of Grece with that felaship.  
 And theyanone drough up the saile,  
 And all that night this was conseil;  
 But erly whan the sonné shone  
 Men sigh how that they weré gone  
 And come unto the kinge and tolde.  
 And he the sothé knowé wolde  
 And axeth, where his doughter was.  
 There was no word, but ‘Out alas,  
 She was ago.’<sup>2</sup> The moder wept,  
 The fader as a wodeman lept  
 And gan the timé for to warie<sup>3</sup>  
 And swore his othe he wold nought  
 tarie,

That with galiote and with galé  
 The samé cours the samé wey  
 Which Jason toke he woldé take,  
 If that he might him overtake.  
 To this they saiden allé ye.  
 Anone as they were atté see  
 And all as who saith at one worde,  
 They gone withinné shippés borde,  
 The sail goth up, and forth they  
 straught,

But none exploit therof they caught,  
 And so they tornen home ayein,  
 For all that labour was in vein.  
 Jason to Grece with his pray  
 Goth through the see the righté  
 way.

<sup>1</sup> *Beleve*, remain.

<sup>2</sup> *Ago*, gone.

<sup>3</sup> *Warie*, curse

Whan he there come and men it  
tolde,

They maden joié yong and olde.

“Esón whan that he wist of this,

How that his soné comen is

And hath achévéd that he sought

And home with him Medea brought,

In all the widé world was none

So glad a man as he was one.

To-gider ben these lovers tho,

Till that they hadden sonés two

Wherof they weren bothé glade,

And olde Eson great joié made

To seen thencrees of his lignage,

For he was of so great an age

That men awaiten every day

Whan that he shuldé gone away.

Jason, which sigh his fader olde,

Upon Medea made him bolde

Of art magíqué which she couth,

And praieth her that his faders

youth

She woldé make ayeinward newe.

And she that was towárd him trewe

Behight him that she wolde it do,

Whan that she timé sigh therto.

But what she did in that matére

It is a wonder thing to here,

But yet for the novellérie

I thinké telle a great partie.

“Thus it befell upon a night,

Whan there was nought but sterré

light,

She was vanísshed right as her list,

That no wight but her self it wist.

And that was atté midnight tide ;

The world was still on every side,

With open hede and foot all bare

Her hair to-sprad she gan to fare,

Upon her clothés gert she was

All spechélés and on the gras

She glode forth as an adder doth.

None other wisé she ne goth,

Till she came to the fresshé flood,

And there a whilé she withstood,

Thriés she tornéd her aboute

And thriés eke she gan down loute,

And in the flood she wete her hair,

And thriés on the water there

Shégaspeth with a drecchingonde<sup>1</sup>

And tho she toke her speche on

honde.

First she began to clepe and calle

Upwárde unto the sterrés alle,

To winde, to air, to see, to londe

She preide and eke helde up her

honde

To Échatés and gan to crie,

Whiche is goddesse of sorcerie,

She saidé, ‘ Helpeth at this nede,

And as ye maden me to spede

Whan Jason came the flees to seche,

So help me now, I you beseche !’

With that she loketh and was ware,

Down fro the sky there came a chare,

The which dragóns abouté drowe.

And thoshe gan her hede down bowe

And up she stighe and faire and well

She drové forth by chare and wheel

Above in thaire among the skies ;

The londe of Crete in tho parties

She sought, and fasté gan her hie,

And therupon the hullés high

Of Othrin and Olimpe also

And eke of other hullés mo

She founde and gadreth herbés

suote,

She pulleth up some by the rote

And many with a knife she shereth

And all into her char she bereth.

Thus whan she hath the hullés

sought,

The floodés there foryate she nought

Eridian and Amphisros,

Peneie and eke Spercheïdos,

To hem she went and there she

nome

Both of the water and of the fome,

The sonde and eke the smalléstones

<sup>1</sup> *Drecching onde*, troubled breath.

Whiche as she chese out for the  
nones,

And of the Reddé See a part  
That was behovelich to her art  
She toke, and after that about  
She soughté sondry sedés out  
In feldés and in many greves  
And eke a part she toke of leves.  
But thing which might her most  
availe

She found in Crete and in Thessaile.  
In daiés and in nightés nine,  
With great travaile and with great  
peine

She was purveyed of every piece  
And torneth homward into Grece.  
Before the gatés of Eson  
Her chare she let away to gone  
And toke out first that was therinne,  
For tho she thoughté to beginne  
Such thing as semeth impossiblé  
And made her selven invisiblé,  
As she that was with thaire enclosed  
And might of no man be desclosed.  
She toke up turvés of the londe  
Withouté helpe of mannés honde  
And heled<sup>1</sup> with the grené gras,  
Of whiche an alter made there was  
Unto Echates the goddessse  
Of art magique and the maistresse.  
And este an other to invent,  
As she which did her hole intent,  
Tho toke she feldwode<sup>2</sup> and ver-  
veine,

Of herbés ben nought better tweine,  
Of which anone withouté let  
These alters ben abouté set.  
Two sondry pittés fasté by  
She made, and with that hastély  
A wether which was black she  
slough,

And out therof the blood she drough  
And did into the pittés two,  
Warm milk she put also therto

<sup>1</sup> *Heled*, covered.      <sup>2</sup> *Felwood*, gentian.

With hony meind,<sup>1</sup> and in such wise  
She gan to make her sacrifice  
And cried and praidé forth withall  
To Pluto the god infernál  
And to the quené Proserpine.  
And so she sought out all the line  
Of hem that longen to that craft,  
Behindé was no namé last,  
And praid hem all, as she well couth,  
To graunt Esón his firsté youth,  
This olde Esón brought forth was  
tho;<sup>2</sup>

Away she bad all other go  
Upon perfl that mighté falle,  
And with that word they wenten alle  
And left hem theré two alone.  
And tho she gan to gaspe and gone  
And madé signés many one  
And said her wordés therupon,  
And with spellinge and her charmes  
She toke Esón in both her armes  
And made him for to slepé fast  
And him upon her herbés cast.  
The blacké wether tho she toke  
And hew the flesshe as doth a coke,  
On either alter part she laide,  
And with the charmés that she saide  
A fire down fro the sky alight  
And made it for to brenné light.  
And whan Medea sigh it brenne,  
Anone she gan to sterte and renne  
The fry alters all about.

There was no besté which goth out  
More wildé than she semeth there.  
Aboute her shulders heng her hair  
As though she were oute of her minde  
And tornéd to another kinde.  
Tho lay there certain wodé cleft  
Of which the pieces now and eft  
She made hem in the pittés wete  
And put hem in the fry hete  
And toke the bronde with all the  
blase

And thriés she began to rase

<sup>1</sup> *Meind*, mixed.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, then.

About Esón there as he slept.  
 And eft with water which she kept  
 She made a cercle about him thries  
 And eft with fire of sulphre twies  
 Full many another thing she dede,  
 Whiche is nought writen in the  
 stede.

But tho she ran so up and doune  
 She madé many a wonder souné,  
 Sontimé lich unto the cock,  
 Somtime unto the laverock,  
 Sontimé cacleth as an hen,  
 Sontimé speketh as don men.  
 And right so as her jargon straungeth  
 In sondry wise her formé chaungeth,  
 She semeth faire and no womán,  
 For with the craftés that she can  
 She was as who saith a goddésse,  
 And what her listé more or lesse  
 She did, in bokés as we finde,  
 That passeth over mannés kinde.  
 But who that woll of wonders here,  
 What thing she wrought in this  
 matere

To make an ende of that she gan,  
 Such merveil herdé never man.

“Apointed in the newé mone,  
 Whan it was timé for to done,  
 She set a caldron on the fire,  
 In which was al the hole attire  
 Whereon the mediciné stood,  
 Of juse, of water, and of blood,  
 And let it boile in suche a plite  
 Till that she sigh the spumé white.  
 And tho she cast in rinde and rote  
 And sede and floure that was for  
 bote,

With many an herbe and many a  
 stone

Wherof she hath there many one.  
 And eke Cimpheíus, the serpént,  
 To her hath all her scalés lent,  
 Chelidre her yafe her adders skin,  
 And she to boilen cast hem in,  
 And parte eke of the hornéd oule,

The which men here on nightés  
 houle,

And of a raven which was tolde  
 Of niné hundred winter olde  
 She toke the hede with all the bille.  
 And as the mediciné it wille  
 She toke her after the bowele  
 Of the seewolf and for the hele  
 Of Eson, with a thousand mo  
 Of thingés that she haddé tho.  
 In that caldrón to-gider as blive  
 She put and toke than of olíve  
 A drié braunche hem with to stere,<sup>1</sup>  
 The which anon gan floure and bere  
 And waxe all fresshe and grene  
 ayein.

Whan she this vertue haddé sene,  
 She let the leesté droppe of alle  
 Upon the baré floure<sup>2</sup> down falle :  
 Anon there sprong up floure and gras  
 Where as the droppé fallen was,  
 And waxe anone all medow grene  
 So that it mighté well be sene.  
 Medea thanné knewe and wist  
 Her mediciné is for to trist<sup>3</sup>  
 And goth to Eson there he lay  
 And toke a swerd was of assay,  
 With which a wounde upon his side  
 She madé, that there out may slide  
 The blood withinné which was olde  
 And sike and trouble and feble and  
 colde.

And tho she toke unto his use  
 Of herbés all the besté juse  
 And pouréd it into his wounde,  
 That made his veinés full and sounde,  
 And tho she made his woundés close,  
 And toke his honde, and up he rose.  
 And tho she yaf him drinke a  
 draught

Of which his youth ayein he caught,  
 His hede, his herte and his viságe  
 Lich unto twenty winter age,

<sup>1</sup> Stere, stir.      <sup>2</sup> Baré floure, bare ground.  
<sup>3</sup> To trist, to be trusted.

His horé hairés were away,  
And lich unto the fresshé May  
Whan passéd ben the coldé shoures,  
Right so recovereth he his floures.

“Lo, what might any mandevise  
A woman shewe in any wise  
More hertely love in any stede  
Than Medeá to Jason dede.  
First she made him the flees to winne,  
And after that fro kith and kinne  
With great tresór with him she stale,  
And to his fader forth with all  
His elde hath tornéd into youthe,  
Which thing none other woman  
couthe.

But how it was to her aquit,  
The rémembraúncé dwelleth yit.

King Peleús his eme was dede,  
Jasón bare crowne upon his hede,  
Medea hath fulfilled his will,  
But whan he shuld of right fulfill  
The trothé which to her afore  
He had in thile of Colchos swore,  
Tho was Medea most deceived,  
For he an other hath received  
Which doughter was to king Creon,  
Creusá she hight, and thus Jasón,  
As he that was to love untrewé,  
Medea left and toke a newe ;  
But that was after sone abought.<sup>1</sup>  
Medea with her art hath wrought  
Of cloth of golde a mantel riche,  
Which semeth worth a kingés riche,<sup>2</sup>  
And that was unto Creusa sent  
In name of yest and of presént,  
For susterhode hem was betwene.  
And whan that yongé fresshé quene  
That mantel lappéd her aboute,  
Anon therof the fire sprang oute  
And brent her bothé flesshe and bon.  
Tho cam Medea to Jasón  
With both his sonés on her honde  
And said, ‘O thou of every londe  
The most untrewé créature,

<sup>1</sup> *Abought*, paid for.

<sup>2</sup> *Riche*, kingdom.

Lo, this shall be thy forfeitúre.’  
With that she both his sonés slough  
Before his eye, and he out drough  
His swerd and wold have slain her  
tho,—

But faréwell, she was ago  
Unto Pallas the court above,  
Where as she pleigneth upon love,  
As she that was with that goddesse,  
And he was lefte in great distresse.

“Thus might thou se, what sorwe  
it doth

To swere an oth, which is nought  
soth,

In Lovés causé namély.

My soné, be well ware forthý  
And kepe that thou be nought for-  
swore.

For this, whiche I have told to-fore,  
Ovidé telleth every dele.”—

“My fader, I may leve it wele,  
For I have herde it ofté say,  
How Jason toke the flees away  
Fro Colchos, but yet herde I nought,  
By whom it was first thider brought.  
And for it weré good to here,  
If that you list at my priere  
To telle I woldé you beseche.”—

“My soné, who that woll it seche,  
In bokés he may finde it write.  
And nethéles, if thou wolt wite  
In the manér as thou hast pride,  
I shall the tell, how it is saide.

**The fame** of thilké shepés felle  
Whiche in Colchos, as it befelle,  
Was all of gold, shal never deie,  
Wherof I thenké for to say,  
Howe it cam first into that ile.  
There was a king in thilké while  
Towardés Grece, and Athemas  
The cronique of his namé was,  
And had a wif, which Philen hight,  
By whom, so as Fortúne it dight,  
He had of children yongé two.

Frixus the firsté was of tho,

A knavé<sup>1</sup> child right faire with all.  
 A daughter eke the which men call  
 Hellen, he haddé by his wife.  
 But for there may no mannés life  
 Endure upon this erthé here,  
 This worthy quene, as thou might  
 here,

Er that the children were of age,  
 Toke of her endé the passage  
 With great worshíp and was be-  
 grave:<sup>2</sup>

What thing it liketh God to have  
 It is great reson to ben his.  
 Forthý this king, so as it is,  
 With great suffránce it under-  
 fongeth.

And afterward, as him belongeth,  
 When it was timé for to wedde,  
 A newé wife he toke to bedde,  
 Whiche Yno hight and was a maide  
 And eke the doughter as men saide  
 Of Cadmé, whiche a king also  
 Was holde in thilké daiés tho.

Whan Yno was the kingés make  
 She cast how that she mighté make  
 These children to her fader loth  
 And shope a wile ayein hem both,  
 Which to the king was all unknowe.  
 A yere or two she let do sowe  
 The lond with sodé whete aboute,  
 Wherof no corn may springen oute.  
 And thus by sleight and by covine  
 Aros the derth and the famine  
 Through out the londe in such a wise,  
 So that the king a sacrifice  
 Upon the point of this distresse  
 To Ceres, which is the goddessse  
 Of corne, hathshape him for to yive,  
 To loke, if it may be foryive  
 Themischeffe which was in his londe.  
 But she, which knewe to-fore the  
 honde<sup>3</sup>

The circumstance of all this thing,

<sup>1</sup> *Knavé*, boy.

<sup>2</sup> *Begrave*, buried.

<sup>3</sup> *To-fore the honde*, beforehand.

Ayein the coming of the king  
 Into the temple hath shape so  
 Of her accord, that allé tho  
 Which of the temple prestés were,  
 Have said and full declaréd there  
 Unto the king, but if so be  
 That he deliver the contré  
 Of Frixus and of Hellen bothe,  
 With whom the goddés ben so  
 wrothe

That while tho children ben with-  
 inne

Such tilthé shall no man beginne  
 Wherof to get him any corne ;  
 Thus was it said, thus was it sworne  
 Of all the prestés that there are.  
 And she which causeth all this fare,  
 Said eke therto what that she wolde.  
 And every man than after tolde  
 So as the quené had hem preide.

“ The king, which hath his eré  
 leide

And leveth<sup>1</sup> all that ever he herde,  
 Unto her talés thus answerde  
 And saith, that lever him is to chese  
 His children bothé for to lese  
 Than him and all the remenaunt  
 Of hem which are appertenaunt  
 Unto the lond whiche he shall kepe.  
 And bade his wifé to take kepe  
 In what manére is best to done,  
 That they deliveréd were sone  
 Out of this worlde. And she anone  
 Two men ordeineth for to gone,  
 But first she made hem for to swere  
 That they the children shuldé bere  
 Unto the see, that none it knowe,  
 And hem therinné bothé throwe.  
 The children to the see ben lad,  
 Where in the wise as Yno bad  
 These men be redy for to do.  
 But the goddesssé which Juno  
 Is hote appereth in the stede  
 And hath unto the men forbede

<sup>1</sup> *Leveth*, believes.

That they the children nought ne  
slee,

But bad hem loke into the see  
And taken hede of that they sighen,  
Thereswama shepeto-fore hereyen,  
Whose flees of burnéd gold was all.  
And this goddessé forth with all  
Commaundeth that withouté let  
They shulde anon the children set  
Above upon the shepés back.  
And all was do, right as she spak,  
Wherof the men gone home ayein.

“And fell so, as the bokés sain,  
Hellen the yongé maiden tho,  
Whiche of the see was wo bego,  
For puré drede her hert hath lore,  
That fro the shepe which hath her  
bore,

As she that was swouné dé feint,  
She fell and hath her self adreint.  
With Frixus and this shepe forth  
swam,

Till he to thile of Colchos cam,  
Where Juno the goddessé he fonde,  
Which toke the shepe unto the londe  
And set it there in such a wise,  
As thou to-fore hast herd devise,  
Wherof cam after all the wo,  
Why Jason was forsworé so  
Unto Medee, as it is spoke.”—

“My fader, who that hath to-broke  
His trouth, as ye have tolde above,  
He is nought worthy for to love  
Ne be belovéd, as me semeth.  
But every newé lové quemeth  
To him that newé fangel is.  
And nethéles now after this,  
If that you list to taken hede  
Upon my shrifté to procede  
In Lovés cause ayein the Vice  
Of Covetise and Avarice,  
What there is more I woldé wite.”—

“My soné, this I findé write,  
There is yet one of thilké brood,  
Which only for the worldés good

To make a tresor of monéy  
Put allé consciéce away.  
Wherof in thy confessiön  
The name and the condiön  
I shall here afterward declare,  
Which maketh one riche an other  
bare.

**Upon the bench** sitténd on high  
With Avarice Usure I sigh,  
Ful clothéd of his owné suite,  
Which after gold maketh chase and  
suite

With his brocoürs, that renne aboute  
Liche unto racches<sup>1</sup> in a route.  
Such lucre is none above groundé,  
Which is nought of tho racchés  
founde.

For where they se beyeté sterte,  
That shall hem in no wise asterte  
But they it drive into the net  
Of lucre, whiche Usúre hath set.

Usúré with the riché dwelleth,  
To all that ever he bieth and selleth  
He hath ordeiné d of his sleight  
Mesúré double and double weight.  
Outwárd he selleth by the lasse  
And with the more he maketh his  
tasse,<sup>2</sup>

Wherof his hous is full withinne.  
He recheth nought be so he winne,  
Though that there lesé ten ortwelve.  
His love is all toward him selve  
And to none other but he se  
That he may winné suché thre.  
For where he shallought yive or lene  
He woll ayeinward take a bene  
There he hath lent the smallé pese.<sup>3</sup>  
And right so there ben many of these  
Lovers, that though they love a lite<sup>4</sup>  
That scarsly wolde it weie a mite,  
Yet wol they have a pound ayein,  
As doth Usúre in his bargain.

<sup>1</sup> *Racches*, scenting hounds.

<sup>2</sup> *Tasse*, heap.

<sup>3</sup> Will take a bean where he has lent a pea.

<sup>4</sup> *Lite*, little.

But certes such Usúre unliche  
It falleth more unto the riche  
Als well of love as of beyete  
Than unto hem that ben nought  
grete,

And as who saith ben simple and  
pouer ;

For selden is whan they recouer  
But if it be through great deserte,  
And nethéles men se pouerte  
With pursúite of contenance<sup>1</sup>  
Full ofté make a great chevaúnce  
And take of love his avauntáge  
Forth with the helpe of his brocáge  
That maken semewhere it is nought.  
And thus full ofté is lové bought  
For litel what, and mochel take  
With falsé weightés that they make.

“ Now sone, of that I saide above  
Thou wost what Usure is of Love.  
Tell me forthy what so thou wilt,  
If thou therof hast any gilt ? ” —

“ My fader nay, for ought I here.  
For of the points ye tolden here  
I will you by my trowth assure,  
My weight of love and my mesúre  
Hath be more large and more cer-  
teine

Than ever I toke of love ayeine.  
For so yet couthe I never of sleighte  
To take ayein by double weighte  
Of lové more than I have yive.  
For also wis mote I be shrive  
And have remission of sinne,  
And so yet couth I never winne  
Ne yet so mochel soth to sain,  
That ever I might have half ayein  
Of so full love as I have lent.  
And if mine hap were so well went,  
That for the hole I might have half,  
Me thenketh I were a goddes half.  
For where Usuré wold have double,  
My conscience is nought so trouble,

<sup>1</sup> Pursuite of contenance, continued perseverance.

I biddé never as to my dele  
But of the hole an halven dele.  
That is none éxcess as me thenketh,  
But netheles it me forthenketh.  
For well I wot that wol nought be,  
For every day the better I se  
That how so ever I yive or lene  
My love in placé that I mene,  
For ought that ever I axe or crave  
I can nothing ayeinwarde have.  
But yet for that I wol nought lete  
What so befall of my beyete,  
That I ne shall her yive and lene  
Mylove and all mythought soclene,  
That toward me shall nought be-  
leve.<sup>1</sup>

And if she of her godé leve  
Rewardé wol me nought ayein,  
I wot the last of my bargein  
Shall stonde upon so great a lost,  
That I may never more the cost  
Recouer in this world till I deie,  
So that touchénd of this partie  
I may me well excuse and shall ;  
And for to speké forth withall,  
If any brocour for me went  
That point come never in min entent,  
So that the moré me mervelfleth  
What thing it is my lady eileth,  
That all min herte and all my timé  
She hath, and do no better by me.

“ I have herd said, that thought  
is free

And nethéles in priveté  
To you, my fader, that bene here  
Min holé shrifté for to here,  
I dare min herté well disclose  
Touchend Usúrie, as I suppose,  
Whiche, as ye telle, in love is used.  
My lady may nought ben excused  
That for o loking of her eye  
Min holé herté till I deie  
With all that ever I may and can  
She hath me wonné to her man,

<sup>1</sup> Beleve, remain.



Wherof me thenketh good reson  
wolde

That she somdele rewardé sholde,  
And yive a part there she hath all.  
I not what falle hereafter shall,  
But into now yet dare I sain  
Her listé never yive ayein  
A goodly word in such a wise  
Wherof min hopé might arise  
My greté love to recompense.  
I not how she her consciéce  
Excusé wol of this Usúre  
By largé weight and great mesúre.  
She hath mylove and I have nought  
Of that which I have dere abought,  
And with min herte I have it paide,  
But all this is asidé laide,  
And I go lovélés aboute.  
Her oughté stonde in ful great  
doubte,

Till she redressé suche a sinne  
That she wol al my lové winne  
And yiveth me nought to livé by.  
Noughtal somochas 'grauntmercy'  
Her list to say, of which I might  
Some of my greté peine alight.  
But of this point, lo, thus I fare,  
As he that paieth for his chaffare  
And bieth it dere and yet hath none,  
So mote he nedés pouer gone.  
Thus bie I dere and have no love,  
That I ne may nought come above  
To winne of lové none enresce.  
But I me willé nethélese  
Touchend Usúre of love aquite,  
And if my lady be to wite<sup>1</sup>  
I pray to God such grace her sende  
That she bytime it motamende."—

"My sone, of that thou hast an-  
swérde

Touchend Usure I have al herde,  
How thou of love hast wonné smale.  
But that thou tellest in thy tale  
And thy lady therof accusest,

<sup>1</sup> To wite, to blame.

Me thenketh tho wordes thou mis-  
usest.

For by thin owné knoueleching  
Thou saist, how she for one loking  
Thy holé hert fro the she toke,  
She may be such that her o loke  
Is worth thine herté many folde,  
So hast thou well thin herté solde  
Whan thou hast that is moré  
worthe.

And eke of that thou tellest forthe,  
How that her weight of love uneven  
Is unto thine, under the heven  
Stood never in even that balaunce  
Which stont in lovés governaunce.  
Such is the statute of his lawe,  
That though thy lové moré drawe  
And peise in the balaúncé more,  
Thou might nought axe ayein ther-  
fore

Of duété, but all of grace.  
For Love is Lorde in every place,  
There may no lawe him justify,  
By reddour ne by compaigny<sup>1</sup>  
That he ne wol, after his wille,  
Whom that him liketh spede or  
spille.

To love a man may well beginne,  
But whether he shall lese or winne  
That wot no man, til atté last.  
Forthý covéité nought to fast,  
My soné, but abide thin ende,  
Parcas all may to goodé wende.  
But that thou hast me tolde and  
saide

Of o thing I am right well paide,  
That thou by sleighté ne by guile  
Of no brocoúr hast otherwhile  
Enginéde love, for suché dede  
Is soré vengéd as I rede.

"Brocours of lové, that deceiven,  
No wonder is though they receiven  
After the wrong that they deserven.  
For whom as ever that they serven

<sup>1</sup> By force or fellowship.

And do plesauncé for a while,  
 Yet atté last her owné guile  
 Upon her owné hede descendeth,  
 Which God of his vengeauncé  
 sendeth.

As by ensample of time ago  
 A man may finde it hath be so.

“*It fell some time*, as it was  
 sene,

The highé goddesse and the quene  
 Juno tho had in compaigny  
 A maiden full of trechery.

For she was ever in accorde  
 With Jupiter, that was her lorde,  
 To get him other lovés newe  
 Through such brocagé, and was  
 untrewé

All other wisé than him nedeth.  
 Butshe, the which noshamá dredeth,  
 With queinté wordés and with slie  
 Blent in such wise her ladies eye  
 As she to whom that Juno trist,  
 So that therof she nothing wist.  
 But so privé may be nothing,  
 That it no cometh to knouelching,  
 Thing done upon the derké night  
 Is after knowe on daiés light.

So it befell, that atté last  
 All that this slihé maiden cast  
 Was overcast and overthrowe.  
 For as the sothé mot be knowe,  
 To Juno it was done understonde,  
 In what manére her husébonde  
 With fals brocagé hath take usure  
 Of lové more than his mesure,  
 Whan he toke other than his wife ;  
 Wherof this maiden was giltife,  
 Whiche haddé ben of his assent.  
 And thus was all the gamé shent.  
 She suffred him, as she mot nede,  
 But the brocoúr of his misdede,  
 She which her counseil yaf therto,  
 On her is the vengeauncé do ;  
 For Juno with her wordes hote  
 This maiden, which Eccho was hote,

Reproveth and saith in this wise :

‘ O traiteresse, of which servíce  
 Hast thou thin owné lady served,  
 Thou hast great peiné well deserved  
 That thou canst maken it so queint.  
 Thy slihé wordés for to peint  
 Towardés me that am thy quene,  
 Wherof thou madest me to wene,  
 That my husbondé trewé were  
 Whan that he loveth ellés where  
 All be it so him nedeth nought.  
 But upon the it shall be bought  
 Whiche art privé to tho doínges,  
 And me full ofte of thy lesínges  
 Deceivéd hast. Nowe is the day,  
 That I thy wilé quité may,  
 And for thou hast to me conceled  
 That my lorde hath with other deled,  
 I shall the sette in suche a kinde  
 That ever unto the worldés ende  
 All that thou herest thou shalt telle  
 And clappe it out as doth a belle.  
 And with that word she was for-  
 shape,

There may no vois her mouthe es-  
 cape :

What man that in the wodés crieth,  
 Withouten faile Ecchó replieth ;  
 And what word that him lust to sain,  
 The samé word she saith ayein.  
 Thus she, which whilome haddé leve  
 To dwelle in chambre, mot beleve<sup>1</sup>  
 In wodés and on hillés both,  
 For such brocagé as wives loth,  
 Which doth her lordés hertés  
 change

And love in other places straunge.

“ Forthý if ever it so befallé  
 That thou, my sone, amongés alle  
 Be wedded man, hold that thou hast,  
 For than all other love is waste ;  
 O wife shal wel to the suffise,  
 And than if thou for covetise  
 Of lové woldest axé more,

<sup>1</sup> *Beleve*, remain.

Thou shuldest don ayein the lore  
Of alle hem that trewé be.”—

“My fader, as in this degré  
My consciéce is nought accused,  
For I no such brocáge have used  
Wherof that lust of love is wonne.  
Forthý speke forth, as ye begonne,  
Of Avarice upon my shrifte.”—

“My sone, I shall the braunches  
shifte

By order so as they ben set,  
On whom no good is wel beset.

**Blind Avarice** of his lignáge  
For counseil and for cousináge  
To be witholde ayein Largesse  
Hath one, whose name is said  
Scarsnesse,

The which is keper of his hous  
And is so throughout ávarous,  
That he no good let out of honde;  
Though God him self it woldé fonde,  
Of yifté shuld he no thing have.  
And if a man it woldé crave,  
He musté thanné failé nede  
Where God him selvé may nought  
spede.

And thus Scarsnésse in every place  
By reson may no thank purcháce.  
And nethéles in his degre  
Above all other most privé  
With Avaricé stant he this.  
For he govérneth that there is  
In eche estate of his office  
After the reule of thilké vice  
He taketh, he kepeth, he halt, he  
bint,

That lighter is to fle<sup>1</sup> the flint  
Than gete of him in hard or neisshe  
Only the value of a reisshe  
Of good in helping of an other,  
Nought though it were his owné  
brother.

For in the cas of yift and lone  
Stant every man for him alone.

<sup>1</sup> *Fle*, flay.

Him thenketh, of his unkindship,  
That him nedéth no felaship  
Be so the bagge and he accorden,  
Him reccheth nought what men  
recorden

Of him, or be it evil or good,  
For all his truste is on his good;  
So that alone he falleth ofte,  
Whan he best weneth stonde alofte,  
Als well in love as other wise.  
For love is ever of some reprise  
To him that woll his lové holde.  
Forthý my sone, as thou art holde  
Touchend of this tell me thy shrifte,  
Hast thou be scarce or large of yifte  
Unto thy lové, whom thou servest.  
For after that thou well deservest  
Of yifté, thou might be the bet.  
For that good holde I well beset  
For which thou might the better fare,  
Than is no wisdom for to spare.  
For thus men sain in every nede,  
He was wise that first madé mede.  
For where as medé may nought  
spede,

I not what helpeth other dede.  
Full ofte he failéth of his game,  
That will with idel<sup>1</sup> hond reclame  
His hawke, as many a nicé doth.  
Forthý my soné, tell me soth  
And say the trouth, if thou hast be  
Unto thy love or scarce or fre?”—

“My fader, it hath stonéd thus,  
That if the tresor of Cresús  
And all the golde of Octavien,  
Forth with the richesse of Yndien  
Of perlés and of riché stones  
Were all to-gider min at ones,  
I set it at no more accompt  
Than wolde a baré straw amount  
To yive it her all in a day,  
Be so that to that sweté may  
It mighté like or more or lesse.  
And thus because of my scarsnesse

<sup>1</sup> *Idel*, empty.

Ye may well understand and leve  
That I shall nought the worse  
acheve

The purpos which is in my thought,  
But yet I yaf her never nought  
Ne therto durst a profre make.  
For well I wot she woll nought take,  
And yivé woll she nought also,  
She is escheue of bothé two.  
And this I trowé be the skill  
Towardés me, for she ne will  
That I have any cause of hope,  
Nought al so mochel as a drope.  
But toward other as I may se  
She taketh and yiveth in such degré,  
That as by wey of frendelyhede  
She can so kepe her womanhede  
That everyman speketh of her wele.  
But she wol take of me no dele,  
And yet she wot wel that I wolde  
Yive and do bothé what I sholde  
To plesen her in all my might,  
By reson this wote every wight.  
For that may by no wey asterte,  
There she is maister of the herte  
She mot be maister of the good.  
For god wot wel that all my mood  
And allmin herte and all my thought  
And all mygood while I have ought,  
Als frely as God hath it yive,  
It shall be hers, the while I live,  
Right as her list herself commaunde.  
So that it nedeth no demaunde  
To axe me if I have be scarce  
To lové, for as to tho parse<sup>1</sup>  
I will answeren and say no."—

"My soné, that is right well do.  
For often timés of scarsnesse  
It hath ben seen, that for the lesse  
Is lost the more, as thou shalt here  
A talé, lich to this matere.

**Scarsnesse and Love** accorden never,

For every thing is wel the lever

<sup>1</sup> *The parse*, those charms.

Whan that a man hath bought it  
dere,

And for to speke in this matere  
For sparing of a litel cost  
Full ofté time a man hath lost  
The largé coté for the hood.  
What man that scarce is of his good  
And wol nought yive, heshall nought  
take,

With yift a man may undertake  
The highé God to plesé and queme,  
With yift a man the world may deme.  
For every créatúre bore  
If thou him yive is glad therfore,  
And every gladship, as I finde,  
Is comfort unto lovés kinde  
And causeth ofte a man to spede ;  
So was he wise that first yaf mede.  
For Medé kepeth Love in hous,  
But where the men ben coveitoús  
And sparen for to yive a partie,  
They knowen nought Cupidé's arte.  
For his fortúne and his apprise  
Disdeigneth allé covetise  
And hateth allé nigardie.

And for to loke of this partie  
A sothe ensample, howe it is so,  
I findé write of Babio,  
Which had a love at his menáge,  
There was no fairer of her age  
And highte Viola by name,  
Which full of youth and full of game  
Was of her selfe and large and free.  
But such an other chinche<sup>1</sup> as he  
Men wisten nought in all the londe,  
And had affaited to his honde  
His servant, the which Spodius  
Was hote. And in this wisé thus  
The worldés good of suffisaunce  
Was had, but liking and plesaunce  
Of that belongeth to richésse  
Of lové stode in great distresse,  
So that this yongé lusty wight  
Of thing which fell to lovés right

<sup>1</sup> *Chinche*, miser.

Was evil servéd over all,  
 That she was wo bego withall.  
 Til that Cupide and Venus eke  
 A medicné for the seke  
 Ordeiné wolden in this cas ;  
 So as fortuné thanné was  
 Of love upon the destiné  
 It fell right as it shulde be.  
 A fresshe, a free, a frendly man,  
 That nought of Avaricé can,  
 Which Croceús by namé hight,  
 Toward this sweté cast his sight  
 And there she was cam in presence ;  
 She sigh him large of his despense  
 And amorous and glad of chere,  
 So that her liketh well to here  
 The goodly wordés which he saide,  
 And therupon of love he praide.  
 Of lové was all that he ment,  
 To love and for she shulde assent  
 He yaf her yiftés ever among.  
 But for men sain that ‘Mede is  
 strong’

It was well sene at thilké tide,  
 For as it shulde of right betide  
 This Viola largesse hath take  
 And the nigárd she hath forsake.  
 Of Babio she will no more,  
 For he was grucchend evermore,  
 There was with him none other fare,  
 But for to pinche and for to spare,  
 Of worldés muck to get encres.  
 So goth the wrecché lovéles  
 Bejapéd for his Scarsité :  
 And he that largé was and fre  
 And set his herté to despense,  
 This Croceús his bowé bende  
 Which Venus toke him for to holde,  
 And shot as ofte as ever he wolde.

“Lo, thus departeth love his lawe,  
 That what man woll nought be  
 felawe

To yive and spende, as I the telle,  
 He is nought worthy for to dwelle  
 In Lovés Court to be relieved.

Forthý my sone, if I be leved,  
 Thou shalt be large of thy de-  
 spense.”—

“My fader, in my consciéce  
 If there be any thing amis,  
 I wolde amende it after this  
 Toward my lové namély.”—

“My soné, well and redély  
 Thou saist, so that well paid withall  
 I am, and further if I shall  
 Unto thy shrifté specific  
 Of Avarice the progenie,  
 What Vicé sueth after this,  
 Thou shalt have wonder how it is  
 Among the folke in any regne,  
 That such a Vicé mighté regne,  
 Whiche is comúne at all assaies,  
 As men may findé now a daies.

The Vicé like unto the Fende,  
 Which never yet was mannés frende,  
 And clepéd is Unkindéship,  
 Of covine and of felaship  
 With Avarice he is witholde.  
 Him thanketh he shuld nought ben  
 holde

Unto the moder which him bare.  
 Of him may never man beware,  
 He wol nought knowé the merite  
 For that he wolde it nought aquite,  
 Which in this worldé is mochelused,  
 And fewé ben therof excused.

To tell of him is endéles,  
 But thus I saié nethéles,  
 Where as this Vicé cometh to londe  
 There taketh no man his thanke  
 on honde ;

Though he with all his mightés  
 serve

He shall of him no thank deserve ;  
 He taketh what any man will yive  
 But while he hath o day to live  
 He wol no thíng rewardé ayein,  
 He gruccheth for to yive o grein  
 Where he hath take a berné full.  
 That maketh a kindé herté dull,

To set his trust in such frendshíp  
 There as he fint no kindeshíp.  
 And for to speké wordés pleine,  
 Thus here I many a man compleigne

That nowe on daiés thou shalt finde  
 At nedé fewé frendés kinde.  
 What thou hast done for hem tofore

It is foryeten as it were lore,<sup>1</sup>  
 The bokés speken of this Vice  
 And telle how God of his justíce  
 By way of kinde, and eke natúre  
 And every liflich creätúre,  
 The lawe also, who that it can,  
 They dampnen an unkindé man.

“It is all one, to say Unkinde  
 Asthing which done is ayein Kinde,<sup>2</sup>  
 For it with Kindé never stood  
 A man to yieldeñ evil for good.  
 For who that woldé taken hede,  
 A beste is glad of a good dede  
 And loveth thilké creätúre  
 After the lawe of his natúre  
 And doth him ese. And for to se  
 Of this matere auctorité,  
 Full ofté time it hath befallé ;  
 Wherof a tale amongés alle,  
 Which is of olde ensamplarie,  
 I thenké for to specifie.

**To speke of an unkindé man**  
 I finde, how whilome Adrian  
 Of Romé, which a great lorde was,  
 Upon a day as he par cas  
 To wodé in his hunting went,  
 It hapneth at a sodein went,  
 After the chase as he pursueth,  
 Through happé, which no man  
 escheueth,  
 He felle unware into a pit,  
 Where that it mighté nought be let.  
 The pit was depe, and he fell lowe,  
 That of his men none mighté knowe  
 Where he became, for none was nigh

<sup>1</sup> Lore, lost.<sup>2</sup> Kinde, nature.

Which of his fall the mischefe sigh.  
 And thus aloné there he lay  
 Clepende and criend all the day  
 For socoure and deliverance,  
 Till ayein eve it fell per chance,  
 A while er it began to night,  
 A pouer man which Bardus hight  
 Cam forthé walkend with his asse  
 And haddé gadered him a tasse<sup>1</sup>  
 Of grené stickés and of drie  
 To sellé whom that wolde hem bie,  
 As he which had no livélode  
 But whan he mighté suche a lode  
 To towné with his assé carie.  
 And as it fel him for to tarie  
 That ilké timé nigh the pit  
 And hath the trussé fasté knit,  
 He herde a vois, which criéd dimme,  
 And he his eré to the brimme  
 Hath leide and herde it was a man,  
 Which saide, ‘O helpe here Adrian,  
 And I will yivé half my good !’  
 The pouer man this understood  
 As he that woldé gladly win,  
 And to this lord which was within  
 He spake and said, ‘If I the save,  
 What sikernessé shall I have  
 Of covenant, that afterwarde  
 Thou wolt me yivé such rewarde,  
 As thou behightest now before?’  
 That other hath his othés swore  
 By heven and by the goddés alle,  
 If that it mighté so befallé  
 That he out of the pit him brought,  
 Of all the goodés which he ough<sup>2</sup>  
 He shall have even halven dele.

This Bardus said, he wolde wela.  
 And with this worde his asse anon  
 He let untrussé, and therupon  
 Down goth the corde into the pit,  
 To whiche he hath at ende knit  
 A staff, wherby, he saide, he wolde  
 That Adrian him shuldé holde.  
 But it was tho per chauncé falle,

<sup>1</sup> Tasse, heap.<sup>2</sup> Ought, owned.

Into that pit was also falle  
 An Apé, which at thilké throwe,  
 Whan that the cordé cam down lowe,  
 All sodeinly therto he skipte  
 And it in both his armés clipte.  
 And Bardus with his asse anone  
 Him hath up draw, and he is gon.  
 But whan he sigh it was an Ape,  
 He wend all haddé ben a jape  
 Of faierie, and sore him dradde.  
 And Adrian eft soné gradde  
 For helpe and cride and preidé faste.  
 And he eftsone his cordé caste.  
 But whan it came unto the grounde,  
 A great serpént it hath bewounde,  
 The which Bardus anone updrough.  
 And than him thoughté wel inough,  
 It was fantasmé that he herde  
 The vois, and he therto answerde:  
 ‘What wight art thou in goddés  
 name?’

‘I am,’ quod Adrian, ‘the same,  
 Whose good thou shalt have even  
 halfe.’

Quod Bardus ‘Than a goddés halfe  
 The thriddé time assaie I shall.’  
 And cast his cordé forth withall  
 Into the pit, and whan it came  
 To him, this lord of Rome it name  
 And therupon him hath adressed  
 And with his hond fulth ofté blessed.  
 And than he bad to Bardus ‘Hale!’<sup>1</sup>  
 And he, which understood his tale,  
 Betwene him and his asse all softe  
 Hath drawe and set him up a lofte  
 Withouten harm all esély.  
 He saith not onés ‘graunt mercy,’<sup>2</sup>  
 But straught him forth to the citee  
 And let this pouer Bardus be,  
 And nethéles this simple man  
 His covenaunt, so as he can,  
 Hath axéd. And that other saide,  
 If so be that he him upbraide

<sup>1</sup> *Hale*, “Haul up!”

<sup>2</sup> *Graunt mercy*, thank you.

Of ought that hath be spoke or do,  
 It shall be vengéd of him so  
 That him were better to be dede.  
 And he can tho no other rede;  
 But on his asse ayein he cast  
 His trusse and hieth homward fast.  
 And whan that he came home to bed,  
 He tolde his wife how that he sped.

“But finally, to speke ought more  
 Unto this lorde he drad him sore,  
 So that a word ne durst he sain.  
 And thus upon the morwe ayein  
 In the manér as I recorde,  
 Forth with his asse and with his  
 corde

To gader wode, as he did er,  
 He goth, and whan that he cam ner  
 Unto the placé where he wolde,  
 He gan his Ape anone beholde,  
 Which had gadéréd al aboute  
 Of stickés here and there a route  
 And leide hem redy to his honde,  
 Wherof he made his trusse and  
 bonde.

Fro daie to daie and in this wise  
 This Apé profreth his servise,  
 So that he had of wode inough.  
 Upon a time and as he drough  
 Toward the wode, he sigh beside  
 The greaté gastly serpent glide  
 Till that she cam in his présence,  
 And in her kinde a reverence  
 She hath him do, and forth withall  
 A stone more bright than a cristall  
 Out of her mouth to-fore his way  
 She let down fall and went away,  
 For that he shall nought ben adrad.

“Tho was this pouer Bardus glad,  
 Thonkéndé God, and to the stone  
 He goth and taketh it up anone  
 And hath great wonder in his witte  
 How that the beste him hath aquitte  
 Where that the mannés sone hath  
 failed

For whom he haddé most travailed.

But all he put in Goddés honde  
And torneth home, and what he  
fonde

Unto his wife he hath it shewed  
And they, that weren bothé lewed,  
Accorden that he shulde it selle,  
And he no lenger woldé dwelle<sup>1</sup>  
But forth anone upon the tale  
The stone he profreth to the sale;  
And right as he him selfe it sette,  
The jueller anone forth fette  
The golde and made his paiément,  
Therof was no delaiement.  
Thus whan this stone was bought  
and sold,

Homwárd with jóié many fold  
This Bardus goth, and whan he cam  
Hom to his hous and that he nam  
His gold out of his purs withinne,  
He fonde his stone also therinne,  
Wherof for joy his herte plaide,  
Unto his wife and thus he saide,  
'Lo, here my golde,—lo, here my  
stone!'

His wife hath wonder therupon,  
And axeth him how that may be.  
'Now by my trouth, I not,'<sup>2</sup> quod he,  
'But I dare swere upon a boke  
That to my marchant I it toke,  
And he it haddé whan I went.  
So know I nought to what entent  
It is now here, but it be grace.  
Forthý to morwe in other place  
I will it foundé<sup>3</sup> for to selle,  
And if it woll nought with him  
dwelle,

But crepe into my purse ayein,  
Than dare I sauflý swere and sain,  
It is the vertue of the stone.'

"The morwe came, and he is gone  
To seche about in other stede  
His stone to selle, and so he dede  
And lefte it with his chapman there.

<sup>1</sup> *Dwelle*, delay.

<sup>2</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>3</sup> *Foundé*, try.

But whan that he came ellés where,  
In presence of his wife at home,  
Out of his purs and that he nome  
His golde, he founde his stone withal.  
And thus it felle him overal  
Where he it solde in sondrie place,  
Such was the fortune and the grace.  
But so well may nothing be hid,  
That it nis atté lasté kid.<sup>1</sup>

This famé goth abouté Rome  
So ferforth, that the wordés come  
To themperour Justinían,  
And he let sendé for the man  
And axéd him, how that it was.

"And Bardus tolde him all the cas,  
How that the worrne and eke the  
beste,

Al though they madé no beheste,  
His travaile hadden well aquit.  
But he which had a mannés wit  
And made his covenant by mouth  
And swore therto all that he couth  
To parte and yivé half his good  
Hath now foryete how that it stood,  
As he which wol no trouthe holde,  
This emperour al that he tolde  
Hath herde and thilke unkindénesse,  
He said, he wolde him self redresse.  
And thus in court of jugément  
This Adrian was than assent,<sup>2</sup>  
And the quaréll in audiéce  
Declaréd was in the préséce  
Of themperour and many mo;  
Wherof was mochel speché tho  
And great wondring among the  
press.

But atté lasté nethéless,  
For the partié which hath pleigned  
The law hath deméd and ordeigned  
By hem that were aviséd wele,  
That he shal have the halven dele  
Throughout of Adrianés good.  
And thus of thilke unkindé blood  
Stant the memoire unto this day,

<sup>1</sup> *Kid*, made known.

<sup>2</sup> *Assent*, sent for.



Wheré that every wise man may  
 Ensamplen him and take in minde  
 What shame it is to ben unkinde,  
 Ayein the which resón debateth  
 And every creätüre it hateth.

“Forthý my sone, in thy office  
 I redé flee that ilké Vice.  
 For right as the cronqué saith  
 Of Adrian, how he his feith  
 Foryat for worldés covetise,  
 Ful oft in suche a maner wise  
 Of lovers now a man may se  
 Ful many that unkinde be,  
 For wel behote and evil last  
 That is her life,<sup>1</sup> for atté last  
 When that they have her wille do  
 Her love is sone aftér ago.  
 What saist thou, soné, to this  
 cas ?”—

“My fader, I wil say, Helas,  
 That ever such a man was bore  
 Which when he hath his trouthé  
 swore  
 And hath of lové what he wolde,  
 That he at any timé sholde  
 Ever after in his herté finde  
 To falsen and to ben unkinde.

“But, fader, as touchénd of me,  
 I may nought stond in that degre.  
 For I toke never of lové why  
 That I ne may wel go therby  
 And do my profite ellés where  
 For any spede I findé there,  
 I dare wel thenken, all about.  
 But I ne dare nought speke it out,  
 And if I dorst I suffré peigne,  
 That she for whom I suffré peine  
 And love her ever aliché hote,  
 That nouter yivé ne behote  
 In rewardíng of my servíce  
 It list<sup>2</sup> her in no maner wise.  
 I wol nought say that she is kinde,  
 And for to say she is unkinde

<sup>1</sup> Well promised and ill performed, that is their life.

<sup>2</sup> List, pleases.

That dare I nought by God above  
 Which demeth every herte of love,  
 He wot that on min owné side  
 Shall none unkindéship abide ;  
 If it shall with my lady dwelle,  
 Therof dare I no moré telle.  
 Now, godé fader, as it is  
 Tell me, what thenketh you of  
 this ?”—

My sone, of that unkindéship,  
 The which toward thy ladisship  
 Thou pleignest, for she woll the  
 nought,  
 Thou art to blamen of thy thought.  
 For it may be that thy desire,  
 Though it brenne ever as doth the  
 fire,

Par cas to her honoúr misset,  
 Or ellés timé come nought yet  
 Which stant upon thy destiné.  
 Forthý my sone, I redé the  
 Think well, what ever the befallé,  
 For no man hath his lustés alle.  
 But as thou toldest me before  
 That thou to love art nought for-  
 swore

And hast done non unkindénesse,  
 Thou might therof thy gracé blesse  
 And levé nought that cóntinuánce,  
 For there may be no such grevánce  
 To love as is Unkindéship.  
 Wherof to kepé thy worshíp,  
 So as these oldé bokés tale,  
 I shall the telle a redy tale.  
 Now herken and be ware therby,  
 For I will telle it openly.

“*Minos*, as telleth the poéte,  
 The which whilóm was king of  
 Crete,

A soné had and Androchee  
 He hight. And so befell that he  
 Unto Athenés for to lere  
 Was sent, and so he bare him there  
 For that he was of high lignáge,  
 Such pride he toke in his coráge,

That he foryeten hath the scoles,  
 And in riót among the fooles  
 He diddē many thingés wronge  
 And uséd thilké life so longe,  
 Til atté last of that he wrought  
 He found the mischefe which he  
                   sought,

Wherof it fell that he was slain.  
 His fader, which it herde sain,  
 Was wroth, and all that ever hemight  
 Of men of armés he him dight  
 A strong power and forth he went  
 Unto Athenés, where he brent  
 The pleiné contré al aboute.  
 The cités stood of him in doubté<sup>1</sup>  
 As they that no defencé had  
 Ayein the power which he lad.  
 Egēus which was theré king  
 His counseil toke upon this thing,  
 For he was than in the citee,  
 So that of pees into tretée  
 Betwene Minós and Egēús  
 They fell, and bene accorded thus,  
 That king Minós fro yere to yere  
 Receivé shal as thou shalt here  
 Out of Athenés for truage  
 Of men that were of mighty age  
 Personés nine, of which he shall  
 His willé don in speciall  
 For vengeance of his sonés deth,  
 None other gracé there ne geth  
 But for to také the juise,<sup>2</sup>  
 And that was don in suche a wise.  
 Upon which stood a wonder cas.  
 For thilké timé so it was,  
 Wherof that men yet rede and sing,  
 King Minos had in his keepíng  
 A cruel monster, as saith the gest.  
 For he was half man and half beste,  
 And Minotaurus he was hote,  
 Which was begotten in a riote  
 Upon Pasiphe, his owné wife,  
 Whil he was out upon the strife  
 Of thilké greaté siege at Troie.

<sup>1</sup> *Doubte, fear.*

<sup>2</sup> *Juise, judgment.*

But she which lost hath allé joie  
 Whan that she sigh this monster bore  
 Bad men ordeigne anon therfore.  
 And fell that ilké timé thus,  
 There was a clerke, one Dedalus,  
 Which haddé ben of her assent<sup>1</sup>  
 Of that her world was so miswent ;  
 And he made of his owné wit,  
 Wherof the remembraunce is yit,  
 For Minotauré suche a hous  
 That was so stronge and merveilóus  
 That what man that withinné went,  
 There was so many a sondry went  
 That he ne shuldé nought come out,  
 But gone amaséd all about.  
 And in this hous to locke and warde  
 Was Minotaurus put in warde,  
 That what life<sup>2</sup> that therinné cam,  
 Or man or beste, he overcam  
 And slough, and fed him therupon.  
 And in this wisé many one  
 Out of Athenés for truage  
 Devouréd weren in that rage.  
 For every yere they shope hem so,  
 They of Athenés er they go  
 Toward that ilké wofull chaunce  
 As it was set in ordenaunce,  
 Upon Fortúne her lot they cast ;  
 Till that Thesëús atté laste,  
 Which was the kingés soné there  
 Amongés other that there were,  
 In thilké yere as it befell  
 The lot upon his chauncé fell.  
 He was a worthy knight withall,  
 And whan he sigh his chauncé fall,  
 He ferde as though he toke none  
                   hede,

But all that ever he might spede  
 With him and with his felaship  
 Forth into Crete he goth by ship,  
 Where that the king Minós he sought  
 And profreth all that he him ought  
 Upon the point of her accorde.

<sup>1</sup> *Of her assent, sent for by her.*

<sup>2</sup> *Life, body ; what life, whoever.*

This sterné king, this cruel lorde,  
 Toke every day one of the nine  
 And put into the disciplene  
 Of Minotaure to be devoured.  
 But Thesëús was so favoured  
 That he was kept till atté last,  
 And in the meané while he cast  
 What thing him weré best to do.  
 And fell, that Ariadné tho,  
 Which was the doughter of Minós,  
 And haddé herd the worthy los<sup>1</sup>  
 Of Thesëús and of his might  
 And sigh he was a lusty knight,  
 Her holé herte on him she laide.  
 And he also of love her praide  
 So ferforth that they were alone,  
 And she ordeineth than anone  
 In what manér she shuld him save.  
 And shopé so, she did him have  
 A clue of threde of which withinne  
 First atté dore he shall beginne  
 With him to také that one ende,  
 That whan he wold ayeinward wende  
 He mighté go the samé wey.  
 And over this so as I say,  
 Of pitch she toke him a pelote,<sup>2</sup>  
 The which he shulde into the throte  
 Of Minotauré casté right.  
 Such wepon also for him she dight,  
 That he by reson may nought faile  
 To make an ende of his bataile.  
 For she him taught in sondry wise  
 Till he was knowe of thilke emprise  
 How he this besté shuldé quelle.  
 And thus short talé for to telle,  
 So as this maiden him had taught  
 Thesëús with this monster faught  
 And smote of his hede, the whiche  
 he nam,  
 And by the thred, so as he cam  
 He goth ayein, til he were out.  
 So was great wonder all about ;  
 Minós the tribute hath relesed,

<sup>1</sup> *Los*, praise.

<sup>2</sup> *Toke him a pelote*, gave him a ball.

And so was all the werré cesed  
 Betwene Athenes and hem of Crete.

“Butnow to speke of thilké swete  
 Whose beauté was withouté wan,  
 This faire maiden Adriane,  
 Whan that she sigh Thesëús sounde  
 Was never yet upon this grounde  
 A gladder wight than she was tho.  
 Thesëús dwelt a day or two  
 Where that Minós great chere him  
 ded.

Thesëús in a privé sted  
 Hath with this maiden spoke and  
 rounded,<sup>1</sup>

That she to him was abandoúned ;  
 For he so fairé tho behight<sup>2</sup>  
 That ever while he livé might  
 He shuld her také for his wife  
 And as his owné hertés life  
 He wolde her love and trouthe bere.  
 And she, which mighté nought for-  
 bere,

So soré lovéth him ayein,  
 That what as ever he wold sain  
 With all her herté she beleveth.  
 And thus his purpos he acheveth,  
 So that assuréd of his trouthe  
 With him she went, and that was  
 routhé.

Fedra her yongé suster eke,  
 A lusty maide, a sobre, a meke,  
 Fulfilléd of all curtesie,  
 For susterhode and compaignie  
 Of lové which was hem betwene,  
 To sen her suster made a quene  
 Her fader lefte and forth she went  
 With him which all his first entent  
 Foryat within a litel throwe,<sup>3</sup>  
 So that it was all over throwe  
 Whan she best wend it shuldé stonde.  
 The ship was blowé fro the londe,  
 Wherinné that they sailend were.  
 This Ariadne had mochel fere

<sup>1</sup> *Rounded*, whispered.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho behight*, then promised.

<sup>3</sup> *Throwe*, space of time.

Of that the wind so loudé blewe,  
As she which of the see ne knewe,  
And praidé for to reste a while.  
And so fell that upon an ile  
Which Chio highté they ben drive,  
Where he to her hath levé yive,  
That she shall lond and take her  
rest,

But that was nothing for her best.  
For whan she was to londé brought,  
She, which that timé thoughté  
nought

But allé trouth and toke no kepe,  
Hath laid her softé for to slepe,  
As she which longe hath ben for-  
wacched.

But certés she was evil macched  
And fer from allé lovés kinde.

For moré than the beste<sup>1</sup> unkinde  
Thesëús, which no trouthé kept,  
While that this yongé lady slept,  
Fulfilled of all unkindéship  
Hath all foryete the godéship,  
Whiche Ariadné him hadde do,  
And bad unto the shipmen tho  
Hale up the saile and nought abide,  
And forth he goth the samé tide  
Towardé Athenes, and her on londe  
He lefté, which lay nigh the stronde  
Slepéndé til that she awoke.

But whan that she cast up her loke  
Toward the stronde and sigh no  
wight,

Her herté was so sore aflight<sup>2</sup>  
That she ne wisté what to thinke  
But drough her to the water brinke,  
Where she beheld the see at large.  
She sigh no ship, she sigh no barge  
Als ferforth as she mighté kenne.  
'Ha lord,' she saidé, 'which a senne,  
As all the world shall after here,  
Upon this wofull woman here  
This worthy knight hath done and  
wrought,

<sup>1</sup> Beste, beast.

<sup>2</sup> *Aflight*, afflicted.

I wend I had his lové bought,  
And so deservéd atté nede,  
Whan that he stood upon his drede,  
And eke the love he me behight.  
It is great wonder, how he might  
Towardés me now ben unkinde,  
And so to let out of his minde  
Thing which he said his owné mouth.  
But after this, whan it is couth  
And drawe into the worldés fame,  
It shall ben hindring of his name.  
For well he wote, and so wote I,  
He yafe his trouthé bodily  
That he min honour shuldé kepe.  
And with that word she gan to wepe  
And sorweth moré than inough.  
Her fairé tresses she to-drough  
And with her self toke such a strife,  
That she betwene the deth and life  
Swounéndé lay full oft amonge.  
And all was this on him alonge,  
Which was to love unkindé so,  
Wherof the wrong shall evermo  
Stond in croníque of remembraunce.  
And eke it axeth a vengeaunce  
To ben unkinde in lovés cas  
So as Thesëús thanné was,  
All though he were a noble knight.  
For he the lawe of lovés right  
Forfested hath in allé way,  
That Ariadne he put away,  
Which was a great unkindé dede.  
And after this, so as I rede,  
Fedra, the which her suster is,  
He toke in stede of her, and this  
Fell afterward to mochel tene.  
For thilké Vice of whiche I mene,  
Unkindéship, where that it falleth  
The trouthe of mannés hert it palleth  
That he can no good dede acquite,  
So may he stonde of no merite  
Towardés God and eke also  
Men clepen him the worldés fo,  
For he no moré than the Fende  
Unto none other man is frende,

But all toward him self alone.

“Forthy my sone, in thy persone  
This Vice above all other fle.”—

My fader, as ye techen me,  
I thenké don in this matere.  
But over this now wold I here,  
Wherof I shall me shrivé more.”

“My godé sone, as for thy lore,  
After the reule of Covetise,  
I shall the propreté devise  
Of every Vicé by and by.  
Now herke and be wel ware therby.

“**In the lignage** of Avarice,  
My soné, yet there is a Vice,  
His righté name it is Ravine,  
Which hath a route of his covinc.  
Ravine among the maisters dwel-  
leth,

And with his servants as mentelleth  
Extorción is now witholde.  
Ravine of other mennés folde  
Maketh his lardér and paieth  
nought.

For where as ever it may be sought  
In his hous there shall no thing  
lacke,

And that ful ofte abieth the packe  
Of pouer men that dwelle aboute ;  
Thus stant the comune people in  
doubte,

Which can do none amendément.  
For whan him failleth paiément,  
Raviné maketh non other skille,  
But taketh by strength al that he  
wille.

So ben there in the samé wise  
Lovers, as I the shall devise,  
That whan nought ellés may availe,  
Anone with strengthé they assaile  
And get of lové the sesine  
Whan they se timé, by ravine.

“Forthy my soné, shrive the  
here,  
If thou hast ben a ravinere  
Of lové.”—“Certes, fader, no,

For I my lady lové so  
For though I were as was Pompéy  
That all the world me wolde obey,  
Or ellés such as Alisaundre,  
I woldé nought do suche a sclaunder.

It is nogood man, whichso doth.”—  
“In godé feith, sone, thou saist  
soth,

For he that woll of purveánce  
By such a wey his lust avance  
He shall it after sore abie,  
But if<sup>1</sup> these olde ensamples lie.”—

“Now, godé fader, tell me one,  
So as ye connen many one,  
Touchénd of love in this matere.”—

“Now list, my sone, and thou  
shalt here

So as it hath befall er this  
In lovés cause how that it is,  
A man to také by ravine  
The preié which is feminine.

**There was a roial** noble kinge,  
A riche of allé worldés thinge,  
Which of his propre enheritance  
Athenés had in gouvernaunce,  
And whoso thenké therupon,  
His namé was king Pandión.  
Two daughters had he by his  
wife,

The which he lovéd as his life.  
The firsté daughter Progné hight,  
And the secónde, as she well might,  
Was clepéd fairé Philomene,  
To whom fell after mochel tene.<sup>2</sup>  
The fader of his purveánce  
His daughter Progné wolde avance,  
And yafe her unto mariáge  
A worthy king of high lignáge,  
A noble knight eke of his honde,  
So was he kid<sup>3</sup> in every londe.  
Of Tracé he hight Teréús,  
The clerke Ovidé telleth thus.

<sup>1</sup> *But if*, unless.

<sup>2</sup> *Tene*, sorrow.

<sup>3</sup> *Kid*, made known, renowned.

This Terëús his wife home lad,  
 A lusty life with her he had  
 Till it befell upon a tide,  
 This Progne, as she lay him beside,  
 Bethought her how it mighté be  
 That she her suster mighté se;  
 And to her lorde her will she saide  
 With goodly wordés and him praide  
 That she unto her mighté go,  
 And if it likéd him nought so,  
 That than he wolde him selvé wende,  
 Or ellés by some other sende  
 Which might her deré suster grete  
 And shape how that they mighten  
 mete.

Her lorde anone to that he herde  
 Yaf his accorde and thus answérde:  
 'I woll,' he saidé, 'for thy sake,  
 The wey after thy suster take  
 My self and bring her, if I may.'  
 And she with that, there as she lay,  
 Began him in her armés clippe  
 And kist him with her softé lippe  
 And saidé: 'Siré, graunt mercy.'  
 And he sone after was redý  
 And toke his levé for to go.  
 In sory timé did he so.

This Terëús goth forth to shippe  
 With him and all his felshippe.  
 By sea the righté cours he nam  
 Unto the contré till he cam  
 Where Philoméne was dwelling,  
 And of her suster the tiding  
 He tolde and tho they weren glad  
 And mochel joie of him they made.  
 The fader and the moder bothe  
 To leve her doughter weré lothe  
 But if they weren in presence,  
 And nethéles at reverence  
 Of him that wolde him self travaile,  
 They woldé nought he shuldé faile,  
 And that they praiden yive her leve.  
 And she that woldé nought beleve<sup>1</sup>  
 In allé hasté made her yare<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Beleve*, stay behind.    <sup>2</sup> *Yare*, ready.

Toward her suster for to fare  
 With Terëús and forth she went.  
 And he with al his hole entent  
 Whan she was fro her frendés go  
 Assoteth of her lové so  
 His eyé might he nought witholde  
 That he ne must on her beholde,  
 And with the sight he gan desire  
 And set his owné hert a fire.  
 And fire whan it to tow approacheth  
 To him anon the strength accro-  
 cheth,<sup>1</sup>

Till with his hete it be devoured,  
 The tow ne may nought be soc-  
 coured.

And so the tirann ravinere,  
 Whan that she was in his powere,  
 And he therto sigh time and place,  
 As he that lost hath all his grace,  
 Foryate he was a wedded man,  
 And in a rage on her he ran  
 Right as a wolf that taketh his pray.  
 And she began to crie and pray:  
 'O fader dere, o moder dere,  
 Now help!' But they ne might it  
 here,

And she was of to litel might  
 Defence ayein so rude a knight  
 To maké whan he was so wode  
 That he no reson understode.  
 But whan she to her selvé come  
 And of her mischefe hedé nome  
 And knewe how that she was no  
 maide,

With wofull herté thus she saide:  
 'O thou of allé men the worst,  
 Where was there ever man that dorst  
 Do such a dede as thou hast do?  
 That day shall falle, I hopé so,  
 That I shall tell out all my fille  
 And with my speche I shall fulfille  
 The widé worlde in brede and  
 length

That thou hast do to me by strength.

<sup>1</sup> *Accrocheth*, increaseth.

If I among the people dwelle  
 Unto the people I shall it telle ;  
 And if I be withinné wall  
 Of stonés closéd, than I shall  
 Unto the stonés clepe and crie,  
 And tellen hem thy felonie ;  
 And if I to the wodés wende,  
 There shall I tellé tale and ende  
 And crie it to the briddés out,  
 That they shall here it all about :  
 For I so loude it shall reherce,  
 That my vois shall the heven perce,  
 That it shall souné in Goddés ere,  
 Ha falsé man, where is thy fere ?  
 O more cruél than any beste,  
 How hast thou holden thy behest  
 Which thou unto my suster madest ?  
 O thou, which allé love ungladest  
 And art ensample of all untrewé,  
 Now woldé god my suster knewe  
 Of thin untrouthe, how that it stood !  
 And he than as a leon wode<sup>1</sup>  
 With his unhappy hondés strong  
 He caught her by the tresses long  
 With whiche he bondé both her  
 armes,  
 That was a feble dede of armes,  
 And to the grounde anone her cast,  
 And out he clippeth also fast  
 Her tungé with a paire of sheres.  
 So what with blode and what with  
 teres,  
 Out of her eyne and of her mouth,  
 He made her fairé face uncouth.  
 She lay swounéd unto the dethe,  
 There was unnethés any brethe.  
 But yet whan he her tungé resté,  
 A litel part therof he lefte.  
 But she withall no word may souné  
 But chitre<sup>2</sup> and as a brid jargoune.  
 And nethéles that wodé hounde  
 Her body hent up fro the grounde  
 And sent her there as by his will  
 She shulde abide, in prison still

<sup>1</sup> *Wode*, madly raging.      <sup>2</sup> *Chitre*, chirp.

For ever mo. But now take hede  
 What after fell of this misdede.  
 Whan all this mischefe was befallé,  
 This Teréús, that foule him falle,  
 Unto his contré home he tigh,<sup>1</sup>  
 And whan he cam his paleis nigh,  
 His wife alredy there him kept.  
 Whan he her sigh, anon he wept,  
 And that he didé for deceipt,  
 For she began to axe him streit :  
 ‘Where is my suster?’ And he saide  
 That she was dede, and Progne  
 abraide,

As she that was a wofull wife,  
 And stood betwene her deth and life  
 Because she herdé such tidíng.  
 But for she sigh her lord wepíng,  
 She wendé nought but alle trouth  
 And haddé wel the moré routh.  
 The perlés weré tho forsake  
 To her and blacké clothés take,  
 As she that was gentil and kinde.  
 In worship of her susters minde<sup>2</sup>  
 She made a riche enterément,<sup>3</sup>  
 For she found none amendément  
 To sighen or to sobbé more,  
 So was there guile under the gore.

“Now levé we this king and  
 quene,  
 And torne ayein to Philomene.  
 As I began to tellen erst,  
 Whan she cam into prison ferst,  
 It thought a kingés daughter  
 straunge  
 To maké so sodeín a change  
 Fro welth unto so great a wo.  
 And she began to thenké tho,  
 Though she by mouthé nothing  
 praide,  
 Within her herté thus she saide :  
 ‘O thou, almighty Jupitér,  
 That highé sittest and lokest fer,

<sup>1</sup> *Tigh*, drew.

<sup>2</sup> In reverence to her sister's memory.

<sup>3</sup> *Enterément*, interment, funeral pomp.

Thou suffrest many a wrong doſng,  
 And yet it is nought thy willng.  
 To the there may nothing ben hid,  
 Thou wost<sup>1</sup> how it is me betid.  
 I wolde I haddé nought be bore.  
 For than I haddé nought forlore  
 My speche and my virginité.  
 But godé lord, all is in the,  
 Whan thou therof wolt do ven-  
 geaúnce

And shapé my deliveraúnce !'  
 And ever among this lady wepte  
 And thoughté that she never kepte  
 To be a worldés woman more,  
 And that she wissheth evermore.  
 But ofte unto her suster dere  
 Her herté speketh in this manere  
 And saide : 'Ha suster, if ye knewe  
 Of min estate ye woldé rewe  
 I trowe, and my deliveraúnce  
 Yewoldé shape, and do vengeaúnce  
 On him that is so fals a man.  
 And nethéles, so as I can,  
 I woll you send some tokening,  
 Wherof ye shall have knouleching  
 Of thing I wot that shall you loth  
 The which you toucheth and me  
 both.'

And tho within a while als tite<sup>2</sup>  
 She wafe a cloth of silke all white  
 With letters and ymagery,  
 In which was all the felony,  
 Which Teréús to her hath do,  
 And lappéd it to-gider tho  
 And set her signet therupon  
 And sent it unto Progne anon.  
 The messenger which forth it bare,  
 What it amounteth is nought ware,  
 And nethéles to Progne he goth  
 And privély taketh her the cloth  
 And went ayein right as he cam,  
 The Court of him none hedé name.

"Whan Progne of Philomené  
 herde

She woldé knowe how that it ferde,  
 And openeth that the man hath  
 brought

And wot therby what hath be  
 wrought

And what mischefe there is befallé.  
 In swouné tho she gan down falle,  
 And este arose and gan to stonde,  
 And eft she taketh the clothe on  
 honde,

Beheld the letters and thymáges,  
 But atté last of suche oultráges  
 She said, 'Weping is nought the  
 bote,'<sup>1</sup>

And swereth, if that she livé mote  
 It shall be vengéd other wise.  
 And with that she gan her avise,  
 How first she might unto her winne  
 Her suster, that no man withinne,  
 But only they that weré swore,  
 It shuldé knowe, and shope ther-  
 fore,

That Teréús nothing it wist,  
 And yet right as her selven list  
 Her suster was delivered sone  
 Out of prisón, and by the mone  
 To Progné she was brought by  
 night.

Whan eche of other had a sight  
 In chambre there they were alone,  
 They maden many a pitous mone.  
 But Progné most of sorwé made,  
 Which sigh her suster pale and fade  
 And spechéles and deshonoúred  
 Of that she haddé be defloured,  
 And eke upon her lord she thought  
 Of that he so untruely wrought  
 And had his espousailé broke,  
 She maketh a vow it shall be wroke.  
 And with that word she kneleth  
 down

Weping in great devocioún,  
 Unto Cupide and to Venus  
 She praid and saidé thanné thus :

<sup>1</sup> Wost, knowest.    <sup>2</sup> Als tite, promptly.

<sup>1</sup> Bote, remedy.



'O ye, to whom no thing asterte<sup>1</sup>  
Of Lové may, for every herte  
Ye knowe, as ye that ben above  
The God and the Goddésse of Love,  
Ye witen well, that ever yit  
With al min herte and all my wit  
I have ben trewe in my degre  
And ever thoughté for to be,  
And never love in other place  
But all only the king of Trace  
Whiche is my lord and I his wife.  
But now alas this wofull strife,  
That I him thus ayeinward finde  
The most untrewé and most un-  
kinde

That ever in ladies armés lay,  
And wel I wot that he ne may  
Amend his wronge, it is so great,  
For he to litel of me lete  
Whan he min owné suster toke  
And me that am his wife forsoke.'

Lo, thus to Venus and Cupide  
She praid, and furthermore she cride  
Unto Apollo the highést  
And said: 'O mighty god of rest,  
Thou do vengeaunce of this debate,  
My suster and all her estate  
Thou wost, and I shall bere a blame  
Of that my suster hath a shame,  
That Teréús to her I sent.  
And well thou wost, that min entent  
Was all for worship and for good.  
O lord, that yivest the livés food  
To every wight, I pray the here  
These wofull susters that ben here,  
And let us nought to the ben loth,  
We ben thin owné women both.'  
Thus pleigneth Progne and axeth  
wreche,

And though her suster lacké speche,  
To him that allé thinges wote  
Her sorwe is nought the lassé hote.  
But he that thanné herd hem two  
Him ought have sorwed evermo

<sup>1</sup> *Asterte*, escape.

For sorwe which was hem betwene.  
With signés pleigneth Philomene,  
And Progné saith: 'It shal be  
wreke,

That all the world therof shall speke.'

"And Progne tho sikenessé  
feigned,

Wherof unto her lord she pleigned  
And preith she mote her chambre  
kepe

And as her liketh wake and slepe.  
And he her graunteth to be so.

And thus to-gider ben they two,  
That wold him but a litel good.

Now herke hereafter, how it stood  
Of wofull auntrés that befelle.

These susters, that ben bothé felle,  
And that was nought on hem alonge

But only on the greaté wronge  
Which Teréús hem hadde do,

They shopen for to venge hem tho.  
This Teréús by Progne his wife

A soné hath, which as his life  
He loveth, and Ithís he hight.

His moder wisté well she might  
Do Teréús no moré greve

Than slee his child which was so  
leve.

Thus she that was as who saith mad  
Of wo which hath her overlad,

Without insight of moderhede  
Foryat pité and losté drede

And in her chambre privély

This childé without noise or cry  
She slough and hewe him all to

pieces.

And after with diversé spieces

The flesh whan it was so to-hewe,  
She taketh and maketh therof a

sewe,<sup>1</sup>

With which the fader at his mete  
Was servéd till he had him ete

That he ne wist how that it stood.  
But thus his owné fleshh and blood

<sup>1</sup> *Sewe*, broth, stew.

Him self devoureth ayeine kinde,  
 As he that was to-fore unkinde.  
 And than er that he were arise,  
 For that he shuldé bene agrise  
 To shewen him the child was dede,  
 This Philomené toke the hede  
 Betwene two disshes, and all wrothe  
 Tho camen forth the susters bothe  
 And setten it upon the bord.  
 And Progné than began the word  
 And saide : ' O werst of alle wicke,  
 Of consciéncé whom no pricke  
 May steré, lo, what thou hast do,  
 Lo, here ben now we susters two.  
 O raviner, lo here thy prey,  
 With whom so falslich on the wey  
 Thou hast thy tiranné wrought,  
 Lo, now it is somedele abought  
 And beter it shall, for of thy dede  
 The world shall ever sing and rede  
 In remembraunce of thy defame,  
 For thou to love hast done such  
 shame,

That it shall never be foryete.'

With that he sterte up fro the mete,  
 And shove the bord into the flore,  
 And caught a swerd anone and swore  
 That they shulde of his hondés deie.  
 And they unto the goddés crie  
 Begunné with so loude a steven,  
 That they were herde unto the  
 heven,

And in the twinkeling of an eye  
 The goddés that the mischefe sigh  
 Her formés chaungéd allé thre.  
 Echone of hem in his degré  
 Was torned into a briddés kinde  
 Diversélich as men may finde.  
 After thestate that they were inne  
 Her formés weré set a twinne,  
 And as it telleth in the tale  
 The first into a nightingale  
 Was shape, and that was Philomene,  
 Which in the winter is nought sene,  
 For thanné ben the levés falle

And naked ben the busslies alle.  
 For after that she was a brid  
 Her will was ever to ben hid  
 And for to dwelle in privé place,  
 That no man shuldé sen her face  
 For shamé which may nought ben  
 lassed

Of thing that was to-foré passed,  
 And halt her clos the winter day.  
 But whan the winter goth away  
 And that natúré the goddesse  
 Woll of her owné fre largesse  
 With herbés and with flourés bothe  
 The feldés and the medewes clothe,  
 And eke the wodés and the greves  
 Ben heléd<sup>1</sup> all with grené levés,  
 So that a brid her hidé may  
 Betwené March, Aprille and May,  
 She that the winter<sup>2</sup> held her clos  
 For puré shame and nought aros,  
 Whan that she sigh the bowés thicke  
 And that there is no baré stické  
 But all is hid with levés grene,  
 To wodé cometh this Philomene  
 And maketh her firsté yerés flight,  
 Where as she singeth day and night,  
 And in her song all openly  
 She maketh her pleint and saith :

' O why,

O why ne were I yet a maide ?'  
 For so these oldé wisé saide  
 Which understoden what she ment,  
 Her notés ben of suche entent.  
 And eke they said, how in her songe  
 She maketh great joy and merth  
 amonge

And saith : ' Ha, now I am a brid,  
 Ha, now my facé may ben hid !'  
 Thus medleth she with joié wo  
 And with her sorwé merth also,  
 So that of lovés maladie  
 She maketh diversé melodie  
 And saith : ' Love is a wofull blisse,

<sup>1</sup> *Greves . . . heled, groves . . . covered.*

<sup>2</sup> *The winter, during winter.*

A wisdom, which can no man wisse,  
A lusty fever, a woundé softé.<sup>7</sup>  
This noté she reherseþ ofte  
To hem which understonde her tale.

“Now have I of this nightingale,  
Which erst was clepéd Philomene,  
Told all that ever worldé mene  
Both of her forme and of her note,  
Wherof men may the story note.  
And of her suster Progne I finde,  
How she was tornéd out of kinde  
Into a swalwé swift of wing,  
Which eke in winter lith swounding  
There as she may no thng be sene,  
But whan the world is woxé grene  
And comen is the somer tide,  
Than fleeth she forth and ginneth  
to chide

And chitereth out in her langáge  
What falskede is in mariáge;  
And telleth in a maner speche  
Of Teréús the spouses breche.  
She wol nought in the wodés dwelle,  
For she wold openliché telle,  
And eke for that she was a spouse,  
Among the folk she cometh to house  
To do these wivés understonde  
The falshode of her husébonde,  
That they of hem beware also,  
For there be many untrewé of tho.

“Thus ben the susters briddés  
both

And ben toward the men so loth,  
That they ne woll for puré shame  
Unto no mannés hond be tame,  
For ever it dwelleth in her minde  
Of that they found a man unkinde,  
And that was falsé Teréús.  
If suché one be amonge us  
I not, but his condition  
Men say in every regiön  
Withinné town and eke without  
Now regneth comunlich about.  
And nethéles in remembraunce  
I woll declare what vengeaunce

The goddés hadden him ordeigned,  
Of that the susters hadden pleigned.  
For anone after he was chaunged  
And from his owné kindéstraunged,  
A lappéwinké made he was  
And thus he hoppeth on the gras,  
And on his heed there stont upright  
A crest in token of a knight,  
And yet unto this day, men saith,  
A lappéwinke hath lost his feith  
And is the brid falsést of alle.

“Beware, my sone, er the so falle,  
For if thou be of such covine  
To get of lové by ravine  
Thy lust, it may the fallé thus,  
As it befell of Teréús.”—

“My fader, nay, Goddés forbode,  
Me weré lever be fortrode,  
With wildé hors and be to-drawe,  
Er I ayein love and his lawe  
Did any thing, or loude or still,  
Which weré nought my ladies will.  
Men saien that every love hath  
drede,

So folweth it that I her drede,  
For I her love, and who so  
dredeth,—

To plesé his love and serve, him  
nedeth.

Thus may ye known by this skill,  
That no Raviné done I will  
Ayein her will by such a wey.  
But while I live I will obey,  
Abiding on her courtesie  
If any mercy wolde her plie.<sup>1</sup>

“Forthy my fader, as of this  
I wot nought I have do amis.  
But furthermore I you beseche,  
Some other point that ye me teche,  
And axeth forth if there be ought,  
That I may be the better taught.”—

“**Þhan Covetise** in pouer  
estate

Stont with him self upon debate

<sup>1</sup> *Plie*, bend, turn.

Through lacke of his misgovern-  
 aunce,  
 That he unto his sustenaunce  
 Ne can non other waie finde  
 To get him good, than as the blinde  
 Which seeth nought what shal after  
 fall,  
 That ilké Vicé which men call  
 Of Robbery he taketh on honde,  
 Wherof by water and by londe  
 Of thing which other men beswinke<sup>1</sup>  
 He get him cloth and mete and  
 drinke,  
 Him reccheth nought what he be-  
 ginne  
 Through thefté so that he may winne.  
 Forthý to maken his purchás  
 He lith awaitend on the pas,  
 And what thing that he seeth ther  
 passe  
 He taketh his parte or more or lasse  
 If it be worthy to be take,  
 He can the packés well ransake.  
 So privély bereth none about  
 His gold that he ne fint it out,  
 Or other juell what it be  
 He taketh it as his propreté  
 In wodés and in feldés eke.  
 Thus Robberfé goth to seke  
 Where as he may his purchas finde.  
 And right so in the samé kinde  
 My godé sone, as thou might here,  
 To speke of love in the matere  
 And make a verray résemblance  
 Right as a thefe maketh chevesance  
 And robbeth mennés goodes about  
 In wode and felde where he goth out,  
 So be theré of these lovers some  
 In wildé stedés<sup>2</sup> where they come  
 And finden there a woman able  
 And therto placé covenáble,  
 Withouté leve er that they fare  
 They take a parte of that chaffare.

<sup>1</sup> *Beswinke*, obtain by labour.

<sup>2</sup> *Stedes*, places.

But therof wot nothing the wife  
 At home, which loveth as her life  
 Her lord and sit all day wissing  
 After her lordés home coming.  
 But whan he cométh home at eve  
 Anone he maketh his wife beleve,  
 For she nought ellés shuldé knowe  
 He telleth her, how his hunt hath  
 blowe  
 And howe his houndés have well  
 ronne,  
 And how there shone a mery sonne,  
 And how his hawkés flowne wele.  
 But he wol telle her never a dele,  
 How he to love untrewé was  
 Of that he robbéd in the pas  
 And toke his lust under the shawe  
 Ayein Love and ayein his lawe.

“Which thing, my sone, I the  
 forbede,

For it is an ungodly dede.  
 For who that taketh by robberie  
 His love, he may nought justifié  
 His cause, and so ful osté sithe<sup>1</sup>  
 For onés that he hath ben blithe  
 He shall ben after sory thries.  
 Ensamples for such robberies  
 I findé write as thou shalt here  
 Accordend unto this matere.

“*I rede, how whilom* was a  
 maide

The fairest, as Ovidé saide,  
 Which was in hiré timé tho.  
 And she was of the chambre also  
 Of Pallas, which is the goddésse  
 And wife to Marte, of whom prow-  
 esse

Is yové to these worthy knightes,  
 For he is of so greaté mightes,  
 That he govérneth the bataile;  
 Withouten him may nought availe  
 The strongé hond, but he it helpe,  
 There may no knight of armes  
 yelpe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Osté sith*, many times.    <sup>2</sup> *Yelpe*, boast.

But he fight under his banere.  
 But now to speke of my matere  
 This fairé, fresshé, lusty may<sup>1</sup>  
 Alone as she went on a day  
 Upon the strondé for to play,  
 There came Neptúnus in the way,  
 Which hath the see in governaunce,  
 And in his herté such plesaunce  
 He toke whan he this maiden sigh,  
 That all his hert aros on high.  
 For he so sodeinlich unware  
 Beheld the beauté that she bare,  
 And cast anone within his hert  
 That she him shall no way astert.  
 This maiden which Cornfx by name  
 Was hoté, dredend allé shame,  
 Sigh that she mighté nought debate,  
 And well she wist he wolde algate  
 Fulfill his lust of robberie,  
 Anone began to wepe and crie  
 And said, 'O Pallas noble quene,  
 Shew nowthymight, and let besene,  
 To kepe and savé min honouér!'  
 That word was nought so soné  
 spoke,

Whan Pallas shopé recoverír  
 After the will and the desíre  
 Of hiré which a maiden was,  
 And sodeinlich upon this cas  
 Out of her womanisshé kinde  
 Into a briddés like I finde  
 She was transforméd forth withall,  
 So that Neptunus nothing stal  
 Of such thing that he wolde have  
 stole.

With fethers blacke as any cole  
 Out of his armés in a throwe  
 She fleigh before his eyen a crowe;  
 Which was to her a more delite  
 To kepe her maidenhedé white  
 Under the wede of fethers blacke,  
 In perles whité than forsake  
 That<sup>2</sup> no life may restore ayein.  
 But thus Neptúne his hert in vein

<sup>1</sup> *May*, maid.    <sup>2</sup> *That*, that which.

Hath upon robberfé set.  
 The bird is flowe and he was let  
 The fairé maid him hath escaped,  
 Wherof for ever he was bejaped  
 And scornéd of that he hath lore.

"My soné, be thou ware ther-  
 fore,

So as I shall the yet devise  
 Another talé therupon,  
 Which fell by oldé daiés gone.

**King Lichaón** upon his wife  
 A daughter had, a goodly life  
 And clené maide of worthy fame,  
 Calfstona whose righté name  
 Was clepéd, and of many a lorde  
 She was besought, but her accorde  
 To lové mighté no man winne,  
 As she wiche hath no lust ther-  
 inne,

But swore within her hert and saide,  
 That she woll ever ben a maide.  
 Wherfore, to kepe her selfe in pees,  
 With suche as Amadriades  
 Were clepéd, wodémaidens tho,  
 And with the nimphés eke also  
 Upon the spring of fresshé welles  
 She shope to dwelle and no where  
 elles.

And thus came this Calistoná  
 Into the wode of Tegeá,  
 Where she virginité behight  
 Unto Diane, that on a day  
 Was priveliche stole away.  
 For Jupiter through his queintise  
 From her it toke in suche a wise,  
 So that it mighté nought be hid.  
 And therupon it is betid,  
 Diané, wiche it herdé tell,  
 In privé place unto a welle  
 With nimphes al a compaigny  
 Was come and in a ragery  
 She saidé, that she bathé wolde,  
 And bad that every maiden sholde  
 With her all naked bath also.  
 And tho began the privé wo.

With shame from her the nimphés  
fled,

Till wanné that natúre her spedde,  
That of a soné, which Archas  
Was naméd, she delivered was.

And tho Juno, which was the wife  
Of Jupiter, wrothe and hastife  
In purpose for to do vengeaúnce,  
Came forth upon this ilké chaunce,  
And to Calistona she spake  
And set upon her many a lacke  
And said : ' Ha, now thou art atake,  
That thou thy werk might nought  
forsake.

Ha, thou ungoodly ypocrite,  
How thou art greatly for to wite.  
Thy greté beauté shall be torned,  
Through which that thou hast be  
mistorned,

Thy largé front, thy eyen gray  
I shall hem chaunge in other way,  
And all the feture of thy face  
In such a wise I shall deface,  
That every man the shall forbere.'

With that the likenesse of a bere  
She toke and was forshape anone.  
Within a time and therupon  
Befell, that with a bow in honde  
To hunte and gamé for to fonde  
Into that wodé goth to play  
Her sone Archás, and in his way  
It hapneth that this beré came.  
And whan that she good hedé name,  
Where that he stood under the  
bough,

She knewe him well and to him  
drough,

For though she had her formé lore,  
The lové was nought lost therfóre  
Which kinde hath set under his lawe.  
Whan she under the wodé shawe  
Her child beheld, she was so glad  
That she with both her armés sprad,  
As though she were in woman-  
hede,

Toward him come and toke none  
hede

Of that a bow he baré bent.  
And he with that an arwe hath  
hent<sup>1</sup>

And gan to teise<sup>2</sup> it in his bowe,  
As he, that can none other knowe  
But that it was a besté wilde.  
But Jupiter, which woldé shilde  
The moder and the sone also,  
Ordeineth for hem bothé two  
That they for ever weré save.

" But thus, my soné, thou might  
have

Ensamplé, and by other wey  
In oldé bokés as I rede,  
Such robberié is for to drede,  
And namélich of thilke good  
Whiche every woman that is good  
Desireth for to kepe and holde  
As whilom was by daiés olde.  
For if thou here my talé wele  
Of that was tho, thou might somdele  
Of olde ensamples taken hede  
How that the floure of maidenhede  
Was thilké timé holde in pris.  
And so it was, and so it is,  
And so it shall for ever stonde,  
And for thou shalt it understonde,  
Now herken a tale next suend,  
How maidenhede is to commend.

**Of Rome** among the gestes olde  
I find, how that Valéry tolde,  
That what man tho was emperour  
Of Romé he sholde done honour  
To the virgin, and in the wey  
Where he her mete, he shulde obey  
In worship of virginité,  
Which tho was a great dignité  
Nought onlich of the women tho,  
But of the chasté men also  
It was commended over all.  
And for to speke in speciáll  
Touchend of men ensamplé I finde.

<sup>1</sup> *Hent*, seized.

<sup>2</sup> *Teise*, stretch.

“ Phirins, which was of mannés kinde

Above all other the fairést  
Of Rome and eke the comeliést,  
That well was hiré which him might

Beholde and have of him a sight.  
Thus was he tempted ofté sore,  
But for he woldé be no more  
Among the women so coveited,  
The beauté of his facé streited  
He hath, and thrust out both his eyne,

That allé women whiche it sein  
Than afterwarde of him ne rought.  
And thus his maidenhede he bought.

“ So may I prové wel forthý  
Above all other under the sky,  
Who that the vertues woldé peise,  
Virginité is for to preise,  
Which as thapocalips recordeth  
To Criste in heven best accordeth.  
So may it shewé well therfore  
As I have tolde it here to-fore,  
In heven and eke in erth also  
It is accept to bothé two.

Out of his flesshe a man to live  
Gregoire hath this ensample yive  
And saith : It shall rather be told<sup>1</sup>  
Lich to an aungel manyfold  
Than to the life of mannes kinde ;  
There is no reson for to finde,  
But only through the grace above,  
In flesshé without fleshly love  
A man to livé chasté here.

And nethéles a man may here  
Of suché that have ben er this,  
And yet there ben, but for it is  
A vertue which is seldé wonne,  
Now I this matter have begonне  
I thenké tellen over more,  
Which is, my soné, for thy lore,  
If that the list to taken hede,  
To trete upon the maidenhede.

<sup>1</sup> Told, accounted.

“ The boke saith that a mannés life

Upon knighthode in werre and strife  
Is set among his enemies.

The freilé flesh, whose nature is  
Ay redy for to sporne and fall,  
The firsté foman is of all.

For thilké werre is redy ay,  
It werreth night, it werreth day,  
So that a man hath never rest.  
Forthý is thilké knight the best  
Through might and grace of goddés sonde

Whiche that batailé may withstonde,  
Wherof yet dwelleth the memoire  
Of hem that whilome the victoire  
Of thilké dedly werré hadden,  
The high prowessé which they laden

Wherof the soulé stood amended,  
Upon this erth yet is commended.

**An emperour** by thilké daies  
There was, and he at all assaies  
A worthy knight was of his honde,  
There was none such in all the londe,  
But yet for all his vasselage<sup>1</sup>  
He stood unwedded all his age,  
And in cronique as it is tolde  
He was an hundred winter olde.  
And haddé ben a worthy knight  
Both of his lawe and of his might.  
But whan men wolde his knight-  
hood peise

And of his dedes of armés preise  
Of that he didé with his hondes,  
Whan he the kingés and the londes  
To his subjection put under,  
Of all that prise hath he no wonder,  
For he it set of none accompte  
And said, all that may nought  
amounte

Ayein a point whiche he hath nome,  
That he his flesh hath overcome.

<sup>1</sup> Vasselage, valour in arms, as in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" and in Barbour's "Bruce."

He was a virgine, as he said ;  
On that bataile his pris he laid.

Lo now, my sone, avisé the.”—

“Ye, fader, all this may well be.  
But if all other didé so,  
The world of men were sone ago ;<sup>1</sup>  
And in the lawe a man may finde  
How God to man by wey of kinde  
Hath set the world to multiply.  
And who that woll him justify,  
It is inough to do the lawe.

And nethéles your godé sawe  
Is good to kepé, who so may,  
I woll nought there ayein say nay.”

“**My sone**, take it as I say,  
If maidenhed be take away  
Withouté lawés ordenaunce,  
It may nought failen of vengeaunce.

“And if thou wolt the sothé  
wite,

Behold a talé which is write,  
How that the king Agámenon  
Whan he the citee of Lesbon  
Hath won, a maiden there he fonde  
Which was the fairest of the londe  
In thilké timé that men wist.  
He toke of hiré what him list  
Of thing which was most precioús,  
Wherof that she was daungeroús.

This fairé maiden clepéd is  
Criseid, the doughter of Crisís,  
Which was that timé speciáll  
Of thilké temple principáll  
Where Phebus had his sacrifice,  
So was it well the moré vice.  
Agámenon was than in way  
To Troié ward and toke away  
This maiden, whiche he with him  
lad,

So greaté lust in her he had.

But Phebus which hath great  
disdein

Of that his maiden was forlein,  
Anone as he to Troié came,

<sup>1</sup> Ago, gone.

Vengeaunce upon this dede he  
name<sup>1</sup>

And send a comune pestilence.  
They soughten than her evidence  
And maden calculación,  
To knowe in what condición  
This deth cam in so sodeinly,  
And atté lasté redely  
The cause and eke the man they  
founde,

And forth withal the samé stounde  
Agámenon opposéd was,  
Whiche hath beknouen all the cas  
Of the folsé, which he wrought.  
And therupon mercý they sought  
Toward the god in sondry wise  
With praier and with sacrifice ;  
The maiden home ayein they sende  
And yaf her good inough to spende  
For ever while she shuldé live,  
And thus the sinné was foryive  
And all the pestilencé cesed.

“Lo, what it is to ben encresed  
Of lové whiche is evil wonne.  
It weré better nought begonne  
Than take a thing withouté leve  
Which thou must after nedés leve  
And yet have malgré forth with all.  
Forthý to robben over all  
In lovés cause if thou beginne,  
I not what esé thou shalt winne.  
My soné, be well ware of this,  
For thus of robbery it is.”—

“My fader, your ensamplarie  
In lovés cause of robberie  
I have it right well understonde.  
But over this how so it stonde,  
Yet wol I wite of your apprise,  
What thing is more of Covetise.

**With Covetisé** yet I finde  
A servaunt of the samé kinde,  
Which Stelth is hote, and micherie<sup>2</sup>  
With him is ever in compaignie.  
Of whom if I shall tellé soth

<sup>1</sup> Name, took.

<sup>2</sup> Micherie, secrecy.



He stalketh as a peacock doth  
 And taketh his preié so covérte,  
 That no man wote it in apérte.  
 For whan he wot the lord from home  
 Than woll he stalke about and come,  
 And what thing he fint in his wey  
 Whan that he seeth the men away  
 He steleth it and goth forth withall  
 That therof no man knowé shall.  
 And eke full ofte he goth anight  
 Withouté mone or sterré light  
 And with his craft the dore unpiketh  
 And taketh therinné what him liketh.  
 And if the doré be so shet,  
 That he be of his entré let,  
 He woll in atté window crepe,  
 And while the lord is fast aslepe,  
 He steleth what thing him best list,  
 And goth his wey er it be wist.  
 Full ofte also by light of day  
 Yet woll he stele and make assay,  
 Under the cote his honde he put  
 Till he the mannés purs have kut  
 And rifleth that he fint therinne.  
 And thus he auntreth him to winne  
 And bereth an horn and nought ne  
 bloweth  
 For no man of his counseil knoweth  
 What he may get of his miching,  
 It is all bile<sup>1</sup> under the wing.  
 And as an hound that goth to folde  
 And hath there také what he wolde  
 His mouth upon the gras he wipeth,  
 And so with feigné chere him  
 slipeth,  
 That what as ever of shepe he  
 strangle  
 There is no man therof shall jangle  
 And for to knowen who it dede;  
 Right so doth stelthe in every stede,  
 Where as him list his preié take,  
 He can so well his causé make  
 And so well feigne and so well glose  
 That there ne shall no man suppose

<sup>1</sup> *Bile*, bill.

But that he were an innocent,  
 And thus a mannés eye he blent,  
 So that this crafte I may remove<sup>1</sup>  
 Withouten helpe of any meve.  
 There be lovérs of that degre,  
 Which all her lust in priveté  
 As who saith gotten all by Stelth  
 And ofte atteignen to great welth  
 As for the timé that it lasteth,  
 For love awaiteth ever and casteth  
 How he may stele and cacche his  
 pray

Whan he therto may finde a way.  
 For be it night, or be it day  
 Hetaketh his part, whan that he may,  
 And if he may no moré do  
 Yet woll he stele a cuss<sup>2</sup> or two.

“My soné, what saist thou therto,  
 Telle, if thou diddest ever so.”—

“My fader, how?”—“My soné,  
 thus,

If thou hast stolen any cuss  
 Or other thing which therto longeth,  
 For no man suché theves hongeth;  
 Tell on forthy and say the truth.”—

“My fader, nay; and that is  
 routh,

For by my will I am a thefe,  
 But she that is to me most lefe,  
 Yet durst I never in priveté  
 Nought onés take her by the kne  
 To stele of her or this or that,  
 And if I durst I wot well what,  
 And nethéles but if I lie  
 By stelthé ne by robberie  
 Of lové, which fell in my thought,  
 To hire did I never nought;  
 But as men sain, where hert is failed  
 There shall no castel be assailed,  
 But though I haddé hertés ten  
 And were as stronge as allé men,  
 If I be nought min owné man  
 And dare nought usen that I can,

<sup>1</sup> *Remove*, change to another field of enterprise; from Money to Love.

<sup>2</sup> *Cuss*, kiss.

I may my selvé nought recouer  
 Though I be never man so pouer.  
 I bere an herte and here it is,  
 So that me faileth wit in this  
 How that I shulde of mine accorde  
 The servant lede ayein the lorde.  
 For if my foot wold owhere go,  
 Or that min hond wolde ellés do,  
 Whan that min hert is there ayein  
 The remenaunt is all in vein.  
 And thus me lacketh alle wele,  
 And yet ne dare I nothing stele  
 Of thing which longeth unto love,  
 And eke it is so high above  
 I may nought well therto arecche,  
 But if so be at time of speche  
 Full selde if than I stelé may  
 A worde or two and go my way.  
 Betwene her high estate and me  
 Comparison there may none be,  
 So that I fele and well I wote  
 All is to hevy and to hote  
 To set on hondé without leve.  
 And thus I mot algaté leve  
 To stelé that I may nought take,  
 And in this wise I mot forsake  
 To ben a thefe ayein my will  
 Of thing which I may nought fulfill.

“For that serpént which never  
 slept

The flees of gold so well ne kept  
 In Colchos, as the tale is tolde,  
 As my lady a thousand folde  
 To kepe her body night and day.  
 She hath a wardein redy ay,  
 Which is so wouderfull a wight,  
 That him ne may no mannés might  
 With swerd ne with no wepon daunt,  
 Ne with no sleight of charme en-  
 chaunt

Wherof he might be madé tame,  
 And Daunger is his righté name,  
 Whiche under lock and under key,  
 That no man may it stele away,  
 Hath al the tresor underfonge

That unto lové may belonge.  
 The lesté loking of her eye  
 May nought be stole, if he it sigh;  
 And who so gruccheth for so lite  
 He woldé soné set a wite  
 On him that woldé stelé more.  
 And that me greveth wonder sore,  
 For this provérb is ever newe,  
 That strongé lockés maken trewe  
 Of hem that wolden stele and pike.  
 For so wel can there no man slike<sup>1</sup>  
 By him ne by no other mene,  
 To whom Daungér wol yive or lene  
 Of that tresór he hath to kepe.  
 So though I woldé stalke and crepe  
 And waite on eve and eke on morwe,  
 Of Daunger shal I nothing borwe,  
 And stelé wot wel may I nought.  
 And thus I am right wel bethought,  
 While Daunger stont in his office,  
 Of Stelthé, which ye clepe a Vice,  
 I shall be gilty never mo.  
 Therefore I wold he were ago  
 So fer that I never of him herde  
 How so that afterward it ferde,  
 For than I mighté yet par cas  
 Of lové maké some purchas  
 By stelth or by some other way,  
 That now fro me stont fer away.

“But, fader, as ye tolde above,  
 How Stelthé goth anight for love,  
 I may nought wel that point forsake,  
 That ofté tímés I ne wake  
 On nightés whan that other slepe.  
 But now, I pray you také kepe,  
 Whan I am loggéd in such wise  
 That I by nighté may arise  
 At some windów and loken out  
 And se the housing al about,  
 So that I may the chambre knowe  
 In which my lady, as I trowe,  
 Lith in her bed and slepeth softe,  
 Than is min hert a thefe ful ofte,  
 For there I stondé to behold

<sup>1</sup> Smooth the way.

The longé nightés that ben cold  
 And thenke on her that lieth there,  
 But atté lasté when I finde  
 That I am fall into my minde,  
 And se that I have stondé longé  
 And have no profit underfonge,  
 Than stalke I to my bed withinne.  
 And this is all that ever I winne  
 Of lové, when I walke on night.  
 My will is good, but of my might  
 Me lacketh both and of my grace,  
 For what so that my thought embrace

Yet have I nought the better ferde.  
 My fader, lo, now have ye herde  
 What I by Stelth of Love have do,  
 And how my will hath be therto ;  
 If I be worthy to penaunce,  
 I put it to your ordenaunce.”—

“ My sone, of stelth I the behete,  
 Though it be for a timé swete,  
 At ende it doth but litel good,  
 As by ensample how that it stood  
 Whilom, I may the tellé now.”—

“ I pray you, fader, say me  
 how.”—

“ My sone, of him, which goth  
 by day

By wey of stelthé to assay  
 In lovés cause and taketh his pray,  
 Ovidé said, as I shall say,  
 And in his Methamor he tolde  
 A talé which is good to holde.

**The poet** upon this matere  
 Of Stelthé wrote in this manere.  
 Venus, which hath the lawe in honde  
 Of thing which may nought be with-  
 stonde,

As she which the tresór to warde  
 Of lové hath within her warde,  
 Phebus to love hath so constreigned  
 That he withouté rest is peined  
 With all his herté to coveite  
 A maiden which was warded streite  
 Withinné chambre and kept so clos

That seldom was when she desclos  
 Goth with her moder for to play.  
 Leucothoë, so as men say,  
 This maiden hight, and Orchamus  
 Her fader was, And befell thus,  
 This doughter that was kept so dere  
 And haddé be from yere to yere,  
 Upon the whose nativité  
 Of comeliheed and of beauté  
 Nature hath set all that she may,  
 That lich unto the fresshé May,  
 Whiche other monthes of the yere  
 Sourmounteth, so withouté pere  
 Was of this maiden the fetúre,  
 Wherof Phebús out of mesúre  
 Her loveth and on every side  
 Awaiteth what so may betide.  
 In his await so longé he lay  
 Till it befell upon a day  
 That he through out her chambre  
 wall

Came in all sodeinlich and stall  
 That thing which was to him so  
 lefe.

But wo the while, he was a thefe,  
 For Venus, which was enemy  
 Of thilké lovés michery,  
 Discovereth all the plein cas  
 To Climené, which thanné was  
 Toward Phebús his concubine.  
 And she, to letté the covine  
 Of thilké lové, dedely wrothe,  
 To pleign upon this maide she goth  
 And tolde her fader howe it stood,  
 Wherof for sorwe well nigh wode  
 Unto her moder thus he saide :  
 ‘ Lo, what it is to kepe a maide.  
 To Phebus dare I nothing speke  
 But upon her it shall be wreke.’  
 And bad with that do make a pit,  
 Wherin he hath his doughter set,  
 As he that woll no pité have,  
 So that she was all quike begrave  
 And deide anone in his presence.  
 But Phebus, for the reverence

Of that she haddé be his love,  
Hath wrought through his powér  
above

That she sprong up out of the molde  
Into a flour, was naméd Golde,  
Which stant governéd of the sonne.  
And thus whan love is evil wonne,  
Full ofte it cometh to repentail."—

"My fader, that is no merveile,  
Whan that the counceil is bewreied.  
For in your tale as it betid,  
Venus discovereth all the cas,  
And eke also brode day it was  
Whan Phebus such a stelthé  
wrought,  
Wherof the maide in blame he  
brought,

That afterwards he was so lore.  
But for ye saiden now to-fore,  
How Stelth of Lové goth by night  
And doth his thingés out of sight,  
Therof me lust also to here  
A talé lich to the matere,  
Wherof I might ensample take."

"My godé soné, for thy sake,  
So as it befell by daiés olde  
And so as the poét it tolde,  
Upon the nightés michery  
Now herken a tale of poesy.

**The mightiest** of allé men,  
Whan Hercules with Eolen,  
Which was the love of his coráge,  
To-gider upon a pelrinage  
Towardé Romé shulden go,  
It fell hem by the waíe so,  
That they upon a day a cave  
Within a roché founden have,  
Which was réal and glorious  
And of entailé curioús,  
By name and Thophis it was hote.  
The sonné shone tho wonder hote,  
As it was in the somer tide.

"This Hercules, which by his side  
Hath Eolen his lové there,  
Whan they at thilké cavé were,

He said, he thought it for the best,  
That she her for the heté rest  
All thilké day. And so befell,  
This cavé was under the hill  
Of Tímolus, which was begrowe  
With vinés, and at thilké throwe  
Faunus with Saba the goddesse,  
By whom the largé wilderness  
In thilké timé stood governéd,  
Were in a place, as I am lerned,  
Nigh by, which Bachuswodé hight.

"This Faunusto ke a great insight  
Of Eolen, that was so nigh,  
For whan that he her beauté sigh,  
Out of his wit he was assoted  
And in his herte it hath so noted,  
That he forsoke the nimphés alle  
And said, he wolde, how so it falle,  
Assay an other for to winne,  
He set his hertes thought withinne,  
And therupon his time awaiteth.  
Now take good hede, how love  
affaiteth

Him which withal is overcome.  
Faire Eolen whan she was come  
With Hercules into the cave,  
She said him, that she woldé have  
His clothés of and hire bothe,  
Andeche of hem shulde other clothe.  
And all was do right as she bad,  
He hath her in his clothés clad  
And cast on her his gunion,  
Which of the skin of a leon  
Was made, as he upon the wey  
It slough, and over this to play  
She toke his greté mace also  
And knet it at her girdel tho.  
So was she lich the man arraied,  
And Hercules than hath assaied  
To clothen him in her array.  
And thus they japé forth the day,  
Till that her souper redy were.  
And whan they hadden soupéd there,  
They shopen hem to go to rest,  
And as it thought hem for the best,

They bad, as for that ilké night,  
Two sondry beddés shuld be dight,  
Wherin that they to resté gone  
Eche by hem self in sondry place.  
Fair Eolen hath set the mace  
Besides her beddés heved above,  
And with the clothés of her love  
She helléd<sup>1</sup> all her bed aboute.  
And he, which had nothing in  
doubte,

Her wimpel wonde about his cheke,  
Her kirtel and her mantel eke  
Abrode upon his bed he spredde,  
And thus they slepen both a bedde.  
And what of travail, what of wine  
The servaunts like to dronken swine  
Beganné for to routé<sup>2</sup> faste.  
This Faunus, which his stelthé caste,  
Was thanné comen to the cave  
And found, they weren alle save;  
Withouté noise and in he went,  
The derké night his sighté blent,  
And yet it hapned him to go  
Where Eolen a beddè tho  
Was laid aloné for to slepe.  
But for he woldé take kepe  
Whose bed it was, he made assay  
And of a leon where it lay  
The cote he founde and eke he feleth  
The mace, and than his herté keleth,  
That theré durst he nought abide;  
But stalketh upon every side  
And sought abouté with his honde  
That other bed, till that he fonde  
Where lay bewimpled a viságe.  
Tho was he glad in his coráge,  
For he her kirtel founde also  
And eke her mantel bothé two  
Bespred upon the bedde alofte,  
And wendé well it weré she.  
And thus in stede of Eolé  
Anone he profreth him to love,  
But he, which sigh a man above,  
This Hercules him threw to grounde

<sup>1</sup> *Helléd*, covered.<sup>2</sup> *Routé*, snore.

So soré, that they have him founde  
Liggendé there upon the morwe,  
And tho was nought a litel sorwe  
That Faunus of him selvé made.  
But ellés there they were all glade  
And loughen him to scorne aboute,  
Saba with nimphés all a route  
Came down to loke how that it ferde,  
And whan that they the sothé herde  
He was bejapéd over all.

“My soné, be thou ware with all  
In aunter if the so betide  
As Faunus didé thilké tide,  
Wherof thou might beshaméd so.”—

“Min holy fader, certes no.  
But if I haddé right good leve,  
Such micherie I thinké leve.  
My fainté herté woll nought serve,  
For malgré wolde I nought deserve  
In thilké placé where I love.  
But for ye tolden here above  
Of Covetise and his pilage,  
If there be more of that lignage,  
Which toucheth to my shrifte, I  
pray,

That ye therof me woldé say,  
So that I may the Vice escheue.”—

“My sone, if I by order sue  
The Vices as they stonde a rowe,  
Of Covetisé thou shalt knowe,  
There is yet one, which is the last,  
In whom there may no Vertue last,  
For he with God him self debateth,  
Wherof that all the heven him  
hateth.

**The highé God**, whiche allé good  
Purveiéd hath for mannés food  
Of clothés and of mete and drinke,  
Bade Adam, that he shuldé swinke  
To geten him his sustenaunce,  
And eke he set an ordenaunce  
Upon the lawe of Moíses,  
That though a man be havéles,  
Yet shall he nought by thefté stele.  
But now a daiés there ben fele,

That woll no labour undertake ;  
 But what they may by stelhé take  
 They holde it sikerliché wonne,  
 And thus the lawe is overronne,  
 Which God hath set, and namély  
 With hem that so untruély  
 The goodés robbe of Holy Chirche.  
 The thefté, which they thanné  
 wirche,

By name is cleped Sacrilege,  
 Ayein the whom I thenke allegge.  
 Upon three points as we ben taught  
 Stont Sacrilege, and ellés nought.  
 The firsté point is for to say,  
 Whan that a thefe shall stele away  
 The holy thing from holy place.  
 The seconde is, if he purcháce  
 By way of theft an holy thinge  
 The whiche upon his knowlechinge  
 Fro holy place away was toke.  
 The thirdé point, as saith the boke,  
 Is suche, as whereas ever it be,  
 In wode, in felde, or in cite,  
 Shall no man stelé by no wise  
 That halowed is to the servise  
 Of God whiche allé thingés wote,  
 But there is nouthér cold né hote,  
 Whiche he for God or man woll  
 spare,

So that the body may wel fare  
 And that he may the world escape,  
 The heven him thinketh is but a jape  
 Of his condiciön to telle,  
 Which rifeleth bothe boke and belle,  
 So forthwith all the remenaunt  
 To Goddés hous appurtenaunt,  
 Where that he shuldé bid his bede,  
 He doth his theft in holy stede,  
 And taketh what thing he fint therein.  
 For whan he seeth that he may win  
 He wondeth for no cursednesse  
 That he ne breketh the holinesse  
 And doth to God no reverence,  
 For he hath lost his consciënce,  
 That though the prest therforé curse,

He saith, he fareth nought the  
 worse.

And for to speke it other wise,  
 What man that lasseth the fraun-  
 chise

And taketh of Holy Chirch his pray,  
 I not what bedés he shall pray  
 Whan hefro God which hathyive all  
 The purpartie in speciáll,  
 Which unto Crist him self is due,  
 Benimth; he may nought wel eschue  
 The peiné comend afterward,  
 For he hath made his foréward  
 With sacrileggé for to dwelle,  
 Which hath his heritage in helle.

“And if we rede of tholde lawe,  
 I findé write in thilké lawe,  
 Of princes how there weren thre  
 Coupáble sore in this degre.  
 That one of hem was clepéd thus  
 The proudé king Antiochus ;  
 That other Nabuzardan hight,  
 Which of his cruelté behight  
 The temple to destruie and waste,  
 And so he did in allé haste ;  
 The thridde, which was after  
 shamed,

Was Nabugodonósor named,  
 And he Jerusalem put under  
 Of sacrilege and many a wonder  
 There in the holy temple he wrought,  
 Which Baltazár his heire abought,  
 Whan Mane Techel Phares write  
 Was on the wall, as thou might wite  
 So as the bible it hath declared.  
 But for al that it is nought spared  
 Yet now a day that men ne pille  
 And maken argument and skille  
 To sacrilege as it belongeth,  
 For what man that there after  
 longeth

He taketh none hede what he doth.  
 And if a man shall tellé soth,  
 Of guile and of subtilité  
 Is none so sligh in his degre

To feigne a thing for his beyete  
 As is this Vice of whiche I trete.  
 He can so priveliché pike,  
 He can so well his wordés slike  
 To put away suspiciõn,  
 That in his excusatiõn  
 There shall no man defalté finde,  
 And thus full ofté men be blinde,  
 That stõnden in his word deceived,  
 Er his queintfésé be perceived.  
 But nethéles yet other while  
 For all his sleight and all his guile  
 Of that he wolde his werke forsake,<sup>1</sup>  
 He is atteint and overtake.  
 Wherof thou shalte a talé rede,  
 In Rome as it befell in dede.

**Er Rome cam** to the creauce  
 Of Cristés feith, it fell perchaunce,  
 Cesár, which tho was emperour,  
 Him listé for to done honouír  
 Unto the temple Apollinis,  
 And made an ymage upon this,  
 The which was clepéd Apolló,  
 Was none so riche in Romé tho<sup>2</sup>  
 Of plate of golde a berde he hadde,  
 The which his brest all over spradde  
 Of golde also withouté faile  
 His mantell was of large entaile  
 Beset with perrie<sup>3</sup> all about,  
 Forth right he straught his finger  
 out

Upon the which he had a ringe,  
 To seen it was a riché thing  
 A fine carbuncle for the nones  
 Most preciõus of alle stones.

“And fell that time in Romé thus  
 There was a clerke one Lucius,  
 A courteour, a famous man,  
 Of every wit somwhat he can,  
 Out také that him lacketh reule  
 His owne estat to guide and reule.  
 How so it stood of his speking,  
 He was nought wise in his dofng.

<sup>1</sup> Forsake, deny.      <sup>2</sup> Tho, then.  
<sup>3</sup> Perrie, precious stones.

But every riote atté last  
 Mot nedés falle, and may nought  
 laste.

After the mede of his deserte  
 So fell this clerke into pouerte  
 And wisté nought how for to rise,  
 Wherof in many a sondry wise  
 He cast his wittés here and ther,  
 He loketh nigh, he loketh fer,  
 Till on a timé that he come  
 Into the temple, and hede he nome  
 Where that the god Apollo stood,  
 He sigh the richesse and the good  
 And thought he woldé by some way  
 The tresor picke and stele away;  
 And therupon so sleighly wrought  
 That his purpóse about he brought,  
 And went away unápperceived.  
 Thushath the man his god deceived;  
 His ring, his mantel and his berd,  
 As he which nothing was aferd,  
 All privély with him he bare.  
 And whan the wardeins weren ware  
 Of that her god despuiléd was,  
 Hem thought it was a wonder cas  
 How that a man for any wele  
 Durst in so holy placé stele,  
 And namély so great a thing.  
 This talé came unto the king,  
 And was through spoken over all.  
 But for to knowe in speciall,  
 What maner man hath do the dede,  
 They soughten helpe upon the  
 nede

And maden calculaciõn,  
 Wherof by demonstraciõn  
 The man was foundé with the good;  
 In jugément and whan he stood,  
 The king hath axéd of him thus:  
 ‘Say thou, unsely Lucius,  
 Why hast thou don this sacri-  
 legge?’—

‘My lord, if I the cause allegge,  
 Quod he ayein, me thenketh this,  
 That I have do nothing amis.

Three points ther ben, which I have  
do :

Wherof the firsté point stant so,  
That I the ring have take away ;  
As unto that, this woll I say,  
Whan I the god behelde about,  
I sigh how he his hond straught out  
And profred me the ring to yive.  
And I, which woldé gladly live  
Out of pouerte, through his largesse  
It underfang, so that I gesse  
As therof I am nought to wite.<sup>1</sup>  
And overmore I woll me quite  
Of gold that I the mantel toke ;  
Gold in his kind, as saith the boke,  
Is hevye both and colde also.  
And for that it was hevye so,  
Me thought it was no garnément  
Unto the god convenient  
To clothen him the somer tide.  
I thought, upon that other side,  
Howgold is colde, and such a clothe  
By reson oughté to be lothe  
In winter timé for the chele.  
And thus thenkendé thoughtés fele  
As I min eie abouté thought,  
His largé berd than atté last  
I sigh, and thought anone therfore,  
How that his fader him before  
Which stood upon the samé place,  
Was berdes with a yongly face.  
And in such wise, as ye have herde,  
I toke away the sonés berde  
For that his fader haddé none  
To make hem liche, and hereupon  
I axé for to ben excused.'

"Lothus, where sacrilege is used,  
A man can feigne his conscience  
And right upon such evidence  
In Lovés cause if I shall trete,  
There ben of suché small and great,  
If they no leiser finden elles  
They wol nought wonden for the  
belles,

<sup>1</sup> To wite, to blame.

Ne though they sen the prest at  
masse,

That wol they leten overpasse,  
If that they finden her love there  
They stande and tellen in her ere  
And axe of God none other grace  
While they ben in that holy place.  
But er they gon some avauntáge  
There will they have and some  
piláge

Of goodly word or of beheste,  
Or ellés they take atté leste  
Out of her honde a ring or glove,  
So nigh the weder they will hove,  
As who saith she shall nought for-  
yete

Now I this token of her have gete.  
Thus halwe they the highé feste,  
Such thefté may no chirch areste,  
For all is lefull that hem liketh,  
To whom that ellés it misliketh.  
And eke right in the selvé kinde  
In greaté citees men may finde  
This lusty folk that make hem gay  
And waite upon the haliday,  
In chirches and in minstres eke  
They gon the women for to seke,  
And where that such one goth about  
To-fore the fairest of the route  
Where as they sitten all a rewe,  
There will he moste his body shewe,  
His croket<sup>1</sup> kempt and theron set  
An ouché<sup>2</sup> with a chapélet  
Or ellés one of grené leves  
Which laté came oute of the greves,  
All for he shuldé semé fresh.  
And thus he loketh on his flessch  
Right as an hawke which hath a sight  
Upon the fowl there he shall light,  
And as he were a fairie  
He sheweth him to-fore her eye  
In holy placé where they sitte

<sup>1</sup> Croket, croquet, a large roll of crossed hair  
once in the fashion.

<sup>2</sup> Ouché, jewel, or jewel setting . . . greves,  
groves.



Al for to make her hertés flitte.  
His eyé no where woll abide  
But loke and pry on every side  
On her and her, as him best liketh,  
And other while among he siketh;  
Thenketh one of hem 'That was  
for me!'

And so there thenken two or thre  
And yet he loveth none of alle,  
But where as ever his chauncé falle;  
And nethéles to say a soth  
The causé why that he so doth,  
Is for to stele an herte or two  
Out of the chirche er that he go.  
And as I said it here above,  
All is that sacrillegge of love,  
For well may be he steleth away  
That he never after yeldé may.  
Tell me forthý, my sone, anone,  
Hast thou do sacrillegge or none  
As I have said in this manere?"—

"My fader, as of this matere  
I woll you tellen redely  
What I have do, but truëly  
I may excusé min entent,  
That I never yet to chirché went  
In such manér as ye me shrive,  
For no womán that is on live.  
The causé why I have it laft  
May be for I unto that craft  
Am nothing able for to stele,  
Though there be women nought so  
fele.

But yet woll I nought saié this  
Whan I am there my lady is,  
In whom lith holy my quaréle,  
And she to chirche or to chapéle  
Woll go to matins or to messe  
That time I waité well and gesse,  
To chirche I come, and there I  
stonde,

And though I take a boke on honde  
My contenance is on the boke  
But toward her is all my loke.  
And if so fallé, that I pray

Unto my God and somewhat say  
Of *Pater Noster* or of Crede  
All is for that I woldé spede,  
So that my bede in holy chirche  
There mighté some mirácle wirche  
My ladies herté for to change,  
Which ever hath be to me so  
straunge;

So that all my devociön  
And all my contemplaciön  
With all min herte and my coráge  
Is only set on her ymáge.  
And ever I waite upon the tide  
If she loke any thing aside,  
That I me may of her avise;  
Anone I am with Covetise  
So smité that me weré lefe  
To be in holy chirche a thefe,  
But nought to stele a vestément  
For that is nothing my talént.  
But I wol stele if that I might  
A glad word or a goodly sight,  
And ever my service I profre,  
And namely whan she woll gone  
offre,

For than I lede her, if I may.  
For somewhat wold I stele away  
Whan I beclippe her on the waste,  
Yet atté last I stele a taste,<sup>1</sup>  
And other while 'graunt mercy'  
She saith, and so win I therby  
A lusty touch, a good worde eke,  
But all the remenaunt to seke  
Is fro my purpos wonder fer.  
So may I say, as I said er,  
In holy chirch if that I wowe,  
My consciéce I wolde allowe  
Be so that up amendément  
I mighté get assignément  
Where for to spede in other place;  
Such sacrillegge I hold a grace.

"And thus, my fader, soth to say  
In chirché right as in the way

<sup>1</sup> *Taste*, touch (*tâter*). So a knight might  
in the old romances taste his horse; or a  
damsel taste a hero's wound.

If I might ought of lové take  
 Such hanel have I nought forsake,  
 But finally I me confesse,  
 There is in me no halinesse  
 While I her se in haly stede.  
 And yet for ought that ever I dede  
 No sacrilege of her I toke  
 But if it were of worde or loke  
 Or ellés if that I her fredde<sup>1</sup>  
 Whan I toward offring her ledde,  
 Také therof what I take may  
 For ellés bere I nought away,  
 For though I wolde ought ellés have  
 All other thingés ben so save  
 And kept with such a privilegge  
 That I may do no sacrilege;  
 God wot my willé nethéles.  
 Though I must nedés kepé pees  
 And malgré min so let it passe,  
 My will therto is nought the lasse,  
 If I might other wise away,  
 Forthý, my fader, I you pray,  
 Tell what you thenketh therupon,  
 If I therof have gilt or none.”—

“Thy will, my sone, is for to  
 blame,  
 The remenaunt is but a game  
 That I have herd the tellé yit.  
 But take this lore into thy wit,  
 That allé thing hath time and stede,  
 The chirche serveth for the bede,<sup>2</sup>  
 The chambre is of an other speche;  
 But if thou wistest of the wreche  
 How sacrilege it hath abought,  
 Thou woldest better ben bethought.  
 And for thou shalt the more amende,  
 A tale I will on the despende.

“**To all men** as who saith knowe  
 It is, and in the world through blowe,  
 How that of Troié Lamedón  
 To Hercules and to Jasón,  
 Whan toward Colchos out of Grece  
 By see sailénd, upon a piece  
 Of londe of Troié resté preide.

<sup>1</sup> *Fredde*, felt.

<sup>2</sup> *Bede*, prayer.

But he hem wrothfully congeide,<sup>1</sup>  
 And for they found him so villein,  
 Whan they came into Grece ayein  
 With power that they getté might  
 Towardés Troié they hem dight  
 And there they token such ven-  
 geaünce,

Wherof stant yet the remembraünce.  
 For they destruiéd king and all  
 And leften but the brenté wall,  
 The Grekes of Troians many slow<sup>2</sup>  
 And prisoners they toke inow,  
 Among the whiché there was one  
 The kingés daughter Lamedon  
 Esóna the fairé thing,  
 Which unto Thelamon the king  
 By Hercules and by thassent  
 Of all the holé parlément  
 Was at his willé yove and graunted.  
 And thus hath Grecé Troié daunted,  
 And home they torne in such manére.  
 But after this, now shalt thou here  
 The cause, why I this talé telle,  
 Upon the chauncé that befelle.

“King Lamedon, which deide  
 thus,  
 He had a sone one Priamus,  
 Which was nought thilké time at  
 home,  
 But whan he herd of this, he come  
 And found how the citee was falle,  
 Which he began anon to walle  
 And madé there a citee newe,  
 That they which other londés knewe  
 Tho saiden that of lime and stone  
 In all the world so faire was none.  
 And on that o side of the town  
 The king let maken Ylion,  
 That highé toure, that strongé place,  
 Which was adrad of no manáce  
 Of quarele nor of none engíne.  
 And though men woldé make a mine,  
 No mannés craft it might approche,  
 For it was set upon a roche

<sup>1</sup> *Congeide*, expelled.

<sup>2</sup> *Slow*, slew.

The wallés of the towne about,  
 Hemstood of all the world no doubt.  
 And after the proportioun  
 Six gatés were there of the town  
 Of such a forme of such entaile  
 That hem to se was great merveile.  
 The dichés weren brode and depe,  
 A fewé men it mighté kepe  
 From all the world, as semeth tho  
 But if<sup>2</sup> the goddés weren fo.  
 Great prees unto that citee drough,  
 So that there was of people inough  
 Of burgeis that therinné dwellen,  
 There may no mannés tunge tellen,  
 How that citee was riche and good.

“Whan all was made and all  
 well stood,

King Priamus tho him bethought  
 What they of Grecé whilom wrought,  
 And what was of herswerd devoured,  
 And how his suster deshonoúred  
 With Thelamon away was lad.  
 And tho thenkénd he wex unglad  
 And set anone a parlément  
 To which the lordés were assent.<sup>3</sup>  
 In many wisé there was spoke,  
 How that they mighten bene awroke,  
 But atté lasté nethéles  
 They saiden all accorde and pees;  
 To setten every parte in rest  
 It thought hem thanné for the best  
 With resonáble amendément.  
 And thus was Anthenor forth sent  
 To axen Esióna ayein  
 And witen what they wolden sain.

“So passeth he the see by barge  
 To Grecé for to say his charge,  
 The which he saidé redely  
 Unto the lordés by and by.<sup>4</sup>  
 But where he spake in Grece aboute,

<sup>1</sup> *Doubt*, fear.

<sup>2</sup> *But if*, unless.

<sup>3</sup> *Assent*, sent for, summoned.

<sup>4</sup> *By and by*, immediately. “By and by,” “presently,” “anon,” and some other words of promptitude, have grown into senses that express some little delay.

He herdé nought but wordés stoute  
 And naméliche of Thelamon.  
 The maiden wolde he nought forgon,  
 He saidé, for no maner thing,  
 And bad him gone home to his king,  
 For theré gat he none amende  
 For ought he couthé do or sende.

“This Anthenór ayein goth home  
 Unto his king, and whan he come,  
 He tolde in Grece of that he herde,  
 And how that Thelamon answerde,  
 And how they were at her above,  
 That they wol nouter pees ne love  
 But every man shall done his best.  
 But for men sain, that night hath  
 rest,  
 The king bethought him all that  
 night,

And erly whan the day was light  
 He toke counseil of this matére,  
 And they accorde in this manére,—  
 That he withouten any let  
 A certain timé shuldé set  
 A parlément to ben advised,  
 And in this wise it was advised.  
 Of parlément he set a day,  
 And that was in the month of May.  
 This Priamus had in his ight<sup>1</sup>  
 A wife, and Hecuba she hight,  
 By whom at that time eke had he  
 Sonés five and daughters thre  
 Besiden hem and thritty mo,  
 And weren knightés alle tho<sup>2</sup>  
 But nought upon his wife begete,  
 But ellés where he might hem gete  
 Of women which he haddé knowe.  
 Such was the world that ilkéthrowe,  
 So that he was of children riche  
 So therof was no man him liche.

Of parlément the day was come,  
 There ben the lordés all and some,  
 Tho was pronouncéd and purposed  
 And all the cause hem was des-  
 closed,

<sup>1</sup> *Ight*, possession.

<sup>2</sup> *Tho*, those.

How Anthenór in Grecé ferde.  
 They sitten allé still and herde,  
 And tho spake every man aboute ;  
 There was alleggéd many a doubté,  
 And many a proud word spoke also.  
 But for the mosté parte as tho  
 They wisten nought what was the  
 beste

Or for to werre or for to reste.  
 But he that was withouté fere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Hector, among the lordés there  
 His talé tolde in suche a wise  
 And saidé : ‘ Lordés, ye ben wise,  
 Ye knowen this als well as I,  
 Above all other most worthy  
 Stant now in Grecé the manhod  
 Of worthinesse and of knighthod.  
 For who so woll it wel agrope,  
 To hem belongeth all Europe,  
 Whiche is the thriddé parte evén  
 Of all the world under the hevén.  
 And we be but of folk a fewe,  
 So were it reson for to shewe  
 The peril er we fall therinne.  
 Bet is to levé than beginne  
 Thing whichas may nought ben  
 acheved,  
 He is nought wise, that find him  
 greved

And doth so that his greve be more.  
 For who that loketh all to-fore  
 And woll nought se what is behinde,  
 He may full ofte his harmés finde.  
 Wickis to strive and have the worse,  
 We have enchésón for to curse,  
 This wote I well, and for to hate  
 The Grekes, but er that we debate  
 With hem that ben of such a might  
 It is full good that every wight  
 Be of him self right well bethought.  
 But as for me thus say I nought,  
 For whilé that my life woll stonde,  
 If that ye také werré on honde,  
 Fall it to the best or to the werst,

<sup>1</sup> *Fere*, companion, equal.

I shall my selven be the ferst  
 To greven hem what ever I may.  
 I woll nought onés saié nay  
 To thing which that your counceil  
 demeth,

For unto me well more it quemeth  
 The werré certés than the pees.  
 But this I saié nethéles,  
 As me belongeth for to say.  
 Now shapé ye the besté way.’

‘Whan Hector hath said his avis  
 Next after him tho spake París,  
 Which was his brother, and alaide<sup>1</sup>  
 What him best thought, and thus  
 he saide :

‘ Strong thing it is to suffré wronge,  
 And suffré shame is moré stronge ;  
 But we have suffred bothé two :  
 And, for all that, yet have we do  
 What so we mighté to reforme  
 The pees, whan we in suche a forme  
 Sent Anthenór, as ye wel knowe.  
 And they her greté wordés blowe  
 Upon her wrongfull dedés eke,  
 And he that woll him self nought  
 meke

To pees and list no reson take,  
 Men sain resón him wol forsake.  
 For in the multitude of men  
 Is nought the strengthé, for with ten  
 It hath be sene in true quaréle  
 Ayein an hunderd falsé dele  
 And had the better, of Goddés grace.  
 Thus hath befallé in many place.  
 And if it like unto you alle,  
 I will assay how so it falle  
 Our enemies if I may greve,  
 For I have caught a gret beleve  
 Upon a point I wol declare.

‘ This ender day as I gan fare  
 To hunt unto the greté herte  
 Which was to-fore min houndés  
 sterte,  
 And every man went on his side

<sup>1</sup> *Alaide*, alleged.

Him to pursue, and I to ride  
 Began to chase, and soth to say,  
 Within a while, out of my way  
 I rode, and nisté where I was,  
 And slepé caught me and on the  
 grasse

Beside a welle I laid me down  
 To slepe, and in a visión  
 To me the god Mercúrie cam,  
 Goddesses thre with him he nam  
 Minervé, Venus and Juno,  
 And in his honde an appel tho  
 He helde of gold with letters write.  
 And this he didé me to wite  
 How that they put hem upon me,  
 That to the fairest of hem thre  
 Of gold that appel shulde I give.  
 With ech of hem tho was I shrive  
 And eche one fairé me behight.<sup>1</sup>  
 But Venus said, if that she might  
 That appel of my yifé gete,  
 She wolde it nevermore foryete ;  
 And saide, how that in Grece londe  
 She woldé bring into min honde  
 Of all this erthé the fairést :  
 So that me thought it for the best  
 To her and yaf the appel tho.  
 Thus hope I well if that I go  
 That she for me woll so ordeigne  
 That they matéré for to pleigne  
 Shull have or that I come ayein.  
 Nowe have ye herd that I woll sain,  
 Say ye what stant in your avis.'—  
 And every man tho saiddé his,  
 And sondry causes they recorde,  
 But atté lasté they accorde  
 That Paris shall to Grece wende.  
 And thus the parlement toke ende.

“Cassandra whan she herd of this,  
 The which to Paris suster is,  
 Anone she gan to wepe and weile  
 And said : ‘ Alas, what may us eile,  
 Fortúné with her blindé whele

<sup>1</sup> *Fairé behight*, promised fairly, made fair promises.

Ne woll nought let us stondé wele,  
 For this I dare well undertake,  
 That if París his waié take,  
 As it is said that he shall do,  
 We ben for ever than undo.'—  
 The which—Cassandra thannéhigh  
 In all the world as it bereth sight,—  
 In bokés as men findé write,  
 Is that Sibille of whom ye wite,<sup>1</sup>  
 That allé men yet clepen sage.  
 Whan that she wist of this viáge,  
 How Paris shall to Grece fare,  
 No woman mighté worsé fare  
 Ne sorwé moré than she did.  
 And right so in the samé stede  
 Ferd Helenus which was her brother,  
 Of prophecy and such another,  
 And all was holdé but a jape,  
 So that the purpos which was shape,  
 Or were hem lefe or were hem lothe,  
 Was holde, and into Grece he goth,  
 This Paris, with his retenaunce.  
 And as it fell upon his chaunce,  
 Of Grece hé londeth in an ile,  
 And him was told the samé while  
 Of folk which he began to freine,<sup>2</sup>  
 Tho was in thilé quene Heleine,  
 And eke of contrés there about  
 Of ladies many a lusty rout,  
 With mochel worthy people also.  
 And why they comen thider tho  
 The causé stood in such a wise  
 For worship and for sacrifice  
 That they to Venus wolden make,  
 As they to-fore had undertake,  
 Some of good will, some of behest,  
 For thanné was her highé fest  
 Within a temple which was there.  
 Whan Paris wisté what they were,  
 Anone he shope his ordenaunce  
 To gone and done his obeisaunce  
 To Venus on her haliday  
 And did upon<sup>3</sup> his best array.

<sup>1</sup> *Wite*, know.    <sup>2</sup> *Freine*, make inquiry.  
<sup>3</sup> *Did upon*, put on.

With great riches he him be-  
honesth

As it to such a lord belongeth,  
He was nought arméd netheles,  
But as it were in londe of pees.  
And thus he goth forth out of ship  
And taketh with him his felaship;  
In such manere as I you say  
Unto the Temple he helde his way.

“ Tidngé, which goth over all  
To greate and smallé forth withall,  
Come to the quenés ere and tolde  
How Paris come, and that he wolde  
Do sacrificé to Venús.

And whan she herdé tellé thus,  
She thought, how that it ever be,  
That she woll him abide and se.

“ Forth cometh París with glad  
viságe

Into the Temple on pelrínage,  
Where unto Venus the goddessse  
He yiveth and offreth great richésse  
And praieth her that he praié wolde.  
And than aside he gan beholde,  
And sigh where that this lady stood,  
And he forth in his fresshé mood  
Goth there she was, and made her  
chere

As he well couth in his manére,  
That of his wordés such plesaunce  
She toke, that all her aqueintaunce  
Als ferforth as the herté lay  
He stale er that he went away.  
So goth he forth and toke his leve  
And thought anone, as it was eve,  
He woldé done his sacrilege,  
That many a man shulde it abegge.<sup>1</sup>  
Whan he to ship ayein was come  
To him he hath his conseil nome<sup>2</sup>  
And all deviséd the matere  
In such a wise as thou shalt here.  
Withinné night all privély  
His men he warneth-by and by  
That they be redy arméd sone

<sup>1</sup> *Abegge*, abyé, pay for.      <sup>2</sup> *Nome*, taken.

For certain thing whiche is to done,  
And they anone ben redy alle  
And echone other gan to calle  
And went hem out upon the stronde  
And toke a purpos there on londe  
Of what thing that they wolden do,  
Toward the Temple and forth  
they go.

So fell it of devociön  
Heleine in contemplaciön  
With many an other worthy wight  
Was in the Temple and woke all  
night

To bid and pray unto thymáge  
Of Venus, as was than uságe,  
So that París right as him list  
Into the Temple er they it wist  
Came with his men all soideinly.

And all at onés set askry<sup>1</sup>  
In hem which in the Temple were,  
For tho was mochel people there,  
But of defencé was no bote,  
So suffren they that suffre mote.  
París unto the quené wente  
And her in both his armés hente  
With him and with his felaship  
And forth they bere her into ship.  
Up goth the saile, and forth they  
went,

And suche a wind Fortúne hem sent,  
Till they the haven of Troié caught,  
Where out of ship anone they  
straught

And gone hem forth toward the town,  
The which came with processión  
Ayein París to sene his pray.  
And every man began to say  
To París and his felaship  
All that they couthen of worshíp,  
Was none so litel man in Troy  
That he ne madé merthe and joy  
Of that París had wonne Heleine.  
But all that merthe is sorwe and  
peine

<sup>1</sup> *Askry*, screaming.

To Helenus and to Cassandre.  
For they it tolden<sup>1</sup> shame and  
sclaundre

And loss of all the comun grace,  
That Paris out of haly place  
By stelth hath take a mannés wife,  
Wherof that he shall lese his life,  
And many a worthy man therto,  
And all the citee be fordo  
Which never shall be made ayein.  
And so it fell, right as they sain,  
The sacrileggé which he wrought  
Was causé why the Gregois sought  
Unto the town and it belay  
And wolden never part away  
Till what by sleight and what by  
strength

They had it wonne in brede and  
length  
And brent and slain that was  
withinne.

“ Now se, my soné, which a sinne  
Is sacrilegge in haly stede.  
Beware therfore, and bid thy bede<sup>2</sup>  
And do nothing in haly chirche  
But that thou might by reson wirche.  
And eke take hede of Áchillés,  
Whan he unto his lové chees  
Políxená that was also  
In haly Temple of Ápolló,  
Which was the causé why he deide  
And all his lust was laid aside.  
And Troilus upon Creseide  
Also his firsté lové laide  
In haly place, and how it ferde  
As who saith all the world it herde.  
Forsake he was for Diomedé,  
Such was of love his lasté mede.

“ Forthý my sone, I woldé rede  
By this ensample as thou might rede  
Secheellés where thou wilt thy grace  
And ware thee well, in haly place,  
What thou to lové do or speke

In aunter if it so be wreke<sup>1</sup>  
As thou hast herd me tell to fore,  
And take good hede also therfore.

**Upon the forme** of Avarice  
More than of any other Vice  
I have devided in parties  
The braunches, which of com-  
paignies

Through out the world in generall  
Be now the leders over all  
Of Covetise and Perjurie,  
Of Fals Brocáge and Usurie,  
Of Scarsenesse and of Unkinde-  
ship,

Which never drough to felaship,  
Of Robberie and of Privé Stelth,  
Which done is for the worldés welth,  
Of Ravine and of Sacrilege,  
Which maketh the conscience  
agregge;<sup>2</sup>

All though it may richésse atteigne,  
It floureth but it shall not greine  
Unto the fruit of rightwisnesse.  
But who that woldé do Largesse  
Upon the reule as it is yive,  
So might a man in trouthé live  
Toward his God and eke also  
Toward the World, for bothé two  
Largesse awaiteth, as belongeth  
Toneither part that he ne wrongeth.  
He kepeth him self, he kepeth his  
frendes,

So stant he sauf to both his endes ;  
That he excedeth no mesure,  
So well he can him self mesure :  
Wherof, my soné, thou shalt wite<sup>3</sup>  
So as the philosophre hath write,

“ Betwene the two extremités  
Of Vicé stont the proprietés  
Of Vertue, and to prove it so  
Take Avarice and take also  
The Vice of Prodegalité,  
Betwene hem Liberalite,

<sup>1</sup> Wreke, avenged.

<sup>2</sup> Agregge, feel overburdened.

<sup>3</sup> Wite, know.

<sup>1</sup> Tolden, accounted, reckoned.

<sup>2</sup> Bid thy bede, pray thy prayer.

Which is the Vertue of Largesse,  
 Stant and govérneth his noblesse.  
 For tho two Vices in discorde  
 Stond ever, as I find of recorde ;  
 So that betwene her two debate  
 Largessé reuleth his estate,  
 For in such wise as Avarice,  
 As I to-fore have told the Vice,  
 Through streit holdíng and through  
 scarsnesse

Stant as contrairé to largesse,  
 Right so stant Prodegalité  
 Revers, but nought in such degre.  
 For so as Avarcé spareth  
 And for to kepe his tresor careth,  
 That other all his own and more  
 Ayein the wisé mannés lore  
 Yiveth and despendeth here and  
 there,

So that him reccheth never where ;  
 While he may borwe he woll de-  
 spende

Till atté last he saith : ' I wende.'<sup>1</sup>  
 But that is spoken all to late,  
 For than is pouerte at the gate  
 And taketh him even by the sleve,  
 For erst woll he no wisdom leve.  
 And right as Avarice is sinne,  
 That wold his tresor kepe and winne,  
 Right so is Prodegalité.

But of Largesse in his degre,  
 Which even stant betwene the two,  
 The highé God and man also  
 The vertue eche of hem commen-  
 deth.

For he him selven first amendeth,  
 That over all his namé spredeth,  
 And to all other where it nedeth  
 He yiveth his good in such a wise  
 That he maketh many a man arise  
 Which ellés shuldé fallé low.  
 Largessé may nought be unknowe,  
 For what lond that he regneth inne,

<sup>1</sup> *I wende*, I will turn (over a new leaf), will change my way.

It may nought failé for to winne  
 Through his deserté love and grace,  
 Where it shall faile in other place.  
 And thus, betwene to moch and lite,  
 Largessé, which is nought to wite,<sup>1</sup>  
 Holt ever forth the middel way.  
 But who that torné wol away  
 Fro that to Prodegalité,  
 Anone he left the propreté  
 Of Vertu and goth to the Vice.  
 For in such wise as Avarice  
 Leseth for scarsnesse his good  
 name,

Right so that other is to blame,  
 Which through his wast mesúre  
 exceedeth.

For no man wot what harm that  
 bredeth

But mochel joié ther betideth,  
 Where that Largesse an herté  
 guideth.

For his mesúre is so govérned,  
 That he in bothé parts is lerned  
 To God and to the World also,  
 He doth resón to bothé two.  
 The pouer folk of his almesse  
 Relievéd ben in the distresse  
 Of thirst of hunger and of colde,  
 Ne yift of him was never solde  
 But frely yive, and nethéles  
 The mighty God of his ences  
 Rewardeth him of double grace,  
 The heven he doth him to purchase  
 And yiveth him eke the worldés good.  
 And thus the coté for the hood  
 Largessé taketh, and yet no sinne  
 He doth, how so that ever he winne.  
 What man hath hors, men yiven  
 him hors,

And who ne hath, of him no force,<sup>2</sup>  
 For he may thenne on foté go ;  
 The world hath ever stondé so.  
 But for to loken of the tweie,

<sup>1</sup> *To wite*, to be blamed.

<sup>2</sup> *No force*, no matter.



A man to go the siker weic,  
 Bet is to yivé than to take,  
 With yifte a man may frendés make,  
 But who that taketh or great or small,  
 He taketh a chargé forth with all  
 And stant nought fre til it be quit.  
 So for to deme in mannés wit,  
 It helpeth more a man to have  
 His owné good than for to crave  
 Of other men and make him bonde  
 Wher ellés he may stond unbonde.  
 Senec counseileth in this wise  
 And saith: ' But if the good suffice  
 Unto the liking of the will,  
 Withdrawethy lust and hold the still  
 And be to thy good suffisaúnt,  
 For that thing is appurtenaunt  
 To trouthe and causeth to be fre  
 After the reule of charité,  
 Which first beginneth of him selve.  
 For if thou richest other twelve,  
 Wherof thou shalt thyself be pouer,  
 I not what thank thou might recouer.  
 While that a man hath good to yive,  
 With greaté routés he may live  
 And hath his frendés over all,  
 And everich of him tellé shall,  
 The while he hath his fullé packe  
 They say, ' A good feláw is Jacke.'  
 But whan it failleth atté last,  
 Anone his prise they overcast,  
 For than is there none other lawe,  
 But ' Jacké was a good felawe.'  
 Whan they him pouer and nedy se,  
 They let him passe and fare well he;  
 Al that he wend of compaignie  
 Is thanné torned to folie.

" But now to speke in other kinde  
 Of Love, a man may suché finde,  
 That where they come in every rout,  
 They cast and wast her love about  
 Till all her time is overgone,  
 And thanné have they lové none.  
 For he that loveth over all,  
 It is no reson that he shall

Of love have any propreté.  
 Forthý my sone, avisé the,  
 If thou of love hast ben to large;  
 For suche a man is nought to charge.  
 And if it so be, that thou hast  
 Despended al thy time in wast  
 And set thy love in sondry place,  
 Though thou the substauce of thy  
 grace

Lese at the last, it is no wonder,  
 For he that put him selven under  
 As who saith comun over all,  
 He leseth the lové special  
 Of any one, if she be wise.  
 For lové shall nought bere his prise  
 By reson, whan it passeth one.  
 So have I sen full many one,  
 That were of lové wel at ese,  
 Which after fell in great disese  
 Through wast of lové, that they spent  
 In sondry places where they went.  
 Right so, my sone, I axe of the,  
 If thou with prodegalité  
 Hast here and there thy lové  
 wasted?"—

" My fader, nay, but I have tasted  
 In many a place as I have go,  
 And yet love I never one of tho  
 But for to drivé forth the day.  
 For leveth well, my hert is ay  
 Withouté mo for evermore  
 All upon one, for I no more  
 Desiré but her love alone.  
 So make I many a privé mone,  
 For well I fele I have despended  
 My longé love and nought amended  
 My spede, for ought I findé yit.  
 If this be wast, unto your wit,  
 Of love and prodegalité,  
 Now, godé fader, demeth ye.  
 But of o thing I woll me thrive,  
 That I shall for no lové thrive  
 But if her self me woll releve."—

" My soné, that I may well leve,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Love, believe.

And nethéles me semeth so  
 For ought that thou hast yet misdo  
 Of timé whiché thou hast spended,  
 It may with gracé ben amended.  
 For thing which may be worth the  
 cost

Perchance is nouter wast ne lost,  
 For what thing stant on aventúre  
 That can no worldés creätúre  
 Tell in certain how it shall wende  
 Till he therof may sene an ende.  
 So that I note<sup>1</sup> as yet therfore,  
 If thou, my sone, hast wone or lore.  
 For ofté time, as it is sene,  
 Whan somer hath lost all his grene  
 And is with winter wast and bare,  
 That him is left nothing to spare,—

<sup>1</sup> *Note*, know not.

All is recovered in a throwe ;  
 The coldé windés overblowe,  
 And stilléd ben the sharpé shoures,  
 And sodeinlich ayein his floures  
 The somer happneth, and is riche,  
 And so parcas thy grace is liche.  
 My soné, though thou be now pouer  
 Of lové, yet thou might recouer.”—

“ My fader, certés graunt mercý,  
 Ye have me taught so redilý,  
 That ever while I livé shall  
 The bet I may be ware with all  
 Of thing which ye have said er this,  
 But evermore how that it is  
 Toward my shrifte as it belongeth,  
 To wit of other points me longeth,  
 Wherof that ye me wolden teche  
 With all min herte I you beseche.”

## Book VI.

### OF GLUTTONY.

**T**he greté sinne originall,  
 Which every man in general  
 Upon his birth hath envenfmed,  
 In Paradis it was mistimed,  
 Whan Adam of thilke appel bote,  
 His sweté morcel was to hote,  
 Which dedly<sup>1</sup> madé the mankinde.  
 And in the bokés as I finde  
 This Vicé, which so out of reule  
 Hath set us all, is clepéd Gule,  
 Of which the braunchés ben so great  
 That of hem all I wol nought treat,  
 But only as touchénd of two  
 I thenké speke and of no mo.  
 Wherof the first is Dronkéship  
 Which bereth the cuppé felaship.  
 Ful many a wonder doth this Vice,  
 He can make of a wisman nice,  
 And of a fool that him shall seme  
 That he can all the lawé deme  
 And yiven every jugémént  
 Which longeth to the firmament  
 Both of the sterre and of the mone.  
 And thus he maketh a great clerk  
 sone  
 Of him that is a lewdé man.  
 There is no thing, whiche he ne can  
 While he hath dronkéship on honde,  
 He knoweth the see, he knoweth  
 the stronde,  
 He is a noble man of armes,—  
 And yet no strength is in his armes.

<sup>1</sup> *Dedly*, mortal.

There he was stronge inow to-fore  
 With dronkéship it is forlore,  
 And all is chaungéd his estate  
 And wext anone so feble and mate,<sup>1</sup>  
 That he may nouthér go ne come,  
 But all to-gider he is benome<sup>2</sup>  
 The power both of honde and fote  
 So that algate abide he mote,  
 And all his wittés he foryete.  
 The which is to him such a lete<sup>3</sup>  
 That he wot never what he doth,  
 Ne which is fals ne which is soth,  
 Ne which is day ne which is night,  
 Asfor thetime he knoweth no wight<sup>4</sup>  
 That he ne wot so moch as this—  
 What maner thing him selven is  
 Or he be man or he be beste.  
 That holde I right a sory feste,  
 Whan he that reson understode  
 So sodeinlich is woxé wode  
 Or elles lich the dedé man  
 Which nouthér go ne speké can.  
 Thus ofte he is to beddé brought,  
 But where he lith yet wot he nought,  
 Till he arise upon the morwe  
 And than he saith, 'O, which a sorwe  
 It is for to be drinkéles,'  
 So that half drunke in such a rees  
 With drié mouth he sterte him up  
 And saith, 'Now *baillez ça* the cuppe.'

<sup>1</sup> *Mate*, dull, flat.

<sup>2</sup> *Benome*, deprived of.

<sup>3</sup> *Lete*, hindrance.

<sup>4</sup> *No wight*, no whit.

That made him lese his wit at eve  
 Is than a morwe all his beleve,  
 The cuppe is all that ever him pleseth  
 And also that him most diseseth,  
 It is the cuppé whom he serveth,  
 Which allé carés from him kerveth  
 And all the balés to him bringeth.  
 Injoy he wepeth, in sorwe hesingeth,  
 For dronkéship is so divers  
 It may no whilé stonde invers,  
 He drinketh the wine, but atté last  
 The wine drinketh him and bint  
 him fast

And laith him drunké by the walle  
 As him which is his bondé thralle  
 And all in his subjection.

And lich to such condición

As for to speke it otherwise

It falleth, that the mosté wise

Ben other while of Love adoted

And so bewhappéd and assoted <sup>1</sup>

Of dronken men that never yit

Was none which half so lost his wit

Of drinke, as they of such thing do

Which cleped is the jolif wo,

And waxen of her owné thought

So drunké that they knowé nought,

What reson is, or more or lesse.

Such is the kinde of that siknesse,

And that is nought for lacke of  
 braine,

But Love is of so great a maine <sup>2</sup>

That where he taketh a herte on  
 honde,

There may no thng his might with-  
 stonde.

The wisé Salomon was nome,

And strongé Sampson overcome,

The knightly David him ne might

Rescoué that he with the sight

Of Bersabé ne was bestade,

Virgile also was overlade,

And Aristotle was put under.

<sup>1</sup> *Bewhappéd and assoted*, knocked over and  
 besotted.

<sup>2</sup> *Maine*, strength.

“Forthymy sone, it is no wonder,  
 If thou be drunke of Love amonge,  
 Which is above all other stronge.  
 And if so is that thou so be,  
 Tell me thy shrift in privété,  
 It is no shame of such a thewe  
 A yong man to be dronkelewe.  
 Of such phisíque I can a parte,  
 And as me semeth by that arte  
 Thou shuldest by phisonomý  
 Be shapen to that malady  
 Of lovéd drunk, and that is routhe.”—

“Ha, holy fader, all is trouthe  
 That ye me telle, I am beknowe,  
 That I with Love am so bethrowe <sup>1</sup>  
 And al min herte is so through  
 sunke

That I am verliché drunke,

And yet I may both speke and go.

But I am overcomé so

And tornéd fro my self so clene

That oft I wot nought what I mene,

So that excusen I ne may

My herté fro the firsté day

That I cam to my lady kith, <sup>2</sup>

I was yet sobre never sith,

Where <sup>3</sup> I her se or se her nought ;

With musing of min owné thought

Of lové which min herte assaileth

So drunke I am that my wit failéth

And all my braine is overtorned,

And my maneré so mistorned,

That I foryete all that I can

And stondé like a maséd man,

That ofté whan I shuldé play

It maketh me drawe out of the way

In solein <sup>4</sup> placé by my selve,

As doth a laborér to delve

Which can no gentilmannés chere, <sup>5</sup>

Or ellés as a lewdé frere,

Whan he is put to his penaunce,

<sup>1</sup> *Bethrowe*, cast down.

<sup>2</sup> *Cam kith*, became known.

<sup>3</sup> *Where*, whether.

<sup>4</sup> *Solein*, single.

<sup>5</sup> Who knows nothing of the good manners  
 of a gentleman.

Right so lese I my contenance.  
 And if it nedés so betide,  
 That I in compaigný abide,  
 Where as I musté daunce and singe  
 The hové-daunce<sup>1</sup> and carolinge,  
 Or for to go the newé fote,  
 I may nought wel heve up my fote,  
 If that she be nought in the way.  
 For than is all my merth away,  
 And waxe anone of thought so full,  
 Wherof my limmés ben so dull,  
 I may unethés<sup>2</sup> gon the pas.  
 For thus it is and ever was,  
 Whan I on suché thoughtés muse,  
 The lust and merthé that men use,  
 Whan I se nought my lady by me,  
 All is foryeté for the timé  
 So ferforth that my wittés chaungen  
 And allé lustés fro me straungen,  
 That they sain allé truély  
 And swéré, that it am nought I.  
 For as the man which ofté drinketh  
 The wine that in his stomacks sinketh  
 Wexth drunke and witles for a  
 throwe,

Right so my lust is overthrowe,  
 And of min owné thought so mate<sup>3</sup>  
 I waxé, that to min estate  
 There is no limmé will me serve,  
 But as a drunken man I swerve  
 And suffre such a passiön,  
 That men have great compassiön  
 And everich by him self mervelfleth  
 What thing it is that me so esleth.  
 Such is the maner of my wo,  
 Which timé that I am her fro,  
 Till este ayein that I her se.  
 But than it were a nicété  
 To tellé you how that I fare.  
 For whan I may upon her stare,  
 Her womanheed, her gentillesse,  
 Min hert is full of such gladnesse  
 That overpasseth so my wit

<sup>1</sup> *Hové-daunce*, court dance.

<sup>2</sup> *Unethés*, not easily.

<sup>3</sup> *Mate*, dull, dead.

That I wot never where it sit,  
 But am so drunken of that sight  
 Me thenketh for the time I might  
 Right sterté through the holé wall.  
 And than I may well, if I shall,  
 Both singe and daunce and lepe  
 about

And holdé forth the lusty rout.  
 But nethéles it falleth so  
 Full ofté that I fro her go  
 Ne may, but as it were a stake  
 I stonde, avisément to take  
 And loke upon her fairé face,  
 That for the while out of the place  
 For all the world ne might I wende.  
 Such lust comth than into my  
 minde,

So that withouté mete and drinke  
 Of lusty thoughtés which I thinke,  
 Me thenketh I mighté stonden ever.  
 And so it weré to me lever  
 Than such a sighté for to leve,  
 If that she woldé yive me leve  
 To have so mochel of my will.  
 And thus thenkénd I stondé still  
 Withouté blenching of min eye,  
 Right as me thoughté that I sigh  
 Of paradis the mosté joy.  
 And so there while I me rejoy;  
 Unto min herte a great desire  
 The which is hoter than the fire  
 All sodeinliche upon me renneth,  
 That all my thought withinné bren-  
 neth

And am so ferforth overcome  
 That I not where I am become,  
 So that among tho hertés stronge  
 In stede of drinke I underfonge  
 A thought so swete in my coráge,  
 That never piment<sup>1</sup> ne vernage<sup>2</sup>  
 Was half so sweté for to drinke.  
 For as I wolde, than I thinke,

<sup>1</sup> *Piment*, wine with a third part of honey spiced with powder of cloves, mace, cinnamon, cubebs, and galingale.

<sup>2</sup> *Vernage*, a white wine.

As though I were at min above,  
 For so through drunke I am of love,  
 That all that my sotie demeth  
 Is soth as than it to me semeth.  
 And while I maytho thoughtés kepe  
 Me thenketh as though I were aslepe  
 And that I were in Goddés barme.<sup>1</sup>  
 But whan I se min owné harme  
 And that I sodeinliche awake  
 Out of my thought and hedé take  
 How that the sothé stant in dede,  
 Than is my sikernesse in drede  
 And joié tornéd into wo,  
 So that the hete is all ago  
 Of such sotie as I was inne.  
 And than ayeinward I beginne  
 To take of love a newé thorst,  
 The which me greveth alltherworst,  
 For thannécometh the blanché fever  
 With chele and maketh me so to  
 chever<sup>2</sup>

And so it coldeth at min herte,  
 That wonder is how I asterte<sup>3</sup>  
 In suche a point that I ne deie.  
 For certés there was never keie  
 Ne frosen fs upon the walle  
 More inly cold than I am alle.  
 And thus suffre I the hoté chele  
 Which passeth other peinés fele,  
 In colde I brenne and fresse in hete  
 And than I drinke a bitter swete  
 With drié lippe and eyen wete.  
 Lo, thus I temper my diete  
 And take a draught of such relés<sup>4</sup>  
 That all my wit is hertéles  
 And all min herté there it sit  
 Is as who saith withouté wit,  
 So that to prove it by resón  
 In making of comparisón  
 There may no differéncé be  
 Betwen a drunken man and me,  
 But all the werst of everychone  
 Is ever that I thurst in one,

The moré that my herté drinketh  
 The more I may, so that me  
 thinketh,

My thurst shall never be acquieint.<sup>1</sup>  
 God shieldé that I be nought dreint  
 Of such a superfluité.

For well I fele in my degre  
 That all my wit is overcast,  
 Wherof I am the more agast  
 That in defaulte of ladyship  
 Perchaunce in such a dronkéschip  
 I may be dead er I beware.  
 For certés, fader, this I dare  
 Beknowe and in my shrifté telle,  
 But<sup>2</sup> I a draught have of that welle  
 In which my deth is and my life,  
 My joy is tornéd into strife,  
 That sobre shall I never worthe,<sup>3</sup>  
 But as a drunken man forworthe,<sup>4</sup>  
 So that in londé, where I fare,  
 The lust is lore of my welfare,  
 As he that may no boté finde.

But this me thenketh a wonder kinde,  
 As I am drunke of that I drinke  
 Of thesé thoughtés that I thinke  
 Of which I findé no reles,  
 But if I mighté nethéles  
 Of suche a drinke as I coveite  
 So as me list have o receite,  
 I shulde assobre<sup>5</sup> and faré wele.  
 But so Fortúne upon her whele  
 On high medeigneth nought to sette,  
 For evermore I finde a lette.  
 The botéler is nought my frend  
 Which hath the keié by the bend.<sup>6</sup>  
 I may well wissch and that is waste,  
 For well I wot so fressh a taste,  
 But if my gracé be the more,  
 I shall assaié nevermore.  
 Thus am I drunke of that I se,  
 For tasting is defended me,

<sup>1</sup> *Acquieint*, quenched.

<sup>2</sup> *But*, unless.

<sup>3</sup> *Worthe*, become.

<sup>4</sup> *Forworthe*, perish.

<sup>5</sup> *Assobre*, become sober.

<sup>6</sup> The key on his girdle, or band.

<sup>1</sup> *Barme*, bosom.

<sup>2</sup> *Chever*, shiver.

<sup>3</sup> *Asterite*, escape.

<sup>4</sup> *Relés*, relish.

And I can nought my selven  
staunche,

So that, my fader, of this braunche  
I am giltif, to tellé trouth."—

"My soné, that me thenketh  
routh.

For lovédrunke is the mischefe  
Above all other the moste chefe,  
If he no lusty thought assay  
Which may his sory thurst allay,  
As for the timé yet it lesseth  
To him which other joié misseth.

"Forthy my sone, aboven all  
Think well how so it the befall,  
And kepe thy wittés that thou hast  
And let hem nought be drunke in  
wast.

But nethéles there is no wight,  
That may withstonde Lovés might.  
But why the cause is, as I finde,  
But that there is diversé kinde  
Of lovédrunké: why men pleigneth  
After the court which all ordeigneth,  
I will the tellen the manére,  
Now list, my sone, and thou shalt  
here.

**F**or the fortune of every  
chaunce

After the goddés purveaunce  
To man it groweth from above,  
So that the spede of every love  
Is shapé there, er it befallé.  
For Jupiter aboven alle,  
Which is of goddes soverain,  
Hath in his celler, as men sain,  
Two tonnés full of lové drinke  
That maketh many an herté sinke  
And many an herte also to flete,<sup>1</sup>  
Or of the soure or of the swete.  
That one is full of such piment,  
Which passeth all entendément  
Of mannés wit if he it taste,  
And maketh a jolif herte in haste.

"That other bitter as the galle,

<sup>1</sup> *Flete*, float, swim.

Which maketh a mannés herté palle,  
Whose dronkéship is a siknesse  
Through feling of the bitternesse.  
Cupide is botéler of bothe,  
Which to the leve and to the lothe  
Yiveth of the swete and of the soure,  
That somé laugh and somé loure,  
But for so much as he blinde is  
Full ofté time he goth amis  
And taketh the baddé for the good,  
Which hindreth many a mannés food  
Withouté cause and furthereth eke.  
So be there some of lové seke  
Which ought of reson to ben hole,  
And somé comé to the dole  
In happe and as hem selven lest<sup>1</sup>  
Drinke undeservéd of the best.

"And thus this blindé botélere  
Yiveth of the trouble in stede of  
chere

And eke the chere in stede of trouble.  
Lo, how he can the hertés trouble  
And maketh men drunke al upon  
chaunce

Withouté lawe of governaunce.  
If he drawe of the sweté tonne,  
Than is the sorwe all overronne  
Of lovédrunke, and shall nought  
greven

So to be drunken every even,  
For all is thanné but a game.  
But whan it is nought of the same  
And he the better tonné draweth,  
Such dronkéship an herté gnaweth  
And febleth all a mannés thought,  
That better him were have drunké  
nought

And all his brede have eten drie,  
For than he lest his lusty wey  
With dronkéship and wot nought  
whider

To go, the waies ben so slider,  
In whiche he may par cas so falle  
That he shall breke his wittés alle.

<sup>1</sup> *Lest*, please.

And in this wisé men be drunke  
 And the drinké they have drunke.  
 But allé drinken nought alike,  
 For some shall singe and some shal  
 sike,

So that it me no thing mervelfleth,  
 My sone, of lové that the eyleth,  
 For wel I knowé by thy tale,  
 That thou hast drunken of the  
 dwale<sup>1</sup>

Which bitter is, till God the sende  
 Such gracé that thou might  
 amende.

But soné, thou shalt bid and pray  
 In such a wise as I shall say,  
 That thou the lusté well atteigne  
 Thy wofull thurstes to restreigne  
 Of Love and tasté the swetenesse,  
 As Bachus did in his distresse,  
 Whan bodeliché thurst him hent  
 In straungé londés, where he went.

“**Thiſ Bachus** sone of Jupiter  
 Was hote,<sup>2</sup> and as he wenté fer  
 By his fadérs assignément  
 To make a wer in Orient  
 And great powér with him he ladde,  
 So that the higher hond he hadde  
 And victoire of his enemies  
 And torneth homward with his  
 prise.

In suche a contré which was drie  
 A mischefe fell upon the wey,  
 As he rode with his compaigny  
 Nigh to the strondés of Lubie,  
 There mighté they no drinké finde  
 Of water ne of other kinde,  
 So that him self and all his hoste  
 Were for default of drinke almoste  
 Distruiéd, and than Bachus praid  
 To Jupiter, and thus he said :  
 ‘O highé fader, that seest all,  
 To whom is reson that I shall  
 Beseche and pray in évery nede,  
 Behold, my fader, and take hede

<sup>1</sup> *Dwale*, nightshade.

<sup>2</sup> *Hote*, called.

This wofull thurst that we be inné,  
 To staunche and graunt us for to  
 winne

And saufe unto the contré fare  
 Where that our lusty lovés are  
 Waiténd upon our home comíng.’  
 And with the vois of his praying,  
 Which herd was to the goddés high,  
 He sigh anone to-fore his eye  
 A wether which the grounde hath  
 sporned,

And where he hath it overtorned,  
 There sprang a wellé fressh and  
 clere,

Wherof his owné botélere  
 After the lustés of his will  
 Was every man, to drinke his fill.  
 And for this ilké greté grace  
 Bachus upon the samé place  
 A riché temple let arere,  
 Which ever shuldé stondé there  
 To thirsty men in remembraunce.

“Forthý, my sone, after this  
 chaunce

It sit the well to taken hede  
 So for to pray upon thy nede,  
 As Bachus praidé for the well.  
 And thenke as thou hast herd metell  
 How grace he gradde<sup>1</sup> and grace  
 he had,

He was no fool that first so rad.  
 For selden get a domb man londe,  
 Take that provérbe, and under-  
 stonde

That wordés ben of vertue gret.  
 Forthý to speké thou ne let  
 And axe and pray erély and late  
 Thy thurst to quenche, and thenke  
 algate,

The boteler which bereth the key  
 Is blinde, as thou hast herd me say.  
 And if it mighté so betide,  
 That he upon the blindé side  
 Par cas the sweté tonne araught,

<sup>1</sup> *Graddé*, cried for.



Thanshalt thou have a lusty draught  
 And waxe of lovédrunké sobre.  
 And thus I redé thou assobre  
 Thin herte in hope of suche a grace,  
 For dronkéschip in every place  
 To whether sidé that it torne  
 Doth harme and maketh a man to  
 sporne<sup>1</sup>

And ofté falle in suche a wise,  
 Where he par cas may nought arise.

“And for to loke in evidence  
 Upon the sothe expérience  
 So as it hath befalle er this,  
 In every mannés mouth it is  
 How Tristram was of lové drunke  
 With Bele Isoldé, whan they drunke  
 The drink which Brangweine hem  
 betek

Er that king Mark his eme her toke  
 To wife, as it was after knowe.  
 Andeke, my sone, if thou wolt knowe  
 As it hath fallen over more  
 In lovés cause, and what is more  
 Of dronkéschippé for to drede  
 As it whilom befell in dede,  
 Wherof thou might the better  
 escheue

Of drunké men that thou ne sue  
 The compaigný in no manere,  
 A great ensample thou shalt here.

**This finde I write** in poesy  
 Of thilké faire Ypotasy,  
 Of whose beauté there as she was  
 Spake everyman. And fell par cas,  
 That Pirothous so him spedde,  
 That he to wife her shuldé wedde,  
 Wherof that he great joié made.  
 And for he wolde his lové glade  
 Ayein the day of mariáge  
 By mouthé bothe and by messáge  
 His frendés to the fest he praid,  
 With great worship and as men said  
 He hath this yongé lady spoused.  
 And whan that they were allé housed

<sup>1</sup> *Sporne*, strike with the foot; stumble.

And set and servéd atté mete,  
 There was no wine, which may  
 begete

That there ne was plenty inough,  
 But Bachus thilké tonnéd drough,  
 Wherof by way of dronkéschip  
 The greatest of the felaship  
 Were out of reson overtake,  
 And Venus, which hath also take  
 The causé most in speciall,  
 Hath yive him drinké forth with all  
 Of thilké cuppé whiche exciteth  
 The lust wherin a man deliteth.  
 And thus by double weié drunke  
 Of lust that ilké firy funke<sup>1</sup>  
 Hath made hem as who saith half  
 wode,<sup>2</sup>

That they no reson understode  
 Ne to none other thing they seen  
 But hiré which to-fore her eyen  
 Was wedded thilké samé day;  
 That fresshé wife, that lusty may  
 Of her it was all that they thoughten  
 And so ferforth her lustés soughten  
 That they the wiché naméd were  
 Centauri, at the festé there  
 Of one assent, of one accorde,  
 This yongé wife malgré her lorde  
 In suche a rage away forth ladden,  
 As they which none insight ne  
 hadden

But only to her drunké fare,  
 Which many a man hath made  
 misfare

In love als wel as other wey.  
 Wherof, if I shall moré say  
 Upon the nature of this Vice,  
 Of custume and of exercise  
 The mannés grace how it fordoth,  
 A talé, which was whilom soth  
 Of foolés that so drunken were,  
 I shall reherce unto thin ere.

**I rede** in a croniqué thus  
 Of Galba and of Vitelliús,

<sup>1</sup> *Funke*, touchwood, spark.    <sup>2</sup> *Wode*, mad.

The which of Spaine bothé were  
 The greatest of all other there,  
 And bothe of o conditió  
 After the dispositiún  
 Of glotony and dronkeship,  
 That was a sory felaship.  
 For this thou might wel understonde,  
 That man may nought well longé  
 stonde

Which is wine drunke of comun use,  
 For he hath loré the vertues  
 Wherof that Reson shuld him clothe,  
 And that was sen upon hem bothe.  
 Men sain there is non evidence  
 Wherof to knowe a difference  
 Betwene the drunken and the wode,  
 For they ben never nouter gode ;  
 For where that wine doth wit away  
 Wisdome hath lost the righté wey,  
 That he no maner Vicé dredeth ;  
 No moré than a blind man thredeth  
 His nedel by the sonnés iight,  
 No more is Reson than of might  
 Whan he with dronkeship is blent.  
 And in this point they weren shent  
 This Galba both and eke Vitelle  
 Upon the cause as I shall telle,  
 Wherof good is to taken hede.  
 For they two through her dronken-  
 hede

Of witéls excitatiún  
 Oppressed all the naciún  
 Of Spaine, for all foul usáunce,  
 Which done was of continuaúnce  
 Of hem which all day drunké were.  
 There was no wife ne maiden there  
 What so they were or faire or foule  
 Whom they ne taken to defoule,  
 Wherof the lond was often wo.  
 And eke in other thingés mo  
 They wroughten many a sondry  
 wronge.

But how so that the day be longe,  
 The derké night cometh atté last.  
 God woldé nought they shulden last,

And shope the lawe in suche a wise  
 That they through dome to the juise  
 Ben dampnéd for to be forlore.  
 But they that hadden be to-fore  
 Enclined to allé drunkenesse,  
 Her endé thanné bare witénsé ;  
 For they in hopé to assuage  
 The peine of dethe upon the rage  
 That they the lassé shulden fele,  
 Of winé let fill full a mele  
 And drunken till so was befall  
 That they her strengthés losten all  
 Withouten wit of any braine,  
 And thus they ben half dedé slaine,  
 That hem ne greveth but a lite.

“ My sone, if thou be for to wite  
 In any point which I have said,  
 Wherof thy wittes bene unteid,  
 I redé clepe hem home ayein.”—

“ I shall do, fader, as ye sain,  
 Als ferforth as I may suffise.  
 But well I wot that in no wise  
 The dronkeship of Love away  
 I may remué by no wey,  
 It stant nought upon my fortune.  
 But if you listé to comúne  
 Of the secóndé glotony,  
 Which clepéd is Delfcacy,  
 Wherof ye speken here to-fore,  
 Beseche I woldé you therfore.”—

My sone, as of that ilké Vice  
 Which of all other is the norice,  
 And stant upon the retenue  
 Of Venus, so as it is due,  
 The propreté how that it fareth  
 The boke herafter now declareth.

Of this chapitre, in which we  
 trete,

There is yet one of such diete  
 To which no pouer may atteigne,  
 For all is past as paindemaine<sup>1</sup>  
 And sondry wine and sondry drinke  
 Wherof that he woll ete and drinke

<sup>1</sup> Past as paindemaine, diet unattainable by the poor; all pastry, as fine white bread, &c.

His cokés ben for him affaided,  
 So that his body is awaited  
 That him shall lacké no delite  
 Als ferforth as his appetite  
 Suffiseth to the metés hote,  
 Wherof the lusty Vice is hote  
 Of gulé the Delicacy,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which all the holé progeny  
 Of lusty folke hath undertake  
 To fedé while that he may take  
 Richessé, wherof to be founde.  
 Of abstinence he wot no bounde,  
 To what profit it shuldé serve.  
 And yet phisqué of his conserve  
 Maketh many a restauración  
 Unto his recreación,  
 Which woldé be to Venus lefe.  
 Thus for the point of his relefe  
 The coker which shal his mete array  
 But he the bet his mouth assay  
 His lordés thank shall ofté lèse  
 Er he be servéd to the chese.  
 For there may lacké nought so lite<sup>2</sup>  
 That he ne fint anone a wite,<sup>3</sup>  
 For but his lust be fully served  
 There hath no wight his thank de-  
 served,  
 And yet for mannés sustenance  
 To kepe and holde in governaunce  
 To him that woll his helé gete  
 Is none so good as comun mete.  
 For who that loketh on the bokes,  
 It saith, confection of cokes  
 A man him shuldé well advise  
 How he it toke and in what wise.  
 For who that useth that he knoweth  
 Full selden siknesse on him groweth,  
 And who that useth metés straunge  
 Though his natúre empeire and  
 change  
 It is no wonder, levé sone,  
 Whan that he doth ayein his wone<sup>4</sup>  
 To také metes and drinkés newe,

<sup>1</sup> Delicacy of the gullet.    <sup>2</sup> Lite, little.

<sup>3</sup> Wite, blame.    <sup>4</sup> Wone, custom.

The which it shulde alwey eschewe  
 For in phisqué this I finde,  
 That Usance is the seconde Kinde,<sup>1</sup>

“And right so chaungeth his  
 estate

He that of Love is delicate,  
 For though he haddé to his honde  
 The besté wife of all the londe  
 Or the fairésté love of alle,  
 Yet wolde his herte on other falle  
 And thinke hem more deliciós  
 Than he hath in his owné hous.  
 Men sain it is now ofté so,  
 Avise hem well, that they so do,  
 And for to speke in other way  
 Full ofté time I have herd say,  
 That he which hath no love acheved  
 Him thinketh that he is nought  
 relieved

Though that his lady make him  
 chere,

So as she may in good manere  
 Her honour and her namé save,  
 But he the surplus mighté have;  
 Nothing withstanding her estate,  
 Of lové moré delicate,  
 He set her chere at no delite  
 But he have all his appetite.

“My sone, if it with the be so,  
 Tell me?”—“Min holy fader, no.  
 For delicate in such a wise  
 Of Love, as ye to me devise,  
 Ne was I never yet giltife.  
 For if I haddé suche a wife,  
 As ye speke of, what shulde I more?  
 For than I woldé never more  
 For lust of any womanhede  
 Min herte upon none other fede.  
 And if I did, it were a waste.  
 But all withouté such repaste  
 Of lust as ye me tolde above,  
 Of wife or yet of other love,  
 I faste and may no fodé gete,  
 So that for lack of deintie mete

<sup>1</sup> Use is second Nature.

Of whiche an herté may be fedde,  
 I go fasténdé to my bedde.  
 But might I getten as ye tolde  
 So mochel that my lady wolde  
 Me fedé with her glad semblaunt,  
 Though me lacke al theremenaunt,  
 Yet shulde I somdele ben abeshed<sup>1</sup>  
 And for the timé wel refreshed.  
 But certes, fader, she ne doth ;  
 For in good feith to tellé soth  
 I trowé, though I shuldé sterve,  
 She woldé nought her eyé swerve  
 My herté with one goodly loke  
 To fede, and thus for such a coke  
 I may go fasting evermo.  
 But if so is that any wo  
 May fede a mannés herté wele,  
 Therof I have at every mele  
 Of plenté moré than inough.  
 But that is of him self so tough,  
 My stomack may it nought defie.<sup>2</sup>  
 Lo, such is the Delfcacie  
 Of Lové which min herté fedeth,  
 Thus have I lacke of that me nedeth.  
 But for all this yet nethéles,  
 I say, I am nought giltéles,  
 That I somdele am delicate.  
 For ellés were I fully mate  
 But if that I some lusty stounde  
 Of comfort and of esé founde  
 To take of lové some repast ;  
 For though I with the fullé taste  
 The lust<sup>3</sup> of Lové may nought fele,  
 Min hunger otherwise I kele  
 Of smalé lustés whiche I pike,  
 And for a timé yet they like,  
 If that ye wisten, what I mene.”—

“Now, godé soné, shrive the clene  
 Of suché deinties as ben good  
 Wherof thou takest thin herté  
 food.”—

“My fader, I you shall reherce,

<sup>1</sup> *Abeshed*, astonished. <

<sup>2</sup> *Defie*, digest.

<sup>3</sup> *Lust*, pleasure, in no bad sense ; so lusty = the German “lustig.”

How that my fodés ben diverse,  
 So as they fallen in degre.  
 One feding is of that I se,  
 An other is of that I here,  
 The thridde, as I shall tellen here,  
 It groweth of min owné thought.  
 And ellés shulde I livé nought,  
 For whom that faileth food of herte  
 He may nought well the dethe as-  
 terté,

“Of sight is all my firsté food,  
 Through which min eye of allé good  
 Hath that to him is accordaúnt  
 A lusty fodé suffisaúnt.

Whan that I go toward the place  
 Where I shall se my ladies face,  
 Min eyé, whiche is loth to faste,  
 Beginneth to hunger anone so faste  
 That him thinketh of an houré thre,  
 Till I there come and he her se.

And than after his appetite  
 He taketh a food of such delite,  
 That him none other deintie nedeth,  
 Of sondry sightés he him fedeth.  
 He seeth her face of such colour  
 That fressher is than any flour ;  
 Heseeth her front is large and pleine  
 Withouté frounce of any greine ;  
 He seeth her eyen liche an heven ;  
 He seeth her nasé straughte and  
 even ;

He seeth her rudde upon the cheke ;  
 He seeth her reddé lippés eke ;  
 Her chinne accordeth to the face,  
 All that he seeth is full of grace ;  
 Heseeth her necké rounde and clene,  
 Therinné may no bone be sene ;  
 He seeth her handés faire and white,  
 For all this thingé without wite  
 He may se naked atté leste,  
 So is it well the moré feste  
 And well the more delfcacie  
 Unto the feding of min eye.  
 He seeth her shapé forth with all,  
 Her body rounde, her middel small,

So well begone with good array,  
 Which passeth all the lust of May  
 Whan he is most with softé shoures  
 Full clothéd in his lusty floures.  
 With suché sightés by and by  
 Min eye is fed, but finally,  
 Whan he the port and the manere  
 Seeth of her womanisshé chere,  
 Than hath he such delite on honde  
 Him thenketh he might stillé stonde  
 And that he hath full suffisaunce  
 Of livelode and of sustenaunce  
 As to his part for evermo.  
 And if it thought all other so,  
 Fro thenné wolde he never wende  
 But there unto the worldés ende  
 He wolde abide, if that he might,  
 And feden him upon the sight.  
 For though I mighté stonden ay  
 Into the time of domésday  
 And loke upon her ever in one,  
 Yet whan I shuldé fro her gone  
 Min eyé wolde, as though he faste,  
 Ben hunger storven also faste  
 Till eft ayein that he her see,  
 Such is the nature of min eye.  
 There is no lust so deintéfull,  
 Of which a man shall nought be full  
 Of that the stomack underfongeth,  
 But ever in one min eyé longeth ;  
 For loke, how that a goshawk tireth,<sup>1</sup>  
 Right sodoth he, whan that he pireth  
 And tototh on her womanhede,  
 For he may never fully fede  
 His lust, but ever a liche sore  
 Him hungreth, so that he the more  
 Desireth to be fed algate.  
 And thus min eye is made the gate  
 Through which the deinties of my  
 thought  
 Of lust ben to min herté brought.  
 Right as min eyé with his loke  
 Is to min herte a lusty coke

<sup>1</sup> *Tireth*, tears and plucks in feeding, as a bird of prey.

Of Lovés fodé delicate,  
 Right so min ere in his estate,  
 Whereas min eyé may nought  
 serve,  
 Can well min hertés thank deserve  
 And feden him fro day to day  
 With suché deintés, as he may.  
 For thus it is, that over all  
 Where as I come in speciáll  
 I may here of my lady prise :  
 I here one say, that she is wise ;  
 An other saith, that she is good ;  
 And some men sain, of worthy blood  
 That she is come, and is also  
 So fair, that no where is none so ;  
 And some men praise her goodly  
 chere :

Thus every thing that I may here  
 Which souneth to my lady good,  
 Is to min ere a lusty food.  
 And eke min ere hath over this  
 A deinty festé, whan so is  
 That I may here her selven speke,  
 For than anone my faste I breke  
 On suché wordés as she saith,  
 That full of trouth and full of feith  
 They ben, and of so good disporte,  
 That to min eré great comfórté  
 They done as they that ben delices.  
 For all the metés and the spices  
 That any Lumbard couthé make  
 Ne be so lusty for to take  
 Ne so ferforth restauratife  
 I say as for min owné life,  
 As be the wordés of her mouth.  
 For as the windés of the south  
 Ben most of allé debonaire,  
 So whan her list to speké faire  
 The vertue of her goodly speche  
 Is verrily min hertés leche.<sup>1</sup>  
 And if it so befall amonge  
 That she carole upon a songe,  
 Whan I it here I am so fed  
 That I am fro my self so led

<sup>1</sup> *Leche*, physician.

As though I were in Paradis,  
 For certes as to min avis,  
 Whan I here of her vois the steven<sup>1</sup>  
 Me thinkth it is a blisse of heven.  
 And eke in otherwise also  
 Ful ofté time it falleth so  
 Min eré with a good pitaunce  
 Is fed of reding of romaunce  
 Of Ydoine and of Amadas,  
 That whilom weren in my cas,  
 And eke of other many a score,  
 That loveden longe er I was bore;  
 For whan I of her lovés rede,  
 Min eré with the tale I fede  
 And with the lust of her histoire.  
 Somtime I drawe into memoire  
 How sorwe may nought ever last,  
 And so cometh hope in atté last,  
 Whan I none other fodé knowe.  
 And that endureth but a throwe,  
 Right as it were a chery feste.  
 But for to compten atté lest,  
 As for the whilé yet it eseth  
 And somdele of min hert appeseth.  
 For what thing to min eré spredeth,  
 Which is plesaunt, somdele it fedeth,  
 With wordés such as he may gete,  
 My lust in stede of other mete.

“Lo thus, my fader, as I you say  
 Of lust the which min eye hath see  
 And eke of that min ere hath herde,  
 Full ofte I have the better ferde.  
 And tho two bringen in the thridde,  
 The which hath in min herte amidde  
 His placé také to array  
 The lusty fodé whiche assay  
 I mote, and namélich on nightes,  
 Whan that me lacketh allé sightes,  
 And that min hering is away,  
 Than is he redy in the wey  
 My reré souper<sup>2</sup> for to make,  
 Of which min hertés fode I take.

“This lusty cokés name is hote

<sup>1</sup> *Steven*, voice, sound.

<sup>2</sup> *Réré souper*, a supper after supper for the luxurious who sat up late.

Thought, which hath ever his  
 pottés hote  
 Of lové boilend on the fire  
 With fantasy and with desire,  
 Of which er this full ofte he fed  
 Min herté whan I was a bed.  
 And than he set upon my borde  
 Both every sight and every worde  
 Of lust which I have herd or seen.  
 But yet is nought my fest all plein,  
 But all of woldés and of wissches  
 Therof have I my fullé disshes,  
 But as of feling and of taste  
 Yet might I never have o repaste.  
 And thus as I have said a-forn,  
 I lické hony on the thorn,  
 And as who saith upon the bridel  
 I chewé, so that all is idel,  
 As in effect the fode I have.  
 But as a man that wolde him save  
 Whan he is sike by mediciné,  
 Right so of lové the famine  
 I fonde in all that ever I may  
 To fede, and drivé forth the day  
 Till I may have the greté fest  
 Which all min hunger might arrest.

“Lo, suché ben my lustes thre,  
 Of that I thinké, here and se,  
 I take of lové my feding  
 Withouté tasting or feling,  
 And as the plover doth of aire  
 I live, and am in good espeire  
 That for no such delcacy  
 I trowe I do no glotený.  
 And nethéles to your avis,  
 Min holy fader, that ben wis,  
 I recommaundé min estate  
 Of that I have ben delicate.”—

“My sone, I understondé wele  
 That thou hast told here every dele,  
 And as me thinketh by thy tale  
 It ben delités wonder smale  
 Wherof thou takest thy lovés fode.  
 But, sone, if that thou understode,  
 What is to ben delicioús,

Thou woldest nought ben curios  
 Upon the lust of thin estate  
 To ben to soré delicate  
 Wherof that thou resón excede ;  
 For in the bokés thou might rede,  
 If mannés wisdom shall be sued  
 It oughté wel to ben escheued  
 In Love als well as other way ;  
 For as these haly bokés say,  
 The bodély delices alle  
 In every point how so they falle  
 Unto the soulé done grevaunce.  
 And for to take in remembraunce  
 A tale accordaunt unto this,  
 Which of great understanding is  
 To mannés soulé resonáble,  
 I thinke tell and is no fable.

“**Of Cristés word** who wol it  
 rede

How that this Vice is for to drede  
 In thevangile it telleth pleine,  
 Which mote algaté be certeine  
 For Crist him self it bereth witnesse.  
 And though the clerke and the  
 clergesse

In Latin tunge it rede and singe  
 Yet for the moré knouelechinge  
 Of trouthe, which is good to wite,  
 I shal declare as it is write  
 In English, for thus it began.

“**Crist saith**: There was a  
 riché man,

A mighty lord of great estate,  
 And he was eke so delicate  
 Of his clothng that every day  
 Of purple and bisse<sup>1</sup> he made  
 him gay

And ete and drank therto his fill  
 After the lustés of his will  
 As he which all stode in delice  
 And toke none hede of thilké Vice.  
 And as it shuldé so betide,  
 A pouer lazér upon a tide  
 Came to the gate and axéd mete.

<sup>1</sup> *Bisse*, finest linen.

But theré might he nothing gete  
 His dedely hunger for to staunche,  
 For he which had his fullé paunche  
 Of allé lustés atté borde  
 Nedeigneth nought tospeke a worde  
 Onlich a crummé for to yive  
 Wherof the pouer mighté live  
 Upon the yift of his almesse.  
 Thus lay this pouer in great distresse  
 A colde and hungry at the gate,  
 Fro which he mighté go no gate  
 So was he wofully besene.

And as these haly bokés sain,  
 The houndés comen fro the halle,  
 Where that this siké man was falle,  
 And as he lay there for to deie,  
 The woundés of his malady  
 They licken, for to done him ese.  
 But he was full of such disese  
 That he may nought the deth escape.  
 But as it was that timé shape  
 The soulé fro the body passeth,  
 And he whom nothing overpasseth,  
 The highé God up to the heven  
 Him toke, where he hath set him  
 even

In Abrahamés barme<sup>1</sup> on high,  
 Where he the hevens joié sigh  
 And had all that he havé wolde.  
 And fell as it befallé sholde,  
 This riché man the samé throwe  
 With sodein deth was overthrowe  
 And forth withouten any went<sup>2</sup>  
 Unto the helle straught he went,  
 The fende into the fire him drough  
 Where that he haddé peine inough  
 Of flamé which that ever brenneth.  
 And as his eye abouté renneth,  
 Toward the heven he cast his loke,  
 Where that he sigh and hedé toke  
 How Lazar set was in his see  
 Als fer as ever he mighté see  
 With Abraham, and than he praide  
 Unto the patriarch and saide :

<sup>1</sup> *Barme*, bosom.

<sup>2</sup> *Went*, turning.

‘Send Lazar down fro thilké sete  
And do that he his finger wete  
In water, so that he may droppe  
Upon my tungé for to stoppe  
The greté hete in which I brenne.’  
But Abrahám answérdé thenne  
And saidé to him in this wise :

‘My soné, thou the might avise  
And take into thy remembraunce  
How Lazar haddé great penaúnce  
While he was in that other life.  
But thou in all thy lust jolife  
The bodely delcécés soughtest,  
Forthýso as thouthanné wroughtest,  
Now shalt thou také thy rewarde  
Of dedely peine here afterwarde  
In hellé, which shall ever last.  
And this Lazar now atté last  
This worldés peine is overronne,  
In heven and hath his life begonne  
Of joié which is endéles.  
But that thou praíest nethéles,  
That I shall Lazar to the sende  
With water on his finger ende  
Thine hoté tungé for to kele,  
Thou shalt no suché graces fele,  
For to that foulé place of sinne  
For ever in which thou shalt ben  
inne,

Cometh none out of this placé thider  
Ne none of you may comen hider,  
Thus be ye parted now a-two.’  
The rich ayeinward cridé tho :  
‘O Abraham, sithe it so is,  
That Lazar may nought do me this  
Whiche I have axéd in this place,  
I woldé pray an other grace.  
For I have yet of bretherne five  
That with my fader ben a-live  
To-gider dwellend in one hous,  
To whom, as thou art gracióús,  
I praíé, that thou woldest sende  
Lazar, so that he mighté wende  
To warne hem how the worlde is  
went,

Thatafterward they benought shent  
Of suché peinés as they deie.  
Lo, this I praie and this I crie,  
How I may nought myself amende.’  
The patriarche anone suende  
To this praíer answérdé : ‘Nay,’  
And saide him, how that every day  
His bretheren mighten knowe and  
here

Of Moíses on erthé here  
And of prophétés other mo,  
What hem was best. And he  
saith : ‘No,

But if there might a man arise  
From deth to life in suche a wise  
To tellen hem how that it were,’  
He saidé, ‘than of puré fere  
They shulden well beware therby.’  
Quod Abraham : ‘Nay sikerly,  
For if they now will nought obey  
To such as techen hem the wey  
And all day preche and all day telle  
How that it stant of heven and helle,  
They woll nought thanné taken hede  
Though it befellé so in dede  
That any dede man weré arered,  
To ben of him no better lered  
Than of an other man alive.’

“If thou, my soné, canst describe  
This tale, as Crist him self it tolde,  
Thou shalt have causé to beholde  
To se so great an evidence,  
Wherof the sothe experience  
Hath shewéd openlich at eye,  
That bodély delcécacy  
Of him which yiveth none almesse,  
Shall after falle in great distresse.  
And that was sene upon the riche,  
For he ne wolde unto his liche  
A crummé yiven of his brede,  
Than afterward whan he was dede  
A droppe of water him was werned.<sup>1</sup>  
Thus may a mannés wit be lerned  
Of hem that so delités taken

<sup>1</sup> *Werned*, denied.



Whan they with deth ben overtaken,  
That erst was swete isthanné souré.  
But he that is a gouvernoúr  
Of worldés good, if he be wise,  
Within his herte he set no prise  
Of all the worlde, and yet he useth  
The good that he nothíng refuseth,  
As he which lord is of the thinges,  
The ouches and the riché ringes,  
The cloth of gold and the perrie  
He taketh, and yet delícacíe  
He leveth though he wear all this.  
The beste meté that there is  
He eteth, and drinketh the besté  
drinke,

But how that ever he ete or drinke  
Delcacié he put away  
As he which goth the righté wey  
Nought only for to fede and clothe  
His body, but his soulé bothe.  
But they that taken other wise  
Her lustés, ben none of the wise,  
And that whilom was shewéd eke,  
If thou these oldé bokés seke.

“That man that wolde him well  
avise,

Delcacy is to despise  
Whan Kinde accordeth nought  
withall,

Wherof ensample in speciall  
**O**f Nero whilom may be tolde,  
Whiche ayein kindé manifolde  
His lustés toke, till atté last,  
That God him wolde all overcast,  
Of whom the cronique is so plein,  
Me lust no more of him to sain.  
And nethéles for glotony  
Of bodély delcacy  
To knowe his stomack how it ferde,  
Of that no man to-foré herde  
Which he within him self bethought,  
A wonder subtil thing he wrought.  
Thre men upon election  
Of age and of complexión  
Lich to him self by allé way

He toke towardés him to play,  
And ete and dranke as well as he,  
Therof was no diversité.  
For every day whan that they ete  
To-fore his owné bord they sete,  
And of such meté as he was served,  
All though they had it nought de-  
served,

They token service of the same.  
But afterward all thilké game  
Was into wofull ernest torned.  
For whan they weré thus sojórned,  
Within a time at after-mete  
Nero, which haddé nought foryete  
The lustés of his frele estate,  
As he which all was delicate  
To knowé thilke experiéce,  
The men let come in his presence,  
And to that one the samé tide  
A courser that he sholdé ride  
Into the felde anone he bad,  
Wherof this man was wonder glad  
And goth to pricke and prounce  
about.

That other, while that he was out,  
He laide upon his bed to slepe.  
The thriddé, which he woldé kepe  
Within his chambre faire and softe,  
He goth now up now down ful ofte,  
Walkénd apace, that he ne slepte  
Till he which on the courser lepte,  
Was comen fro the felde ayein.  
Nero than, as the bokés sain,  
These men did done take all thre  
And slough hem for he woldé se  
The whose stomáck was best  
defied.<sup>1</sup>

And whan he hath the sothé tried,  
He found that he which goth the pas  
Defied best of allé was,  
Which afterward he uséd ay.  
And thus what thing unto his pay  
Was most plesánt, he lefté none ;  
With every lust he was begone

<sup>1</sup> Was defied, had digested.

Wherof the body mighté glade,  
 For he no abstinencé made ;  
 But althermost of erthly thinges  
 Of women unto the likinges  
 Nero set all his holé herte,  
 For that lust shuld him nought  
 asterte.

Whan that the thurst of love him  
 caught

Where that him list he toke a  
 draught,

He spareth nouter wife ne maide,  
 That such another, as men saide,  
 In all this world was never yit.

He was so drunke in all his wit  
 Through sondry lustés which he  
 toke,

That ever while there is a boke  
 Of Nero men shall rede and sing  
 Unto the worldés knouleching.

“ My gode sone, as thou hast  
 herde,

For ever yet it hath so ferde,  
 Delícacy in Lovés cas

Withouté reson is and was.

For where that love his herté set  
 Him thenketh it might be no bet,  
 All though it be nought fully mete  
 The luste of love is ever swete.

Lo, thus to-gider of felaship,

Delícacy and dronkéschip,

Wherof Reson stant out of herre,<sup>1</sup>

Have made full many a wise man erre  
 In Lovés causé most of all.

For than how so that ever it fall  
 Wit can no reson understonde,  
 But let the governauncé stonde  
 To Will, which thanné wexeth so  
 wilde

That he can nought himselven shilde  
 Fro the perill, but out of fere

The way he secheth here and there,  
 Him reccheth nought upon what  
 side,

<sup>1</sup> *Out of herre, off its hinges.*

For ofté time he goth beside  
 And doth such thing withouté drede,  
 Wherof him oughté wel to drede.  
 But whan that Love assoteth sore,  
 It passeth allé mennés lore,  
 What lust it is that he ordeigneth  
 There is no mannés might re-  
 streigneth,

And of God taketh he none hede,  
 But lawéles withouté drede,  
 His purpos for he wolde acheve,  
 Ayein the points of the beleve  
 He tempteth heven, erth and helle,  
 Here afterward as I shall telle.

“ Who dare do thing, which Love  
 ne dare ?

To Love is every lawe unware,  
 But to the lawés of his hest  
 The fissh, the fowl, the man, the beste  
 Of all the worldés kindé louteth.

For Love is he which nothing  
 doubteth,<sup>1</sup>

In mannés herté where he sit  
 He compteth nought toward his wit  
 The wo no moré than the wele,  
 No more the heté than the chele,  
 No more the weté than the drie,  
 No more to livé than to deie,  
 So that to-foré ne behinde  
 He seeth no thng but as the blinde.  
 Withoute insight of his coráge  
 He doth merveilés in his rage  
 To what thing that he wol him  
 drawe.

There is no God, there is no lawe  
 Of whom that he taketh any hede,  
 But as Bayárd the blindé stede  
 Till he falle in the dicche a midde  
 He goth there no man will him bidde,  
 He stant so ferforth out of reule,  
 There is no wit that may him reule.  
 And thus to tell of him in soth,  
 Full many a wonder thing he doth,  
 That weré better to be laft,

<sup>1</sup> *Doubteth, feareth.*

Among the wichie is wiché craft,  
That some men clepen sorcery,  
Which for to winne his druery<sup>1</sup>  
With many a circumstance he  
    useth,

There is no point which he refuseth.  
The craft, which that Saturnus fonde,  
To maké prickés in the sonde,  
That geomauncé clepéd is,  
Ful oft he useth it amis ;  
And of the flood his ydromaúnce ;  
And of the fire the piromaúnce :  
With questións echone of tho  
He tempteth ofte, and eke also  
Aëromaunce in jugément  
To Love he bringeth of his assent.  
For thesé craftés as I finde  
A man may do by way of kinde  
Be so it be to good entent.  
But he goéth all other went,<sup>2</sup>  
For rather er he shuldé faile  
With nigromaunce he wolde assaile  
To make his incantació n  
With hote subfumigació n,  
Thilke art which specular<sup>3</sup> is hote  
And used is of comun rote  
Among paiéns which that craft eke,<sup>4</sup>  
Of wichie is auctor Thosz the Greke,  
He wercheth one and one by rowe.  
Razel is nought to him unknowe,  
The Salomónés Candary,  
His Ydeác, his Eutory,  
The figure and the boke withall  
Of Balamuz and of Ghenball,  
The seale and therupon thymáge  
Of Thebith for his avauntáge  
Hetaketh, and somewhat of Gibere,  
Which helplich is to this matere.  
Babylla to her sonés seven  
Which hath renouncéd to the heven,

<sup>1</sup> *Druery*, love.

<sup>2</sup> *Went*, turning, cross way.

<sup>3</sup> *Specular*, miswritten "spatula" in MS. The chapter "De Specularia" follows that on Geomancy in Cornelius Agrippa, "De Vanitate Scientiarum."

<sup>4</sup> *Eke*, increase, extend.

With Cernés bothé square and  
    rounde,

He traceth ofte upon the grounde,  
Makénd his invocació n.  
And for full é nformatió n  
The scolé, which Honorius  
Wrote, he pursueth. And lo, thus  
Magique he useth for to winne  
His love, and spareth for no sinne.  
And over that of his sotý  
Right as he secheth sorcery  
Of hem that ben magiciéns,  
Right so of the naturié ns  
Upon the sterrés from above  
His wey he secheth unto love  
Als fer as he hem understondeth.  
In many a sondry wise he fondeth,  
He maketh ymáge, he maketh  
    sculptúre,  
He maketh writí ng, he maketh  
    figúre,

He maketh his calculatió ns,  
He maketh his demonstratió ns,  
His hours of astronomý  
He kepeth as for that partý  
Which longeth to the inspectió n  
Of love and his affectió n,  
He wolde into the hellé seche  
The devel him selvé to beseche  
If that he wisté for to spede  
To gete of love his lusty mede.  
Where that he hath his herté set  
He biddé never faré bet,  
Ne wit of other heven more.  
My sone, if thou of such a lore  
Hast ben er this, I rede the leve."—

"Min holy fader, by your leve  
Of all that ye have spoken here  
Which toucheth unto this matere,  
To tellé soth right as I wene,  
I wot nought o word what ye mene.  
I woll nought say if that I couth  
That I nolde in my lusty youth  
Beneth in helle and eke above  
To winné with my ladies love

Done al that ever that I might,  
For therof have I none insight  
Where afterward that I become  
So that I wonne and overcome  
Her lové which I most coveite.”—

“My soné, that goth wonder  
streite.

For this I may well tellé soth,  
There is no man the which so doth  
For all the craft that he can caste,  
That he ne bieth it atté laste.  
For often he that will beguile  
Is guilé with the samé guile,  
And thus the guiler is beguiled,  
As I finde in a boke compiled  
To this matére an olde histoire,  
The which comth now to my  
memoire

And is of great ensemplary  
Ayein the vice of sorcery,  
Wherof none endé may be good.  
But how whilóm therof it stood,  
A talé which is good to knowe  
To the, my sone, I shall beknowe.

**Among hem,** which at Troié  
were,

Ulixes at the siegé there  
Was one by name in speciáll  
Of whom yet the memoriáll  
Abit, for while there is a mouthe  
For ever his namé shall be couthe.  
He was a worthy knight and king  
And clerk knowénd of every thing,  
He was a great rethorien,  
He was a great magicien ;  
Of Tullius the rethorique,  
Of king Zorastes the magique,  
Of Tholomé thastronomy,  
Of Plato the philosophy,  
Of Daniel the slepy dremes,  
Of Neptune eke the water stremes,  
Of Salomon and the proverbes,  
Of Macer all the strength of herbes,  
And the phisique of Ypocras,  
And lich unto Pithagoras

Of surgery he knew the cures.  
But some what of his aventüres,  
Which shall to my matere accorde,  
To the, my sone, I will recorde.

“This king, of which thou hast  
herd sain,

From Troy as he goth home ayein  
By ship, he found the see diverse  
With many a windy storm reverse.  
But he through wisdom which he  
shapeth

Ful many a great péril escapeth,  
Of whiche I thenké tellen one,  
How that malgré the nedeland stone  
Wind-drive he was all soideinly  
Upon the strondés of Cilly,  
Where that he must abide a while.  
Twey quenés weren in that ile  
Calipso naméd and Circes.

And when they herde, how Úlixés  
Is londed there upon the rive,  
For him they senden also blive.<sup>1</sup>  
With him such as he wolde he nam  
And to the court to hem he cam.  
These quenés were as two goddéses  
Of art magique sorcerésses,

That what lord come to that rivage,  
They make him love in such a rage  
And upon hem assoté so,  
That they woll have, er that he go,  
All that he hath of worldés good.

Ulixes well this understood,  
They couthé moch, he couthé more.  
They shape and cast ayein him sore  
And wrought many a subtil wile  
But yet they might him nought  
beguile ;

But of the men of his navie  
They two forshope<sup>2</sup> a great partie,  
May none of hem withstonde her  
hestes :

Some part they shopen into bestes,  
Some part they shopen into foules,

<sup>1</sup> *Rive*, shore ; *also blive*, very quickly ; *nam*, took.

<sup>2</sup> Those two (queens) transformed.

To berés, tigrés, apés, oules,  
 Or ellés by some other wey,  
 Ther might no thng hem disobey,  
 Such craft they had abové kinde.  
 But that art couthé they nought finde  
 Of which Ulixes was deceived,  
 That he ne hath hem alle weived  
 And brought hem into such a rote<sup>1</sup>  
 That upon him they bothe assote.  
 And through the science of his arte  
 He toke of hem so well his parte  
 That he begat Circes with childe,  
 He kepte him sobre and made hem  
 wilde,

He set him selvé so above  
 That with her good and with her love,  
 Who that therof be leve or loth,  
 All quite into his ship he goth.

Circes to-swollé bothé sides  
 He left, and waiteth on the tides,  
 And straught throughout the salté  
 fome

He taketh his cours and comth him  
 home,

Where as he found Penelopé,  
 A better wife there may none be,  
 And yet there ben inough of good.  
 But who her goodship understood  
 Fro first that she wifehodé toke,  
 How many lovés she forsoke  
 And how she bare her all about  
 Therewhilés that her lord was out,  
 He mighté make a great avaunt,  
 Amonges all the remenaunt,  
 That she was one of all the best.  
 Well might he set his herte in rest,  
 This king, whan he her founde in  
 hele.

For as he couthe in wisdom dele,  
 So couthé she in womanhede.  
 And whan she sigh withouten drede  
 Her lord upon his owné grounde,  
 That he was comé sauf and sounde,

<sup>1</sup> *Rote*, practice; routine, as in the phrase  
 "repeat by rote."

In all this world ne mighté be  
 A gladder woman than was she.

"The famé which may nought  
 be hid

Throughout the londe is soné kid,  
 Her king is comen home ayein;  
 There may no man the fullé sain  
 How that they weren allé glad  
 So mochel joy of him they made;  
 The presents every day be newed,  
 He was with yiftés all besnewed,  
 The people was of him so glad  
 That though none other man hem  
 bad

Taillage upon hem self they sette,  
 And as it were of puré dette  
 They give her goodés to the king.  
 This was a glad home welcomng.

"Thushath Ulixes what he wolde,  
 His wife was such as she be sholde,  
 His people was to him subgite,  
 Him lacketh nothing of delite.

"But Fortune is of such-a flight  
 That whan a man is most on height  
 She maketh him rathest for to falle,  
 Therewot no man what shall befallé.  
 The happés over mannés hede  
 Ben hongé with a tender threde;  
 That provéd was on Ulixés,  
 For whan he was most in his pees  
 Fortuné gan to make him werre  
 And set his welthe al out of herre.  
 Upon a day as he was mery,  
 As though there might him no thing  
 dery,<sup>1</sup>

Whan night was come he goth to  
 bedde,

With slepe and both his eyen  
 fedde.

And while he slept he met a sweven,  
 Him thought he sigh a statue even  
 Which brighter than the sonné  
 shone.

A man it seméd was it none,

<sup>1</sup> *Dery*, hurt.

But yet it was as in figuré  
 Most lich to mannés creätüre.  
 But as of beauté hevenlich  
 It was most to an aungel lich,  
 And thus betwene aungel and man  
 Beholden it this king began,  
 And suche a lust toke of the sight,  
 That fain he wolde, if that he might,  
 The forme of that figuré embrace.  
 And goth him forth toward that  
 place

Where he sigh that ymágé tho,  
 And takth it in his armés two  
 And it embraceth him ayein  
 And to the king thus gan it sain :

‘ Ulixes, understand wel this,  
 The token of our acquaintance is  
 Here afterward to mochel tene ;  
 The lové that is us betwene,  
 Of that we now such joié make,  
 That one of us the deth shall take,  
 Whan timé cometh of destiné,  
 It may none otherwisé be.’

Ulixes tho began to pray  
 That this figuré wolde him say  
 What wight he is, that saith him so.  
 This wight upon a speré tho  
 A pensel<sup>1</sup> which was well begone  
 Embrouded, sheweth him anone,  
 Thre fisshes all of o colour  
 In maner as it were a toure  
 Upon the pensel weré wrought.  
 Ulixes knew this token nought  
 And praith to wite, in some partie,  
 What thinge it mighté signifie.  
 ‘ A signe it is,’ the wight answerde,  
 ‘ Of an empire ;’ and forth he ferde  
 All sodeinly, whan he that said.

“ Ulixés out of slepe abraid,  
 And that was right ayein the day,  
 That lenger slepen he ne may.  
 Men sain, a man hath knoueleching  
 Save of him self of allé thing ;

<sup>1</sup> *Pensel*, a small banner hanging from a lance.

His owné chauncé no man knoweth,  
 But as Fortúne it on him throweth.  
 Was never yet so wise a clerk,  
 Which mighté knowe all Goddés  
 werk,

Ne the secrét which God hath sette  
 Ayein a man may nought be lette.  
 Ulixes though that he be wise,  
 With all his wit in his advise  
 The more that he his sweven ac-  
 compteth

The lasse he wot what it amounteth.  
 For all his calculatióin  
 He seeth no demonstratióin  
 As plainly for to knowe an ende.  
 But nethéles, how so it wende,  
 He drad him of his owné sone ;  
 That maketh him well the more  
 astone

And shope therfore anone withall  
 So that withinné castell wall  
 Thelemachum his sone he shette  
 And upon him strong warde he sette.  
 The sothé further he ne knewe,  
 Till that Fortúne him overthrewe.  
 But nethéles for sikernesse,  
 Where that he mighté wit and gesse  
 A placé strengest in his londe,  
 There let he make of lime and sonde  
 A strengthé where he wolde dwelle,  
 Was never man yet herdé telle  
 Of suche an other as it was.  
 And for to strength him in that cas  
 Of all his lond the sikerest  
 Of servants and the worthiest  
 To kepen him withinné warde  
 He set his body for to warde ;  
 And madé such an ordenaunce  
 For lové, ne for áqueintaúnce,  
 That were it erely were it late  
 They shuldé let in at the gate  
 No maner man, what so betid,  
 But if so were him self it bid.

“ But all that might him nought  
 availe,

For whom Fortúné wol assaile  
 There may be no such résisténce  
 Which mighté make a mandefénce,  
 All that shall be, mot fall algate.  
 This Circes wiché I spake of late,  
 On whom Ulixés hath begete  
 A child, though he it have foryete,  
 Whan timé came, as it was wone,  
 She was deliverd of a sone,  
 Which clepéd is Thelogonus.  
 This child whan he was boré thus  
 About his moder to full age  
 That he can reson and langáge  
 In good estate was drawé forth.  
 And whan he was so mochel worth  
 To stonden in a mannés stede,  
 Circes his mother hath him bede,  
 That he shall to his fader go  
 And told him all to-gider tho  
 What man he was that him begat.  
 And whan Thelogonus of that  
 Was ware, and hath full knoueleching  
 How that his fader was a king,  
 He praith his moder fairé this  
 To go where that his fader is.  
 And she him graunteth that he shall,  
 And made him redy forth with all.  
 “It was that timé such usaunce,  
 That every man the conoissaunce  
 Of his contré bare in his honde,  
 Whan he went into straungé londe.  
 And thus was every man therfore  
 Wel knowé, where that he was bore,  
 For espiáll and mistrowínges  
 They didé thanné suché things  
 That every man might other knowe.  
 So it befell that ilké throwe  
 Thelogonus, as in this cas,  
 Of his contré the signé was  
 Thre fisshes, which he shuldé bere  
 Upon the penon of a spere.  
 And whan that he was thus arraied  
 And hath his harneis all assaied,  
 That he was redy every dele,  
 His moder bad him faré wele

And said him, that he shuldé  
 swithe<sup>1</sup>

His fader grete a thousand sithe.  
 Thelogonus his moder kist  
 And toke his leve, and where he wist  
 His fader was, the waíé name,  
 Till he unto Nachaíé came,  
 Which of that lond the chefe citee  
 Was clepéd, and there axeth he  
 Where was the kinge and how he  
 ferde.

And whan that he the sothé herde,  
 Where that the king Ulixes was,  
 Alone upon his hors great pas  
 He rode him forth, and in his honde  
 He bare the signal of his londe  
 With fisshes thre, as I have tolde,  
 And thus he went unto that holde  
 Where that his owné fader dwelleth.  
 The causé why he comth, he telleth  
 Unto the kepers of the gate,  
 And wolde have comen in there at,  
 But shortly they him saidé nay.  
 And he als faire as ever he may  
 Besought and toldé hem of this,  
 How that the king his fader is.  
 But they with proudé wordés great  
 Began to manace and to threte  
 But<sup>2</sup> he go fro the gaté fast  
 They wolde him take and setté fast.  
 Fro wordés unto strokés thus  
 They felle, and so Thelogonus  
 Was soré hurte and well nigh dede,  
 But with his sharpé sperés hede  
 He maketh defénce, how so it falle,  
 And wan the gate upon hem alle  
 And hath slain of the besté five.  
 And they ascriden also blive  
 Through out the castell all about ;  
 On every sidé men come out,  
 Wherof the kingés herte afflight,  
 And he with all the hast he might  
 A speré caught and forth he goth  
 As he that was nigh wode for wroth.

<sup>1</sup> *Swithe*, strongly.

<sup>2</sup> *But*, unless.

He sigh the gatés full of blood,  
 Thelogonus and where he stood  
 He sigh also, but he ne knewe  
 What man it was, but to him threwe  
 His spere, and he sterde out a side,  
 But destiné which shall betide,  
 Befell that ilké timé so,  
 Thelogonus knew nothing tho  
 What man it was that to him caste,  
 And while his owné speré laste,  
 With all the signé therupon,  
 He cast unto the kinge anon  
 And smot him with a dedly wounde.  
 Ulixes fell anone to grounde,  
 Tho every man, 'The king! the  
 king!'

Began to cry, and of this thing  
 Thelogonus which sigh the cas  
 On knes he fell and saide: 'Alas,  
 I have min owné fader slain!  
 Now wolde I deie wonder fain,  
 Now sle me who that ever will,  
 For certés it is right good skill.'<sup>1</sup>  
 He crieth, he wepeth, he saith ther-  
 fore:

'Alas, that ever was I bore,  
 That this unhappy destiné  
 So wofully comth in by me!'  
 Thisking, which yet hath life inough,  
 His herte ayein to him he drough  
 And to that vois an ere he laide  
 And understood all that he saide  
 And gan to speke and saide on  
 high:

'Bring me this man.' And whan  
 he sigh

Thelogonus, his though he sette  
 Upon the sweven which he mette,<sup>2</sup>  
 And axeth, that he mighté se  
 His spere, on which the fisshes thre  
 He sigh upon the pensel wrought,  
 Tho wist he well, it faileth nought,  
 And bad him that he telle sholde

<sup>1</sup> Skill, reason.

<sup>2</sup> Sweven . . . mette, dream . . . dreamed.

Fro whenne he came and what he  
 wolde.

Thelogonus in sorwe and wo  
 So as he mighté toldé tho  
 Unto Ulixes all the cas,  
 How that Circés his moder was,  
 And so forth said him every dele,  
 How that his moder grete him wele,  
 And in what wisé she him sent.  
 Tho wist Ulixes what it ment,  
 And toke him in his armés softe  
 And all bledéndé kist him ofte  
 And saidé: 'Soné, while I live,  
 This infortúne I the foryive.'  
 After his other sone in hast  
 He send, and he began him hast  
 And cam unto his fader tite.  
 But whan he sigh him in such plite,  
 He wold have ronne upon that  
 other

Anone and slain his owné brother,  
 Ne haddé be that Ulixés  
 Betwene hem made accorde and  
 pees,

And to his heir Thelemachus  
 He bad that he Thelogonus  
 With all his power shuldé kepe  
 Till he were of his woundés depe  
 All hole, and than he shulde him  
 yive

Lond where upon he mighté live.  
 Thelemachus whan he this herde,  
 Unto his fader he answérde  
 And saide, he woldé don his wille.  
 So dwellé they to-gider stille  
 These brethren, and the fader  
 sterveth.

"Lo, wherof sorcerié serveth,  
 Through sorcerý his lust he wan,  
 Through sorcerý his wo began,  
 Through sorcerý his love he chese,  
 Through sorcerý his life he lese.  
 The child was gete in sorcerý,  
 The which did all his feloný,

<sup>1</sup> Tite, quickly.



Thing which was ayein kindé  
wrought

Unkindéliche it was about :  
The child his owné fader slough,  
That was unkindéship inough.

“Forthý take hede how that it is,  
So for to winné love amis,  
Which endeth all his joy in wo.  
For of this arte I find also,  
That hath be do for Lovés sake,  
Wherof thou might ensample take,  
A great cronfque emperiall  
Which ever into memoriall  
Among the men, how so it wende,  
Shall dwellé to the worldés ende.

The highé creator of thinges,  
Which is the king of allé kinges,  
Full many wonder worldés chaunce  
Let slide under his sufferáunce,  
There wot no man the causé why  
But he, the which is Almightý.  
And that was provéd whilóm thus,  
Whan that the king Nectánabús,  
Which had Egipté for to lede,  
But for he sigh to-fore the dede  
Through magique of his sorcerie,  
Wherof he couth a great partie,  
His enemies to him coménd,  
Fro whom he might him nought  
defend,

Out of his owné lond he fledde  
And in the wise as he him dredde  
It fell, for all his wicchecraft,  
So that Egipte him was beraft.  
And he disguised fledde away  
By ship and held the righté way  
To Macedoiné, where that he  
Arriveth at the chefe citee.

Three yomen of his chambere there  
All only for to serve him were,  
The which he trusteth wonder wele  
For they were trewe as any stele.

And hapneth that they with him  
ladde

Parte of the besté good he hadde,

They také logginge in the town  
After the dispositioun,  
Where as him thoughté best to  
dwelle.

He axeth than and herdé telle  
How that the kingé was out go  
Upon a werre he haddé tho.  
But in that citee thanné was  
The quené which Olimpias  
Was hote and with solempnité  
The feste of her nativité,  
As it befell, was thanné holde,  
And for her lust to be beholde  
And preiséd of the people about  
She shope her for to riden out  
At after-mete all openly.

Anone were allé men redý,  
And that was in the month of May.  
This lusty quene in good array  
Was set upon a mulé white,  
To sene it was a great delite  
The joié that the citee made,  
With fresshé thingés and with glade  
The noble town was all behonged,  
And every wight was sore alonged  
To se this lusty lady ride.  
There was great merth on allé side  
Where as she passeth by the strete,  
There was ful many a timbre bete  
And many a maidé carolénde.  
And thus through out the town  
pleiénde

This quene unto the pleiné rode,  
Where that she hovéd and abode  
To se diversé gamés pley,  
The lusty folk joust and tourney.  
And so forth every other man  
Which pleié couth his pley began  
To plesé with this noble quene.

“Nectánabús came to the grene  
Amongés other and drough him  
nigh.

But whan that he this lady sigh  
And of her beauté hedé toke,  
He couthé nought witholde his loke

To se nought ellés in the felde,  
But stood and only her behelde,  
Of his clothinge and of his gere  
He was unliche all other there,  
So that it hapneth atté laste  
The quene on him her eyé caste  
And knew that he was straunge  
anone.

But he behelde her ever in one  
Withouté blenching of his chere.  
She toke good hede of his manere  
And wondreth why he didé so,  
And bad men shuldé for him go.  
He came and did her reveréce.  
And she him axeth in siléce  
From whenne he cam and what he  
wolde.

And he with sobre wordés tolde,  
He saith: 'Madame, a clerk I am  
To you and in messáge I cam  
The whiche I may nought tellen  
here,

But if it liketh you to here,  
It mot be said so privély  
Where none shall be but ye and I.  
"Thus for the time he toke his  
leve.

The day goth forth till it was eve  
That every man mot leve his werk.  
And she thought ever upon this clerk,  
What thing it is that he wold mene.  
And in this wise abode the quene  
And passeth over thilké night,  
Till it was on the morwé light.  
She sendé for him, and he came,  
With him his astrolabe he name,<sup>1</sup>  
Which was of finé gold precioús  
With points and cercles merveilóús.  
And eke the hevenly figúres  
Wrought in a boke full of peintúres  
He toke this lady for to shewe  
And tolde of eche of hem by rewe  
The cours and the condition.  
And she with great affection

<sup>1</sup> Name, took.

Sate still and herdé what he wolde.  
And thus whan heseeth time he tolde  
And feigneth with his wordés wise  
A tale and saith in such a wise:  
'Madamé, but a while ago,  
Where I was in Egipté tho  
And rad in scole of this science,  
It fell into my consciéce  
That I unto the temple went  
And there with all min hole entent  
As I my sacrificé dede  
One of the goddés hath me bede  
That I you warné privély,  
So that ye maké you redý,  
And that ye be nothing agast,  
For he such love hath to you cast,  
That ye shall bene his owné dere  
And he shall be your beddéfere  
Till ye conceive and be with childe,'  
And with that word she wax all milde  
And somdele red became for shame  
And axeth him that goddés name,  
Which so wold done her compaigny.  
And he said: 'Amos of Luby.'  
And she saith: 'That may I nought  
leve,

But if I se a better preve.'  
'Madamé,' quod Nectánabús,  
'In token that it shall be thus  
This night for enformatión  
Ye shall have an avisióne,  
That Amos shall to you appere  
To shewe and teche in what manere  
The thing shall afterward befallé.  
Ye oughten well aboven alle  
To maké joy of such a lorde.  
For whan ye ben of one accorde  
He shall a sone of you begete  
Which with his swerd shall win and  
gete

The widé worlde in length and brede,  
All ertthly kingés shall him drede.  
And in such wise I you behote  
The god of erthe he shall be hote.'  
'If this be soth,' tho quod the quene,

' This night, thou saiest, it shall be  
sene.

And if it falle into my grace,  
Of god Amos that I purcháce  
To take of him so great worshíp,  
I wol do the such ladishíp,  
Wherof thou shalt for evermo  
Be riche.' And he her thonketh  
tho

And toke his leve and forth he went.  
She wisté litel what he ment.  
For it was guile and sorcery  
All that she toke for prophecý.

Nectánabús throughout the day  
Whan he cam home where as he lay  
His chambre by him self betoke  
And overtorneth many a boke  
And through the craft of artemáge<sup>1</sup>  
Of wexe he forgéd an ymáge.

He loketh his equacións  
And eke the constellacións,  
He loketh the conjuncións,  
He loketh the receptións,  
His signe, his houre, his ascendént,  
And draweth Fortúne of his assent.  
The name of quene Olimpías  
In thilke ymáge written was  
Amiddés in the front above.  
And thus to winne his lust of love  
Nectánabús this werk hath dight.  
And whan it cam withinné night,  
That every wight is fall aslepe,  
He thought he wolde his timé kepe  
As he, whiche hath his houre  
apointed.

And thanné first he hath anointed  
With sondry herbés that figúre  
And therupon he gan conjúre,  
So that through his enchantément  
This lady, which was innocent  
And wisté nothing of this guile,  
Met<sup>2</sup> as she slepté thilke while,  
How fro the heven came a light,  
Whiche all her chambre madé light.

<sup>1</sup> *Artemage*, Art Magic.    <sup>2</sup> *Met*, dreamed.

And as she loketh to and fro,  
She sigh, her thought, a dragon tho,  
Whose scherdes<sup>1</sup> shinen as the  
sonne,

And hath his softé pas begonne  
With all the cheré that he may  
Toward the bed there as she lay,  
Till he came to the beddés side.  
And she lay still and nothing cride,  
For he did all his thingés faire  
And was courtéis and debonaire.  
And as he stood her fasté by,  
His forme he chaungeth sodeinly,  
And the figúre of man he nome  
To her and into bed he come,  
And she was wonder glad withall.  
Nectánabús, which causeth all  
Of this metredé<sup>2</sup> the substaunce,  
Whan hesigh time his nigromaúnce  
He stint and nothing moré saide  
Of his carecte, and she abraide  
Out of her slepe and levethe wele  
That it is soth than every dele  
Of that this clerke her haddé tolde,  
And was the glader many folde  
In hope of suche a glad metredé  
Which after shall befallé in dede.  
She longeth sore after the day,  
That she her sweven tellé may  
To this guiloúr in priveté,  
Which knewe it al so well as she.  
And nethéles on morwe sone  
She left al other thing to done  
And for him send, and all the cas  
She tolde him plainly as it was  
And saidé, how than well she wist  
That she his wordes mighté trist,  
For she founde her avisióne  
Right after the conditióne  
Which he her haddé told to-fore,  
And praid him hertély therfore,  
That he her holdé covenant  
So forth of all the remenant,

<sup>1</sup> *Scherdes*, scales.

<sup>2</sup> *Metredé*, dream-counsel.

That she may through his orde-  
naunce

Towardés god do such plesaunce,  
That she wakéndé might him kepe  
In such wise as she met <sup>1</sup> a slepe.  
And he that couth of guile inough,  
Whan he this herd, for joy he lough  
And saith: 'Madame, it shall be do.  
But this I warné you therto,  
This night whan that he comth to  
play,

That there be no life <sup>2</sup> in the way  
But I that shall at his liking  
Ordeiné so for his comíng  
That ye ne shull nought of him faile.  
For this, madame, I you counseile,  
That ye it kepé so privé,  
That no wight ellés but we thre  
Have knowleching how that it is ;  
For ellés might it fare amis  
If ye didought that shulde him grevé.<sup>'</sup>  
And thus he makth her to beleve  
And feigneth under guilé feith.  
But nethéles all that he saith  
She troweth. And ayein the night  
She hath within her chambre dight,  
Where as this guiler fasté by  
Upon this god shall privély  
Awaite, as he makth her to wene.  
And thus this noble gentil quene,  
Whan she most trusted, was de-  
ceived.

"The night come, and the cham-  
bre is weived,

Nectánabús hath take his place,  
And whan he sigh the time and space,  
Through the deceit of his magique  
He put him out of mannés like  
And of a dragon toke the forme,  
As he, which wolde him all conforme  
To that she sigh in sweven er this ;  
And thus to chambre come he is.  
The quené lay a bed and sigh  
And hopeth ever as he cam nigh,

<sup>1</sup> Met, dreamed.      <sup>2</sup> No life, no body.

That he god of Lubfé were,  
So hath she well the iessé fere.  
But for he wold her more assure,  
Yet efte he chaungeth his figure  
And of a wether the likenesse  
He toke in signe of his noblésse,  
With largé hornés for the nones  
Of finé gold and riché stones.  
A corone on his heved he bare  
And sodeinlich, er she was ware,  
As he whiche alle guilé can,  
His forme he torneth into man,  
All though she were in part de-  
ceived,

Yet for all that she hath conceived  
The worthiest of allé kithe,  
Which ever was to-fore or sithe  
Of conquest and chivalerie,  
Só that through guile and sorcerie  
There was that noble knight be-  
gonne,  
Which all the worlde hath after  
wonne.

Thus fell the thing which fallé  
sholde,  
Nectánabús hath that he wolde,  
With guile he hath his lové sped,  
With guile he came into the bed,  
With guile he goth him out ayein.  
He was a shrewéd chamberlein  
So to beguile a worthy quene,  
And that on him was after sene.  
But nethéles the thing is do.  
This falsé god was soné go  
With his deceit and helde him  
close,

Till morwe cam that he arose,  
And tho, whan time and leiser was,  
The quené tolde him all the cas  
As she that guilé none supposeth,  
And of two points she him opposeth.  
One was, if that this god no more  
Woll come ayein, and overmore  
How she shall stonden in accorde  
With king Philppe her owné lorde,

When he comth home and seeth  
her grone.

'Madame,' he saith, 'let me  
alone,

As for the god I undertake  
That whan it liketh you to take  
His compaigný at any throwe,  
If I a day to-fore it knowe  
He shall be with you on the night,  
And he is well of such a might  
To kepé you from allé blame.  
Forthý comforté you, madame,  
There shall none other causé be.'  
Thus toke he leve and forth goth he.  
And tho began he for to muse  
How he the quené might excuse  
Toward the king of that is falle,  
And found a craft amongés alle,  
Through which he hath a see foule  
daunted<sup>1</sup>

With his magíque and so en-  
chaunted,

That he flew forth whan it was night  
Unto the kingés tenté right,  
Where that he lay amidde his hoste.

"And whan he was a-slepé most,  
With that the see foule to him  
brought,

An other charmé which he wrought  
At home within his chambre still,  
The kinge he torneth at his will,  
And maketh him for to dreme and se  
The dragon and the priveté  
Which was betwene him and the  
quene.

And over that he made him wene  
In sweven that the god Amós,  
Whan he up fro the quene aros,  
Toke forth a ring wherin a stone  
Was set and gravé therupon  
A sonne, in which, whan he cam nigh,  
A leon with a swerd he sigh.

And with that prent, as he so mette,<sup>2</sup>  
Upon the quenés wombe he sette

<sup>1</sup> A sea-fowl tamed.

<sup>2</sup> *Mette*, dreamed.

A seal, and goth him forth his way;  
With that the sweven went away.  
And tho began the king awake  
And sigheth for his wivés sake  
Where as he lay within his tent,  
And hath great wonder what it ment.  
With that he hasted him to rise  
Anone and sent after the wise,  
Among the whiché there was one,  
A clerke, his name is Amphione,  
Whan he the kingés sweven herde,  
What it betokneth he answerde  
And saith: 'As sikerly as the life  
A god hath laien by thy wife  
And got a soné which shall winne  
The world and all that is withinne.  
As leon is the king of bestes  
So shall the world obey his hestes,  
Which with his swerd shal al be  
wonne

Als fer as shineth any sonne.'

"The king was doubtif of this  
dome,

But nethéles whan that he come  
Ayein into his owné lond,  
His wife with childé great he fond;  
He mighté nought him selven stere  
That he ne made her hevychere.  
But he which couthe of allé sorwe,  
Nectánabús, upon the morwe  
Through the decept of nigromaúnce  
Toke of a dragon the semblaúnce  
And where the king sat in his halle,  
Cam in rampénd among hem alle  
With such a noise and such a rore,  
That they agast were all so sore  
As though they shuldé deie anone.  
And nethéles he greveth none,  
But goth toward the deis on high.  
And whan he cam the quené nigh,  
He stint his noise and in his wise  
To her he profreth his servíce  
And laith his hede upon her barme,  
And she with goodly chere her arme  
About his necke ayeinward laide,

And thus the quené with him plaide  
 In sight of allé men about.  
 And atté last he gan to lout  
 And óbeisaúnce unto her make,  
 As he that wolde his levé take.  
 And sodeinly his lothely forme  
 Into an egle he gan transforme,  
 And fligh and set him on a raile,  
 Wherof the king had great merveile.  
 For there he pruneth him and piketh,  
 As doth an hawk whan him wel  
 liketh,

And after that him self he shoke,  
 Wherof that all the halle quoke,  
 As it a terremoté<sup>r</sup> were.  
 They saiden alle, god was there,  
 In suche a rees and forth he fligh.

“The king which all this wonder  
 sigh,

Whan he cam to his chambre alone,  
 Unto the quené made his mone  
 And of foryivenesse he her praide.  
 For than he knew well, as he saide,  
 She was with childé with a god.

“Thus was the king withouté rod  
 Chastiséd and the quene excused  
 Of that she haddé ben accused.  
 And for the greater evidence  
 Yet after that in the presénce  
 Of king Philp and other mo,  
 Whan they ridé in the feldés tho,  
 A fesaunt came before her eye  
 The whiche anone, as they her sigh  
 Fleéndé, let an ey<sup>2</sup> down falle,  
 And it to-brake to-fore hem alle.  
 And as they token therof kepe,  
 They sigh out of the shellé crepe  
 A litel serpent on the groundé,  
 Which rampeth all abouté rounde,  
 And in ayein he woll have wonne,  
 But for the brenning of the sonne  
 It mighté nought, and so it deide.  
 And therupon the clerkés saide :

‘As the serpént, when it was out,

<sup>1</sup> *Terremoté*, earthquake.

<sup>2</sup> *Ey*, egg.

Went environ the shelle aboute  
 And mighté nought torne in ayein,  
 So shall it fallen in certein,—  
 This childe the world shall environé  
 And above allé the corone  
 Him shall befall, and in yonge age  
 He shall desire in his coráge,  
 Whan all the worlde is in his honde  
 To torne ayein unto the londe  
 Where he was bore, and in his wey  
 Howeward he shall with poison dey.’

“The king whiche al this sigh  
 and herde

Fro that day forth how so it ferde  
 His jalousie hath all foryete.  
 But he, whiche hath the childe begete,  
 Nectánabús in privité  
 The time of his nativité  
 Upon the constellatiún  
 Awaiteth and relatiún  
 Maketh to the quene, how she snall  
 do,

And every houre appointeth so  
 That no minúte therof was lore.  
 So that in dué time is bore  
 This childe, and forthwith therupon  
 There fellen wonders many one ;  
 Of terremote uníverséle ;  
 The sonné toke colour of stele  
 And lost his light ; the windés blewe  
 And many strengthés overthrewe ;  
 The see his propré kindé chaungeth  
 And all the worlde his formé  
 straungeth ;

The thunder with his fry leven  
 So cruel was upon the heven,  
 That every erthely créature  
 Tho thought his life in aventure.  
 The tempest atté lasté ceseth,  
 The childe is kepte, his age encreseth,  
 And Alisaúndre his name is hote ;  
 To whom Calistre and Aristote  
 To techen him philosophý  
 Entenden, and astronomý  
 With other thingés which he couth,

Also to teche him in his youth  
 Nectánabús toke upon honde.  
 But every man may understonde  
 Of sorcery, how that it wende,  
 It woll him selvé prove at ende,  
 And namély for to beguile  
 A lady which withouté guile  
 Supposeth trouth all that she hereth.  
 But often he that evil stereth,  
 His ship is dreint therin amidde,  
 And in this cas right so betidde.  
 Nectánabús, upon a night  
 Whan it was faire and sterré light,  
 This yongé lord lad upon high  
 Above a toure, where as he sigh  
 The sterrés such as he accompteth,  
 And saith what eche of hem  
 amounteth,

As though he knewe of allé thing.  
 But yet hath he no knoueleching  
 What shal unto him self befallé.  
 Whan he hath tolde his wordés alle,  
 This yongé lord than him opposeth  
 And axeth if that he supposeth  
 What deth he shul him selvé dey.  
 He saith : ‘ Or fortune is away  
 And every sterre hath lost his wone,  
 Or ellés of min owné sone  
 I shall be slain, I may nought fle.’  
 Thought Alisaundre in priveté :  
 ‘ Herof this oldé dotard lieth.’  
 And er that other ought aspieth  
 All sodeinlich his oldé bones  
 He shof over the wall at ones  
 And saith him : ‘ Lie down there a  
 part !  
 Wherof now serveth all thin art ?  
 Thou knewe all other mennés  
 chaunce  
 And of thy self hast ignoraunce ;  
 That thou hast said amonges alle  
 Of thy persone is nought befallé.’

“ Nectánabús, which hath his  
 dethe,  
 Yet while him lasteth life and brethe

To Alisaundre he spake and said  
 That he with wrong blame on him  
 laid.

Fro point to point and all the cas  
 He tolde, how he his soné was.  
 Tho he which sory was inough,  
 Out of the dich his fader drough  
 And tolde his moder how it ferde,  
 In counseil and whan she it herde,  
 And knew the tokens which he tolde,  
 She nisté<sup>1</sup> what she saié sholde,  
 But stood abasshed as for the while  
 Of this magíque and all the guile.  
 She thought, how that she was  
 deceived,

That she hath of a man conceived  
 And wende a god it haddé be.  
 But nethéles in such degre  
 So as she might her honour save  
 She shope the body was begrave.  
 And thus Nectánabús abouth  
 The sorcerfè, which he wrought,  
 Though he upon the creatúres  
 Through his carectés and figúres  
 The maistry and the power hadde  
 His Creätór to nought him ladde,  
 Ayein whose lawe his craft he useth,  
 Whan he for lust his god refuseth  
 And toke him for the devels craft.  
 Lo, what profft is him belaft :  
 That thing, through which he wend  
 have stonde,

First him exilé out of londe  
 Which was his own, and from a king  
 Made him to be an underling,  
 And sithen to deceive a quene,  
 That torneth him to mochel tene,  
 Through lust of love he gat him  
 hate,

That endé couth he nought abate  
 His oldé sleightés which he cast,  
 Yonge Alisaundre him overcast ;  
 His fader which him misbegat  
 He slough, a great mishap was that,

*Nisté*, knew not.

But for o mis an other mis  
Was yolde, and so full ofte it is.  
Nectánabús his craft miswent,  
So it misfell him er he went.<sup>1</sup>  
I not what helpeth that clergý<sup>2</sup>  
Which maketh a man to do folý,  
And namélich of nigromaúnce,  
Which stont upon the miscreaúnce.

“And for to se more evidence  
**Jorastes**, which the experience  
Of art magíqué first forth drough,  
Anone as he was bore he lough,  
Which token was of wo súfngé,  
For of his owné controvínge  
He found magíque and taught it  
forth,

But all that was him litel worth.  
For of Surrie a worthy king  
Him slewe and that was his endíng.  
But yet through him this craft is  
used,  
And he through 'all the world ac-  
cused,

For it shall never well acheve  
That stont nought right with the  
beleve.

But lich to wolle is evil sponne,  
Wholeseth him self hath litel wonne,  
An ende proveth every thing.

“**Saúl**, which was of Jewésking,  
Up peine of deth forbad this arte,  
And yet he toke therof his parte.  
The Phitonisse in Samary  
Yaf him counseil by sorcery,  
Which after fell to mochel sorwe,  
For he was slain upon the morwe.  
To conné mochel thing it helpeth,  
But of to moché no man yelpeth.<sup>3</sup>  
So for to loke on every side,  
Magíqué may nought well betide.

“Forthý my sone, I woll the rede,  
That thou of these ensamples drede,  
That for no lust of erthly love

<sup>1</sup> Went, weened.

<sup>2</sup> Clergy, learning.

<sup>3</sup> Yelpeth, boasts.

Thou seché so to come above  
Wherof as in the worldés wonder  
Thoushalt for ever be put under.”—

“My godé fader, graunt mercý.  
For ever I shall beware therby  
Of Lové what me so befallé  
Such sorcery aboven alle.  
Fro this day forth I shall escheue,  
That so ne woll I nought pursue  
My lust of Lové for to seche.  
But this I woldé you besече  
Besidé that me stant of Love,  
As I you herdé speke above,  
How Alisaundre was betaught  
Of Aristotle and so well taught  
Of all that to a king belongeth,  
Wherof my herté soré longeth  
To wité what it woldé mene.  
For by resón I woldé wene,  
But if I herde of thingés strange,  
Yet for a time it shuldé chaunge  
My peine and lissé me somdele.”—

“My godé soné, thou saiest wele.  
For wisdom, how that ever it  
stonde,

To him that can it understonde  
Doth great profit in sondry wise ;  
But touchend of so high a prise,  
Which is nought unto Venus knowe,  
I may it nought my selvé knowe,  
Which of her Court am all forth  
drawe

And can no thing but of her lawe.  
But nethéles to knowé more  
As wel as thou me longeth sore.  
And for it helpeth to comúne  
All be they nought to me comune,  
The scolés of philosophy  
Yet think I for to specify  
In boke as it is comprehended,  
Wherof thou mightest ben amended.  
For though I be nought all cunning  
Upon the forme of this writíng,  
Some part therof yet I have herde,  
In this matere how it hath ferde.



## Book VII.

### HOW A KING WAS TAUGHT.

**F** Genius the prest of love,  
My sone, as thou hast praid  
above,  
That I the scolé shall declare  
Of Aristotle and eke the fare  
Of Alisaundre, how he was  
taught,  
I am somdele therof distraught.  
For it is nowight the matere  
Of lové, why we sitten here  
To shrivé so as Venus badde,  
But nethéles for it is gladdé,  
So as thou saist, for thin apprise  
To here of suché thingés wise,  
Wherof thou might thy timé lisse,  
So as I can, I shall the wisse.  
For Wisdom is at every throwe  
Above all other thing to knowe  
In Lovés cause and ellés where.  
Forthý my sone, unto thin ere,  
Though it be nought in the registre  
Of Venus, yet of that Calistre  
And Aristotle whilom write  
To Alisaundre, thou shalt wite.  
But for the lorés ben diverse  
I thinké first to the reherce  
The nature of philosophý,  
Which Aristotle of his clergy  
Wise and experte in the Sciénces,  
Declaréd thilke intelligénces,  
As of the points in principall.  
Wherof the first in speciáll  
Is Theoriqué, which is grounded

On him which al the worlde hath  
founded,  
Which comprehended al the lore.  
And for to loken overmore  
Next of Sciénces the secoúnde  
Is Rhetoriqué, whose facounde  
Above all other is eloquent.  
To telle a tale in jugément  
So well can no man speke as he.  
The lasté Science of the thre  
It is Practiqué, whose office  
The Vertu trieth fro the Vice  
And techeth upon godé thewes<sup>1</sup>  
To fle the compaigny of shrewes,<sup>2</sup>  
Which stant in diposición  
Of mannes fre election.  
Practique enformeth eke the reule,  
How that a worthy King shall reule  
His realmé both in werre and pees.  
Lo, thus danz<sup>3</sup> Aristotelés  
These thre Sciénces hath devided  
And the natúre also decided  
Wherof that eche of hem shall serve.  
The firsté, which is the conserve  
And keper of the remenaunt,  
As that which is most suffisaunt  
And chefe of the philosophy,  
If I therof shall specify,  
So as the philosóphre tolde,  
Now herke and kepe that thou it  
holde.

<sup>1</sup> *Thewes*, manners, morals.

<sup>2</sup> *Shrewes*, evil men.

<sup>3</sup> *Danz*, Dominus, applied to a Graduate in Arts.

“Of theoriqué principall  
 The philosóphre in speciáll  
 The propetés hath déterméed,  
 As thilké which is enlumned  
 Of wisdom and of high prudence  
 Above all other in his science,  
 And stant departed upon thre.  
 The first of which in his degre  
 Is clepéd in philosophy  
 The Science of Theology,  
 That other naméd is Phisíque,  
 The thridde is said Mathématíque.  
 Theology is that science,  
 Which unto man yiveth evidence  
 Of thing which is nought bodely,  
 Wherof men knowé redely  
 The High Almighty Trinité,  
 Which is o God in Unité  
 Withouten ende and béginníng  
 And Creatór of allé thing,  
 Of erthe, of heven and of helle,  
 Wherof as oldé bokés telle  
 The philosóphre in his resón  
 Wrote upon this conclusión,  
 And of his writing in a clause  
 He clepeth God the Firsté Cause,  
 Which of him self is thilké good  
 Withouté whom nóthing is good,  
 Of which that every créature  
 Hath his béing and his natúre.  
 After the being of the thinges  
 There ben thre formés of béinges.

“ Thing, which began and endé  
 shall,

That thing is clepéd temporall.  
 There is also by other way  
 Thing which began and shall nought  
 dey

As soulés that ben spirituall,  
 Her being is perpetuell.  
 But there is one above the sonne  
 Whose timé never was begonne  
 And endelés shall ever be,  
 That is the God, whose magesté  
 All other thingés shall góverne,

And his Béing is sempitérne.  
 The God, to whom that all honóur  
 Belongeth, he is Creatóur.  
 And other ben his créatures,  
 He commaundeth the natúres  
 That they to him obeiénn allé.  
 Withouten him, what so befallé,  
 Her might is none and He may<sup>1</sup> all:  
 The God was ever and ever shall,  
 And they begonne of his assente.  
 The timés allé be present  
 To God, and to hem alle unknowe,  
 But what him liketh that they knowe.  
 Thus both an aungel and a man,  
 The which of all that God began  
 Be chefe, obeiénn Goddes might,  
 And He stont endelés up right.  
 To this Sciéncé ben privé  
 The Clerkés of Divinité,  
 The which unto the people prechen  
 The feith of HalyChirche and techen,  
 Which in one cas upon beleve  
 Stant moré than they conné preve  
 By wey of argument sensíble.  
 But nethéles it is credíble  
 And doth a man great medé have  
 To him that thenketh him self to  
 save.

Theology in such a wise  
 Of highé Science and apprise  
 Above all other stant unlike  
 And is the first of Theorique.

“ Phisique is after the secónde,  
 Through which the philosóphre  
 hath fonde

To techen sondry knoulechinges  
 Upon the bodeliché thinges  
 Of man, of beste, of herbe, of stone,  
 Of físshe, of foule, of everichone  
 That ben of bodély substaúnce,  
 The nature and of the substaunce.  
 Through this Sciéncé it is fullsought,  
 Which vaileth and which vaileth  
 nought.

<sup>1</sup> *May*, has power over.

“The thridde point of Theorique,  
Which clepéd is Mathématfque,  
Devided is in sondry wise  
And stant upon divers apprise.  
The ferst of whiche is Arsmetique,<sup>1</sup>  
And the secónd is said Musique,  
The thridde is eke Geometric,  
Also the forth Astronomie.

“Of Arsmetiqué the matere  
Is that of which a man may lere,  
What algorisme<sup>2</sup> in nombreamount-  
eth,

Whan that the wisé man accompteth  
After the formal propreté  
Of algorismés a, be, ce.  
By which multiplicatiön  
Is made and diminutiön  
Of sommés by the experience  
Of this art and of this sciéce.

“The seconde of mathématfque,  
Which is the Science of Musique,  
That techeth upon Harmonie  
A man to maké melodie  
By vois and souné of instrument  
Through notés of accordément,  
The whiché men pronounce alofte;  
Now sharpé notés and now softe  
Now highé notés and now lowe,  
As by the gamme<sup>3</sup> a man may knowe,  
Which techeth the prolaciön  
Of note and the condition.

Mathematique of his Sciéce  
Hath yet the thridde intelligéce  
Full of wisdom and of clergie  
And clepéd is Geometrie,  
Through which that a man hath the  
sleight

Oflength, of brede, of depth, of height  
To knowé the proporciön  
By verray calculaciön  
Of this Science. And in this wise  
These oldé philosóphres wise  
Of all this worldés erthé rounde

<sup>1</sup> *Arsmetique*, Arithmetic.

<sup>2</sup> *Algorisme*, Algebra.

<sup>3</sup> *Gamme*, gamut.

How large, how thické was the  
grounde,  
Contrivé in the experience,  
The cercle and the circumferéce  
Of every thing unto the heven  
They setten point and mesure even.

“Mathématfque above the erth,  
Of High Sciéce above, the ferth  
Which speketh upon Astronomie  
And techeth of the sterrés high,  
Beginning upward fro the mone.  
But first, as it was for to done  
This Aristotle in other thing  
Unto this worthy yongé king  
The kinde of every elemént,  
Which stant under the firmamént,  
How it is made and in what wise  
Fro point to point he gan devise.

“He, which natúreth every kinde,  
The mighty God, so as I finde,  
Of Man, which is his créature,  
Hath so devided the nature  
That none till other well accordeth.  
And by the cause it so discordeth  
The life, which feleth the siknesse,  
May stond upon no sikernesse.

“Of therthé, which is colde and  
dry,  
The kinde of man Maléncoly  
Is cléped, and that is the firste,  
The most ungoodlich and the werste.  
What man hath that complexiön,  
Full of ymaginatiön  
Of dredés and of wrathfull thought,  
He fret him selven all to nought.

“The water, which is moist and  
colde, [folde,  
Maketh Fleumé,<sup>1</sup> which is mani-  
Foryetel, slow and very sone  
Of every thing whiche is to done.

What man that taketh his kind  
of thair,  
He shall be light, he shall be fair.

<sup>1</sup> *Fleumé*, phlegm of the phlegmatic tem-  
perament.

For his complexión is blood,  
Of allé there is none so good,  
Where as he hath love undertake,  
Wrongé is it, if that he forsake.

“The first of his condición  
Appreth the complexión,  
Whose propretes ben drie and hote,  
Which in a man is coler<sup>1</sup> hote.  
It maketh a man ben enginous  
And swifte of fote and eke irous.<sup>2</sup>  
Of conteke and fool hastifnesse  
He hath a right great businesse.

After the kinde of thelement  
Thus stant a mannés kindé went<sup>3</sup>  
As touchend his complexión  
Upon sondry división  
Of dry, of moist, of chele, of hete,  
And eche of hem his owné sete  
Appropred hath within a man.  
And first to telle as I began  
The Splen is to Maléncolý  
Assignéd for herbérgery.<sup>4</sup>

“The moisté Fleumé with the  
colde

Hath in the Lungés for his holde  
Ordeiné him a propre stede  
To dwellé there as he is bede.

“To the Sanguíne Complexión  
Nátúre of his inspection  
A propre hous hath in the Liver  
For his dwellíngé made deliver.<sup>5</sup>

“The drié Coler with his hete  
By wey of kinde his propre sete  
Hath in the Gallé, where he dwel-  
leth,

So as the philosóphre telleth.

“Now over this is for to wite,  
As it is in phisiqué write  
Of Liver, of Lunge, of Galle, of Splen,  
They all unto the herté ben  
Servaúnts, and eche in his office

<sup>1</sup> Coler, choler, bile.

<sup>2</sup> Irous, given to anger, choleric.

<sup>3</sup> Kindé went, natural turn or bent.

<sup>4</sup> The Splen is assigned to Melancholy for its place of lodging.

<sup>5</sup> Deliver, free, supple.

Entendeth to don him servíce,  
As he, which is chefe lord above.  
The Liver maketh him for to love,  
The Lungé yiveth him wey of speche,  
The Gallé servéth to do wreche,  
The Splen doth him to laugh and play  
Whan all unclennesse is away.

Lo, thus hath eche of hem his dede  
To susteignen hem and fede.

In time of recreation

Nature hath in creatión

The Stomack for a comun coke

Ordeinéed so, as saith the boke :

The Stomack coke is for the hall

And boileth meté for hem all

To make hem mighty for to serve

The Herté, that he shall nought  
sterve.

For as a King in his empire  
Above all other is lorde and sire,

So is the Herté principall,

To whom Resón in speciáil

Is yove as for the governaunce.

“And thus natúre his purveaúnce

Hath made for man to liven here.

But God which hath the Soulé dere

Hath forméd it in other wise

That can no man plainly devise.

But as the clerkés us enforme,

That lich to God it hath a forme,

Through which figúre and which  
likenesse

The Soule hath many an high  
noblesse

Appropred to his owné kinde.

But oft her wittés ben made blinde

Al onelich of this ilké pointe,

That her abiding is conjointe

Forth with the body for to dwelle.

“That one desireth toward helle,

That other upward to the heven ;

So shall they never stonde in even

But if the Flesssh be overcome

And that the Soule have holy nome<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holy nome, wholly taken.

The governaunce, and that is selde  
While that the Flessh him may  
bewelde.

All erthely thing which God began,  
Was only made to servé man,  
But he the Soul all onely made  
Him selven for to serve and glade.  
All other bestés that men finde  
They serve unto her owné kinde,  
But to Resón the Soulé serveth,  
Wherof the man his thank deserveth  
And get him with his workés good  
The perduráble livés food.

“Of what matere it shall be tolde  
A talé liketh many folde  
The bet if it be spoké pleine,  
Thus thenke I for to torne ayeine  
And tellen plenerly therfore  
Of therthé, wherof now to-fore  
I spake, and of the water eke,  
So as these oldé bokés speke,  
And setté properly the bounde  
After the forme of mappemounde,<sup>1</sup>  
Through which the ground by pur-  
parties

Departed is in thre parties,  
That is Asie, Aufríque, Europé,  
The which under the heven cope  
As fer as streccheth any ground  
Begripeth all this erthé round.  
But after that the highe wreche<sup>2</sup>  
The water weíes let out seche  
And overgo the hillés high,  
Which every kindé madé deie  
That upon middel erthé stood  
Out také Noë and his blood,  
His sonés and his daughters thre  
They weren sauf and so was he.  
Her namés, who that redé right,  
Sem, Cham, Japhét the brethern  
hight,  
And whanné thilke almighty honde

Withdrough the water fro the londe  
And all the ragé was away  
And erthé was the mannés way,  
The sonés thre, of which I tolde,  
Right after that hem selvé wolde,  
This world departé they begonne.<sup>1</sup>

“Asía, which lay to the sonne  
Upon the marche of orient,  
Was graunted by commúne assent  
To Sem, which was the sone eldést,  
For that partié was the best  
And double as moch as other  
two.

And was that timé bounded so,  
Wher as the flood which men Nile  
calleth,

Departeth fro his cours and falleth  
Into the see Aléxandrine,  
There taketh Asie first sesíne<sup>2</sup>  
Toward the west, and over this  
Of Canahim, where the flood is  
Into the Greté See rennénd,  
Fro that into the worldés end  
Estwarde Asie it is algates  
Till that men comen to the gates  
Of Paradis, and theré ho.<sup>3</sup>  
And shortly for to speke it so  
Of orient in generall  
Within his bounde Asié hath all.

“And than upon that other side  
Westwárde, as it fell thilké tide,  
The brother, which was hoté  
Cham,  
Unto his parte Aufríqué nam.  
Japhét Europé tho toke he ;  
Thus parten they the worlde on thre.  
But yet there ben of londés fele<sup>4</sup>  
In occident as for the chele,  
In oriente as for the hete,  
Which of the people be forlete  
As lond desérte, that is unáble,  
For it may nought ben habitáble.

<sup>1</sup> *Mappemounde*, Mappa Mundi, map of the world.

<sup>2</sup> *The highe wreche*, the vengeance of God.

<sup>1</sup> They began to divide this world.

<sup>2</sup> *Sesíne*, seizin, possession.

<sup>3</sup> *Ho*, stop.

<sup>4</sup> *Fele*, many.

“The water eke hath sondry  
 bounde,  
 After the lond where it is founde,  
 And taketh his name of thilké londes  
 Where that it renneth on the  
 strondes.

But thilké see, which hath no wane,  
 Is clepéd the Great Oceane,  
 Out of the which arise and come  
 The highé flodés all and some.  
 Is none so litel wellé spring,  
 Which therenetaketh his bégínníng,  
 And lich a man that lacketh breth  
 By wey of kindé so it geth  
 Out of the see and in ayein,  
 The water, as the bokés sain.

“Of Elements the propretés  
 How that they stonden by degres,  
 As I have told nowmight thou here,  
 My godé sone, all the matere  
 Of erthe, of water, aíre and fire.  
 And for thou saist, that thy desire  
 Is for to witen overmore  
 The forme of Aristotles lore,  
 He saith in his entendément  
 That yet there is an Element  
 Above the foure, and is the fífte  
 Set of the highe Goddes yifte,  
 The which that *orbis* clepéd is.  
 And therupon he telleth this,  
 That as the shellé hole and sounde  
 Encloseth all abouté rounde  
 What thing within an ey<sup>1</sup> belongeth,  
 Right so this *orbis* underfongeth  
 These Eleméntés everychone  
 Which I have spoke of one and one.

“But over this now take good  
 hede,  
 My soné, for I wol procede  
 To speke upon Mathématíque,  
 Which grounded is on Theoríque.  
 The Science of Astronomy  
 I denke for to specify;  
 Withouté which to tellé pleinz

<sup>1</sup> *Ey*, egg.

All other Science is in veine  
 Toward the scole of erthly thinges.  
 For as an egle with his winges  
 Fleeth above allé that men finde,  
 So doth this Science in his kinde.

“Benethe upon this erthé here  
 Of allé thingés the matere,  
 As tellen us they that ben lerned,  
 Of thing above it stont govérned,  
 That is to sain of the planétes  
 The chelés bothe and eke the hetes,  
 The chaunces of the worldé also,  
 That we Fortúné clepen so  
 Among the mennés nación,  
 All is through constellación;  
 Wherof that some man hath the  
 wele,

And some men have diseses fele  
 In love as well as other thinges.  
 The state of realmés and of kinges  
 In time of pees, in time of werre,  
 It is conceivéd of the sterre.  
 And thus saith the Naturien,  
 Whiche is an Astronomien.  
 But the Divine saith other wise,  
 That if men weré good and wise  
 And plesant unto the Godhede  
 They shulden nought the sterrés  
 drede.

For o man if him well befalle  
 Is moré worth than ben they alle  
 Towardés him that weldeth all.  
 But yet the lawe origináll,  
 Which he hath set in the natúres,  
 Mot worchen in the creätúres,  
 That therof may be none obstácle  
 But if<sup>1</sup> it stonde upon miracle  
 Through praier of some haly man.  
 And forthý so as I began  
 To speke upon Astronomy  
 As it is write in the clergý,  
 To telle how the planétés fare,  
 Some parte I denké to declare,  
 My sone, unto thin audiéncie.

<sup>1</sup> *But if*, unless.

“**Astronomy** is the Science  
Of wisdom and of high conning  
Which maketh a man have know-  
leching

Of sterrés in the fermament,  
Figuré, cercle and movemént  
Of eche of hem in sondry place,  
And what betwene hem is of space,  
How so they move or stondé fast,  
All this it telleth to the last.  
Assembled with Astronomy  
Is eke that ilke Astrology,  
The which in jugéménts accompteth  
Theeffect what every sterre amount-

eth.  
And how they causen many a wonder  
To the climáts<sup>1</sup> that stond hem  
under.

And for to telle it moré pleine  
These oldé philosóphres saine  
That *orbis* which I spake of er  
Is that which we fro therthe afer  
Beholde, and firmament it calle,  
In which the sterrés stonden alle,  
Among the which in speciáll  
Planetés seven principáll  
There ben, that mannés sighte  
demeth

By thorizont as to us semeth.  
And also there ben Signés twelve,  
Which have her cercles by hem selve  
Compásséd in the zodiaque  
In which they have her places take,  
And as they stonden in degre  
Her cercles more or lassé be  
Made after the proportión  
Of therthé, whose condición  
Is set to be the foundamént  
To susteine up the firmamént.  
And by this skill a man may knowe,  
The moré that they stonden lowe  
The moré ben the cercles lasse,  
That causeth why that somé passe  
Her diié cours to-fore an other.

<sup>1</sup> *Climáts*, regions, climes.

But now, my levé deré brother,  
As thou desirest for to wite  
What I finde in the bokés write,  
To telle of the Planetés Seven  
How that they stonde upon the  
heven,

And in what point that they ben in,  
Take hedé, for I woll begin,  
So as the philosóphre taught  
To Alisaundre and it betought,  
Wherof that he was fully taught  
Of wisdom which was him betought.

“Beneth all other stant the Mone,  
The which hath with the See to done  
Of flodés high and ebbés lowe  
Upon his change it shall be knowe.  
And every fissh which hath a shelle  
Mote in his governaúncé dwelle  
To wexe and wane in his degre,  
As by the Mone a man may se,  
And all that stant upon the grounde  
Of his moistúre it mot be founde.  
All other sterrés, as men finde,  
Ben shinend of her owné kinde  
Out take only the moné light,  
Which is nought of him selvé  
bright,

But as he taketh it of the Sonne.  
And yet he hath nought all full  
wonne  
His light that he nis somdele  
derke.

But what the let is of that werke  
In almagest<sup>1</sup> it telleth this.  
The Monés cercle so lowe is,  
Wherof the Sonne out of his stage  
Ne seth him nought with full viságe  
For he is with theground beshaded,  
So that the Mone is somdele faded  
And may nought fully shiné clere.  
But what man under his powere  
Is bore, he shall his placé change  
And seché many londés straunge.

<sup>1</sup> *Almagest*, Ptolemy's collection of the observations of the old astronomers.

And as of this condición  
The Monés disposición  
Upon the londe of Alemaigne  
Is set, and eke upon Britaigne,  
Which is now clepéd Engelonge,  
For they travaile in every londe.

“Of the Planetés the secónde  
Above the Mone hath take his  
bonde

Mercúre, and his natúre is this,  
That under him who that bore is,  
In boke he shall be studiós  
And in writingé curiós  
And slowe and lustles to travaile  
In thing whiche ellés might availe.  
He loveth ese, he loveth rest,  
So is he nought the worthiést.  
But with somdelé besinesse  
His hert is set upon richésse.

And as in this condición  
Theeffect and disposición  
Of this Planete and of his chaunce  
Is most in Borgone and in Fraunce.

Next to Mercure as woll befalle  
Stant that Planeté which men calle  
Venús, whose constellación  
Govérneth all the nación  
Of lovers, where they spede or none,  
Of which I trowé thou be one.  
But whiderward thin happés wende,  
Shall this Planeté shewe at ende,  
As it hath do to many mo,  
To somé wel, to somé wo.  
And nethéles of this Planéte  
The most partý is softe and swete.

“For who that therof taketh his  
berth

He shall desiré joy and merth,  
Gentl, curtéis and debonaire  
To speke his wordés softe and faire,  
Such shall he be by wey of kinde.  
And over all where he may finde  
Plesaunce of love, his herté boweth  
With all his might and ther he  
woweth.

Venus of lové the goddésse  
Is clepéd, but of wantonesse  
The climate of her lechery  
Is most comúne in Lumbardy.

“Next unto this Planéte of love  
The brighté Sonne stant above,  
Which is the hinderer of the night  
And furtherer of the daiés light,  
As he which is the worldés eye,  
Through whom the lusty compaignie  
Of foulés by the morwé singe,  
The freshe flourés sprede and  
springe,

The highétre the ground beshadeth,  
And every mannés herté gladdeth.  
And for it is the Hede Planete,  
How that he sitteth in his fete,  
Of what richésse, of what nobléy  
These bokés telle, and thus they  
say.

“Of golde glistrend spoke and  
wele

The sonne his carte <sup>1</sup> hath faire and  
wele,

In whiche he sitte, and is coróned  
With brighté stonés enviróned,  
Of which if that I speké shall  
There be to-fore in speciáll  
Set in the front of his coróne  
Thre stonés, which that no persóné  
Hath upon erthe, and the first is  
By namé clepéd licuchis.  
That other two be clepéd thus  
Astrices and ceramius.  
In his coróne, also behinde,  
By oldé bokés as I finde,  
There ben of worthy stonés thre  
Set ech of hem in his degre,  
Wherof a cristall is that one,  
Which that coróne is set upon.  
The secónde is an adamant.  
The thridde is noble and avenaunt,  
Which clepéd is ydríades.  
And over this yet nethéles

<sup>1</sup> Carte, chariot.



Upon the sidés of the werke,  
 After the writing of the clerke,  
 There sitten five stonés mo,  
 The smaragdine is one of tho,  
 Jaspis and elitropius  
 And vendides and jácinctus.  
 Lo, thus the coróne is beset,  
 Wherof it shineth well the bet,  
 And in such wise his light to sprede  
 Sit with his diadéme on hede  
 The sonné shinend in his carte.  
 And for to lede him swithe and  
 smarte

After the brighté daiés lawe  
 There ben ordeinéed for to drawe  
 Four hors his chare and him withall,  
 Wherof the namés telle I shall,  
 Erítheús the first is hote,  
 The which is red and shineth hote,  
 The second Actéós the bright,  
 Lampés the thriddé courser hight,  
 And Philogéus is the ferth,  
 That bringen light unto this erth  
 And gone so swifte upon the  
 heven,

In foure and twenty hourés even  
 The carté with the brighté sonne  
 They drawé, so that over ronne  
 They have under the cercles high  
 All middel erthe in suche an hie.<sup>1</sup>

“And thus the sonne is over all  
 The Chefe Planéte imperiall,  
 Above him and beneth him thre  
 And thus betwene hem regneth he  
 As he that hath the middel place  
 Among the Seven, and of his face  
 Be glad all erthly creätúres  
 And taken after the natúres  
 Her ese and recreación,  
 And in his constellación  
 Who that is bore in speciáll,  
 Of good will and of liberall  
 He shall be founde in allé place  
 And also stonde in móchel grace

<sup>1</sup> *Hic*, haste.

Toward the lordés for to serve  
 And great profíte and thank de-  
 serve.

And over that it causeth yit  
 A man to be subtl of wit,  
 To worch in golde, and to be wise  
 In every thing which is of prise.  
 But for to speken in what coste  
 Of all this erth he regneth moste,  
 As for wisdóm it is in Grece,  
 Where is appropred thilké spiecc.

“Mars the planété bataillóus  
 Next to the sonné glorióus  
 Abové stant and doth merveiles  
 Upon the fortune of batailes.  
 The conqueroúrs by daiés olde  
 Were unto this planété holde,  
 But who that his nativité  
 Hath take upon the propreté  
 Of Martés disposición  
 By wey of constellación,  
 He shall be fiers and fool hastife  
 And désiroús of werre and strife,  
 But for to tellen redely  
 In what climáte most comunly  
 That this Planéte hath his effecte,  
 Said is, that he hath his aspecte  
 Upon the Haly Londe so cast,  
 That there is no pees stedéfast.

“Abové Mars upon the heven  
 The Sixté Planete of the Seven  
 Stant Jupiter the delicate,  
 Which causeth pees and no debate.  
 For he is clepéd the Planéte,  
 Which of his kindé softe and swete  
 Attempreth all that to him longeth.  
 And whom this Planete under-  
 fongeth

To stonde upon his regiment,<sup>1</sup>  
 He shall be meke and paciént  
 And fortunate to marchandý  
 And lusty to delfcacý  
 In every thing which he shall do,  
 This Jupiter is cause also

<sup>1</sup> *Regiment*. rule.

Of the sciéncé of lighté werkes,  
 And in this wisé tellen clerkes  
 He is the planete of delices.  
 But in Egípte of his offices  
 He regneth most in speciáll,  
 For there be lustés over all  
 Of all that to this life befalleth.  
 For there no stormy weder falleth,  
 Which mighté grevé man or beste,  
 And eke the londe is so honéste,  
 That it is plenteoús and pleine,  
 There is no idel ground in veine.  
 And upon such felicité  
 Stant Jupiter in his degre.

“The highest and aboven alle  
 Stant that Planété, which men calle  
 Saturnus, whose complexión  
 Is colde, and his condición  
 Causeth malíce and cruelté  
 To him the whose nativité  
 Is set under his governaúnce.  
 For all his werkés ben grevaúnce  
 And enemý to mannés hele,  
 In what degre that he shall dele.  
 His climate is in orient,  
 Where that he is most violent.

“Of the Planetes by and by,  
 How that they stonde upon the sky,  
 Fro point to point as thou might here  
 Was Alisaundre made to lere.  
 But over this touchénd his lore  
 Of thing that they him taughté more  
 Upon the scolés of clergý,  
 Now herken the philosophy.

“He which departeth day from night,  
 That oné derke that other bright,  
 Of seven daiés made a weke ;  
 A month of fouré wekés eke,  
 He hath ordeiné in his lawe ;  
 Of monthés twelve and eke forth-  
 drawe

He hath also the longé yere.  
 And as he set of his powére  
 Accordaunt to the daiés seven  
 Planétés seven upon the heven,

As thou to-fore hast herd devise,  
 To speké right in such a wise  
 To every monthé by him selve  
 Upon the heven, of signés twelve  
 He hath after his ordinall  
 Assigned one in speciáll,  
 Wherof so as I shall rehercen  
 The tidés of the yere diversen.  
 But plainly for to make it knowe  
 How that the signés sit a rowe,  
 Eche after other by degré  
 In substauce and in propreté  
 The zodiáqué comprehendeth  
 Within his cercle and it appendeth.

“The firste of whiché nethéles  
 By name is clepéd Ariés,  
 Which lich a wether of statúre  
 Resembled is in his figúre.  
 And as it saith in almageste  
 Of sterrés twelve upon this beste  
 Ben set, wherof in his degre  
 The wombe hath two, the heved  
 hath thre,

The taile hath seven, and in this wise,  
 As thou might heré me devise,  
 Stant Aries, which hote and drie  
 Is of him self, and in partie  
 He is the réceipt and the hous  
 Of mighty Mars the batailous.  
 And overmore eke as I finde  
 The Creatór of alle kinde  
 Upon this Signé first began  
 The world, whan that he madé man,  
 And of this constellación  
 The verray operación  
 Availleth, if a man therinne  
 The purpose of his werk beginne,  
 For than he hath of propreté  
 Good spede and great felicité.

“The twelvé monthés of the yere  
 Attitled under the powére  
 Of thesé twelvé signés stonde,  
 Wherof that thou shalt understonde  
 This Aries out of the twelve  
 Hath Marche attitled for him selve,

Whan every brid shall chese his  
make,

And every nedder and every snake  
And every reptile which may move,  
His might assaieth for to prove  
To crepen out ayein the sonne,  
Whan Ver<sup>1</sup> his seson hath begonne.

“Taurus the seconde after this  
Of Signés which figuréd is  
Unto a bullé, drie and colde,  
And as it is in bokés tolde  
He is the hous appurtenaunt  
To Venus somdele descordaunt.  
This bulle is eke with sterrés set,  
Through which he hath his hornés  
knet

Unto the taile of Aries,  
So is he nought there sterrélés.  
Upon his brest eke eighténe  
He hath, and eke as it is sene  
Upon his tail stonde other two.  
His month assignéd eke also  
Is Averil, which of his shoures  
Minístreth way unto the floures.

“The thriddé Signe is Gemini,  
Which is figuréd redely  
Lich to two twinnés of man kinde,  
That naked stonde. And as I  
finde,

They ben with sterrés wel bego,  
The heved hath parte of thilké two,  
That shine upon the bullés taile,  
So ben they both of o parafle.  
But on the wombe of Gemini  
Ben fivé sterrés nought forthý.  
And eke upon the fete be twey,  
So as these oldé bokés say,  
That wisé Tholomeus wrote.  
His propre monthé wel I wote  
Assignéd is the lusty May,  
Whan every brid upon his lay  
Among the grené levés singeth,  
And love of his pointuré stingeth  
After the lawés of natúre

<sup>1</sup> Ver, the Spring.

The youthe of every créature.

“Cancér after thereule and space  
Of Signés halt the forthé place.  
Like to the crabbe he hath sem-  
blaunce

And hath unto his retinaunce  
Sixtené sterrés, wherof ten,  
So as these oldé wisé men  
Describe, he bereth on him to-fore  
And in the middle two before  
And four he hath upon his ende,  
Thus goth he sterréd in his kende.  
And of him self is moist and colde  
And is the propre hous and holde  
Which apperteineth to the Mone  
And doth what longeth him to done.  
The month of Juin unto this Signe  
Thou shalte after the reule assigne.

“The fifté Signe is Leo hote,  
Whos kinde is shapé drie and hote,  
In whom the Sonne hath herber-  
gage.

And the semblaunce of his ymage  
Is a león, which in baillie  
Of sterrés hath his purpartie,  
The fouré which as Cancer hath  
Upon his endé, Leo tath  
Upon his heved, and thanné neste  
He hath eke foure upon his breste,  
And one upon his tail behinde.  
In oldé bokés as we finde.  
His propre month is Juil by name,  
In which men pleien many a game.

“After Leó Virgó the nexte  
Of Signés clepéd is the sexte,  
Wherof the figure is a maide,  
And as the philosóphre saide,  
She is the welth and the rising,  
The lust, the joy and the likíng  
Unto Mercure. And soth to say  
She is with sterrés well bescie,  
Wherof Leó hath lent her one,  
Which sit on high her heved upon.  
Her wombe hath five, her fete also  
Have other five, and ever mo

Touchend as of complexión  
 By kindly disposición  
 Of drie and cold this maiden is.  
 And for to tellen over this  
 Her month as thou shalte under-  
 stonde,

Whan every felde hath corne in  
 honde

And many a man his backe hath  
 plied,

Unto this signe is Augst applied.

“After Virgó to reknen even  
 Libra sit in the nombre of seven,  
 Which hath figúre and resemblaúnce  
 Unto a man which a balaunce  
 Bereth in his honde as for to weie,  
 In boke and as it may be seie.

Diversé sterrés to him longeth,  
 Wherof on heved he underfongeth  
 First thre, and eke his wombe hath  
 two,

And down beneth eight other mo.  
 This signe is hote and moisté both,  
 The whiché thingés be nought loth  
 Unto Venús, so that alöfte  
 She resteth in his hous full ofte,  
 And eke Saturnus often hied  
 Is in this signe and magnified.

His propre month is said Septembre,  
 Which yiveth men cause to re-  
 membre,

If any sore be left behinde  
 Of thing which grevé may to kinde.

“Among the Signés upon height  
 The signé, whiche is nombred eight,  
 Is Scorpio, which as felón  
 Figúred is a Scorpión.

But for all that yet nethélesse  
 Is Scorpio nought sterrélesse.  
 For Libra graunteth him his ende  
 Of eighté sterrés, where he wende,  
 The which upon his heved assised  
 He bereth, and eke there ben devised  
 Upon his wombé sterrés thre  
 And eight upon his taile hath he.

Which of his kinde is moist and colde  
 And unbehovely manyfolde.

He harméth Venus and empeireth,  
 But Mars unto his hous repeireth,  
 But ware whan they to-gider dwellen.  
 His propre monthe is, as men tellen,  
 Octobre, which bringeth the kalende  
 Of Winter, that cometh next suénde.

“The ninth signe in Novembre  
 also,

Which folweth after Scorpio,  
 Is clepéd Sagittarius,  
 The whos figúre is markéd thus ;  
 A monstre with a bowe on honde,  
 On whom that sondry sterrés stonde,  
 Thilke eight of whiche I spake to-  
 fore,

The which upon the tail ben lore  
 Of Scorpio the heved all faire  
 Be spreden of the Sagittaire,  
 And eight of other stonden even  
 Upon his wombe, and other seven  
 There stonden on his tail behinde,  
 And he is hote and drie of kinde.  
 To Jupiter his hous is fre.

But to Mercure in his degre,  
 For they be nought of one assent,  
 He worcheth great empeirément.  
 This signe hath of his propreté  
 A monthé, whiche of duëté  
 After the seson that befalleth  
 The ploughés oxen in winter stalleth.  
 And fire into the halle he bringeth  
 And thilké drinke of which men  
 singeth,

He torneth must into the wine,  
 Than is the larder of the swine.  
 That is Novembre which I mene,  
 Whan that the leef hath lost his grene

“The tenthé Signé drie and colde,  
 The which is Capricornus tolde,  
 Unto a gote hath resemblaúnce.  
 For whosé love and áqueintaúnce  
 Within his housé to sojorne  
 It liketh well unto Satorne.

But to the Mone it liketh nought,  
 For no profit is theré wrought.  
 This Signe as of his propreté  
 Upon his heved hath sterrés thre  
 And eke upon his wombé two  
 And twey upon his taile also.  
 Decembre after the yerés forme,  
 So as the bokés us enforme,  
 With daiés shorte and nightés longe  
 This ilké Signe hath underfonge.

“Of tho that sitte upon the heven  
 Of Signés in the nombre elleven  
 Aquariús hath take his place  
 And stant well in Saturnés grace,  
 Which dwelleth in his herbergage.  
 But to the Sonne he doth outrage.  
 This Signe is verrailly resembled  
 Lich to a man which halte assembled  
 In ither honde a water spout,  
 Wherof the stremés rennen out.  
 He is of kindé moist and hote,  
 And he that of the stérrés wote  
 Saith, that he hath of sterrés two  
 Upon his heved, and bene of tho  
 That Capricorn hath on his ende.  
 And as the bokés maken minde  
 That Tholoméus made him selve,  
 He hath eke on his wombé twelve,  
 And twey upon his endé stonde.  
 Thou shalte also this understonde,  
 The frosty coldé Janevere,  
 Whan comen is the newé yere,  
 That Janus with the double face  
 In his chare hath take his place  
 And loketh upon bothé sides  
 Some dele toward the winter tides,  
 Some dele toward the yere suénde,  
 That is the monthé belongénde  
 Unto this Signe, and of his dole  
 He yiveth the firsté primerole.<sup>1</sup>

“Thetwelfthé, which is last of alle  
 Of signés, Piscis men it calle,  
 The which, as telleth the scriptúre,  
 Bereth of two fisses the figúre.

<sup>1</sup> *Primerole*, primrose.

So is he colde and moist of kinde,  
 And eke with sterrés as I finde  
 Beset in sondry wise, as thus  
 Two of his ende Aquarius  
 Hath lent unto his heved, and two  
 This Signe hath of his owne also  
 Upon his wombe, and over this  
 Upon his ende also there is  
 A nombre of twenty sterrés bright,  
 Which is to sene a wonder sight.  
 Toward this signe into his hous  
 Comth Jupiter the glorióus,  
 And Venus eke with him accordeth  
 To dwellen, as the boke recordeth.  
 The Month unto this signe ordeined  
 Is Februar, which is bereined.  
 And with londflodés in his rage  
 At fordés letteth<sup>1</sup> the passage.

“Now hast thou herd the propreté  
 Of Signes, but in his degré  
 Albumazare yet over this  
 Saith, so as therthé parted is  
 In fouré, right so ben devised  
 Thesignés twelve, and stonde assised  
 That eche of hem in his partie  
 Hath his climate to justifie,  
 Wherof the firsté regiment  
 Toward the parte of orient  
 From Antióche and that contré  
 Governéd is of Signés thre,  
 That is Cancér, Virgó, Leó.  
 And towarde occident also  
 From Armeny, as I am lerned,  
 Of Capricorne it stant governéd,  
 Of Piscis and Aquarius.  
 And after hem I findé thus  
 Southward fro Alisaundré forth  
 Tho Signés, whiché most ben worth  
 In governaunce of that doaire,<sup>2</sup>  
 Libra they ben and Sagittaire  
 With Scorpio, which is conjoint  
 With hem to stonde upon that point  
 Of Constantnople the cité,  
 So as the bokés tellen me.

<sup>1</sup> *Letteht*, hinders.

<sup>2</sup> *Doaire*, province.

The last of this división  
 Stant untoward Septemtrion,  
 Where as by wey of purveiaunce  
 Hath Aries the governaunce  
 Forth with Taurús and Gemini.  
 Thus ben the Signés proprely  
 Devided, as it is reherced,  
 Wherof the londés ben diversed.

“*Lo thus, my sone,* as thou  
 might here,

Was Alisaundre made to lere  
 Of hem that weren for his lore.  
 But now to loken overmore  
 Of other sterrés how they fare  
 I thenke hereafter to declare,  
 So as king Alisaundre in youth  
 Of him that suché signés couth  
 Enforméd was to-fore his eye  
 By night upon the sterrés sigh.

“Upon sondry creación  
 Stant sondry operación,  
 Some worcheth this, some worcheth  
 that ;

The fire is hote in his estate  
 And brenneth what hemayatteigne,  
 The water may the fire restreigne,  
 The which is colde and moist also.  
 Of other thinge it fareth right so  
 Upon this erthe among us here.  
 And for to speke in this manére  
 Upon the heven, as men may finde  
 The sterrés ben of sondry kinde  
 And worchen many sondry thinges  
 To us that bene her underlinges.  
 Among the whiché forth withall  
 Nectánabús in speciáll,  
 Which was an astronomien  
 And eke a great magicien  
 And undertake hath thilke emprise,  
 To Alisaundre in his apprise  
 As of magíqué naturele  
 To knowe, enformeth him somdele  
 Of certein sterrés what they mene,  
 Of which he saith there ben fiftene.  
 And sondrily to everichone

A gras belongeth and a stone,  
 Wherof men worchen many a  
 wonder

To setté thing bothe up and under.

“To telle right as he began  
 The firsté sterre Aldeboran,  
 The clerest and the most of alle,  
 By righté namé men it calle,  
 Which liche is of condición  
 To Mars and of complexión  
 To Venus, and hath therupon  
 Carbunculum his propre stone.  
 His herbe is Anabulla named,  
 Which is of great vertúe proclaimed.

“The seconde is nought vertulés  
 Clota, or ellés Pliades

It hatte and of the Monés kinde  
 He is. And also this I finde,  
 He taketh of Mars complexión,  
 And lich to such condición  
 His stone appropred is Cristall,  
 And eke his herbe in speciall  
 The vertuouús Fenél it is.

“The thriddé, which comth after  
 this,

Is hote Algol the cleré rede,  
 Whiche of Satorne as I may rede  
 His kindé taketh and eke of Jove  
 Complexión to his behove.  
 His propre stone is Diamant,  
 Which is to him most áccordaunt.  
 His herbé, which is him betake,  
 Is hote Eléborum the blacke.

“So as it falleth upon lot  
 The fourthé sterre is Alhaiot,  
 Which in the wise as I saide er  
 Of Satorne and of Jupiter  
 Hath take his kinde, and therupon  
 The Saphir is his propre stone,  
 Marrubium his herbe also,  
 The which accorden bothé two.

“And Canis major in his like  
 The fifté sterre is of magíqué,  
 The whosé kinde is Venerien,  
 As saith this astronomien,

His propre stone is said Berille,  
But for to worche and to fulfille  
Thing which to this Sciéncé falleth,  
There is an herbé, which men  
calleth

Saveine, and that behoveth nede  
To him that woll his purpos spede.

“The sixté suende after this  
By namé Canis minor is.  
The which sterre is Mercuriáll  
By wey of kinde, and forth withall  
As it is writen in the forth  
Complexión he taketh of Marte.  
His stone and herbe as saith the  
scole

Ben Achatés and Primerole.

“The seventh sterre in speciáll  
Of this Sciéncé is Ariall,  
Which sondry nature underfongeth.  
The stone which propre unto him  
longeth,

Gorgonza proprely it hight.  
His herbe also, which he shall right,  
Upon the worching as I mene  
Is Celidoiné fresshe and grene.

“Sterre Ala corvi upon height  
Hath take his place in nombre of  
eight,

Which of his kindé mot performe  
The will of Marte and of Satorne,  
To whom Lapacia the gret  
Is herbé, but of no beyete.  
His stone is Honochinus hote,  
Through which men worchen great  
riote.

“The ninthé sterré faire and vele  
By name is hote Alaëzele,  
Which taketh his propre kindé thus  
Bothe of Mercure and of Venus.  
His stone is the grene Emeraude  
To whom is yoven many a laude.  
Saulge is his herbe appurtenaunt  
Aboven all the remenaunt.

“The tenthé sterre is Almareth,  
Which upon life and upon deth

Through kinde of Jupiter and Marte  
He doth what longeth to his parte.  
His stone is Jaspe and of Plantaine  
He hath his herbé souveraine.

“The sterre eleventh is Venenas,  
The whose natúre is, as it was,  
Take of Venús and of the Mone  
In thing which he hath for to done.  
Of Adamaunt is that perrie,  
In whiche he worcheth his maistrie.  
Thilke herbe also, which him be-  
falleth,

Cicorea the boke him calleth.

“Alpheta in the nombre sit  
And is the twelfté sterré yit,  
Of Scorpio which is govérned,  
And taketh his kinde as I am lerned  
And hath his vertue in the stone  
Which cleped is Topazion.  
His herbé propre is Rosmarine,  
Which shapen is for his covine.

“Of these sterrés which I mene,  
Cor Scorpionis is thrittene,  
The whos natúré Mart and Jove  
Have yoven unto his behove.  
Hís herbe is aristolochy,<sup>1</sup>  
Which folweth his astronomy.  
The stoné which this sterre alloweth,  
Is Sardis which unto him boweth.

“The sterré which stant next the  
last,

Natúre of him this namé cast  
And clepen him Botercadent,  
Which of his kind obediént  
Is to Mercure and to Venus.  
His stone is said Crisolitus.  
His herbe is clepéd Satureie,  
So as these oldé bokés saie.

“But now the lasté sterre of alle  
The Taile of Scorpio men calle,  
Which to Mercure and to Satorne  
By wey of kindé mot retorne

<sup>1</sup> *Aristolochy*, miswritten “astrology.” Cornelius Agrippa, *De Occult. Phil.*, Lib. I., cap. 32, gives the plants under *Cor Scorpionis* as *Aristolochia* and *Crocus*.

After the preparatiôn  
Of dúë constellatiôn.  
The Calcidoine unto him longeth  
Which for his stone he underfongeth.  
Of Majoran his herbe is grounded.  
Thus have I said how they ben  
founded

Of every sterre in speciáll,  
Which hath his herbe and stone  
withall,  
As Hermes in his bokés olde  
Witnéssé bereth, of that I tolde.

“Now hast thou herd, in suche  
a wise

These noble philosóphres wise  
Enformeden this yongé king  
And made him have a knoueleching  
Of thing which first to the partie  
Belongeth of philosophie,  
Which Theoríqué clepéd is,  
As thou to-fore hast herde er this.  
But now to speke of the secónde,  
Whiche Aristotle hath also founde  
And techeth how to speké faire,  
Whiche is a thing full necessaire  
To counterpeisé the balaunce,  
Where lacketh other suffisauncé.

“Above all erthly créatúres

The Highé Maker of natúres  
The Word to man hath yove alone,  
So that the speche of his persone  
Or for to lese, or for to winne  
The hertés thought which is  
withinne,

May shewé what it woldé mene.  
And that is no where ellés sene  
Of kindé with none other beste.  
So shulde he be the more honést,  
To whom God yaf so worthy a yifte,  
And loké well that he ne shifte  
His Wordés to none wicked use,  
For Word the techér of vertuse  
Is clepéd in philosophy.  
Wherof touchéndé this party  
Is rhetoríqué the sciénce

Appropred to the reverence  
Of Wordés that ben resonáble.  
And for this art shall be vailáble  
With goodly wordés for to like  
It hath Gramaire, it hath Logiqué,  
That serven both unto the speche.  
Gramairé first hath for to teche  
To speke upon congruité.  
Logique hath eke in his degre  
Betwene the trouthe and the fals-  
hode

The pleiné wordés for to shode,<sup>1</sup>  
So that nóthing shall go beside  
That he the right ne shall decide,  
Wherof full many a great debate  
Reforméd is to good estate  
And pees susteigné up alofte  
With esy wordés and with softe,  
Where strengthé shuldé let it falle.  
The philosóphre amongés alle  
Forthý commendeth this sciénce,  
Which hath the reule of eloquence.  
In stone and gras vertúe there is,  
But yet the bokés tellen this,  
That Worde above all erthlythinges  
Is vertuóús in his dóinges,  
Where so it be to evil or good.  
For if the Wordés semen good  
And be well spoke at mannés ere  
Whan that there is no trouthé there,  
They done full oft full great decept.  
For whan the Word to the conceipt  
Descordeth in so double a wise,  
Such Rhetoríque is to despise  
In every place and for to drede.

“For of Ulixes thus I rede,  
As in the boke of Troy is founde,  
His eloquence and his facóunde  
Of goodly wordés which he tolde  
Hath made that Anthenor him  
solde

The town whiche he with treson wan.  
Worde hath beguiled many a man,  
With word the wildé beste is daunted,

<sup>1</sup> *Shode*, divide, discriminate.



With word the serpent is en-  
 chaunted,  
 Of wordés mong the men of armes  
 Ben woundés heléd with the  
 charmes,

Where lacketh other medicfne  
 Worde hath under his disciplíne  
 Of sorcerié the caretces.

The wordés ben of sondry sectes,  
 Of evil and eke of good also.  
 The wordés maken frende of fo,  
 And fo of frende, and pees of werre,  
 And werre of pees, and out of herre  
 The word the worldés cause en-  
 triketh

And reconcileth who on him liketh.  
 The worde under the cope of heven  
 Set every thing or oddé or even.

With word the Highé God is plesed,  
 With word the wordés ben appesed.  
 The softé word the loudé stilleth,  
 Where lacketh good the word ful-  
 filleth

To make amendés for the wronge.  
 Whan wordés medlen with the songe,  
 It doth plesauncé well the more.  
 But for to loke upon the lore,  
 How Tulliús his rhetoríque  
 Componeth, there a man may pike  
 How that he shall his wordés set.  
 How he shall lose, how he shall knet,  
 And in what wise he shall pro-  
 nounce

His talé pleiné without frounce.  
 Wherof ensample if thou wilt seche,  
 Take hede and rede whilom the  
 speche

“Of Julius and Cicero,  
 Which consul was of Romé tho,  
 Of Caton eke, and of Silene  
 Behold the wordés hem betwene,  
 Whan the tresón of Cateline  
 Discovered was, and the covine  
 Of hem that were of his assent  
 Was knowe and spoke in parlement,

And axéd howe and in what wise  
 Men sholden done him to jufse.  
 Silanus first his talé tolde  
 To trouth and as he was beholde  
 The comun profit fôr to save,  
 He saide how treson shuldé have  
 A cruel dethe. And thus they

speke,  
 The consul both and Caton eke,  
 And saiden that for suche a wronge  
 There may no peiné be to stronge.  
 But Julius with wordés wise  
 His talé tolde all other wise,  
 As he which wolde her dethe respíte,  
 And foundeth howe he might excite  
 The juges through his eloquence  
 Fro deth to torné the senténcé  
 And set her hertés to pité.

Now tolden they, now toldé he :  
 They speken pleine after the lawe ;  
 But he the wordés of his sawe  
 Coloureth in an other way  
 Spekénd. And thus betwene the  
 twey

To trete upon this jugément  
 Made eche of hem his argument.  
 Wherof the talés for to here  
 There may a man the scolé lere  
 Of Rhetoríque the eloquence,  
 Whiche is the seconde of Science  
 Touchéndé to Philosophie,  
 Wherof a man shall justifie  
 His wordés in dispútesón  
 And knette upon conclusión  
 His argument in suche a forme,  
 Which may the pleiné trouthe en-  
 forme

And the subtlf cautéle abate,  
 Whiche every true man shall debate.

“The firsté, whiche is Theorique,  
 And the secondé Rhetorique  
 Sciénces of Philosophy,  
 I have hem tolde as in party,  
 So as the philosóphre it tolde  
 To Alisaundre. And now I wolde

Tell of the thridde, what it is,  
The which Practiqué clepéd is.

“**P**ractiqué stant upon thre  
things

Toward the governaunce of kinges,  
Wherof the firste Ethique is named,  
The whose Sciencé stant proclamed  
To teche of vertue thilké reule,  
How that a King him self shall reule  
Of his morál condition

With worthy disposition,  
Of good living in his persóné,  
Which is the chefe of his coróné.  
It maketh a kinge also to lerne  
Howe he his body shall gouverne,  
Howe he shall wake, how he shall  
slepe,

How that he shall his helé kepe  
In mete, in drinke, in clothing eke.  
There is no wisdom for to seke  
As for the reule of his persone,  
The which that this sciencé allone  
Ne techeth as by wey of kinde  
That there is nothing left behinde.

“That other point, which to  
practique

Belongeth, is Ecónomique,  
Which techeth thilké honesté,  
Through which a King in his degré  
His wife and child shal reule and  
guie

So forth with all the compaignie  
Which in his houshold shall abide,  
And his estate on every side  
In such manéré for to lede  
That he his houshold ne mislede.

“Practique hath yet the thridde  
apprise,

Which techeth how and in what wise  
Through his purveiéed ordenaunce  
A King shall set in governaunce  
His realme, and that is Policie  
Which longeth unto Regalie  
In time of werre, in time of pees,  
To worship and to good encrees

Of clerke, of knight, and of mar-  
chaunt,

And so forth all the remenaunt  
Of all the comun people about  
Withinné burgh and eke without  
Of hem that ben artificers,  
Whiche usen craftes and mestiérs,  
Whose art is clepéd mechanic ;  
And though they ben nought allé  
like,

Yet nethéles how so it falle,  
O<sup>1</sup> lawé mot gouverne hem alle,  
Or that they lese, or that they winne,  
After the state that they ben inne.

“Lo, thus this worthy yongé king  
Was fully taught of every thing  
Which mighté yive entendément  
Of good reule and good regiment  
To suche a worthy prince as he.  
But of verráy necessité  
The philosóphre him hath betake  
Five points, which he hath under-  
take

To kepe and holde in observaunce  
As for the worthy governaunce  
Which longeth to his Regalie  
After the reule of Policie.

“**T**o every man belongeth lore,  
But to no man belongeth more  
Than to a King which hath to lede  
The people als for his kinghede.  
He may hem bothé save and spille,  
And for it stant upon his wille  
It sit him well to ben avised  
And the vertúes which are assised  
Unto a Kingés regiment<sup>2</sup>  
To take in his entendément,  
Wherof to tellen as they stonde  
Hereafterward now woll I fonde.  
Among the Vertues one is chefe  
And that is Trouthé, which is lefe  
To God and eke to man also.  
And for it hath ben ever so,  
Taught Aristotle as he well couth

<sup>1</sup> O, one.

<sup>2</sup> Regiment, ruie.

To Alisaundre, how in his youth  
 He shulde of Trouthé thilké grace  
 With all his holé herte embrace,  
 So that his word be trewe and pleine  
 Toward the world, and so certeine  
 That in him be no double speche.  
 For if men shuldé Trouthé seche  
 And found it nought within a King,  
 It were an unsittendé<sup>1</sup> thing.

The worde is token of that within,  
 There shall a worthy king begin  
 To kepe his tunge and to be trewe,  
 So shall his price ben ever newe.  
 Avise him every man to-fore  
 And be well ware, er he be swore,  
 For afterwarde it is to late  
 If that he wolde his word debate.  
 For as a King in speciáll  
 Above all other is principáll  
 Of his powér, so shulde he be  
 Most vertuouús in his degre.  
 And that may well be signified  
 By his coróne and specified.

“The gold betokeneth excellence,  
 That men shuld done him reverence  
 As to her legé souveraine.  
 The stonés, as the bokés saine,  
 Commended ben in treble wise.  
 First they ben hard and thilke  
 assise

Betokeneth in a King constaunce,  
 So that there shall no variaunce  
 Be found in his condición.  
 And also by descriptión  
 The vertue whiché is in the stonés,  
 A verray signe is for the nonés  
 Of that a king shall ben honést  
 And holdé trewely his behest  
 Of thing which longeth to kinghede.  
 The brighté colour, as I rede,  
 Which is in the stonés shinénd,  
 Is in figúre betokenénd  
 The cronique of this worldés fame  
 Which stant upon his godé name.

<sup>1</sup> *Unsittendé*, unbecoming.

The cercle, which is rounde aboute  
 Is token of all the londe aboute,  
 Which stant under his gerarchie,  
 That he it shall well kepe and guic.  
 And for that Trouthe how so it falle  
 Is the Vertue Souveraine of alle  
 That longeth unto regiment,  
 A talé which is evident  
 Of Trouthe in commendación,  
 Toward thin enformación,  
 My sone, herafter thou shalt here  
 Of a cronfque in this matere.

As the cronique it doth reherce,  
 A soldan whilom was of Perse,  
 Which Daires hight, and Ytaspis  
 His fader was. And sothe it is,  
 That through wisdóm and high  
 prudéce

More than for any reveréce  
 Of his lignage as by descent  
 The regne of thilke empire he hent.  
 And as he was him selfé wise  
 The wisé men he held in prise,  
 And sought hem out on every side  
 That toward him they shulde abide.  
 Among the whiché thre there were,  
 That most servíce unto him bere  
 As they which in his chambrec  
 lighen

And all his counceil herd and sighen.  
 Her namés ben of straungé note,  
 Harpaghes was the firsté hote,  
 And Manachaz was the secóunde,  
 Zorobabel, as it is founde  
 In the croniqué, was the thridde.

This soldan what so him betidde  
 To hem he tristé most of alle,  
 Wherof the case is so befallé :  
 This lord, which hath conceiptés  
 depe,

Upon a night whan he hath slepe,  
 As he which hath his wit disposed,  
 Touchend a point hem hath opposed.  
 The kingés questiön was this,  
 Of thingés thre which strongest is,

The Wine, the Woman or the King?  
And that they shulde upon this  
thing

Of her answeré avised be,  
He yaf hem fully daiés thre  
And hath behote hem by his feith  
That who the besté reson saith  
He shall receive a worthy mede.

“Upon this thing they token hede  
And stoden in dispútesón,  
That by divérs opinión  
Of arguments that they have holde  
Harpaghes first his talé tolde  
And said, how that the strength of  
kinges

Is mightiest of allé things.  
For King hath power over man,  
And man is he which reson can,  
As he which is of his natúre  
The mosté noble créature  
Of allé tho that God hath wrought.  
And by that skill it semeth nought,  
He saith, that any erthly thing  
May be so mighty as a King.  
A King may spille, a King may  
save,

A King may make of lorde a knave  
And of a knave a lord also,  
The power of a King stant so,  
That he the lawés overpasseth.  
What he woll maké lasse he lasseth,  
What he woll maké more he moreth.  
And as a gentil faucon soreth,  
He fleeth that no man him reclameth,  
But he alone all other tameth  
And stant him self of lawé fre.  
Lo, thus a Kingés might, saith he,  
So as his reson can argúe,  
Is strengest and of most valúe.

“But Manachaz saith other wise,  
That Wine is of the more emprise,  
And that he sheweth by this way.  
The Wine full ofté taketh away  
The reson fro the mannés herte,  
The Wine can make a creple sterte

And a deliver<sup>1</sup> man unwelde,  
It maketh a blind man to behelde  
And a bright eféd semé derke,  
It maketh a lewdé man a clerke,  
And fro the clerkés the clergý  
It taketh away, and cowardy  
It torneth into hardiésse,  
Of avarice it maketh largesse.

The Winé maketh eke the good  
blood,

In which the soulé, which is good,  
Hath chosen her a resting place  
While that the life her wolle embrace.

And by this skillé Manachaz,  
Answeréd hath upon this cas  
And saith, that Wine by wey of  
kind

Is thing, which may the hertés bind  
Well moré than the Regalie.

“Zorobabel for his partie  
Said as him thoughté for the best,  
That Women ben the mightiest,  
The Kinge and the Vinour also  
Of Women comen bothé two.  
And eke he said, how that man hede  
Through strengthe unto the woman-  
hede

Of lové, where he wolle or none,  
Obeié shall, and therupon  
To shewe of Women the maistrice  
A talé whiche he sigh with eye  
As for ensample he toldé this.

“How Apemen, of Besazis  
Which daughter was, in the paleis  
Sittend upon his highé deis,  
Whan he was hottest in his ire  
Toward the great of his empire,  
Cyrus the King tiraunt she toke.  
And only with her goodly loke  
She made him debonaire and meke,  
And by the chin and by the cheke  
She luggeth him right as her list,  
That now she japeth and now she  
kist

<sup>1</sup> *Deliver*, free of movement, lithic.

And doth with him what ever her  
liketh.

Whan that she loureth than he  
siketh,

And whan she gladeth he is glad.  
And thus this King was overlad  
With hiré which his lemman was.

“Among the men is no solas  
If that there be no Woman there,  
For but if that the Woman were  
This worldés joié were awey.  
Through hem men finden out the  
wey

To knighthode and to worldés fame,  
They make a man to dredé shame  
And honour for to be desired.

Through the beauté of hem is fired  
The dart of which Cupidé throweth,  
Wherof the jolif peiné groweth  
Which al the worldé hath under fote.  
A Woman is the mannés bote,  
His life, his deth, his wo, his wele.  
And this thing may be shewed wele,  
How that Womén ben good and  
kinde,

For in ensample thus I finde.

“Whan that the duke Admetus lay  
Sike in his bed, that every day  
Men waiten whan he shuldé dey,  
Alcest his wife goth for to prey  
With sacrifice unto Minerve,  
As she which woldé thank deserve,  
To wite answére of the goddesse,  
How that her lorde of his sikenesse,  
Wherof he was so wo beseine,  
Recover might his hele ayeine.  
Lo, thus she cride and thus she  
praide,

Till atté last a vois her saide,  
That if she woldé for his sake  
The maladíe suffre and take  
And deie her self, he shuldé live.  
Of this answer Alcest hath yive  
Unto Minerve great thankng,  
So that her dethe and his livng

She chese with all her hole entent,  
And thus accorded home she went.  
Into the chambre whan she came,  
Her housébonde anon she name  
In bothe her armés and him kist,  
And spake unto him what her list.  
And therupon within a throwe  
The goodé wife was overthrowe  
And deied, and he was hole in  
haste.

So may a man by reson taste,  
How next after the God above  
The trouthe of Women and the love,  
In whom that allé grace is founde,  
Is mightiest upon this grounde  
And most behovely manyfolde.

“Lo, thus Zorobabel hath tolde  
The tale of his opinión.  
But for fináll conclusiún,  
What strengest is of erthly thinges  
The Wine, the Women or the  
Kinges, [alle

He saith, that Trouthe above hem  
Is mightiest, how ever it falle.

The Trouthe how so it ever come  
May for no thing ben overcome.  
It may well suffre for a throwe,  
But atté last it shall be knowe.

The proverbe is, who that is trewe,  
Him shall his whilé<sup>1</sup> never rewe.

For how so that the causé wende  
The trouthe is shameles atté ende.  
But what thing that is trouthelés  
It may nought well be shamélés,  
And shamé hindereth every wight.

So proveth it, there is no might  
Withouté Trouthe in no degre.  
And thus for trouthe of his decre  
Zorobabel was most commended,  
Wherof the questiún was ended  
And he receivéd hath his mede  
For Trouthé, which to mannés nede  
Is most behovelich over all.

Forthý was Trouthe in speciáll

<sup>1</sup> Whilé, time.

The firsté point in observaunce  
 Betake unto the governaunce  
 Of Alisaundre, as it is saide ;  
 For therupon the ground is laide  
 Of every Kingés regiment,  
 As thing which most conveniént  
 Is for to set a king in even  
 Bothe in this worlde and eke in  
 heven.

“*Next after Trouthé* the se-  
 counde

In Policie as it is founde,  
 Which serveth to the worldés fame  
 In worship of a Kingés name,  
 Largesse it is, whose privilege  
 There may non avaríce abrege.  
 The worldés good was first comúne,  
 But afterward upon Fortúne  
 Was thilké comun profit cessed.  
 For when the people stood en-  
 cressed

And the lignáges woxen great,  
 Anone for singular beyete  
 Drough every man to his partie,  
 Wherof come in the first envé  
 With great debate and werrés  
 stronge,

And last among the men so longe  
 Till no man wisté who was who  
 Ne which was frende ne which  
 was fo,

Till atté laste in every londe  
 Within hem self the people fonde,  
 That it was good to make a King  
 Which might appesen all this thing  
 And yivé right to the lignáges  
 In parting of her heritáges  
 And eke of all her other good.  
 And thus above hem allé stood  
 The King upon his regaly,  
 As he which hath to justify  
 The worldés good fro covetise.  
 So sit it well in allé wisé  
 A King betwene the more and lesse  
 To sette his herte upon Largesse

Toward him self and eke also  
 Towarde his people. And if nought  
 so,

That is to sain, if that he be  
 Toward him selfé large and fre  
 And of his people take and pille,  
 Largessé by no wey of skille  
 It may be said, but Avarice,  
 Which in a Kinge is a great Vice.

“A King behoveth eke to fle  
 The Vice of Prodegalité,  
 That he mesúre in his expence  
 So kepé that of indigence  
 He may be sauf. For who that  
 nedeth,

In all his werk the wors he spedeth.  
 As Aristotle upon Chaldee  
 Ensamplé of great auctorité  
 Unto king Alisaundre taught  
 Of thilké folk that were unsaught<sup>1</sup>  
 Toward her King for his pillage.  
 Wherof he bad in his coráge  
 That he unto thre points entende  
 Where that he wolde his good de-  
 spende.

“First shulde he loke how that  
 it stood

That all wev of his owné good  
 The yiftés which he woldé give,  
 So might he wel the better live.

“And eké he must taken hede  
 If there be cause of any nede  
 Which oughté for to be defended,  
 Er that his goodés ben despended.

“He mote eke as it is befallé  
 Amongés other thingés alle  
 Se the desértés of his men,  
 And after that they ben of ken  
 And of estate and of mérite  
 He shall hem largélich aquite,  
 Or for the werre, or for the pees,  
 That none honour fall in decrees  
 Which mighté torne into diffame,

<sup>1</sup> *Unsaught*, out of accord (First English, saht, peace, reconciliation).

But that he kepe his godé name,  
 So that he be nought holde unkinde.  
 For in cronique a tale I finde,  
 Which speketh somdele of this  
 matere,

Herafterward as thou shalte here.

“**In Rome** to pursue his right  
 There was a worthy pouer knight  
 Which came aloné for to sain  
 His causé, when the court was plein  
 Where Julius was in présence.

And for him lacketh of despense  
 There was with him none advocate  
 To maké plee for his estate.

But though him lacké for to plede  
 Him lacketh nothing of manhede.  
 He wisté well his purse was pouer,  
 But yet he thought his right recouer,  
 And openly pouerte aleide

To temperour, and thus he saide:

‘O Julius, lord of the lawe,  
 Behold, my conseil is withdrawe  
 For lacke of gold to thine office  
 After the lawés of justice.  
 Help, that I haddé conseil here  
 Upon the trouthe of my matere.’

And Julius with that anone  
 Assignéd him a worthy one.  
 But he him self no word ne spake.  
 This knight was wroth and found a  
 lake<sup>1</sup>

In temperour, and saidé thus :

‘O thou unkinde Julius,  
 Whan thou in thy batail were  
 Up in Aufrique, and I was there,  
 My might for thy rescousse I did  
 And putté no man in my stede.  
 Thou wost what woundés there I had,  
 But here I findé the so bad,  
 That the ne list to speke o worde  
 Thine owné mouth, nor of thin horde  
 To yive a florein me to helpe.

How shulde I thanné me beyelpe<sup>2</sup>  
 Fro this day forth of thy largesse,

<sup>1</sup> Lake, lack.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecycelpe*, boast.

Whan such a great unkindénesse  
 Is found in suche a lorde as thou?’  
 This Julius knew well inough  
 That all was soth which he him tolde.  
 And for he woldé nought ben holde  
 Unkind, he toke his cause on honde,  
 And as it were of Goddés sonde,  
 He yaf him good inough to spende  
 For ever unto his livés ende.

“And thus shuld every worthy  
 king

Take of his knightés knouleching  
 Whan that he sigh they haddénede,  
 For every service axeth mede.

But other, which have nought des-  
 served

Through vertue but of japés served,  
 A King shall nought deservé grace,  
 Though he be large in suche a place.

“It sit well every king to have  
 Discretión whan men him crave,  
 So that he may his yifté wite ;  
 Wherof I finde a talé write,  
 How Cinichus a poueré knight  
 A sommé which was over might,  
 Praied of his king Antigonus.

The kinge answerd to him thus  
 And said, how such a yifté passeth  
 His pouer estate. And than he  
 lasseth

And axeth but a litel peny,  
 If that the king wold yive him any.

“The king answeárd, it was to  
 small

For him which was a lord réall,  
 To yive a man so litel thinge,  
 It were unworship in a kinge.

“By this ensample a King may  
 lere,

That for to yive is in manere,  
 For if a King his tresor lasseth  
 Without honoúr and thankeles  
 passeth,

Whan he him self woll so beguile  
 I not who shall compleigne his while

Ne who by right him shall releve,  
But nethéles this I beleve  
To helpé with his owné londe  
Belongeth every man his honde  
To set upon necessité.

“And eke his Kingés realté  
Mote every legé man comfórté  
With good and body to supporte,  
Whan they se causé resonáble.  
For who that is nought entendáble  
To holde upright his Kingés name,  
Him oughté for to be to blame.

“Of Policie and over more  
To speke in this matéré more  
So as the philosóphre tolde,  
A King after the reule is holde  
To modifie and to adresse  
His yiftés upon such largesse  
That he mesuré nought excede.

“For if a King fall into nede,  
It causeth ofté sondry thinges,  
Whiche are ungoodly to the kinges.  
What man will nought him self  
mesúre,

Men seen ful ofté that mesúre  
Him hath forsake. And so doth he  
That useth prodegalité,  
Which is the moder of pouérte,  
Wherof the londés ben desérte.

And namély whan thilké vice  
About a King stant in office  
And hath witholde of his partý  
The covetouúsé flaterý  
Which many a worthy King de-  
ceiveth,

Er he the fallace apperceiveth  
Of hem that serven to the glose.  
For they that connen plese and  
glose

Ben, as men tellen, the noríces  
Unto the fostring of the Vices,  
Wherof full ofté nethéles  
A King is blaméd giltéles.

A Philosóphre, as thou shalt here,  
Spake to a King of this matére

And said him well how that flatróurs  
Coupáble were of thre erroúrs,  
One was toward the goddes high,  
That weren wroth of that they sigh,  
The mischefe which befallé sholde  
Of that the falsé flatroure tolde  
Toward the King. Another was,  
Whan they by sleight and by fallas  
Of feigné wordés make him wene  
That black is white and blew is grene  
Touchend of his condición.

For whan he doth extorción  
With many an other Vicé mo,  
Men shall nought finden one of tho  
To grucche or speké there ayein,  
But holden up his oile<sup>1</sup> and sain,  
That all is well what ever he doth.  
And thus of fals they maken soth,  
So that her Kingés eye is blent  
And wot nought how the worlde is  
went.

The thridde erroúr is harm com-  
mune,

With which the people mot com-  
mune

Of wrongés that they bringen inne,  
And thus they werchen treble sinne  
That ben flatróurs about a king.  
There mighté be no worsé thing  
About a kingés regaly,

Than is the Vice of Flattery.

And nethéles it hath ben used

That it was never yet refused,  
As for to speke, in Court Réall.

For there it is most speciáll

And may nought longé be forbore.

But whan this Vice of hem is bore  
That sholden the Vertúes forth

bringe,

And Trouthe is tornéd to Lesinge,

It is, as who saith, ayein kinde,

Wherof an old ensample I finde.

“Among these other talés wise  
Of philosóphres in this wise

<sup>1</sup> *His oile*, his affirmation.



I rede, how whilom two there were  
 And to the scolé for to lere  
 Unto Athenés fro Cartáge  
 Her frendés whan they were of age,  
 Hem sende. And there they  
 stoden longe

Till they such lore have underfonge  
 That in her timé they surmounte  
 All other men, that to accompte  
 Of hem was tho the greté fame.  
 The first of hem his righté name  
 Was Diogénes thanné hote,  
 In whom was foundé no riote.  
 His felaw Aristippus hight,  
 Which mochel couthe and mochel  
 might.

But atté lasté soth to sain  
 They bothé tornen home ayein  
 Unto Cartáge and scolé lete.  
 This Diogénes no beyete  
 Of worldés good or lasse or more  
 Ne soughté for his longé lore,  
 But toke him only for to dwelle  
 At home. And as the bokés telle,  
 His house was nigh to a rivére  
 Beside a brigge, as thou shalt here.  
 There dwelleth he and taketh his  
 rest,

So as it thought him for the best,  
 To studie in his philósophie,  
 As he which woldé so defic  
 The worldés pompe on every side.

“But Aristippe his boke aside  
 Hath laid, and to the court he wente,  
 Where many a wile and many a  
 wente<sup>1</sup>

With flaterý and wordés softe  
 He caste and hath compasséd ofte  
 How he his princé mighté plese.  
 And in this wise he gate him ese  
 Of veine honour and worldés good,  
 The londés reule upon him stood.  
 The king of him was wonder glad,  
 And all was do what thinge he bad,

<sup>1</sup> *Wente*, turn.

Bothe in the courte and ekewithout  
 With flaterý he brought about  
 His purpos of the worldés werke,  
 Which was ayein the state of clerke,  
 So that philosophý he lefte  
 And to richésse him self uplefte.  
 Lo, thus had Aristippe his will.  
 But Diogénes dwelté still  
 At home and lokéd on his boke.  
 Hesoughté nought the worldés croke  
 For veine honour ne for richesse,  
 But all his hertés businesse  
 He setté to be vertuóus.  
 And thus within his owné hous  
 He liveth to the suffisaunce  
 Of his havíng. And fell perchaunce,  
 This Diogéne upon a day,  
 And that was in the month of May,  
 Whan that these herbés ben hol-  
 sóme,

He walketh for to gader some  
 In his gardin, of which his joutes<sup>1</sup>  
 He thoughté have, and thus aboutes  
 Whan he hath gadred what him  
 liketh,

Heseth him thanné downe and piketh  
 And wisse he herbés in the flood  
 Upon the which his gardin stood  
 Nigh to the brigge, as I tolde ere.  
 And hapneth while he sitteth there,  
 Cam Aristippus by the strete  
 With many hors and routés grete  
 And straught unto the brigge he  
 rode

Where that he hovéd and abode,  
 For as he cast his eyé nigh  
 His felaw Diogéne he sigh,  
 And what he dede he sigh also,  
 Wherof he saidé to him so :

“O Diogéné, God the spede.  
 It weré certés litel nede  
 To sitten here and wortés pike  
 If thou thy princé coutheest like<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Joutes* or *jotes*, beets; also legumes used in old cookery.

<sup>2</sup> *Like*, please.

So as I can in my degre.<sup>7</sup>  
 ' O Aristippe, ' ayein quod he,  
 ' If that thou coutheest so as I  
 Thy wortés piké truélý,  
 It were als litel nede or lasse  
 That thou so worldly wol compassse  
 With flaterfë for to serve,  
 Wherof thou thenkest to deserve  
 Thy princés thank and to purcháce  
 Howthou might stonden in his grace  
 For getting of a litel good.  
 If thou wolt take into thy mood  
 Resón, thou might by reson deme,  
 That so thy princé for to queme<sup>1</sup>  
 Is nought to reson accordaunt,  
 But it is greatly descordaunt  
 Unto the scolés of Athene.'

" Lo, thus answerdé Diogéne  
 Ayein the clerkés flaterie.  
 But yet men sene thessamplerie  
 Of Aristippe is well received  
 And thilke of Diogéne is weived.  
 Office in court and gold in coffre  
 Is now, men sain, the philosóphre  
 Which hath the worship in the halle.  
 But flaterfë passeth alle  
 In chambere whom the court avaun-  
 ceth.

For upon thilké lot it chaunceth  
 To be belovéd now a day.

" I not if it be ye or nay,  
 How Danté the poéte answerde  
 To a flatrou, the tale I herde.  
 Upon a strife betwene hem two  
 He said him, there ben many mo  
 Of thy servauntés than of min.  
 For the poéte of his covine  
 Hath none that woll him cloth and  
 fede,

But a flatróur may reule and lede  
 A king with all his londe about.  
 So stant the wisé man in doubt  
 Of hem that to folfë drawe,  
 For such is now the comun lawe.

<sup>1</sup> *Queme*, please.

But as the comune vois it telleth,  
 Where now that flaterfë dwelleth  
 In every londe under the sonne,  
 There is full many a thing begonne  
 Which weré better to be lefte ;  
 That hath be shewed now and este

" **But if a prince** him woldé  
 reule

Of the Romains after the reule  
 In thilké time as it was used,  
 This Vicé shuldé be refused  
 Wherof the princes ben assoted.  
 But where the pleiné trouth is noted,  
 There may a princé wel conceive  
 That he shall nought him self de-  
 ceive

Of that he hereth wordés pleine,  
 For him ther nought<sup>1</sup> by reson  
 pleigne

That warnéd is er him be wo.  
 And that was fully provéd tho,  
 Whan Romé was the worldés chefe,  
 The sothésaier tho was lefe,  
 Which woldé nought the trouthé  
 spare

But with his wordés plaine and bare  
 To themperóur his sothés tolde,  
 As in cronfque it is witholde,  
 Here afterwarde as thou shalt here  
 Accordend unto this matere.

" To se this olde ensemplarie,  
 That whilom was no flaterie  
 Toward the princes, wel I finde,  
 Wherof so as it comth to minde,  
 My sone, a tale unto thin ere,  
 While that the worthy princes were  
 At Rome, I thenke for to telle.  
 For whan the chaunces so befelle,  
 That any emperóur as tho  
 Victórie had upon his fo  
 And so forth came to Rome ayein,  
 Of treble honóur he was certáin,  
 Wherof that he was magnified.

" The first, as it is specified,

<sup>1</sup> *Nought*, ought not.

Was, when he cam at thilké tide,  
 The chare, in which he shuldé ride  
 Four whité stedés sholdé drawe ;  
 Of Jupiter by thilké lawe  
 The cote he shuldé were also.  
 His prisonérs eke sholden go  
 Endlong the chare on either honde,  
 And all the noble of the londe  
 To-fore and after with him come  
 Ridénd and broughten him to Rome  
 In token of his chivalrie,  
 And for none other flaterie.  
 And that was shewéd forth withall  
 Where he sat in his chare reäll  
 Beside him was a ribald set  
 Which had his wordés so beset  
 To themperouír in all his glorie  
 He saidé : ‘ Take into mémorie,  
 For all this pompe and all this pride  
 Let no justicé gon aside,  
 But know thy self, what so befallé,  
 For men seen ofté timé fallé  
 Thing which men wendé siker  
 stonde.  
 Though thou victórie have on honde,  
 Fortúné may nought stonde alwey ;  
 The whele perchaunce another day  
 May torne and thou might over-  
 throwe,  
 There lasteth nothing but a throwe.’  
 “ With thesé wordés and with mo  
 This ribald, which sat with him tho,  
 To themperouír his talé tolde.  
 And overmore what ever he wolde  
 Or were it evil or were it good  
 So plainly as the trouthé stood,  
 Hespareth nought but speketh it out.  
 And so might every man about,  
 The day of that solemnité,  
 His talé tellen as wele as he  
 To themperouír all openly.  
 And all was this the causé why,  
 That while he stood in his noblesse  
 He shulde his vanité repressé  
 With suché wordés as he herde.

“ Lo now, how thilké time it ferde  
 Toward so high a worthy lorde.  
 For this I finde eke of recórdé,  
 Which the croníque hath auctorized,  
 What emperouír was entronized,  
 The firsté day of his coróne,  
 Where he was in his reäll throne  
 And helde his fest in the paleis  
 Sitténd upon his highé deis,  
 With all the lust that may be gete  
 Whan he was gladest at his mete,  
 And every minstrell haddé pleide  
 And every disour haddé saide  
 What most was plesant to his ere,  
 Than atté lasté comen there  
 His masons for they sholden crave  
 Where that he woldé be begrave,  
 And of what stone his sepultúre  
 They sholden make, and what  
 sculptúre  
 He wolde ordeigné therupon.  
 Tho was there flaterfé none  
 The worthy princes to bejape,  
 The thing was otherwisé shape  
 With good counséile ; and otherwise  
 They were hem selven thanné wise  
 And understoden well and knewen ;  
 Whan suché softé windés blewén  
 Of flaterý into her ere  
 They setten nought her hertés there.  
 But whan they herdé wordés feigned  
 The pleiné trouth it hath des-  
 deigned<sup>1</sup>  
 Of hem that weren so discrete,  
 So toke the flaterer no beyete  
 Of him that was his princé tho.  
 And for to proven it is so,  
 A talé, which befell in dede,  
 In a croníque of Rome I rede.  
**Cesár** upon his reäll throne  
 Where that he sat in his persone  
 And was highést in all his pris,  
 A man which wolde make him wise

<sup>1</sup> Feigned words undervalued the plain truth in men of such discernment.

Fell down knelénd in his presence  
 And did him such a reverence  
 As though the highé God it were,  
 Men hadden great merveilé there  
 Of the worshpé which he dede.  
 This man aros fro thilké stede  
 And forth withall the samé tide  
 He goth him up and by his side  
 He set him down as pere and pere  
 And saide, 'If thou that sittest here  
 Art God which allé thingés might,  
 Than have I do worshpé aright  
 As to the God; and other wise,  
 If thou be nought of thilke assise,  
 But art a man suche as am I,  
 Than may I sit the fasté by,  
 For we be bothe of oné kinde.'

"Cesár answérde and saide: 'O  
 blinde,

Thou art a fol, it is well sene  
 Upon thy self. For if thou wene  
 I be a God, thou dost amis  
 To sit where thou seést God is.  
 And if I be a man also,  
 Thou hast a great folé do,  
 Whan thou to such one as shall deie  
 The worship of thy God away  
 Hast yiven so unworthily.  
 Thus may I prové redely,  
 Thou art nought wise.' And they  
 that herde,

How wisely that the king answérde,  
 It was to hem a newé lore,  
 Wherof they dradden him the more,  
 And brougthen nothing to his ere  
 But if it trouthe and reson were.  
 So ben there many in such a wise,  
 That feignen wordés to be wise  
 And all is verray flaterý  
 To him which can it well aspy.

"The kindé flatroun can nought  
 love

But for to bring him self above,  
 For how that ever his maister fare,  
 So that him self stonde out of care

Him reccheth nought. And thus  
 ful ofte

Deceivéd ben with wordés softe  
 The kingés that ben innocent.  
 Wherof as for chastfément  
 The wisé philosóphre saide:  
 'What king that so his tresure laide  
 Upon such folke, he hath the lesse  
 And yet ne doth he no largesse  
 But harmeth with his owné honde  
 Him self and eke his owné londe.  
 And that by many a sondry wey,  
 Wherof if that a man shall sey  
 As for to speke in generall  
 Where such thing falleth over all  
 That any king him self misreule,—  
 The philosóphre upon his reule  
 In speciáll a causé set

Whiche is and ever hath be the let  
 In governaunce about a king  
 Upon the mischefe of the thing,  
 And that, he saith, is Flaterý,  
 Wherof to-fore as in partý,  
 What Vice it is, I have declared.  
 For who that hath his wit bewared<sup>1</sup>  
 Upon a flatroun to beleve,  
 Whan that he weneth best acheve  
 His godé world, it is most fro.  
 And for to proven it is so  
 Ensamples there ben many one,  
 Of whiche if thou wolt knowen one,  
 It is behovely for to here  
 What whilom fell in this matere.

**Among the kingés** in the bible  
 I finde a tale and is credfible  
 Of him, that whilom Achab hight,  
 Which had all Israel to right.  
 But who that couthé glósé softe  
 And flater, such he set alofte  
 In great estate and made hem riche.  
 But they that speken wordés liche  
 To trouthe and wolde it nought for-  
 bere

For hem was none estate to bere,

<sup>1</sup> *Bewared*, spent.

The courte of suché toke none hede.  
Till atté last upon a nede,  
That Benedab kinge of Surfe,  
Of Israel a great partfe,  
Which Ramoth Galaäd was hote,  
Hath seséd. And of that rióte  
He toke counsefle in sondry wise,  
But nought of hem that weren wise.  
And nethéles upon this cas  
To strengthen him, for Josephas  
Which thanné was kinge of Judee  
He sendé for to come, as he  
Which through frendshp and alli-  
aúnce

Was next to him of áqueintáunce.  
For Joram sone of Josaphath  
Achabbés doughter wedded hath,  
Which highté fairé Godelie.  
And thus cam into Samará  
King Josaphat, and he found there  
The king Acháb. And when they  
were

To-gider spekend of this thing,  
This Josaphat saith to the king,  
How that he worldé gladly here  
Some true prophét in this matere,  
That he his counseil mighté yive  
To what point it shall be adrive.  
And in that timé so befell  
There was such one in Israel,  
Which set him all to flaterý,  
And he was clepéd Sedechý,  
And after him Acháb hath sent.  
And he at his commaundément  
To-fore him cam, and by a sleight  
He hath upon his heved on height  
Two largé hornés set of bras,  
As he whiche all a flatrou was,  
And goth rampénd as a león  
And cast his hornés up and down  
And bad men ben of good espeire,  
For as the hornés percen thaire  
He saith, withouten resistéce,  
So wist he well of his sciéce  
That Benedab is discomfíte.

Whan Sedechy upon this plite  
Hath told this tale unto his lorde,  
Anone they were of his accorde  
Prophétés falsé many mo  
To bere up oile<sup>1</sup> and allé tho  
Affermen that which he hath tolde;  
Wherof the king Acháb was bolde  
And yaf hem yiftés all aboute.  
But Josaphat was in great doubte  
And held fantósme all that he herde,  
Praiénd Acháb how so it ferde,  
If there were any other man,  
The which of prophecfe can,  
To here him speke er that they gone.  
Quod Achab thanné: "There is one,  
A brothel, which Micheas hight.  
But he ne comth nought in my sight  
For he hath long in prison laien,  
Him likéd never yet to saien  
A goodly word to my plesaúnce.  
And nethéles at thine instaúnce  
He shall come out, and than he may  
Say as he saidé many a day;  
For yet he saidé never wele."  
Tho Josaphat began some dele  
To gladen him in hope of trouthe,  
And bad withouten any slouthe  
That men him shuldé fette<sup>2</sup> anone.  
And they that weren for him gone  
Whan that they comen where he was  
They tolden unto Micheás  
The manere how that Sedechý  
Declaréd hath his prophecý.  
And therupon they pray him faire  
That he woll saié no contraire  
Wherof the king may be desplesed,  
For so shall every man be esed,  
And he may helpe him self also.  
Micheas upon trouthé tho  
His herté set and to hem saith—  
All that belongé to his feith

<sup>1</sup> To bere up oile, to sustain the affirmation (of Zedekiah). Oil or oile is an old form of oui, yes. "Oil, par ma foi, sire, oil mult volontiers," says each of the false prophets to Ahab. See note, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Fette, fetch.

And of none other feigné thing  
That woll he tell unto the king,  
Als fer as God hath yive him grace,  
Thus came this prophete into place,  
Where he the kingés willé herde.  
And he therto anone answérde  
And saide unto him in this wise :

‘ My legé lord, for my servíce,  
Which trewe hath stonden ever yit,  
Thou hast me with prisón aquite.  
But for all that I shall nought glose  
Of trouthe als far as I suppose ;  
And as touchénd of thy bataile  
‘Thou shalt nought of the sothé faile.  
For if it liké the to here,  
As I am taught in that matere,  
Thou might it understandé sone.  
But what is afterward to done  
Avisé the, for this I sigh,  
I was to-fore the throne on high,  
Where all the world me thoughté  
stode,

And there I herde and understode  
The vois of God with wordés clere  
Axénd and saide in this manere :

‘ In what thing may I best beguile  
The king Achab?’ And for a while  
Upon this point they speken fast.  
Tho said a spirit atté last :

‘ I undertaké this emprise.’  
And God him axeth in what wise.  
‘ I shall,’ quod he, ‘ deceive and lie  
With flateréndé prophecie  
In suché mouthés as he leveth.’

And he which allé thing acheveth,  
Bad him go forth and do right so.  
And over this I sigh also  
The noble people of Israël  
Dispers as shepe upon an hill  
Without a keper unarraied,  
And as they wente about astraid,  
I herde a vois unto hem sain :

‘ Goth home into your hous ayein,  
Till I for you have better ordeigned.’  
Quod Sedechié: ‘Thou hast feignénd

This tale in angring of the king.’  
And in a wrathe upon this thing  
He smote Micheen upon the cheke ;  
The king him hath rebukéd eke ;  
And every man upon him cride,  
Thus was he shent on every side  
Ayein and into prison ladde,  
For so the kinge him selvé badde.  
The trouthé mighté nought ben  
herde ;

But afterward as it hath ferde,  
The dedé proveth his entent.  
Acháb to the batailé went,  
Where Benedab for all his shelde  
Him slough, so that upon the felde  
His people goth about astray.  
But God, which allé thingés may,  
So doth that they no mischefe have.  
Her king was dede and they ben  
save,

And home ayein in Goddes pees  
They wente, and all was founde les<sup>1</sup>  
That Sedechý hath said to-fore.  
So sit it wel a king therfore  
To loven hem that trouthé mene.  
For atté last it will be sene,  
That flaterý is nothing worth.

“ But now to my materé forth  
As for to speken overmore  
After the philosóphres lore,  
The thriddé point of policy  
I thinké for to specify.

“**What is a lond**, where men  
be none ?

What ben the men which are allone  
Without a kingés governaunce?  
What is a king in his legeaunce  
Where that there is no lawe inlonde?  
What is to také lawe on honde,  
But if the jugés weren trewe?  
These oldé worldés with the newe  
Who that woll take in evidence  
There may he se the experiéce  
What thing it is to kepé lawe

<sup>1</sup> Les, leasings, untruth.

Through which the wrongés be  
 withdrawe  
 And rightwisnessé stant com-  
 mended,

Wherof the regnés ben amended.  
 For where the lawé may comúné,  
 The lordés forth with the comúné  
 Eche hath his propré duëté.  
 And eke the kingés reálté  
 Of bothe his worship underfongeth,  
 To his estate as it belongeth,  
 Whiche of his highé worthinesse  
 Hath to govérné rightwisnesse,  
 As he which shall the lawé guide.  
 And nethéles upon some side  
 His power stant above the lawe  
 To yivé both and to withdrawe  
 The forfet of a mannés life.  
 But thingés which are excessife  
 Ayein the lawe he shal nought do  
 For lové ne for hate also.

“The mightés of a king be gret.  
 But yet a worthy king shall let  
 Of wrong to done all that he might,  
 For he which shall the people right,  
 It sit wel to his regaly  
 That he him self first justify  
 Towardés God in his degré.  
 For his estate is ellés fre  
 Toward all other in his persóne,  
 Sauf only to the God alone  
 Which woll him self a king chastise  
 Where that none other may suffice.

“So were it good to taken hede  
 That first a king his owné dede  
 Betwene the Vertue and the Vice  
 Redresse, and than of his justice  
 So set in even the balaúnce  
 Towardés other in governaúnce,  
 That to the pouer and to the riche  
 His lawés mighten stonden liche,  
 He shall excepté no persone.  
 But for he may nought all him one  
 In sondry places do justice,  
 He shall of his reál office

With wise consideratióne  
 Ordeigne his deputation  
 Of suché jugés as ben lerned,  
 So that his people be govérned  
 By hem that trué ben and wise.  
 For if the lawe of covetise  
 Be set upon a jugés honde,  
 Wo is the people of thilké londe,  
 For wrong may nought him selvon  
 hide.

But ellés, on that other side,  
 If lawé stonéd with the right  
 The people is glad and stant upright,  
 Where as the lawe is resonáble,  
 The comun people stant meváble,  
 And if the lawé torne amis,  
 The people also mistornéd is.

“And in ensample of this matere  
 Of Maximin a man may here,  
 Of Romé which was emperour,  
 That whan he made a governour  
 By wey of substitucióne  
 Of province or of regióne,  
 He woldé first enquire his name  
 And lete it openly proclame  
 What man he were, or evil or good,  
 And upon that his namé stood  
 Enclined to vertue or to vice,  
 So wolde he set him in office,  
 Or ellés put him all away.  
 Thus held the lawe his righté wey,  
 Which found no let of covetise.  
 The world stood than upon the wise,  
 As by ensample thou might rede  
 And holde it in thy minde I rede.

**I**n a cronique I findé thus,  
 How that Gaiús Fabriciús,  
 Which whilom was consúl of Rome  
 By whom the lawés yede and come,  
 Whan the Sampnités to him brought  
 A somme of gold and him besought  
 To don hem favour in the lawe,  
 Toward the gold he gan him drawe  
 Wherof in allé mennés lóke  
 A part up in his honde he toke,

Which to his mouth in allé haste  
 He put it for to smelle and taste  
 And to his eye and to his ere,  
 But he ne found no comfort there.  
 And than he gan it to despise  
 And tolde unto hem in this wise :

‘I not what is with gold to  
 thrive,

Whan none of all my wittés five  
 Find favour ne delite therinne.  
 So is it but a nicé sinne  
 Of gold to ben to covetous.  
 But he is riche and glorious  
 Which hath in his subjection  
 Tho men which in possession  
 Ben riche of gold, and by this skill,  
 For he may all day whan he will  
 Or be hem lefe or be hem lothe  
 Justicé done upon hem bothe.’

“Lo, thus he said. And with  
 that worde

He threw to-fore hem on the borde  
 The gold out of his honde anone,  
 And said hem, that he woldé none.  
 So that he kept his liberté  
 To do justice and equité,  
 Withouté lucre of such richesse.  
 There ben now fewe of suche I gesse.  
 For it was thilké timés used,  
 That every jugé was refused  
 Which was nought frend to comun  
 right,

But they that wolden stonde upright  
 For trouthe only to do justice  
 Preferréd were in thilke office  
 To deme and jugé comun lawe,  
 Which now men sain is all with-  
 drawe.

“To sette a lawe and kepe it  
 nought

There is no comune profit sought.  
 But above allé nethéles  
 The lawé which is made for pees  
 Is good to kepé for the best,  
 For that set allé men in rest.

The rightful emperour Conrade  
 To kepé pees such lawé made  
 That none withinné the cité  
 In destorbaunce of unité  
 Durst onés meven a matere.  
 For in his time as thou might here,  
 What point that was for lawé set  
 It shuldé for no good be let<sup>1</sup>  
 To what personé that it were.  
 And this brought in the comun fere  
 Why every man the lawé dradde,  
 For there was none which favour  
 hadde.

So as these oldé bokés sain,  
 I findé write, how a Romain,  
 Which consul was of the pretoire,  
 Whose namé was Carmidotoire,  
 He set a lawé for the pees  
 That none, but he be wepenles,  
 Shall come into the conseil hous,  
 And ellés as malicioús  
 He shal ben of the lawé dede.  
 To that statúte, and to that rede  
 Accorden alle, it shall be so,  
 For certein causé which was tho.  
 Now list, what fell thereafter sone.  
 This consul haddé for to done  
 And was into the feldés ride.  
 And they him haddé longe abide,  
 That lordés of the conseil were,  
 And for him sende, and he cam there  
 With swerd begert, and hath foryete  
 Till he was in the conseil sete.  
 Was none of hem that madé speche  
 Till he him self it woldé seche,  
 And founde out the default him selve.  
 And than he saide unto the twelve  
 Which of the Senate weren wis :  
 ‘I have deservéd the jusse  
 In hasté that it were do.’  
 And they him saiden allé no,  
 For well they wist it was no vice,  
 Whan he ne thoughté no malice

<sup>1</sup> For no good be let, be stayed ior no money consideration.



But onlich of a litel slouth.  
 And thus they leften as for routh  
 To do justice upon his gilte,  
 For that he shuldé nought be spilte.  
 And whan he sigh the maner how  
 They wolde him save, he made a vow  
 With manful herte, and thus he  
 saide,

That Romé shuldé never abraide  
 His heires whan he were of dawé<sup>1</sup>  
 That her auncestre brake the lawe.  
 Forthý er that they weren ware,  
 Forthwith the samé swerde he bare  
 The statute of his lawé kepte,  
 So that all Rome his dethe bewepte.

“**In other place** also I rede,  
 Where that a juge his owné dede  
 He wol nought venge of lawé broke,  
 The king it hath him selven wroke.  
 The greté king, which Cámbrisés  
 Was hote, a jugé lawéles  
 He found, and into rémembraunce  
 He did upon him such vengeaunce:  
 Out of his skin he was beflain  
 All quick, and in that wisé slain,  
 So that his skin was shape all mete  
 And nailéd on the samé sete,  
 Where that his soné shuldé sitte:  
 Avise him if he woldé flitte  
 The lawé for the covetise,  
 There sigh he redy his júse.

“Thus in defalte of other juge  
 The king mote otherwhilé juge  
 To holden up the righté lawe.  
 And for to speke of tholdé dawé  
 To take ensample of that was tho,  
 I finde a talé write also,  
 How that a worthy prince is holde  
 The lawés of his londe to holde,  
 First for the highé Goddes sake  
 And eke for that him is betake  
 The people for to guide and lede,  
 Which is the charge of his kinghede.

<sup>1</sup> *When he were of dawé, when his days were ended.*

“**In a cronique** I redé thus  
 Of the rightfull Ligurgiús,  
 Which of Athénés princé was,  
 How he the lawe in every cas  
 Wherof he shulde his people reule,  
 Hath set upon so good a reule  
 In all this world that cité none  
 Of lawé was so well begone;  
 Forth with the trouthe of gover-  
 nauce

There was among hem no distaunce,  
 But every man hath his encrees;  
 There was withouté werré pees,  
 Without envÿ lové stood;  
 Richesse upon the comune good  
 And nought upon the singuler  
 Ordeiné was; and the powér  
 Of hem that weren in estate,  
 Was sauf; wherof upon debate  
 There stood no thng, so that in  
 reste

Might every man his herté restc.

“And whan this noble rightfull  
 king,  
 Sigh how it ferde of all this thing  
 Wherof the people stood in ese,  
 He which for ever woldé plesé  
 The highé God whose thank he  
 sought,

A wonder thing than he bethought  
 And shope, if that it mighté be,  
 How that his lawe in the cité  
 Might afterward for ever laste.  
 And therupon his wit he caste,  
 What thing him weré best to feigne,  
 That he his purpose might atteigne.  
 A parlément and thus he set  
 His wisdom where that he beset  
 In audience of great and smaie,  
 And in this wise he tolde his tale:

‘God wote, and so ye woten alle,  
 Here afterward how so it falle,  
 Yet into now my will hath be  
 To do justice and equité  
 In forthring of común profíte,

Such hath ben ever my delite.  
 But of o thing I am beknowe,  
 The which my will is that ye knowe.  
 The lawé which I toke on honde,  
 Was all to-gider of Goddés sonde  
 And no thinge of min owné wit,  
 So mote it nede endured yit  
 And shall do lenger, if ye will,  
 For I wol tellé you the skill.  
 The god Mercurius and no man  
 He hath me taught all that I can  
 Of suché lawés as I made,  
 Wherof that ye ben allé glad.  
 It was the god and no thng I,  
 Which did all this, and now forthy  
 He hath commaunded of his grace,  
 That I shall come into a place  
 Which is forefn, out in an ile,  
 Where I mot tarie for a while  
 With him to speke and he hath bede.  
 For as he saith, in thilké stede  
 He shall me suché thingés telle  
 That ever while the world shal dwelle  
 Athénés shall the better fare.  
 But first er that I thider fare,  
 For that I woldé that my lawe  
 Amongés you ne be withdrawe  
 There whilé that I shall be oute,  
 Forthý to setten out of doubte  
 Both you and me, thus wol I pray,  
 That ye me wolde assure and say  
 With such an othe as ye woll take,  
 That eche of you shall undertake  
 My lawés for to kepe and holde.

“They saiden allé, that they wolde.  
 And there upon they swore here othe,  
 That fro that tímé that he goth  
 Till he to hem be come ayeine  
 They shuld his lawés well and pleine  
 In every point kepe and fulfill.  
 Thus hath Ligurgius his will,  
 And toke his leve and forth he went,  
 But list now well to what entent  
 Of rightwisnesé he did so.  
 For after that he was ago,

He shope him never to be founde :  
 So that Athénés, which was bounde,  
 Never after shuldé be relese,  
 Ne thilké godé lawé cesed,  
 Which was for comun profit set.  
 And in this wise he hath it knet,  
 He which the comun profite  
 sought,

The king his owne estate ne rough.<sup>1</sup>  
 To do profite to the comúne  
 He toke of exile the fortune  
 And leste of princé thilke office  
 Only for love and for justice,  
 Through which he thought, if that  
 he might,

For ever aftér his deth to right  
 The cité which was him betake,  
 Wherof men ought ensample take  
 The godé lawés to avaunce  
 With hem which under governaunce  
 The lawés havé for to kepe.  
 For who that woldé také kepe  
 Of hem that firsté lawés founde,  
 Als fer as lasteth any bounde  
 Of londe her namés yet ben knowe,  
 And if it liké the to knowe  
 Some of her namés, how they stonde,  
 Now herke and thou shalt under-  
 stonde.

**Of every bienfait** the merite  
 The God him self it woll aquite.  
 And eke full ofte it falleth so,  
 The worlde it woll aquite also,  
 But that maynought benevenliche.  
 The God he yiveth the heven riche,  
 The world yifh only but a name  
 Which stand upon the godé fame  
 Of hem that done the godé dede.  
 And in this wisé double mede  
 Receiven they that done well here,  
 Wherof if that the list to here  
 After the fame as it is blowe,  
 There might thou well the sothé  
 knowe,

<sup>1</sup> *Rought*, cared for.

How thilke honesté besinesse  
 Of hem that first for rightwisnesse  
 Among the men the lawés made,  
 May never upon this erthé fade.  
 For ever while there is a tunge,  
 Her namés shall be rede and sunge  
 And holde in the cronqué write,  
 So that the men it sholden wite  
 To speké good, as they well oughten,  
 Of hem that first the lawes soughten  
 In forthing of the worldés pees.  
 Unto the Hebrews was Moisés  
 The first, and to thegipcíens  
 Mercurius, and to Trojéns  
 First was Numa Pompilius,  
 To Athénés Ligurgius  
 Yave first the lawe, and to Gregois,  
 Foroneus hath thilké vois,  
 And Romulus to the Romains ;  
 For suché men that ben vilains,  
 The lawe in such a wise ordeígneth,  
 That what man to the lawé pleígneth,  
 Be so the jugé stond upright,  
 He shall be servéd of his right.  
 And so ferforth it is befallé  
 That lawe is come among us alle,  
 God leve it moté well bene holde,  
 As every king therto is holde.  
 For thing whiche is of kingés set,  
 With kingés ought it nought be let.  
 What king of lawé taketh no kepe  
 By lawe he may no regné kepe.  
 Do lawe away, what is a king ?  
 Where is the right of any thing,  
 If that there be no lawe in londe ?  
 This ought a king well understonde,  
 As he which is to lawé swore,  
 That if the lawé be forbore  
 Withouten execución,  
 It maketh a lond torne up so down,  
 Which is unto the king a sclandre.  
 Forthý unto king Alisaundre  
 The wisé philosóphre bad  
 That he him selvé first be lad  
 Of lawe, and forth than over all

To do justice in generell,  
 That all the widé lond aboute  
 The justice of his lawé doubte,<sup>1</sup>  
 And thanné shall he stonde in rest.  
 For therto lawe is one the best  
 Above all other erthly thing  
 To make a legé drede his king.

“ But how a king shall gete him  
 love

Toward the highé God above  
 And eke among the men in erthe  
 This nexté point, which is the ferthe  
 Of Aristotles lore, it techeth,  
 Wherof who that the scolé secheth  
 What policé that it is  
 The boke reherscheth after this.

**I**f nedefh nough that I delate  
 The pris which preiséd is algate  
 And hath bene ever and ever shall,  
 Wherof to speke in speciáll  
 It is the vertue of Pité,  
 Through which the highé magesté  
 Was steréd, whan his sone alight  
 And in Pité the world to right  
 Toke of the maidé flessch and blood,  
 Pité was cause of thilké good,  
 Wherof that we ben allé save.  
 Well ought a man Pité to have  
 And the vertue to set in prise,  
 Whan he him self whiche is AllWise  
 Hath shewéd why it shall bepreised.  
 Pité may nought be counterpeised  
 Of tiranné with no peise.  
 For Pité maketh a king curteise  
 Both in his worde and in his dede.  
 It sit well every legé drede  
 His king, and to his hest obey.  
 And right so by the samé wey  
 It sit a king to be pitóus  
 Toward his people and gracióus  
 Upon the reule of governaunce,  
 So that he worché no vengeaunce  
 Which may be clepéd cruelte.  
 Justicé which doth equite

<sup>1</sup> *Doubte*, fear, reverence.

Is dredful, for he no man spareth  
 But in the lond, where Pité fareth  
 The king may never faile of love,  
 For Pité through the grace above  
 So as the philosóphre affermeth,  
 His regne in good estate confermeth.  
 Thapostel Jamés in this wise  
 Saith, what man shuldé do juíse  
 And hath not Pité forth with all,  
 The dome of him which demeth all  
 He may him self ful soré drede,  
 That him shall lacke upon the nede  
 To findé Pité whan he wolde.  
 For who that Pité woll beholde,  
 It is a point of Cristés lore ;  
 And for to loken overmore  
 It is behovely, as we finde,  
 To reson and to lawe of kinde.  
 Cassiódore in his aprise telleth :  
 ‘ The Regne is sauf, where Pité  
 dwelleth.’

And Tullius his tale avoweth  
 And saith : What king to Pité boweth  
 And with Pité stont overcome,  
 He hath that shilde of gracé nome  
 Which to the kingés yiveth victoire.

“ Of Alisaundre in his histoie  
 I rede, how he a worthy knight  
 Of sodein wrath and not of right  
 Forjugéd hath, and he appelleth.  
 And with that word the king qua-  
 releth

And saith : ‘ None is abové me.’  
 ‘ That wote I wel mylorde,’ quod he,  
 Fro thy lordshíp appele I nought,  
 But fro thy Wrath in all my thought  
 To thy Pité stant min appele.’  
 The king, which understode him  
 wele,

Of puré Pité yave him grace.  
 And eke I rede in other place  
 Thus saidé whilom Constantine :  
 ‘ What emperour that is encline  
 To Pité for to be servaunt,  
 Of all the worldés remenaunt

He is worthý to ben a lord.’

“ **In olde bokés** of recorde  
 Thus finde I write of ensamplaire :  
 Trajan the worthy debonaire,  
 Bywhom that Romé stood govérned,  
 Upon a time, as he was lerned  
 Of that he was to fámiliér,  
 He saide unto that councillor  
 That for to ben an emperour  
 His wil was nought for vein honouér  
 Ne yet for reddour<sup>1</sup> of justice,  
 But if he might in his offíce  
 His lordés and his people plese.  
 Him thought it were a greater ese  
 With love her hertés to him drawe,  
 Than with the drede of any lawe.  
 For whan a thing is do for doubte,  
 Ful ofte it cometh the wors aboute ;  
 But where a kinge is pietouís  
 He is the moré graciouís,  
 That mochel thrift him shall betide  
 Which ellés shuldé torne aside.

“ **To do pité**, support, and grace  
 The philosóphre upon a place  
 In his writng of daiés olde  
 A tale of great ensample tolde  
 Unto the king of Macedoine,  
 How betwene Kaire and Babeloine,  
 Whan comen is the somer hete,  
 It hapneth two men for to mete  
 As they shulde entren in a pas  
 Where that the wildernessé was.  
 And as they wenten forth spekénde  
 Under the largé wodés ende,  
 That o man axeth of that other :  
 ‘ What man art thou, my levé  
 brother ?  
 Which is thy creauce and thy  
 feith ?’

‘ I am paién,’ that other saith,  
 ‘ And by the lawé which I use,  
 I shall nought in my feith refuse  
 To loven alle men aliche,  
 The pouer both and eke the riche ;

<sup>1</sup> Reddour (voidour), rigour.

When they ben glad I shall be glad,  
 And sory when they ben bestad ;  
 So shall I live in unité  
 With every man in his degré :  
 For right as to my self I wolde,  
 Right so toward al other I sholde  
 Be gracióus and debonaire.

Thus have I told the soft and faire  
 Myfeith, mylawe, and mycreaunce.  
 And if the list for aqueintaunce,  
 Nowtell, what maner man thou art ?'  
 And he answerde upon his part :  
 ' I am a Jewe, and by my lawe  
 I shall to no man be felawe  
 To kepe him trowth in word ne dede  
 But if he be withouté drede  
 A verray Jew right as am I.  
 For ellés I may trewely  
 Bereve him bothé life and good.'

" The paien herde and understood  
 And thought it was a wonder lawe ;  
 And thus upon her sondry sawe  
 Talkénde bothé forth they went.  
 The day was hote, the sonné brent,  
 The paien rode upon an asse,  
 And of his catell more and lasse  
 With him a riché trusse he ladde.

" The Jew, which all untrouthé  
 hadde  
 And went upon his feet beside,  
 Bethought him how he mighté ride,  
 And with his wordés sligh and wise  
 Unto the paien in this wise  
 He said : ' O, now it shall be sene  
 What thing it is thou woldest mene.  
 For if thy lawé be certáfn,  
 As thou hast tolde, I dare well sáin  
 Thou wolt beholdé my destresse,  
 Which am so full of werinesse  
 That I ne may unethé go,  
 And let me ride a mile or two  
 So that I may my body ese.'

The paien wold him nought displese

Of that he spake, but in pité  
 It list him for to knowe and se  
 The pleinté which that other made.  
 And for he wolde his herté glade,  
 He light and made him nothing  
 straunge,

Thus was there made a newé  
 chaunge.

The paien goth, the Jewe alofte  
 Was set upon his assé softe.  
 So gone they forth carpénde faste  
 On this and that, till atté laste  
 The paien mighté go no more  
 And praide unto the Jew therfore  
 To suffre him ride a litel while.  
 The Jew, which thought him to  
 beguile,

Anone rode forth the greté pas  
 And to the paien in this cas  
 He saidé : ' Thou hast do thy right  
 Of that thou haddest me behight  
 To do succour upon my nede,  
 And that accordeth to the dede,  
 As thou art to the lawé holde.  
 And in such wise, as I the tolde,  
 I thenke also for my partie  
 Upon the lawe of Jewerie  
 To worche and do my duété.  
 Thin assé shall go forth with me  
 With all thy good, which I have  
 sesed,

And that I wot thou art disesed  
 I am right glad and nought mispaid.'  
 And when he hath these wordés  
 said,

In allé haste he rode away.

" This paien wot none other way,  
 But on the grounde he kneleth even,  
 His handés up unto the heven,  
 And said : ' O highe sothfastnesse,  
 That lovest alle rightwisnesse,  
 Unto thy dome, lorde, I appele,  
 Beholde and demé my queréle  
 With humble herte I the beseche,  
 The mercy bothe and eke the wreche

I set all in thy jugément.<sup>7</sup>  
 And thus upon his marrément  
 This pain hath made his preiere.  
 And than he rose with drery chere  
 And goth him forth, and in his gate  
 He cast his eye about algate  
 The Jewe if that he mighté se.  
 But for a time it may nought be,  
 Till atté last ayein the night,  
 So as God wolde he went aright  
 As he which held the highé wey,  
 And than he sigh in a valley,  
 Where that the Jewé liggend was,  
 All bloody, dede upon the gras,  
 Which straungled was of a leon.  
 And as he lokéd up and down,  
 He found his assé fasté by  
 Forth with his harneis redely  
 All hole and sound as he it lefte  
 Whan that the Jewe it him berefte :  
 Wherof he thonkéd God knelende.

“ Lo, thus a man may knowe at ende,

How the pitoús pité deserveth.  
 For what man that to Pité serveth,  
 As Aristotle it bereth witnésse,  
 God shall his fomen so repressé,  
 That they shall ay stond under fote.  
 Pité men sain is thilké rote  
 Wherof the vertues springen alle.  
 What infortúné that befallé  
 In any lond, lack of Pité  
 Is cause of thilke adversité ;  
 And that alday may shewe at eye,  
 Who that the world discretely sigh.  
 Good is that every man therefore  
 Take hede of that is said to-fore,  
 For of this tale and other inowe  
 These noble princes whilom drowe  
 Her evidence and her apprise,  
 As men may finde in many a wise,  
 We that these oldé bokés rede,  
 And though they ben in erthé dede,  
 Her godé namé may nought deie  
 For Pité which they wold obey

To do the dedés of mercý.  
 And who this talé redely  
 Remembre, as Aristótle it tolde,  
 He may the will of God beholde  
 Upon the point as it was ended,  
 Wherof that Pité stood commended,  
 Whiche is to Charité felawe,  
 As they that kepen both o lawe.

“ Of Pité for to speké pleine,  
 Which is with mercy well beseine,  
 Full ofte he woll him selvé peine  
 To kepe an other fro the peine.  
 For Charité the moder is  
 Of Pité, which nothing amis  
 Can suffre if he it may amende.  
 It sit to every man livénde  
 To be pitoús, but none so wele  
 As to a king, which on the whele  
 Fortúne hath set aboven all.  
 For in a king, if so befallé  
 That his pité be ferme and stable,  
 To all the londe it is available  
 Only through grace of his persone.  
 For the pité of him alone  
 May all the largé roialme save.  
 So sit it wel a king to have  
 Pité. For this Valeiré tolde  
 And said, how that by daiés olde  
**Codrus**, which was in his degree  
 King of Athénés the citee,  
 A werre he had ayein Dorence.  
 And for to take his evidence,  
 What shall befallé of the bataile,  
 He thought he wolde him first  
 counseile  
 With Ápolló, in whom he triste,  
 Through whose answeré thus he  
 wiste  
 Of two points that he mighté  
 chese,—  
 Or that he wolde his body lese  
 And in bataile him selvé deie,  
 Or ellés the secondé wey  
 To seen his people discomfite.  
 But he, which Pité hath parfite

Upon the point of his beleve,  
The people thoughté to releve  
And chese him selvé to be dede.  
Where is now such another hede  
Which woldé for the limmés die?  
And nethéles in some partie  
It ought a kingés herté stere  
That he his legé men forbere.  
And eke toward his enemfes  
Full ofte he may deservé prise  
To take of Pité remembraunce  
Where that he mighté do ven-  
geaúnce.

For whan a king hath the victoire  
And than he drawe into memoire  
To do pité in stede of wreche  
He may nought fail of thilké speche  
Wherof arist the worldés fame,  
To yive a prince a worthy name.

“**I rede, how whilom** that  
Pompéy,

To whom that Romé must obey,  
A werré had in jeopartie  
Ayein the king of Armenie,  
Which of long time him haddé  
greved.

But atté last it was acheved,  
That he this king discomfit hadde  
And forth with him to Romé ladde  
As prisonér, where many a day  
In sory plite and pouer he lay,  
The coróne on his hede deposed,  
Withinné wallés fast enclosed.  
And with full great humilité  
He suffreth his adversité,  
Pompeyé sigh his paciéncie  
And toke pité with consciéncie,  
So that upon his highé deis  
To-fore all Rome in his paleis,  
As he that wolde upon him rewe,  
Let yive him his coroné newe  
And his estate all full and pleine  
Restoreth of his regne ayein  
And said, ‘it was more goodly thing  
To maké than undone a king,

To him which power had of bothe.’  
Thus they, that weren bothé wrothe,  
Accorden hem to finall pees.  
And yet justicé nethélees  
Was kept and in nothing offended,  
Wherof Pompéy is yet commended.  
There may no king him self excuse  
But if justíce he kepe and use,  
Which, for to escheue cruelté,  
He mote attempre with Pité.  
Of cruelté the feloný  
Engendred is of tiranny,  
Ayein the whose conditióne  
God is him self the champión  
Whose strenghté may no man with-  
stonde.

For ever yet it hath so stonde  
That God a tiraunt over ladde.  
But where Pité the reiné ladde  
There mighté no fortuné last,  
Which was grevoués. But atté last  
The God him self it hath redressed.  
Pité is thilké vertue blessed,  
Which never let his maister falle.  
But Cruelté though it so falle  
That it may regné for a throwe,  
God woll it shall ben over throwe,  
Wherof ensamples ben inough  
Of hem that thilké merel drowe.<sup>1</sup>

**Of cruelté** I redé thus,  
Whan the tiránt Leoncius  
Was to thempíre of Rome arrived,  
Fro which he hath with strenghté  
prived

The pietoués Justinián,  
As he which was a cruel man,  
His nase of and his lippés both  
He kutté, for he wolde him loth  
Unto the people and make unable.  
But he which all is merciáble,  
The highé God ordeineth so,  
That he within a time also,

<sup>1</sup> *Thilke merel drowe*, suffered that pain. *Traire la merle*, in old French, meant to expose oneself to danger, endure pain or fatigue (Godefroy).

Whan he was strongest in his ire,  
 Was shoven out of his empire.  
 Tiberius the power hadde  
 And Rome after his will he ladde,  
 And for Leonce in suche a wise  
 Ordeineth that he toke juisse  
 Of nase and lippés bothé two,  
 For that he did another so  
 Which moré worthy was than he.  
 Lo, which a fall hath Cruelté,  
 And Pité was set up ayein.  
 For after that the bokés sain,  
 Terbellis king of Bulgarie  
 With helpe of his chivalerie  
 Justinian hath unprisonéd  
 And to thempire ayein coróned.

“**In a cronique** I finde also  
 Of Siculus, which was eke so  
 A cruel king like the tempést,  
 The whom no pité might arest.  
 He was the first, as bokés say,  
 Upon the see which found galéy  
 And let hem maké for the werre,  
 As he which all was out of herre<sup>1</sup>  
 Fro pité and misericorde,  
 For therto couthe he nought ac-  
 corde ;

But whom he mightéslain heslough,  
 And therof was he glad inough.  
 He had of conseil many one,  
 Among the whiché there was one,  
 By namé which Perillus hight.  
 And hebethought him, howhemight  
 Unto the tirant do líking.  
 And of his own ymaging  
 Let forge and make a bulle of bras,  
 And on the sidé cast there was  
 A doré, where a man may inne  
 Whan he his peiné shall beginne  
 Through firé which that men put  
 under.

And all this did he for a wonder,  
 That whan a man for peiné cride,  
 The bull of bras, which gapeth wide,

<sup>1</sup> *Out of herre, unhinged, broken away.*

It shuldé seme as though it were  
 A belleving in a mannés ere  
 And nought the crieng of a man.  
 But he which alle sleightés can,  
 The Devil that lith in hellé fast,  
 Him that it cast hath overcast,  
 That for a trespas which he dede  
 He was put in the samé stede,  
 And was him self the first of alle  
 Which was into that peiné falle  
 That he for other men ordeigneth.  
 There was no man that him com-  
 pleigneth.

Of tyranný and cruelté  
 By this ensample a king may se  
 Him selfe andeke his conseil bothe,  
 How they ben to mankindé lothe  
 And to the God abhomináble.  
 Ensamples that ben concordáble  
 I finde of other princes mo,  
 As thou shalt here of time ago.

“**The grete tirant** Dionise,  
 Which mannés life set of no prise,  
 Unto his hors full ofte he yafe  
 The men in stede of corne and  
 chafe.

So that the hors of thilké stood<sup>1</sup>  
 Devoureden the mannés blood,  
 Till fortune atté lasté came  
 That Hercules him overcame,  
 And he right in the samé wise  
 Of this tiránt toke the juisse.  
 As he till other men hath do  
 The samé deth he deied also,  
 That no pité him hath socoured  
 Till he was of his hors devoured.

“Of Lichaón also I finde,  
 How he ayein the lawe of kinde  
 His hostés slough and into mete  
 He made her bodies to ben ete  
 With other men within his hous.  
 But Jupiter the glorioús,  
 Which was commeved of this thing,  
 Vengeaúnce upon this cruel king

<sup>1</sup> *Stood, stud.*



So toke that he fro mannés forme  
 Into a wolfe him let transforme.  
 And thus the cruelté was kid  
 Which of long timé he hath hid.  
 A wolfe he was than openly,  
 The whose natúré prively  
 He had in his condición.  
 And unto this conclusión  
 That tiranny is to despise,  
 I finde ensample in sondry wise  
 And namélich of hem full ofte,  
 The whom Fortúne hath set alofte  
 Upon the werrés for to winne.  
 But how so that the wrong beginne  
 Of tiranný, it may nought laste,  
 But suche as they done atté laste  
 To other men suche on hem falleth.  
 For ayein suché pité callet  
 Vengeaúncé to the God above.  
 For who that hath no tendre love  
 In saving of a mannés life,  
 He shall be foundé so giltife  
 That whan he woldé mercy crave,  
 In time of nede he shall none have.

“Of the natúré this I finde,  
 The fiercé león in his kinde,  
 Which goth rampénd aftér his pray,  
 If he a man finde in his way  
 He woll him slain if he withstonde.  
 But if the man couth understonde  
 To fall anone to-fore his face  
 In signe of mercy and of grace,  
 The leon shall of his natúre  
 Restreigne his ire in such mesúre  
 As though it were a besté tamed,  
 And torne away halving ashamed,  
 That he the man shall nothing greve.  
 How shuldé than a prince acheve  
 The worldés grace, if that he wolde  
 Destruie a man whan he is yolde  
 And stant upon his mercy all?

“But for to speke in speciáll  
 There have be such and yet there be,  
 Tiraunts, whose hertés no pité  
 May to no point of mercy ply,

That they upon her tiranny  
 Ne gladen hem the men to slee.  
 And as the rages of the see  
 Ben unpositoús in the tempést,  
 Right so may no pité arest  
 Of cruelté the great oultráge,  
 Which the tiraúnt in his coráge  
 Engendred hath, wherof I finde  
 A talé, which cometh now to minde.

**I rede in oldé bokés thus,**  
 There was a duke, which Spertachus  
 Men clepe, and was a werriour,  
 A cruel man, a conqueroúr  
 With strongé power which he lad.  
 For this condición he had,  
 That wherehim hapneth the victoire,  
 His lust and all his mosté gloire  
 Was for to slee and nought to save.  
 Of raansom wolde he no good have  
 For saving of a mannés life,  
 But all goth to the swerde and knife  
 So lefe him was the mannés blood.  
 And nethéles yet thus it stood,  
 So as Fortúne abouté went,  
 He fell right heire as by descent  
 To Pers and was coronéd king.  
 And whan the worship of this thing  
 Was falle, and he was kinge of  
 Perse,

If that they weren first diverse,  
 The tirannés which he wrought,  
 A thousand fold wel more he sought  
 Than afterward to do malíce,  
 Till God vengeaúnce ayein the vice  
 Hath shapé. For upon a tide,  
 Whan he was highest in his pride,  
 In his rancoúr and in his hete,  
 Ayein the quene of Massegete,  
 Which Thamarís that timé hight,  
 He madé werre all that he might.  
 And she which wolde her lond  
 defende

Her owné sone ayein him sende  
 Which the defence hath undertake,  
 But he discomfit was and take.

And whan this king him had in  
 honde,  
 He wol no mercy understonde,  
 But did him sleen in his présence,  
 The tiding of this violence  
 Whan it cam to the moders ere,  
 She sende anone ay widé where  
 To suché frendés as she had,  
 A great powér till that she lad  
 In sondry wise, and tho she cast  
 How she this king may overcast.  
 And atté last accorded was,  
 That in the daunger of a pas,  
 Through which this tiraunt shuldé  
 pas,  
 She shope his power to compas  
 With strength of men by such a wey  
 That he shall nought escape away.  
 And whan she haddé thus ordeigned,  
 She hath her owné body feigned  
 For fere as though she worldé flee  
 Out of her londe. And whan that he  
 Hath herde how that this lady fledde,  
 So fast after the chace he spedde,  
 That he was founde out of array.  
 For it betid upon a day  
 Into the pas whan he was falle,  
 Thembusshéments to-breken alle  
 And him beclipt on every side,  
 That flee ne might he nought aside.  
 So that there weren dede and take  
 Two hundred thousand for his sake  
 That weren with him of his hoste,  
 And thus was laid the greté boste  
 Of him and of his tyranny.  
 It halp no mercy for to cry  
 To him which whilom didé none.  
 For he unto the quene anone  
 Was brought, and whan that she  
 him sigh,  
 This word she spake and said on  
 high :  
 ‘O man, which out of mannés  
 kinde  
 Resón of man hast left behinde

And livéd worsé than a beste  
 Whom pité mighté nought areste ;  
 The mannés blood to shede and  
 spille,  
 Thou haddest never yet thy fille,  
 But now the lasté time is come,  
 That thy malíce is overcome ;  
 As thou till other men hast do,  
 Now shall be do to the right so.’  
 Tho bad this lady that men sholde  
 A vessel bringe, in which she wolde  
 Se the vengeaunce of his juise  
 Which she began anone devise,  
 And toke the princes which he ladde,  
 By whom his chefe counsél he  
 hadde.  
 And while hem lasteth any breth,  
 She made hem bledé to the deth  
 Into the vessel where it stood,  
 And whan it was fulfilled of blood,  
 She casté this tiraunt therinne  
 And said him : ‘Lo, thus might  
 thou winne  
 The lustés of thine appetite.  
 In blood was whilom thy delite,  
 Now shalt thou drinken all thy fille.’  
 And thus onlich of Goddes wille  
 He which that wolde him selven  
 straunge  
 To pité, found mercý so straunge  
 That he withouté grace is lore.  
 “So may it shewé well therefore,  
 That cruelté hath no good ende.  
 But pité how so that it wende  
 Maketh that God is merciáble,  
 If there be causé resonáble,  
 Why that a King shall be pitoús.  
 But ellés if he be doubtoús  
 To sleen in cause of rightwisesse,  
 It may be said no pitousnesse  
 But it is pusillamité,  
 Whiche every princé shuldé flee.  
 For if pité mesúre excede,  
 Knighthodé may nought wel pro-  
 cede

To do justise upon the right.  
 For it belongeth to a knight  
 As gladly for to fight as reste  
 To set his legé people in reste  
 Whan that the werre upon hem  
 falleth.

For than he mote as it befallerh  
 Of his knighthode as a león  
 Be to the people a champión  
 Withouten any pité feigned.  
 For if manhodé be restreigned,  
 Or be it pees or be it werre,  
 Justicé goth all out of herre,  
 So that knighthode is set behinde.

“**Of Aristofles lore** I finde,  
 A King shall maké good viságe  
 That no man knowe of his coráge  
 But all honouór and worthinesse.  
 For if a King shall upon gesse  
 Withouté verrey causé drede,  
 He may be liche to that I rede,—  
 And though that be liche to a fable,  
 Thensample is good and resonáble.

“As it by olde daiés fell,  
 I redé whilóm that an hill  
 Up in the londés of Archade  
 A wonder dredfull noise it made.  
 For so it fell that ilké day,  
 This hill on his childingé lay.  
 And whan the throwés on him come,  
 His noisé lich the day of dome  
 Was ferefull in a mannés thought  
 Of thing which that they sighé  
 nought.

But well they herden all aboute  
 The noise of which they were in  
 doute,  
 As they that wenden to be lore  
 Of thing which thanné was unbore.  
 The nere this hill was upon chauce  
 To taken his deliveraunce,  
 The more unbuxomlich he cride ;  
 And every man was fled aside  
 For drede and left his owné hous.  
 And atté last it was a mous

The which was bore and to norice  
 Betake. And tho they helde hem  
 nice,

For they withouté causé dradde.  
 Thus if a King his herté ladde  
 With every thing that he shall here,  
 Ful ofte he shuldé chaunge his chere  
 And upon fantasfé drede  
 Whan that there is no cause of  
 drede.

**Gracé** to his princé tolde,  
 That him were lever that he wolde  
 Upon knighthode 'Achillem sue  
 In time of werré than escheue  
 So as Thersites did at Troy.  
 Achilles al his holé joy  
 Set upon armés for to fight ;  
 Thersites sought all that he might  
 Unarméd for to stonde in reste.  
 But of the two it was the beste,  
 That Áchillés upon the nede  
 Hath do, wherof his knightlihedé  
 Is yet commended overall.

**King Salomon** in speciáll  
 Saith : ‘As there is a time of pees,  
 So is a timé nethéles  
 Of werre, in whiche a prince algate  
 Shall for the comun right debate  
 And for his owné worship eke.  
 But it behoveth nought to seke  
 Only the werré for worship,  
 But to the right of his lordship  
 Which he is holdé to defende  
 Mote every worthy prince entende  
 Betwene the simplesse of pité  
 And the foolhaste of cruelté.  
 Where stant the verrey hardiesse,  
 There mote a king his herte adresse,  
 Whan it is timé to forsake  
 And whan time is also to take  
 The dedly werrés upon honde,  
 That he shall for no dredé wonde<sup>1</sup>  
 If rightwisnessé be withall.  
 For God is mighty over all

<sup>1</sup> *Wonde*, turn aside.

To furtheren every mannés trouthe ;  
 But it be through his owné slouthe,  
 And namély the kingés nede  
 It may nought failé for to spede.  
 For he stant oné for hem alle,  
 So mote it well the better falle.  
 And wel the moré God favouéreth,  
 Whan he the comun right socoúreth.  
 And for to se the soth in dede,  
 Behold the bible and thou might rede  
 Of great ensamples many one,  
 Wherof that I wil tellen one.

“**Upon a time** as it befell  
 Ayein Judé and Israëll,  
 Whan sondry kingés comé were  
 In purpos to destruíe there  
 The people which God kepté tho,  
 It stood in thilké daiés so,  
 That Gedeon, which shuldé lede  
 The Goddés folk, toke him to rede  
 And sende in all the lond aboute,  
 Till he assembled hath a route  
 With thritty thousand of defence  
 To fight and maké resistance  
 Ayein the which hem wolde assaile.  
 And nethéles that o bataile<sup>1</sup>  
 Of thre that weren enemis,  
 Was double more than was all his,  
 Wherof that Gedeon him drad,  
 That he so litel people had.  
 But he which allé thing may helpe,  
 Where that there lacketh mannés  
 helpe,  
 To Gedeon his aungel sent  
 And bad, er that he further went,  
 All openly that he do cry  
 That every man in his party  
 Which wolde after his owné will  
 In his delite abidé still  
 At home in any maner wise  
 For purchase or for covetise,  
 For lust of love or lacke of herte,  
 He shuldé nought abouté sterte  
 But holde him still at home in pees.

<sup>1</sup> *Bataile, army.*

Wherof upon the morwe he lecs  
 Wel twenty thousand men and mo  
 The which after the cry ben go.  
 Thus was with him but only left  
 The thriddé parte, and yet God eft  
 His aungel send and saidé this  
 To Gedeon : ‘ If it so is  
 That I thin help shall undertake,  
 Thou shalt yet lassé people take  
 By whom my will is that thouspede.  
 Forthý to morwe take good hede  
 Unto the flood whan ye be come,  
 What man that hath the water nome  
 Up in his hande and lappeth so,  
 To thy part chese out allé tho,  
 And him which wery is to swinke  
 Upon his wombe and lith to drinke  
 Forsake, and put hem al away.  
 For I am mighty allé wey  
 Where as me list min help to shewe  
 In godé men though they be fewe.

“This Gedeon awaiteth wele  
 Upon the morwe and every dele,  
 As God him bad, right so he dede.  
 And thus ther leften in that stede  
 With him thre hundred and no mo,  
 The remenaunt was all ago.  
 Wherof that Gedeon mervéileth  
 And therupon with God counséileth  
 Pleining as ferforth as he dare.  
 And God, which wolde he weré ware  
 That he shall spede upon his right,  
 Hath bede him go the samé night  
 And take a man with him to here  
 What shall be spoke in this matere  
 Among the hethen enemies,  
 So may he be the moré wise,  
 What afterwarde him shall befallé.  
 This Gedeon amongés alle  
 Phara, to whom he tristé most,  
 By night toke toward thilké host,  
 Which loggéd was in a valey,  
 To heré what they wolden say.  
 Upon his fote and as he ferde  
 Two Sarazins spekénd he herde.

Quod one: 'Arede my sweven<sup>1</sup>  
aright,

Whiche I met<sup>2</sup> in my slepe to-night.  
Me thought I sigh a barly cake,  
Which fro the hille his wey hathtake  
And comé rollend down at ones,  
And as it weré for the nones  
Forth in his cours so as it ran  
The kingés tent of Madian,  
Of Amalech, of Amorie,  
Of Amon and of Jebuseie  
And many another tenté mo  
With greté noise as me thought tho  
It threw to grounde and over cast  
And all his host so sore agast,  
That I awoke for puré drede.'

'This sweven can I well arede,'  
Quod thother Sarazin anone,  
'The barly cake is Gedeon,  
Which fro the hill down sodeinly  
Shall come and setté such askry  
Upon the kingés and us both,  
That it shall to us allé lothe.  
For in such drede he shall us bringe,  
That if we haddé flight of winge,  
The wey one fote in our despeire  
We sholden leve and flee in thaire.<sup>3</sup>  
For there shal nothing him with-  
stonde.'

Whan Gedeon hath understonde  
This tale, he thonketh God of alle,  
And privelech ayein he stalle,  
So that no life<sup>4</sup> him hath perceived.  
And than he hath fully conceived,  
That he shall spede. And therupon  
The night suénd he shope to gone  
This multitudé to assaile.

Now shalt thou here a great  
merveile,  
With what wisdómé that he wrought.  
The litel people which he brought  
Was none of hem that he ne hath

<sup>1</sup> *Sweven*, dream.

<sup>2</sup> *Mét*, dreamt.

<sup>3</sup> In our despair we should leave the way of  
going on foot, and fly in the air.

<sup>4</sup> *No life*, nobody.

A pot of erthe, in whiche he tath  
A light brenning in a cressét,  
And eche of hem eke a trompét  
Bare in his other hond beside.  
And thus upon the nightés tide  
Duke Gedeón whan it was derke  
Ordeineth him unto his werke,  
And parteth than his folke in thre  
And chargeth hem that they ne flee,  
And taught hem how they shuld  
askry

All in o vois par compaigný.  
And what worde eke they shuldé  
speke,  
And how they shulde her pottés  
breke

Echone with other, whan they herde  
That he him selvé first so ferde.  
For whan they come into the stede,  
He bad hem do right as he dede.  
And thus stalkéndé forth a pas  
This noble duke whan timé was  
His pot to-brake and loude askryde,  
And tho they breke on every side:  
The trompé was nought for to seke,  
He blewe and so they blewen eke  
With such a noise amonge hem  
alle,

As though the heven shuldé falle.  
The hill unto her vois answerde.  
This hoste in the valéy it herde  
And sigh how that hill was alight,  
So what of hering and of sight  
They caughten such a sodein fere,  
That none of hem be lefté there.  
The tentés holy they forsoke  
That they none other good ne toke,  
But only with her body bare  
They fledde, as doth the wildé hare.  
And ever upon the hill they blewe  
Till that theysighen time and knewe  
That they be fled upon the rage.  
And whan they wiste their avaun-  
táge,  
They fell anone unto the chace.

“Thus might thouse, how Goddes  
grace  
Unto the godé men avaieth.  
But elles ofté time it faileth  
To such as be nought well disposed.  
This talé nedeth nought be glosed,  
For it is openliché shewed,  
That God to hem that ben well  
thewed

Hath yove and graunted the victoire,  
So that thensample of this histoire  
Is good for every King to holde.  
First in himself that he beholde  
If he be good of his living,  
And that the folk which he shal bring  
Be good also, for than he may  
Be glad of many a mery day  
In what that ever he hath to done.  
For he which sit above the mone  
And allé thing may spill and spede  
In every cause and every nede,  
His godé King so well adresseseth,  
That all his fomen he represseth,  
So that there may no man him dere.  
And also well he can forbere  
And suffre a wicked king to falle  
In hondés of his fomen alle.

“**N**ow furthermore if I shall  
sain

Of my matere and torne ayein  
To speke of Justice and Pité  
After the reule of Realté,  
This may a King well understonde,  
Knighthodé mot be take on honde  
Whan that it stant upon the nede,  
He shall no rightfull causé drede,  
No more of werré than of pees,  
If he woll stondé blaméles.  
For suche a cause a king may have,  
That better him is to slee than save;  
Wherof thou might ensample finde.  
The highé maker of mankinde  
By Samuel to Saül'bad,  
That he shall nothing ben adrad  
Ayein king Agag for to fight.

For this the Godhede him beight,  
That Agag shall be overcome.  
And whan it is so ferforth come,  
That Saül hath him descomfite,  
The God bad maké no respíte,  
That he ne shulde him sleen anone.  
But Saül let it overgone  
And didé nought the Goddés heste.  
For Agag made a great beheste<sup>1</sup>  
Of ransom which he woldé give.  
King Saül suffreth him to live  
And feigneth pité forth withall.  
But he which seeth and knoweth all,  
The highé God, of that he feigneth  
To Samuel upon him pleigneth,  
And send him word for that he leste  
Of Agag that he ne bereste  
The life, he shall nought only deie  
Him self, but fro his Regalie  
He shall be put for evermo,  
Nought he but eke his heire also,  
That it shall never come ayein.

“Thus might thou se the sothé  
plein,

That of to moch and of to lite  
Upon the princes stant the wite.<sup>2</sup>  
But ever it was a Kingés right  
To do the dedés of a knight.  
For in the hondés of a King  
The dethe and life is all o thing  
After the lawés of justice;  
To sleen, it is a dedly vice  
But if a man the deth deserve.  
And if a king the life preserve  
Of him which oughté for to deie,  
He sueth nought thensamplarie,  
Which in the bible is evident,  
How David in his testament,  
Whan he no lenger mighté live,  
Unto his sone in charge hath yive,  
That he Joáb shall sleen algate,  
And whan David was gone his gate,  
The yongé wisé Salomone

<sup>1</sup> *Beheste*, promise.

<sup>2</sup> *Wite*, blame.

His faders hesté did anone  
 And slew Joáb in such a wise,  
 That they that herden the jusfe  
 Ever after dradden him the more.  
 And God was eke well paid therfore  
 That he so wolde his herté ply  
 The lawés for to justify.  
 And yet he kepté forth withall  
 Pité, so as a princé shall,  
 That he no tiranné wrought.  
 He found the wisdom which he  
 sought,

And was so rightfull nethéles  
 That all his life he stood in pees,  
 That he no dedly werrés had,  
 For every man his wisdom drad.  
 And as he was him selvé wise,  
 Right so the worthy men of prise  
 He hath of his counsél witholde,  
 For that is every princé holde  
 To make of such his retenue  
 Which wisé ben, and to remue  
 The foolés. For there is no thíng,  
 Which may be better about a king  
 Than counseil, which is the sub-  
 staúnce

Of all a kingés governaúnce.

“**In Salomon** a man may se,  
 What thing of most necessité  
 Unto a worthy King belongeth,  
 Whan he his kingdom under-  
 fongeth.

God bad him chesé what he wolde  
 And saide him that he havé sholde  
 What he wold axe, as of o thing.  
 And he, which was a newé king,  
 Forth therupon his boné<sup>1</sup> praide  
 To God, and in this wisé saide :

‘O king, by whom that I shall  
 regne,

Yive me Wisdóme that I my regne  
 Forth with the people which I have  
 To thin honour may kepe and save.’  
 Whan Salomon his bone hath taxed,

<sup>1</sup> Bone, boon.

The God of that which he hath  
 axed

Was right well paid and graunteth  
 sone

Nought all only that he his bone  
 Shall have of that, but of richesse,  
 Of hele, of pees, of high noblesse,  
 Forth with Wisdóm at his axínges,  
 Which stant above all other thinges.

“But what king woll his regné  
 save,

First him behoveth for to have  
 After the God and his beleve  
 Such counseil which is to beleve<sup>1</sup>  
 Fullfild of truth and rightwisnesse.  
 But above all in his noblése  
 Betwene the reddour and pité  
 A king shall do suche equité  
 And setté the balaunce in even,  
 So that the highé God in heven  
 And all the people of his nobley  
 Loéngé<sup>2</sup> unto his namé say.

For most above all erthly good,  
 Where that a king him self is good,  
 It helpeth ; for in other way  
 If so be that a king forswey,<sup>3</sup>  
 Full oft er this it hath be sain,  
 The comun people is overlain  
 And hath the Kingés sin abought<sup>4</sup>  
 All though the people agulténought.  
 Of that the King his God misserveth,  
 The people taketh that he de-  
 serveth ;

Here in this world, but ellés where  
 I not how it shall stondé there.  
 Forthý good is a king to triste  
 First to him self, as he ne wiste  
 None other help but God allone,  
 So shall the reule of his persone  
 Within him self through providénce  
 Ben of the better consciénce.  
 And for to finde ensample of this

<sup>1</sup> Beleve, remain.

<sup>2</sup> Loéngé, praise.

<sup>3</sup> Forswey, become remiss, not awake to his duty.

<sup>4</sup> Abought, paid for, suffered for.

A tale I rede, and soth it is.

“*In a cronique* it telleth thus,  
The King of Romé Luciús  
Within his chambre upon a night  
The steward of his hous a knight  
Forth with his chamberlein also  
To counseil haddé bothé two,  
And stoden by the chiménée  
To-gider spekend allé thre.  
And hapneth that the Kingés fole  
Sat by the fire upon a stole,  
As he that with his babel<sup>1</sup> plaide,  
And yet he herde all that theysaide,  
And therof toké they non hede.  
The King hem axeth what to rede  
Of such matére as cam to mouth.  
And they him tolden as they couth.  
Whan all was spoke of that they  
ment,

The King with all his hole entent  
That atté last hem axeth this,  
What King men tellen that he is  
Among the folk touchénd his name,  
Or it be pris, or it be blame,  
Right after that they herden sain  
He bad hem for to telle it plein,  
That they no point of soth forbere  
By thilké feith that they him bere.

“The steward first upon this thing  
Yaf his answére unto the King  
And thoughté glose in this matére  
And said, als fer as he can here,  
His name is good and honouráble.  
Thus was the steward favouráble,  
That he the trouthé plein ne tolde.

The King than axeth, ashesholde,  
The chamberlein of his avise,  
And he, that was subtl and wise  
And somdele thought upon his feith,  
Him tolde, how all the people saith,  
That if his counseil weré trewe,  
They wisté thanné well and knewe,  
That of him self he shuldé be  
A worthy King in his degré.

<sup>1</sup> *Babel*, bauble.

And thus the counseil he accuseth  
In party, and the king excuseth.

“The fool, which herde of all  
the cas,

What time as Goddés willé was,  
Sigh, that they saiden nought  
inough,

And hem to scorné bothé lough,  
And to the king he saidé tho :

‘Sir king, if that it weré so  
Of wisdom in thin owné mode,  
That thou thy selven weré good,  
Thy counseil shuldé nought be bad.’

The king therof merveilé had,  
Whan that a fool so wisely spake,  
And of him self found out the lacke  
Within his owné consciéce.

And thus the foolés evidence,  
Which was of goddés grace en-  
spired,

Maketh, that good counseil was  
desired.

He put away the viciús  
And toke to him the vertuús.  
The wrongfull lawés ben amended,  
The londés good is well despended,  
The people was no more oppressed  
And thus stood every thing re-  
dressed.

For where a king is propre wise  
And hath such as him selven is  
Of his counseil, it may nought faile,  
That every thing ne shal availe.  
The Vices thanné gone away,  
And every Vertu holt his wey,  
Wherof the highé God is plesed  
And all the londés folke is esed.  
For if the comun people cry  
And than a king list nought to ply  
To heré what the clamour wolde,  
And other wisé than he sholde  
Desdaineth for to done hem grace,  
It hath be seen in many place,  
There hath befallé great contraire,  
And that I finde of ensamplaire.



“After the deth of Salomone,  
Whan thilké wisé king was gone  
And Roboás in his persóne  
Receivé shuldé the coróne,  
The people upon a parlemént  
Avised were of one assent  
And all unto the king they preiden  
With comun vois and thus they  
saiden :

‘Our legé lord, we the beseche,  
Thatthou receive our humble speche  
And graunt us that which reson will  
Or of thy grace or of thy skill.  
Thy fader, while he was alive  
And mighté bothé graunt and prive,  
Upon the werkés which he had  
The comun people streitéd lad,  
Whan he the temple madé newe.  
Thing which men never afore  
knewe

He brought up than of his tallége,  
And all was under the viságe  
Of werkés which he madé tho.  
But now it is befallé so,  
That all is made right, as he saide,  
And he was riché whan he deide.  
So that it is no maner nede,  
If thou therof wolt taken hede,  
To pilen of the people more,  
Which long time hath be grevéd  
sore.

And in this wise as we the say,  
With tender herté we the prey,  
That thou relessé thilké dette,  
Which upon us thy fader sette.  
And if the líké to done so,  
We ben thy men for evermo  
To gone and comen at thin heste.’

“The King, which herdé this  
requeste,  
Saith, that he woldé ben avised,  
And hath therof a time assised,  
And in the while as he him thought  
Upon this thing conseil he sought.  
And first the wisé knightés olde,

To whom that he his talé tolde,  
Counseillen him in this manére,  
That he with love and with glad  
chere  
Foryive and graunt all that is axed  
Of that his fader haddé taxed.  
For so he may his regne acheve  
With thing which shall hem litel  
greve.

“The King hem herd and over  
passeth  
And with these other his wit com-  
pásseth  
That yongé were and nothing wise.  
And they these oldé men despise  
And saiden: ‘Sir, it shall be shame  
For ever unto thy worthy name,  
If thou ne kepé nought thy right,  
While thou art in thy yongé mjght,  
Which that thin oldé fader gat.  
But say unto the people plat,  
That while thou livest in thy londe,  
The lesté finger of thin honde  
It shall be stronger over all,  
Than was thy faders body all.  
And thus also shall be thy tale,—  
If he hem smote with roddés smale,  
With scorpionés thou shalt hem  
smite.

And where thy fader toke a lite,  
Thou thenkest také mochel more,  
Thushaltthou make hem dredésore  
The greté hert of thy coráge,  
So for to holde hem in serváge.’

“This yongé king him hath con-  
formed  
To done as he was last enformed,  
Which was to him his undoing.  
For whan it came to the speking,  
He hath the yongé conseil holde,  
That he the samé wordés tolde  
Of all the people in audiéce.  
And whan they herden the sentéce  
Of his malíce and the manáce,  
Anone to-fore his owné face

They have him oultrely refused  
 And with full great reprove accused.  
 So they beginné for to rave,  
 That he was faine him self to save.  
 For as the wildé wodé rage  
 Of windés maketh the see salvage  
 And that was calm bringth into  
 wawe,

So for defalt and grace of lawe,  
 The people is steréd all at ones  
 And forth they gone out of his wones,  
 So that of the lignáges twelve,  
 Two tribus onely by hem selve  
 With him abiden and no mo.

So weré they for evermo  
 Of no retorne without espeire  
 Departed fro the rightfull heire  
 Of Israel with comun vois.  
 A king upon her owné chois  
 Among hem self anone they make  
 And have her yongé lord forsake.  
 A pouer knight Jeróboás  
 They toke and lefté Roboás,  
 Which rightfull heire was by de-  
 scent.

Lo, thus the yongé causé went,  
 For that the counseil was nought  
 good

The regné fro the rightfull blood  
 Ever afterward devided was.  
 So may it proven by this cas,  
 That yong counséil, which is to  
 warme,

Or men beware, doth ofté harme.  
 Old agé for the counseil serveth,  
 And lusty youth his thank deserveth  
 Upon the travail which he doth.  
 And bothé for to say a soth  
 By sondry causé for to have,  
 If that he will his regné save,  
 A king behoveth every day,  
 That one can and that other may  
 Be so the kinge hem bothé reule,  
 Or ellés all goth out of reule.

“ And upon this matere also

A question betwene the two  
 Thus writen in a boke I fonde,  
 Where<sup>1</sup> it be better for the londe  
 A King him selvé to be wise  
 And so to bere his owné prise,  
 And that his counseil be nought  
 good ;

Or otherwise if it so stood,  
 A King if he be vicióus  
 And his counséil be vertuóus :  
 It is answerde in suche a wise,  
 That better it is that they be wise,  
 By whom that the counséil shall  
 gone.

For they be many, and he is one,  
 And rather shall an oné man  
 With fals counséil, for ought he can,  
 From his wisdomé be made to fall,  
 Than he aloné shuld hem all  
 Fro vices into vertue change,  
 For that is well the moré straunge.  
 Forthý the lond may well be glad,  
 Whose king with good counséil is  
 lad,

Which set him unto rightwisesse,  
 So that his highé worthinesse  
 Betwene the reddour and pité  
 Doth mercy forth with equité.

A king is holden over all  
 To pité, but in speciall  
 To hem, where he is most beholde,  
 They shulde his pité most beholde  
 That ben the leges of the londe,  
 For they ben ever under his honde  
 After the goddés ordenaünce  
 To stonde upon his governaünce.

Of thempour Anthonius  
 I find, how that he saidé thus :  
 ‘ Lever him weré for to save  
 One of his legés than to have  
 Of enemies a thousand dede.’  
 And thus he lernéd as I rede  
 Of Cipio, which haddé be  
 Consul of Rome. And thus to se

<sup>1</sup> Where, whether.

Divers ensamples how they stonde,  
A King, which hath the charge on  
honde

The comun people to govérne,  
If that he woll, he may well lerne  
Is none so good to the plesaunce  
Of God, as is good governaunce.  
And every governaunce is due  
To pité ; thus I may argue  
That pité is the fundament  
Of every Kinges regiment.  
If it be medled with justice,  
They two remeven allé Vice  
And ben of Vertue most vailable  
To make a Kingés regné stable.

“Lo, thus the fouré points to-fore  
In Governauce as they ben bore  
Of Trouthé first and of Largesse,  
Of Pité forth with Rightwisnesse,  
I have hem tolde. And over this  
The fifté point, so as it is  
Set of the reule of Policý,  
Wherof a king shall modefy  
The fleshly lustés of natúre,  
Now thenke I telle of such mesure,  
That bothé kindé shall be served  
And eke the lawe of God observed.

“It sit a man by wey of kinde  
To lové, but it is nought kinde  
A man for love his wit to lese.  
For if the month of Juil shall frese  
And that December shall be hote,  
The yere mistorneth wel I wote.  
To seen a man from his estate  
Through his sotý effeminate  
And levé that a man shall do,  
It is as hose above the sho  
To man, which ought nought to be  
used.

But yet the world hath oft accused  
Full greté princes of this dede,  
How they for love hem self mislede,  
Wherof manhodé stood behinde  
Of olde ensamples as men finde.

These olde gestes tellen thus,

That whilom Sardanapallus,  
Which held all hole in his empire  
The greté kingdom of Assíre,  
Was through the slouth of his  
coráge

Fall into thilké firy rage  
Of lové which the men assoteth,  
Wherof him self he so rióteth,  
And wax so ferforth womanissh,  
That ayein kinde, as if a fissh  
Abidé wold upon the londe,  
In women suche a luste he fonde,  
That he dwelt ever in chambre still  
And only wrought after the will  
Of women, so as he was bede,  
They taughten him a lace to braide  
And weve a purs and to enfile  
A perle. And fell that ilké while,  
One Arbactus the prince of Mede  
Sigh how this king in womanhede  
Was fallé fro chiválerié,  
And gat him helpe and compaignie  
And wroughté so that atté last  
This king out of his regne he cast,  
Which was undone for ever mo.  
And yet men speken of him so,  
That it is shamé for to here ;  
Forthý to love is in manere.

For where a prince his lustés sueth,  
That he the werré nought pursueth,  
Whan it is timé to bene armed,  
His contré stant full ofté harmed,  
Whan thenemiés ben woxé bolde,  
That they defencé none beholde.  
Full many a londe hath so be lore,  
As men may rede oft tise afore  
Of hem that so her eses soughten,  
Whicheafter they full dereaboughten.

**To mochel ese** is nothing worth,  
For that set every vicé forth  
And every vertue put a backe,  
Wherof pris torneth into lacke,  
As in cronique I may reherse,  
Which telleth, how the king of Perse  
That Cyrus hight, a werré hadde

Ayein the people which he dradde  
 Of a contré which Lidos hight.  
 But yet for ought that he do might  
 As in bataile upon the werre,  
 He had of hem alway the werre.<sup>1</sup>  
 And whan he sigh and wist it wele,  
 That he by strengthé wan no dele,  
 Than atté last he cast a wile  
 This worthy people to beguile  
 And toke with hem a feignéé pees,  
 Which shuldé lasten endelees,  
 So as he saide in wordés wise,  
 But he thought all in other wise.  
 For it betid upon the cas  
 Whan that this people in resté was  
 They token eses many folde,  
 And worldés ese as it is tolde  
 By way of kinde is the norfce  
 Of every lust which toucheth vice.  
 Thus whan they were in lustés falle,  
 The werrés ben forgotten alle.  
 Was none which woldé the worshp  
 Of armés, but in idelshp  
 They putten besinesse away  
 And token hem to daunce and play,  
 And every man doth what him liste.  
 But whan the king of Perse it wiste,  
 That they unto folie entenden,  
 With his powér, whan they lest  
 wenden,

More sodeinly than doth the thunder  
 Hecame for ever and put hem under.  
 And thus hath lecherfé lore  
 The londé which had be to-fore  
 The best of hem that weré tho.

“And in the bible I finde also  
 A talé lich unto this thing,  
 How Amalech the paien king,  
 Whan that he mighté by no wey  
 Defend his londe and put away  
 The worthy people of Israel,  
 This Sarazin, as it befell,  
 Through the counseil of Balaäm  
 A rout of fairé women nam,

<sup>1</sup> *The werre, the worse.*

That lusty were and yonge of age,  
 And bad hem gon to the lignage  
 Of these Hebrews. And forth they  
 went

With eyen grey and browés bent  
 And well arraiéd everychone.  
 And whan they comé were anone  
 Among thebrews, was none in sight  
 But cacché who that cacché might,  
 And grace anone began to faile,  
 That whan they comen to bataile,  
 Than afterward in sory plite  
 They weré take and discomfite,  
 So that within a litel throwe,  
 The might of hem was overthrowe,  
 That whilom weré wont to stonde,  
 Till Phineës the cause on honde  
 Hath také this vengeaúncé last.  
 But than it ceséd atté last.

For God was paid of that he dede,  
 For where he found upon a stede  
 A couple which misferdé so  
 Throughout hesmote hem bothétwo  
 And let hem ligge in mennés eye,  
 Wherof all other which hem sigh  
 Ensampléd hem upon the dede  
 And praiden unto the godhede  
 Her oldé sinnés to amende.  
 And he which wold his mercy sende  
 Restoréd hem to newé grace.  
 Thus may it shewe in sondry place  
 Of chasteté how the clennésse  
 Accordeth to the worthinesse  
 Of men of armés over all.  
 But most of all in speciáll  
 This vertue to a King belongeth,  
 For upon his fortune it hongeth  
 Of that his lond shall spede or spill.  
 Forthý but if a King his will  
 Fro lustés of his flesh restreigne,  
 Ayein him self he maketh a treigne,  
 Into the whiche if that he slide,  
 Him weré better go beside.  
 For every man may understonde  
 How for a timé that it stonde,

It is a sory lust to like,  
Whose endé maketh a man to sike<sup>1</sup>  
And torneth joiés into sorwe.  
The brighté sonné by the morwe<sup>2</sup>  
Beshineth nought the derké night;  
The lusty youth of mannés might,  
In agé but it stondé wele,  
Mistorneth all the lasté whele.

“That every worthy prince is  
holde

Within him self him self beholde  
To se the state of his persóné  
And thenke, how there be joiés none  
Upon this erthé made to last,  
And how the flessché shall at last  
The lustés of his life forsake,  
Him ought a great ensample take  
Of Salomon, Ecclesiaste,  
The fame of whom shall ever laste,  
That he the mighty God forsoke,  
Ayein the lawé whan he toke  
His wivés and his concubines,  
Of hem that weré Sarazines,  
For which he did ydolatrie.  
For this I rede of his sotý,  
She of Sidoíné so him ladde,  
That he knelénd his armés spradde  
To Astrathen with great humblésse,  
Which of herlond was the goddessse.  
And she that was of Moabite  
So ferforth made him to delite  
Through lust, which al his wit  
devoureth,  
That he Chamos her god honouéreth.  
An other Amonite also  
With love him hath assoted so,  
Her god Moloch that with encense  
He sacreth and doth reverence  
In such a wise as she him bad.  
Thus was the wisest overlad  
With blindé lustés which he sought.  
But he it afterward aboutt.

“For Achias Selonités,

Which was prophét, er his deces,  
While he was in his lustés alle,  
Betokeneth what shall after falle.  
For on a day, whan that he mette  
Jeróboam, the knight he grette<sup>1</sup>  
And bad him that he shulde abide  
To heré what him shall betide.  
And forth withall Achias cast  
His mantel of, and al so fast  
He kut it into pieces twelve,  
Wherof two parts toward him selve  
He kept, and all the remenaunt,  
As God hath set his covenauant,  
He toke unto Jeróboás  
Of Nabal which the soné was  
And of the kingés court a knight.  
And said him, ‘Such is Goddés  
might,

As thou hast sene departed<sup>2</sup> here  
My mantel, right in such manere  
After the deth of Salomon  
God hath ordeinéed therupon,  
This regné than he shall devide,  
Which timé thou shalt eke abide,  
And upon that división  
The regne, as in proporción  
As thou hast of my mantel take,  
Thou shalt receive I undertake.’  
O, which a sinné violent,  
Wherof so wise a king was shent,  
That he vengeaúnce of his persóné  
Was nought inough to take alone,  
But afterward, whan he was passed,  
It hath his heritággé lassed,  
As I more openly to-fore  
The talé tolde; and thus therefore  
The philosóphre upon this thing  
Writ and counsèiled to a king,  
That he the forfete of luxure  
Shall tempre and reule of such  
mesure

Which be to kindé suffisaúnt  
And eke to reson accordaúnt,  
So that the lustés ignoraúnce

<sup>1</sup> *Sike*, sigh.

<sup>2</sup> The bright morning sun.

<sup>1</sup> *Grette*, greeted.

<sup>2</sup> *Departed*, divided.

Be cause of no misgovernaunce,  
Through which that he be over-  
throwe

As he that woll no reson knowe.

“ For of Antónie thus I rede,  
Which of Sévérus was the sone,  
That he his life of comun wone  
Yaf holy unto thilké vice,  
And ofté time he was so nice,  
Wherof natúre her hath compleigned  
Unto the God, which hath des-  
deigned

The werkés which Antónie wrought  
Of lust which he full sore abought;  
For God his forfeite hath so wroke,  
That in croníque it is yet spoke.  
But for to také rémembraunce  
Of speciáll misgovernaunce  
Through covetise and injustíce  
Forth with the remenaunt of vice,  
I finde a tale, as thou shalt here,  
Which is thensample of this matere.

**So as these oldé gestés sain,**  
The proudé tfránnish Romaín  
Tarquinius, which was than kīng  
And wrought maný a wrongful  
thing,

Of sonés he had many one,  
Among the which Arrons was one  
Lich to his fader in maneres,  
So that within a fewé yeres  
With treson and with tiranny  
They wonne of londe a great partý  
And token hede of no justíce,  
Which dúë was to her offíce  
Upon the reule of governaunce.  
But al that ever was plesaunce  
Unto the flesshés lust they toke.  
And fell so, that they undertoke  
A werré, which was nought acheved,  
But often time it had hem greved,  
Ayein a folk which thánné hight  
The Gabiens, and all by night  
Thus Arrons whan he was at home  
In Rome a privé place he nome

Within a chambre and bete him  
selve

And made him woundés ten or  
twelve

Upon the backe, as it was sene.  
And so forth with his hurtés grene  
In all the hasté that he may  
He rode and cam that other day  
Unto Gabfē the citee

And in he went. And whan that he  
Was knowe, anone the gatés shette,  
The lordés all upon him sette  
With drawé swerdés upon honde.  
And Arrons wolde hem nought  
withstonde,

And saide: ‘I am here at your  
wille,

As lefe it is that ye me spille,  
As if min owné fader dede.’

And forth within the samé stede  
He praide hem that they woldé se;  
And shewéd hem in what degré  
His fader and his brethren bothe,  
Which as he saidé weren wrothe,  
Him haddé beten and reviled  
And out of Rome for ever exiled.

And thus he made hem to beleve  
And saide, if that he might acheve  
His purpos, it shall well be yolde  
Be so that they him helpé wolde.  
Whan that the lordés haddé sene,  
How wofully he was besene,  
They toké pité of his greve.

But yet it was hem wonder leve  
That Rome him had exiléd so.  
The Gabiens by counseil tho  
Upon the goddés made him swere,  
That he to hem shall trouthé bere  
And strengthen hem with all his  
might.

And they also him hath behight  
To helpé him in his quaréle.  
They shopé thánné for his hele  
That he was bathéd and anoint  
Till that he was in lusty point,

And what he woldé than he had,  
That he all hole the cite lad  
Right as he wolde him self devise.  
And than he thought him in what  
wise

He might his tirannié shewe,  
And to his counseil toke a shrewe<sup>1</sup>  
Whom to his fader forth he sent,  
In his messáge and he tho went  
And praied his fader for to say  
By his avise and finde a wey  
How they the cité mighten winne  
While that he stood so well therinne.  
And whan the messagér was come  
To Rome and hath in counseil nome  
The king, it fell perchauncé so  
That they were in a gardin tho,  
This messenger forth with the king.  
And whan he haddé told the thing  
In what maneré that it stode,  
And that Tarquínus understode  
By the messáge how that it ferde,  
Anone he toke in honde a yerde,  
And in the gardin as they gone  
The lilie croppés one and one  
Where that they weren sprongen  
out

He smote of as they stood about,  
And said unto the messagére :  
'Lo, this thing which I do now here  
Shall be in stede of thiin answe're.  
And in this wise as I me bere,  
Thou shalte unto my soné telle.'  
And he no lenger woldé dwelle,  
But toke his leve and goth withall  
Unto his lorde and tolde him all,  
How that his fader haddé do.  
Whan Arrons herde him tellé so,  
Anone he wisté what it ment,  
And therto sette all his entent  
Till he through fraude and trecherý  
The princes hevedés of Gabý  
Hath smiten of and all was wonne.  
His fader cam to-fore the sonne

<sup>1</sup> *Shrewe*, plotter of evil.

Into the town with the Romains  
And toke and slew the citezeins  
Withouté reson or pité,  
That he ne spareth no degré.  
And for the spede of this conquest  
He let do make a riché fest  
With a solempné sacrifice  
In Phebus temple, and in this wise,  
Whan the Romains assembled were  
In presence of hem allé there,  
Upon thaltér whan all was dight  
And that the firés were alight,  
From under thalter sodeinly  
An hidous serpent openly  
Cam out and hath devoured all  
The sacrifice, and eke withall  
The firés queint, and forth anone,  
So as he cam so is he gone  
Into the depé ground ayein.  
And every man began to sain,  
'Ha lord, what may this signify?'  
And therupon they pray and cry  
To Phebus, that they mighten knowe  
The cause. And he the samé throwe  
With gastly vois, that all it herde,  
The Romains in this wise answe'rde  
And said, how for the wickednesse  
Of pride and of unrightwisesse  
That Tarquin and his sone hath do  
The sacrifice is wasted so,  
Which mighté nought ben accept-  
áble  
Upon such sinne abhomináble.  
And over that yet he hem wisseth  
And saith, that which of hem first  
kisseth  
His moder, he shall také wreche  
Upon the wronge. And of that  
speche  
They ben within her hertés glade,  
Though they outwárd no semblaunt  
made.  
There was a knight, which Brutus  
hight,  
And he with all the haste he might

To groundé fell and there he kiste,  
 But none of hem the causé wiste,  
 But wenden that he haddé sporned  
 Perchaunce and so was overturned.  
 But Brutus all an other ment,  
 For he knew well in his entent,  
 How therthe of every mannés kinde  
 Is moder. But they weren blinde  
 And sighen nought so fer as he.  
 But whan they leften the citee  
 And comen home to Rome ayein,  
 Than everyman, which was Romain  
 And moder hath, to her he bende  
 And kist, and eche of hem thus wende  
 To be the first upon the chaunce  
 Of Tarquin for to do vengeaunce,  
 So as they herden Phebus sain.  
 But every time hath his certain,  
 So must it nedés than abide,  
 Till afterward upon a tide  
 Tarquinius made unskilfully  
 A werré, which was fasté by,  
 Ayein a town with wallés stronge,  
 Which Ardeá was clepéd longe,  
 And cast a siegé there about  
 That there may no man passen out.  
 So it befell upon a night  
 Arrons, which had his souper dight,  
 A parte of the chivalerie  
 With him to suppe in compaignie  
 Hath bede. And whan they comen  
 were  
 And setten at the suppe there,  
 Among her other wordés glade  
 Arrons a great spekingé made,—  
 Who haddé tho the besté wife  
 Of Rome? And thus began a strife,  
 For Arrons saith he hath the best.  
 So janglen they withouten reste,  
 Till atté last one Collatine,  
 A worthy knight and was cousine  
 To Arrons, said him in this wise :  
 ‘It is,’ quod he, ‘of none emprise  
 To speke a word, but of the dede  
 Wherof it is to taken hede.

Anone forthý this same tide  
 Lepe on thy hors and let us ride,  
 So may we knowé bothé two  
 Unwarely what our wivés do,  
 And that shall be a trewe assay.’  
 “This Arrons saith nought onés  
 nay.  
 On horséback anone they lepte  
 In such manere and nothing slepte  
 Ridéndé forth till that they come  
 All privelech withinné Rome,  
 In strangé place and down they light  
 And take a chambre out of sight.  
 They be disguised for a throwe,  
 So that no life<sup>1</sup> hem shuldé knowe.  
 And to the paleis first they sought  
 To se what thing these ladies  
 wrought,  
 Of whiche Arrons had made his  
 vaunt.  
 And they her sigh of glad semblaunt  
 All full of merthés and of bordes.<sup>2</sup>  
 But among all her other wordes  
 She spake nought of her husébonde.  
 And whan they had all understonde  
 Of thilké placé what hem list,  
 They gone hem forth that none it  
 wist  
 Besidé thilké gate of bras,  
 Collácea which clepéd was,  
 Where Collatin hath his dwelling.  
 There founden they at home sitting  
 Lurece his wife all environéd  
 With women which were abandóned  
 To werche, and she wrought eke  
 withall  
 And bad hem haste and said : ‘It  
 shall  
 Be for min husébondes were,  
 Which with his swerd and with his  
 spere  
 Lith at siegé in great disese,  
 And if it shulde him nought displese,  
 Now woldé God, I had him here.

<sup>1</sup> No life, no body.

<sup>2</sup> Bordes, jests.



For certes till that I may here  
 Some good tidíng of his estate,  
 My herte is ever upon debate.  
 For so as allé men wítnesse,  
 He is of such an hardiesse,  
 That he can nought him selvés spare,  
 And that is all my mosté care  
 Whan they the wallés shulde assaile.  
 But if my wísshes might availe,  
 I wolde it were a groundles pit  
 Be so the siegé were unknit,  
 And I my husébondé sigh.<sup>1</sup>  
 With that the water in her eye  
 Arose, that she ne might it stoppe,  
 And as men sene the dew bedroppe  
 The levés and the flourés eke,  
 Right so upon her whité cheke  
 The wofull salté terés felle.

“Whan Collatin hath herde her  
 telle

The meníng of her trewé herte,  
 Anone with that to her he sterte  
 And saidé: ‘Lo, my goodé dere,  
 Now is he comé to you here  
 That ye most loven as ye sain.  
 And she with goodly chere ayein  
 Beclipt him in her armés smale.  
 And the colour which erst was pale  
 To beauté thanné was restored  
 So that it mighté nought be mored.  
 The kingés soné, which was nigh,  
 And of this lady herde and sigh  
 The thingés as they ben befallé,  
 The reson of his wíttés alle  
 Hath lost, for love upon his parte.  
 Cam than and of his firy darte  
 With such a wounde him hath  
 through smite,  
 That he must nedés fele and wite  
 Of thilké blindé malady,  
 To which no cure of surgery  
 Can helpé. But yet nethéles  
 At thilké time he helde his pees  
 That he no countenaúncé made  
 But openly with wordés glade,

So as he couthe in his manere,  
 He spake and madé frendely chere  
 Till it was timé for to go.  
 And Collatin with him also  
 His levé toke, so that by night,  
 With all the hasté that they might,  
 They riden to the siege ayein.  
 But Arrons was so wo besein  
 With thoughtés which upon him  
 runne

That he all by the brodé sunne  
 To beddé goth nought for to reste,  
 But for to thenke upon the beste  
 And the fairésté forth with alle,  
 That ever he sigh or ever shalle,  
 So as him thought in his coráge  
 Where he portreiet her ymáge.  
 First the fetúrés of her face,  
 In which natúre had allé grace  
 Of womanly beauté beset  
 So that it mighté nought be bet.  
 And how her yelwe hair was tressed  
 And her attire so wel adressed.  
 And how she spake, and how she  
 wrought,  
 And how she wepte, and how she  
 thought,  
 That he foryeten hath no dele  
 But all it liketh him so wele  
 That in the wordé nor in dede  
 He lackéd nought of womanhede.

“And thus this tirannísshé knight  
 Was soupled, but nought half  
 aright,  
 For he none other hedé toke,  
 But that he might by sommé croke,  
 All though it were ayein her wille,  
 The lustés of his flesh fulfillé,  
 Which lové was nought resonáble;  
 For wher honóur is remeváble,  
 It oughté well to ben avised.  
 But he, which hath his lust assised  
 With melléd<sup>1</sup> love and tirannie,  
 Hath found upon his trecherie

<sup>1</sup> *Melléd*, mingled.

A wey the which he thenketh to  
 holde,  
 And saith, 'Fortúne unto the bolde  
 Is favoráble for to helpe.'  
 And thus within him self to yelpe,  
 As he which was a wilde man  
 Upon his treson he began.  
 And up he sterte, and forth he wente  
 On horsébacke, but his entente  
 There knew no wight, and thus he  
 name  
 The nexté waié, till he came  
 Unto Collaceá the gate  
 Of Rome, and it was somdele late  
 Right even upon the sonné sette.  
 And he which haddé shape his nette  
 Her innocéncé to betrappe,  
 And as it shuldé tho mishappe,  
 As privelech as ever he might  
 He rode and of his hors alight  
 To-foré Collatinés inn  
 And all frendélich goth him in,  
 As he that was cousfn of house.  
 And she which is the goodé spouse,  
 Lucrecé, whan that she him sigh,  
 With goodly cheré drewe him nigh  
 As she which all honour supposeth  
 And him so as she dare opposeth  
 How it stood of her husébonde.  
 And he tho did her understonde  
 With talés feigné in this wise  
 Right as he wolde him self devise  
 Wherof he might her herté glade,  
 That she the better cheré made.  
 Whan she the gladdé wordés herde  
 How that her housébondé ferde.  
 And thus the trouthé was deceived  
 With slie tresón which was received  
 To hiré which mente allé good.  
 For as the festés thanné stood,  
 His souper was right wel arraied,  
 But yet he hath no word assaied  
 To speke of love in no degré.  
 But with covért subtilité  
 His frendly speches he affaiteth,

And, as the tigre, his time awaiteth  
 In hopé for to cacche his pray.

"Whan that the bordés were away  
 And they have soupéd in the halle,  
 He saith that slepe is on him falle,  
 And prait, he moté go to bedde.  
 And she with allé hasté spedde  
 So as her thought it was to done,  
 That every thing was redy sone.  
 She brought him to his chambre tho  
 And toke her leve, and forth is go  
 Into her owné chambre by.  
 And she that wendé certainly  
 Have had a frend then had a fo,  
 Wherof fell after mochel wo.

"This tiraunt though he lié softe  
 Out of his bedde aros full ofte  
 And goth about and laid his ere  
 To herken till that allé were  
 To beddé gone and slepten faste.  
 And than upon him self he caste  
 A mantel and his swerde all naked  
 He toke in honde, and she unwaked  
 A beddé lay. But what she mette,<sup>1</sup>  
 God wot, for he the dore unshette  
 So privély that none it herde,  
 The softé pas and forth he ferde  
 Into the bed where that she slepte,  
 All sodeinly and in he crepte.  
 And her in bothe his armés toke.  
 With that this worthy wife awoke,  
 Which through tendrésse of woman-  
 hed

Her vois hath lost for puré drede,  
 That o word speké she ne dare.  
 And eke he bad her to beware,  
 For if she madé noise or cry,  
 He said, his swerd lay fasté by  
 To sleen her and her folke about.  
 And thus he brought her herte in  
 doubt,

That lich a lamb whan it is sesed  
 In wolvés mouth, so was disesed  
 Lucrecé, who lay dede oppressed.

<sup>1</sup> Mette, dreamed.

And he, which all him hadde ad-  
ressed

To lust, toke thanné what him liste  
And goth his wey, that none it wiste,  
Into his owné chambre ayein  
And clepéd up his chamberlein  
To horsé lept and forth he rode.  
And she, which in her bed abode,  
Whan that she wist he was agone,  
She clepéd after light anone  
And up aros long er the day  
And cast away her fressh array,  
Asshe which hath the world forsake,  
And toke upon the clothés blacke.  
And ever upon continuing,  
Right as men se a wellé spring,  
With eyen full of wofull teres  
Her hair hangénd about her eres  
She wepte, and no man wisté why.  
But yet among full pitously  
She praiéd that they nolden drecche<sup>1</sup>  
Her husébondé for to fecche  
Forthwith her fader eke also.  
Thus be they comen bothé two,  
And Brutus cam with Collatine,  
Which to Lucrecé was cousine,  
And in they wenten allé thre  
To chambre, where they mighté se  
The wofullest upon this molde,  
Which wepteas she to water sholde.  
The chambre dore anone was stoke,<sup>2</sup>  
Er they have ought unto her spoke.  
They sigh her clothés all disguised,  
And how she hath her self despised  
Her haire hangénd unkemt about.  
But nethéles she gan to lout  
And knele unto her husébonde.  
And he, which fain wold understonde  
The causé why she faréd so,  
With softé wordes axéd tho:  
'What may you be,<sup>3</sup> my godé swete?'  
And she, which thought her self  
unmete

<sup>1</sup> *Drecche*, delay.

<sup>2</sup> *Stoke*, barred.

<sup>3</sup> What may be to you? How is it with you?

And the lest worth of women alle,  
Her woful cheré let down falle  
For shame and couthe unnethés<sup>1</sup>  
loke,

And they therof good hedé toke  
And praiden her in allé way,  
That she ne sparé for to say  
Unto her frendés what her eileth,  
Why she so sore her self bewailéth,  
And what the sothé woldé mene.  
And she, which hath her sorwe grene,  
Her wo to tellé thanne assaieth,  
But tendre shame her word delaieth,  
That sondry timés as she mente  
To speke upon the point she stente.  
And they her beden ever in one  
To tellé forth, and there upon,  
Whan that she sigh she musté nede,  
Her tale betwené shame and drede  
She toldé, nought withouté peine.  
And he, which wolde her wo re-  
streigne,

Her husébond, a sory man,  
Comfórteth her all that he can  
And swore, and eke her fader both,  
That they with hiré be nought wroth  
Of that is do ayein her wille,  
And praiéden her to be stille,  
For they to her have all foryive.  
But she, which thoughté nought to  
live,

Of hem woll no foryivénesse  
And said, of thiké wickednesse,  
Which was to hiré body wrought,  
All were it so she might it nought,  
Never afterward the world ne shall  
Reproven her, and forthwithall,  
Er any man therof be ware,  
A naked swerd, the which she bare  
Within her mantel prively,  
Betwene her hondés sodeinly  
She toke, and through her hert it  
throng,

And fell to ground, and ever among,

<sup>1</sup> *Unnethés*, hardly (not easily).

Whan that she fell, so as she might,  
 Her clothés with her hond sheright,  
 That no man downward fro theknee  
 Shuld any thinge of her then se.  
 Thus lay this wife honestély,  
 All though she diedé wofully.  
 Tho was no sorwe for to seke,  
 Her husbonde and her fader eke  
 A swoune upon the body felle.  
 There may no mannés tungé telle,  
 In which anguishé that they were.  
 But Brutus, which was with hem  
 there,

Toward him self his herté kept  
 And to Lucrece anone he lept,  
 The bloody swerde and pulleth out  
 And swore the goddés al about  
 That he therof shall do vengeance.  
 And she tho made a countenaunce  
 Her dedly eye and atté laste  
 In thinking as it were up cast,  
 And so behelde him in the wise  
 While she to loké may suffise.  
 And Brutus with a manly herte  
 Her husébonde hath made up sterte  
 Forth with her fader eke also  
 In allé haste and said hem tho,  
 That they anone withouté lette  
 A beré for the body fette.  
 Lucrece and therupon bledénd  
 He laide and so forth out criénd  
 He goth unto the market place  
 Of Rome. And in a litel space  
 Through cry the cité was assembled,  
 And every mannés herté trembled  
 Whan they the soth herde of the cas.  
 And thereupon the counseil was  
 Take of the great and of the smale.  
 And Brutus tolde hem all the tale.  
 And thus cam into remembraunce  
 Of sinné the continuaunce  
 Which Arrons haddé do to-fore,  
 And eke long time ér he was bore  
 Of that his fader haddé dó,  
 The wrong camé into placé tho,

So that the comun clamour tolde  
 The newé shame of sinnés olde.  
 And all the town began to cry :  
 ‘Awey, awey the tyranny  
 Of lechery and covetise !’  
 And atté last in such a wise  
 The fader in the samé while  
 Forth with the soné they exile  
 And taken better governaunce.

“But yet an other remembraunce  
 That rightwisnesse and lechery  
 Accorden nought in compaigny  
 With him that hath the lawe on  
 honde,

That may a man well understonde,  
 As by a talé thou shalt wite  
 Of olde ensample as it is write.

“**At Romé** whan that Appius,  
 Whose other name was Claudius,  
 Was governour of the citee,  
 There fell a wonder thing to se  
 Touchend a gentil maide, as thus,  
 Whom Livius Virginius  
 Begeten had upon his wife.  
 Men saiden, that so faire a life  
 As she was nought in all the town.  
 This famé, which goth up and  
 down,

To Claudius came in his ere,  
 Wherof his thought anone was there,  
 But she stood upon mariáge.  
 A worthy knight of great lignáge,  
 Iliciús which thanné hight,  
 Accorded in her faders sight  
 Was that he shulde his daughter  
 wedde.

But er the cause were fully spedde,  
 Her fader, which in Romanie  
 The leding of the chivalrie  
 In governaunce hath undertake,  
 Upon a werré which was take,  
 Goth out with all the strength he  
 hadde

Of men of armés which he ladde.  
 So was the mariáge left

And stood upon accord till eft.

“The King, which herdé telle of this,

How that this maide ordeined is  
To mariágé, thought another,  
And haddé thilké time a brother,  
Which Marchus Claudius was hote,  
And was a man of such riote  
Right as the King him selvé was ;  
They two to-gider upon this cas  
In counseil founden out the wey,  
That Marchus Claudius shall sey  
How she by wey of covaunant  
To his servíce apurtenaunt  
Was hole, and to none other man.  
And there upon he saith he can  
In every point witnessé take,  
So that she shall it nought forsake.<sup>1</sup>

Whan that they hadden shapé so  
After the lawé which was tho,  
While that her fader was absént,  
She was somonéd and assént<sup>2</sup>  
To come in presence of the King,  
And stood in answe're of this thing.  
Her frendés wisten allé wele  
That it was falskede every dele,  
And comen to the Kinge and saiden  
Upon the comun lawe and praiden  
So as this noble worthy knight,  
Her fader, for the comun right  
In thilké time, as was befallé,  
Lay for the profit of hem alle  
Upon the wildé feldés armed,  
That he ne shuldé nought ben  
harmed

Ne shaméd while that he were out.  
And thus they praiden all about.

“For all the clamour that he herde  
The King upon his lust answerde  
And yaf hem only daiés two  
Of respit. For he wendé tho,  
That in so short a time appere  
Her fader might in no manere.  
But as therof he was deceived.

<sup>1</sup> Forsake, deny.

<sup>2</sup> Assént, sent for.

For Livius had all conceived  
The purpos of the King to-fore,  
So that to Rome ayein therfore  
In allé hast he came ridénd  
And left upon the feld liggend  
His host till that he came ayein.  
And thus this worthy capitain  
Appereth redy at his day,  
Where all that ever reson may  
By lawe in audience he doth,  
So that his doughter upon soth  
Of that Marchús her had accused  
He hath to-fore the Court excused.

“The King, which sigh his purpos faile,

And that no sleighté might availe,  
Incombred of his lustés blinde  
The lawé torneth out of kinde,  
And halfe in wrath as though it were  
In presence of hem allé there  
Deceivéd of concúpiscéncé  
Yaf for his brother the senténcé  
And bad him that he shuldé sese  
This maide and make him well at  
ese.

But all within his own entent  
He wist how that the causé went,  
Of that his brother hath the wite  
He was him selven for to wite.<sup>1</sup>  
But thus this maiden haddé wronge  
Which was upon the King alonge,  
But ayein him was none apele,  
And that the fader wisté wele.  
Wherof upon the tiranné,  
That for the lust of lecherie  
His doughter shuldé be deceived,  
And that Ilicius was weived  
Untruly fro the mariágé,  
Right as a leon in his rage,  
Which of no dredé set accompt  
And not what pité shuldé amount,  
A naked swerde he pulléd out,  
The which amongés all the rout

<sup>1</sup> Of that for which his brother had the blame he was himself to be held guilty.

He thresté through his daughters  
side,

And all aloudé thus he cride :

‘Lo, take her there thou wrongfull  
king,

For me is lever upon this thing  
To be the fader of a maide,  
Though she be dede, than if men  
saide

That in her life she weré shamed  
And I therof were evil named.’

Tho bad the king men shulde areste  
His body, but of thilké heste

Like to the chacéd wildé bore  
The houndés whan he feleth sore

To-throweth and goth forth his wey,  
In such a wisé for to sey

This worthy knight with swerd in  
honde

His weiémade, and they him wonde,<sup>1</sup>  
That none of hem his strokés kepte,

And thus upon his hors he lepte  
And with his swerd droppénd of

blood,

The which within his doughter stood,  
He cam thereas the power was

Of Rome and tolde hem all the cas  
And said hem, that they mighten lere

Upon the wronge of this matere,  
That better it weré to redresse

At home the great unrightwinesse,  
Than for to werre in straungé place

And lese at home her owné grace.  
For thus stant every mannés life

In jeopartié for his wife  
And for his daughter if they be

Passénd an other of beauté.  
Of this merveilé which they sigh

So apparaúnt to-fore her eye,  
Of that the king him hath misbore,

Her othés they have allé swore  
That they will stondec, by the right.

And thus of one accorde upright  
To Rome at onés home ayein

They torne and shortly for to sain  
This tirannié cam to mouth,

And every man saith what he couth,  
So that the privé trechery,

Which set was upon lechery,  
Cam openly to mannés ere,

And that brought in the comun fere,  
That every man the perill dradde

Of him that so hem overladde.  
For they, or that<sup>1</sup> it worsé falle,

Through comun conseil of hem alle  
They have her wrongfull King de-

posed,

And hem in whom it was supposed  
The conseil stood of his leding,

By lawe unto the dome they bring,  
Where they receivein the penaúnce

That longeth to such governaúnce.  
And thus thunchasté was chastised ;

Wherof they mighten ben avised  
That sholden afterward governe,

And by this evidencé lerne  
How it is good a Kinge eschue

The lust of vice and vertue sue.

**To make an ende** in this partie,  
Which toucheth to the policie

Of chasteté in speciáll,  
As for conclusión finall

That every lust is to eschue  
By great ensample I may argue,

Howe in Ragés a town of Mede  
There was a maide, and as I rede,

Sarra she hight, and Raguél  
Her fader was. And so befell

Of body bothe and of visage  
Was none so faire of the lignage

To seche among hem all, as she,  
Wherof the riche of the citee

Of lusty folk, that couthen love,  
Assoted were upon her love

And axén hiré for to wedde.  
One was which atté lasté spedde,

But that was moré for likng  
To have his lust than for wedding,

<sup>1</sup> *Wonde, fear.*

<sup>1</sup> *Or that, before.*

As he within his herté caste,  
Whiche him repenteth atté laste.  
For so it fell the firsté night,  
That whan he was to beddé dight  
As he which no thng God be-  
secheth,

But all only his lustés secheth,  
Asmod, which was a fend of helle  
And serveth as the bokés telle  
To tempte a man in such a wise,  
Was redy there, and thilke emprise  
Whiche he hath set upon delite  
He vengeth than in such a plite  
That he his neck hath writh atwo.  
This yongé wife was sory tho,  
Which wisté nothing what it ment,  
And nethéless yet thus it went  
Nought only for this firsté man,  
But after right as he began,  
Six other of her husébondes  
Asmod hath take into his hondes,  
So that they all abeddé deiede,  
Whan they her hond toward her  
leide,

Nought for the lawe of mariáge,  
But for that ilké fryr rage  
In which that they the lawe excede.  
For who that woldé taken hede  
What after fell in this matere,  
There might he well the sothé here  
Whan she was wedded to Thobie,  
And Raphäel in compaigný  
Hath taught him how to be honést.  
Asmod wan nought at thilké fest,  
And yet Thoby his willé hadde,  
For he his lust so godely ladde  
That bothé lawe and kinde is  
served,

Wherof he hath him self preserved  
That he fell nought in the senténcé.  
Of which an open evidence  
By this ensample a man may se,  
That whan liking in the degre  
Of mariágé may forswey,  
Well ought him than in other wey

Of lust to be the better avised.  
For God the lawés hath assised  
As well to reson as to kinde,  
But he the bestés woldé binde  
Only to lawés of natúre,  
But to the mannés creätúre  
God yaf him reson forth withall  
Wherof that he natúré shall  
Upon the causes modify,  
That he shall do no lechery,  
And yet he shall his lustés have,  
So ben the lawés bothé save  
And every thing put out of sclauder,  
As whilom to king Alisaundre  
The wisé philosóphre taught,  
Whan he his firsté loré caught,  
Nought only upon chasteté,  
But als upon alle honesté.  
Wherof a King him self may taste,  
How trewe, how large, how juste,  
how chaste

Him ought of reson for to be  
Forth with the vertue of pité.  
Through which he may great thank  
deserve

Toward his God, that he preserve  
Him and his people in allé welthe  
Of pees, richésse, honouór and helthe  
Here in this worlde and ellés eke.

“My sone, as we to-foré speke  
In shríté, so as thou me saigest,  
And for thin ese, as thou me praigest,  
Thy lové throwés for to lisse,  
That I the woldé telle and wisse  
The forme of Aristotles lore,  
I have it said, and somdele more  
Of other ensamples to assaie  
If I thy peinés mighte alaie  
Through any thing whiche I can  
say.”—

“Do wey, my fader, I you pray;  
Of that ye have unto me tolde  
I thonké you a thousand folde;  
The talés sounen in min ere,  
But yet min herte is ellés here;

I may my selvé nought restreigne  
 That I nam ever in lovés peine.  
 Such loré couthe I never gete,  
 Which mighté maké me foryete  
 O point, but if so were I slepte,  
 That I my tidés ayeine kepte  
 To thenke of love and of his lawe,  
 That herté can I nought with-  
 drawe.

Forthý, my godé fader dere,  
 Leve and speke of my matere  
 Touchénd of Love as we begonne,  
 If that there be ought over ronne  
 Or ought foryete or left behinde

Which falleth unto Lovés kinde,  
 Wherof it nedeth to be shrive,  
 Now axeth, so that while I live  
 I might amende that is amis."—

"My godé deré soné, yis.  
 Thy shrifté for to maké plein,  
 There is yet moré for to sain  
 Of Lové which is unavised.  
 But for thou shalt be well avised  
 Unto thy shrifte as it belongeth,  
 A point which upon lové hongeth  
 And is the laste of allé tho,  
 I woll the telle, and thanné 'ho.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Then stop.



Book VIII.

**T**he mighty God, which un-  
gonne  
Stant of him self and hath begonne  
All other thingés at his will,  
The heven him listé to fulfill  
Of alle joié, where as he  
Sit enthronzéd in his see  
And hath his aungels him to serve,  
Such as him liketh to preserve  
So that they mowé nought forswey,  
But Lucifer he put away  
With al the route apostazied  
Of hem that ben to him allfed,  
Which out of heven into helle  
From aungels into fendés felle,  
Where that there is no joy of light,  
But moré derk than any night,  
The peiné shall ben endéless.  
And yet of firés nethéles  
There is plenté, but theyben blacke,  
Wherof no sighté may be take.

“ Thus whan the thingés ben  
befalle,  
That Luciferés Court was falle  
Where dedly pride hem hath con-  
veied,  
Anone, forthwith it was purveid  
Through him which allé thingés  
may,  
He made Adám the sixté day  
In Paradise, and to his make  
Him liketh Eve also to make  
And bad hem cresce and multiply.

For of the mannés progeny  
Which of the woman shall be bore,  
The nombre of aungels which was  
lore

Whan they out fro the blissé felle  
He thoughté to restore, and fille  
In heven thilké holy place  
Which stood tho voide upon his  
grace.

But as it is well wist and knowe,  
Adám and Evé but a throwe,  
So as it shuld of hem betide,  
In Paradise at thilké tide  
Ne dwelten, and the causé why  
Write in the boke of Genesý  
As who saith allé men have herde,  
How Raphaél the fry swerde  
In hondé toke and drove hem out  
To gete her livés food about  
Upon this wofull erthé here.  
Metodré saith to this matere,  
As he by revelaciön  
It had upon avisiön  
How that Adám and Eve also  
Virginés comen bothé two  
Into the world and were ashamed.  
Till that natüre hath hem reclaimed  
To love and taught hem thilké lore  
That first they kiste and over more  
They done that is to kindé due,  
Wherof they hadden faire issue.  
A soné was the firste of alle,  
And Chaim by namé they him calle.

Abél was after the secoúnde  
 And in the geste as it is founde  
 Natúre so the causé ladde,  
 Two doughters eke dame Evé hadde,  
 The firsté clepéd Calmaná  
 Was, and that other Delborá.  
 Thus was mankindé to beginne,  
 Forthý that time it was no sinne  
 The suster for to take the brother,  
 Whan that ther was of chois non  
 other.

To Chaim was Calmaná betake,  
 And Delboram hath Abel take,  
 In whom was geté nethéles  
 Of worldés folk the first encres.  
 Men sain that nedé hath no lawe,  
 And so it was by thilké dawé  
 And laste unto the seconde age,  
 Till that the greté water rage  
 Of Noë, which was said the flood,  
 The world, which than in sinnéstood,  
 Hath dreint, out také livés eight.  
 Tho was mankindé of litel weight.

Sem, Cam, Japhét, of thesé thre,  
 That ben the sonés of Noë,  
 The worlde of mannés natióin  
 Into multiplicatióin  
 Was tho restoréd new ayein  
 So ferforth as the bokés sain,  
 That of hem thre and her issúe  
 There was so large a retenúe  
 Of nations seventy and two,  
 In sondry place eche one of tho  
 The widé world have enhabítéd.  
 But as natúre hem hath excítéd,  
 They token thanné litel hede  
 The brother of the susterhede  
 To weddéd wivés, till it cam  
 Into the time of Abraham,  
 Whan the thridde agé was begonne,  
 The nedé tho was overonne,  
 Forther was people inough in londe.  
 Then atté first it came to honde,  
 That susterhede of mariáge  
 Was tornéd into cousináge,

So that aftér the righté line  
 The cousin weddeth the cousine.  
 For Abraham er that he deied  
 This charge upon his servaunt leied  
 To him and in this wisé spake,  
 That he his soné Isaäc  
 Do weddéd for no worldés good,  
 But only to his owné blood,  
 Wherof the servaunt as he badde,  
 Whan he was dede, his sone hath  
 ladde

To Bathuël, where he Rebecke  
 Hath wedded with the whité necke.  
 For she, he wisté well and sigh,  
 Was to the childé cousin nigh.

“And thus as Abraham hath  
 taught,

Whan Isaäc was God betaught,  
 His soné Jacob did also  
 And of Labán the daughters two,  
 Which was his eme,<sup>1</sup> he toke to wife  
 And gate upon hem in his life,  
 Of her firsté which highté Lie,  
 Six sonés of his progenie,  
 And of Rachél two sonés eke ;  
 The remenaunt was for to seke,  
 This is to sain of fouré mo,  
 Wherof he gate on Bala two  
 And of Zelpha he had eke twey.  
 And thesé twelve, as I the say,  
 Through providence of God him  
 selve

Ben said<sup>2</sup> the Patriarkes Twelve.  
 Of whom as afterward befel  
 The tribés twelf of Israël  
 Engendred were, and ben the same,  
 That of Hebréws tho hadden name,  
 Which of sibred<sup>3</sup> in aliaunce  
 For ever kepten thilke usaunce  
 Most comunly, till Crist was bore.  
 But afterward it was forbore  
 Among us that ben baptized.  
 For of the lawé canonized

<sup>1</sup> *Eme*, uncle.

<sup>2</sup> *Said*, named.

<sup>3</sup> *Sibred*, kindred.

The Pope hath bodé to the men,  
That none shall wedden of his kin  
Ne the secondé ne the thriddé.  
But though that Holy Chirche it  
bidde,

So to restreigné mariáge,  
There ben yet upon lovés rage  
Ful many of suché now a day,  
That taken where they také may.  
For lové, whiche is unbesein  
Of allé reson, as men sain,  
Through sotie and through niceté  
Of his voluptuosité  
He spareth no condición  
Of kin ne yet religión.

My soné, thou shalt understonde,  
That such delite is for to blame.  
Forthý if thou hast be the same  
To love in any such manere,  
Tell forth therof and shrive the  
here."—

"My fader, nay, God wot the  
sothe,

My faire is nought in such a bothe,  
So wilde a man yet was I never,  
That of my kin, or leve or lever,  
Me listé love in such a wise.  
And eke I not for what emprise  
I shulde assote upon a nonne,  
For though I had her lové wonne  
It might into no prise amounte,  
So therof set I none accompte.  
Ye may well axe of this and that,  
But sothly for to tellé plat,  
In all this world there is but one,  
The which my herte hath over gone.  
I am toward all other fre."—

"Full well, my soné, now I se  
Thy word stant ever upon o place,  
But yet therof thou hast a grace,  
That thou the might so well excuse  
Of lové, such as some men use,  
So as I spake of now to fore.  
For all such time of love is lore,  
And lich unto the bitter swete,

For though it thenke a man first  
swete,

He shall well felen atté laste,  
That it is soure and may nought laste.  
For as a morcel envenimé,  
So hath such love his lust mistfmed,  
And great ensamples many one  
A man may findé therupon.

"**At Rome first** if we begin,  
There shal I find howe of this sin  
An emperour was for to blame,  
Gaius Caligula by name,  
Which of his owné susters thre  
Berefté the virginité,  
And did hem out of londe exile.  
But afterward within a while  
God hath beraft him in his ire  
His life, and eke his large empire.

"Of this sotý also I finde  
Amon his suster ayein kinde,  
Which highte Thamar, he forlay,  
But he that lust another day  
Aboughté, whan that Absolon  
His owné brother there upon,  
Of that he had his suster shent,  
Toke of that sinné vengément  
And slough him with his owné honde.  
And thus thunkinde unkindé fonde.

"And for to se more of this thing  
The bible maketh a knoueleching,  
Wherof thou might take evidence  
Upon the soth experience.  
Whan Lothés wife was overgone  
And shape unto the salté stone,  
As it is spoke unto this day,  
By both his doughters than he lay.  
And so the cause about he ladde,  
That eche of hem a soné hadde,  
Moab the first and the secounde  
Amon; of which as it is founde  
Cam afterward to great ences  
Two natións. And néthelés  
For that the stockés were ungood,  
The branches mighten nought ben  
good.

For of the falsé Moabites  
 Forth with the strength of Amonites,  
 Of that they weren first misget,  
 The people of God was ofte upset  
 In Israëł and in Judee,  
 As in the bible a man may se.

“Lo thus, my soné, as I the say,  
 Thou might thy selvé be besay  
 Of that thou hast of other herde,  
 For ever yet it hath so ferde,  
 Of lovés lust if so befallé  
 That it in other placé fallé  
 Than it is of the lawé sette.  
 He, which his love hath so besette  
 Mote afterward repent him sore,  
 And every man is others lore.  
 Of that befell in time er this,  
 The present timé which nowé is  
 May ben enforméd how it stood,  
 And také that him thenkéth good  
 And levé that which is nought so.  
 But for to loke of time ago,  
 How lust of love excedeth lawe,  
 It oughté for to be withdrawe.  
 For every man it shuldé drede  
 And namélich in his sibrede,  
 Which torneth ofte to vengeaúnce,  
 Wherof a tale in rémembraúnce,  
 Which is a long process to here,  
 I thenke for to tellen here.

Of a cronique in daiés gon,  
 The which is cleped Panteón,  
 In lovés cause I redé thus,  
 How that the great Antiochus,  
 Of whom that Antioché toke  
 His firsté name, as saith the boke,  
 Was coupled to a noble quene,  
 And had a doughter hem betwene.  
 But such fortuné cam to honde,  
 That deth, which no kind may with-  
 stonde

But every life it mote obey,  
 This worthy quené toke away.  
 The king, which madé mochel mone,  
 Tho stood as who saith all him one

Withouté wife, but nethéles  
 His doughter which was perélés  
 Of beauté dwelt about him stille.  
 But whan a man hath welth at wille  
 The flesshe is frele and falleth ofte,  
 And that this maidé tendre and softe  
 Whiche in her faders chambre  
 dwelte

Within a timé wist and felte,  
 It helpeth nought all though she  
 wepe,

For they that shulde her body kepe  
 Of women were absent as than,  
 And thus this maiden goth to man.  
 The wildé fader thus devoureth  
 His owné flessch, which none socou-  
 reth,

And that was cause of mochel care.  
 But after this unkindé fare  
 Out of the chambre goth the king.  
 And she lay still and of this thing  
 Within her self such sorwe made  
 There was no wight, that might  
 her glade,

For fere of thilke horrfible vice.  
 With that came inné the norice,  
 Which fro childhode her haddé kepte  
 And axeth if she haddé slepte,  
 And why her cheré was unglad.  
 But she, which hath ben overlad  
 Of that she mighté nought bewreke,  
 For shamé couth unethés speke.  
 And nethéles mercý she praide  
 With wepingeye and thus she saide:  
 ‘ Helas, my suster, wailoway,  
 That ever I sigh this ilké day.  
 My worldés worship is berefte.’  
 With that she swouneth now and efté  
 And ever wisseth after deth,  
 So that welnigh her lacketh breth.

“ That other, which her wordés  
 herde,  
 In comfortíng of her answérde,  
 ‘ Whan thing is do, there is no bote.  
 So suffren they that suffren mote.

There was none other, which it wist,  
 Thus hath this king all that him list  
 And such delite he toke there in,  
 Him thoughté that it was no sin.  
 And she durst him no thing withsay.  
 But Famé, which goth every way,  
 To sondry regnés all aboute  
 The greaté, beauté telleth oute  
 Of such a maide of high paráge.  
 So that for love of mariáge  
 The worthy princes come and sende,  
 As they the which all honour wende  
 And knew nothing how that it stode.

“The fader whan he understode  
 That they his daughter thus be-  
 sought,

With all his wit he cast and sought  
 How that he mighté finde a lette,  
 And such a statute than he sette  
 And in this wise his lawé taxeth,  
 That what man that his daughter  
 axeth,

But if he couthe his questiún  
 Assoile<sup>1</sup> upon suggestiún  
 Of certein thingés that befelle,  
 The which he wolde unto him telle,  
 He shulde in certein lese his hede.  
 And thus there weré many dede,  
 Her hedés standing on the gate,  
 Till atté lasté long and late  
 For lacke of answer in this wise  
 The remenaunt that weren wise  
 Escheueden to make assay.

“Till it befell upon a day  
 Appollinus the prince of Tíre,  
 Which hath to love a great desire,  
 A yonge, a fresh, a lusty knight,  
 As he lay musing on a night  
 Of the tidngés, which he herde,  
 He thought assay how that it ferde.  
 He was with worthy compaignie  
 Arraiéd and with good navie  
 To ship he goth, the winde him  
 driveth,

<sup>1</sup> *Assoile*, solve.

And saileth till that he arriveth  
 Sauf in the porte of Antioche.  
 He londeth and goth to approche  
 The kingés court and his presence.

“Of every natural sciéce  
 Whiche any clerké couth him teche  
 He couth inough, and in his speche  
 Of wordés he was eloquént.  
 And whan he sigh the king présent,  
 He praieth he mote his daughter  
 have.

The king ayein began to crave  
 And tolde him the condiciún,  
 How first unto his questiún  
 He mote answer and failé nought,  
 Or with his heved it shall be bought.  
 And he him axeth, what it was.

“The king declareth him the cas  
 With sterné loke and stordy chere,  
 To him and said in this manere:  
 ‘With felony I am upbore,  
 I ete, and have it nought forlore.  
 My moders flesh, whose húsébondé,  
 My fader, for to seche I fonde,  
 Which is the sone eke of my wife.  
 Herof I am inquisitife.

And who that can my talé save  
 Al quite he shall my daughter have.  
 Of his answer and if he faile,  
 He shall be dede without faile.  
 Forthý my soné, quod the king,  
 Be wel aviséd of this thing,  
 Which hath thy life in jeopartie.  
 Appollinus for his partie  
 Whan he that questiún had herde,  
 Unto the king he hath answérde  
 And hath rehercéd one and one  
 The points and saidé therupon :

‘The questiún, which thou hast  
 spoke,  
 If thou wolt that it be unloke,  
 It toucheth all the priveté  
 Betwene thin owné child and the  
 And stant all hole upon you two.’  
 The king was wonder sory tho

And thought, if that he said it out,  
Than were he shaméd all about.  
With slighé wordés and with felle  
He saith: 'Mysone, I shall the telle,  
Though that thou be of litel wit,  
It is no great merveile as yit,  
Thin agé may it nought suffice.  
But loké wel thou nought despise  
Thin owné life, for of my grace  
Of thritty daiés full a space  
I graunté the, to ben avised.'

"And thus with leve and time  
assised

This yongé princé forth he wente  
And understode wel what it mente.  
Within his herte as he was lered,  
That for to maken him afered  
The kinge his time hath so delaiéd,  
Wherof he drad and was amaied  
Of treson that he deié sholde  
For he the king his sothé tolde.  
And sodeinly the nightés tide,  
That moré wolde he nought abide,  
Al privély his barge he hente  
And home ayein to Tíre he wente.  
And in his owné wit he saide,  
For drede, if he the king bewraide  
He knew so wel the kingés herte  
That deth ne shulde he nought  
asterte,<sup>1</sup>

The king him woldé so pursue.  
But he that wolde his deth escheue  
And knewe all this to-fore the honde,  
Forsake he thought his owné londe,  
That theré wolde he nought abide.  
For wel he knew that on some side  
This tiraunt of his felonie  
By some manere of trecherie  
To greve his body woll nought leve.

"Forthy withouten taking leve  
As privelich as ever he might  
He goth him to the see by night,  
Her shippés ben with wheté laden,  
Her takil redy tho they maden

<sup>1</sup> *Asterite*, escape.

And haleth sail and forth they fare.  
But for to tellen of the care,  
That they of Tíre baren tho,  
Whan that they wist he was ago,  
It is a pité for to here.  
They losten lust, they losten chere,  
They toke upon hem such penaúnce,  
There was no song, there was no  
daunce,

But every merthe and melody  
To hem was than a maladí,  
For unlust of that aventúre.  
Therewas no man which toketonsúre,  
In dolfull clothés they hem clothe.  
The bathés and the stewés bothe  
They shetten in by every wey.  
There was no life which listé pley  
Ne take of any joié kepe,  
But for her legé lord to wepe,  
And every wight said as he couth:  
'Helas, the lusty floure of youth,  
Our prince, our heved, our governour,  
Through whom we stonden in  
honour,

Withouté the comúne assent,  
That sodeinly is fro us went !'  
Such was the clamour of hem alie.  
"But se we now what is befallé  
Upon the firsté talé pleine  
And torné we therto ayeine.

"Antiochus the greté sire,  
Which full of rancour and of ire  
His herté bereth so as ye herde  
Of that this prince of Tíre answerde,  
He had a felow bachelor,  
Which was his privé counseiler  
And Taliart by name he light.  
The king a strong poisón him dight  
Within a buist<sup>1</sup> and gold therto,  
In allé haste and bad him go  
Straught unto Tíre and for no cost  
Ne sparé till he haddé lost  
The princé which he woldé spill.<sup>2</sup>  
And whan the king hath said his will

<sup>1</sup> *Buist*, box.

<sup>2</sup> *Spill*, ástroy.

This Taliart in a galéy  
 With all the haste he toke his wey.  
 Thewind was good, they saileth blive,  
 Till he toke lond upon the rive  
 Of Tire and forth with all anone  
 Into the burgh he gan to gone  
 And toke hisinne and bode a throwe.  
 But for he woldé nought be knowe,  
 Desguiséd than he goth him out.  
 He sigh the weping all about  
 And axeth, what the causé was.  
 And they him tolden all the cas,  
 How sodeinly the prince is go.  
 And whan he sigh that it was so  
 And that his labour was in veine  
 Anone he torneth home ayeine  
 And to the king whan he cam nigh  
 He tolde of that he herde and sigh,  
 How that the prince of Tire is fled,  
 So was he come ayein unsped.  
 The king was sory for a while  
 But whan he sigh that with no wile  
 He might acheve his cruelté,  
 He stint his wrath and let him be.

“But over this now for to telle  
 Of adventúrés that befelle  
 Unto this prince, of which I tolde,  
 He hath his righté cours forth holde  
 By stone and nedel till he cam  
 To Tharse, and ther his londe he  
 nam.

A bourgeois riche of golde and fee  
 Was thilké time in that citee,  
 Which clepéd was Strangulio,  
 His wife was Dionfse also.  
 This yongé prince, as saith the boke,  
 With him his herbergagé toke.  
 And it befell that citee so  
 Beforé time and than also  
 Through strongé famin whiche hem  
 lad

Was none that any wheté had.  
 Appollinús, whan that he herde  
 The mischefe, how the citee ferde,  
 All frelich of his owné yifte

His whete among hem for to shifte,  
 The which by shipe he haddé brought,  
 He yave, and toke of hem right  
 nought.

But sithen first this world began,  
 Was never yet to such a man  
 More joié made, than they him made.  
 For they were all of him so glade  
 That they for ever in rémembraunce  
 Made a figúre in résemblaunce  
 Of him and in a comun place  
 They set it up, so that his face  
 Might every maner man beholde  
 So as the citee was beholde,  
 It was of laton<sup>1</sup> over gilt.

Thus hath he nought his yifté spilt.  
 “Upon a timé with a route  
 This lord to pleié goth him oute  
 And in his way of Tire he mette  
 Aman, which on his knees him grette,  
 And Hellican by name he hight,  
 Which praide his lord to have in-  
 sight

Upon him self and said him thus,  
 How that the great Antiochus  
 Awaiteth if he might him spille.  
 That other thought and helde him  
 stille

And thonkéd him of his warníng  
 And bad him tellé no tidíng,  
 Whan he to Tire cam home ayeine,  
 That he in Tharse him haddé seine.

“Fortúne hath ever be muáble  
 And may no whilé ston dé stable.  
 For now it higheth, now it loweth,  
 Now stant upright, now over-  
 throweth,

Now full of bliss and now of bale,  
 As in the telling of my tale  
 Here afterward a man may lere,  
 Which is great routhé for to here.

“This lord, which woldé done  
 his best,

<sup>1</sup> *Laton*, latten, an alloy of copper with tin; the material of ancient church brasses.

Within him self hath litel rest  
And thought he wolde his placé  
chaunge

And seke a contré moré straunge.  
Of Tharsiens his leve anone  
He toke and is to shippé gone.  
His cours henam with saile updrawe,  
Where as Fortúné doth the lawe  
And sheweth as I shall reherce  
How she was to this lord diverse,  
The which upon the see sheferketh.<sup>1</sup>  
The winde aros, the wether derketh,  
It blew and madé such tempést,  
None anker may the ship arest,  
Which hath to-broken all his gere.  
The shipmen stood in such a fere,  
Was none that might him self  
bestere,

But ever awaite upon the lere<sup>2</sup>  
Whan that they sholden drenche  
at ones.

There was inough within the wones  
Of weping and of sorwe tho.  
The yongé king maketh mochel wo  
So for to se the ship travaile,  
But all that might him nought availe.  
The mast to-brake, the sail to-rofe,<sup>3</sup>  
The ship upon the wawés drofe,  
Till that they se the londés coste,  
Tho made a vow the leste and moste,  
Be so they mighten come a londe.  
But he which hath the se on honde,  
Neptunus, woldé nought accorde,  
But all to-brake cable and corde,  
Er they to londé mighte approche.  
The ship to-clef upon a roche  
And all goth down into the depe.  
But he that alié thing may kepe  
Unto this lord was merciáble  
And brought him sauf upon a table<sup>4</sup>  
Which to the londe him hath upbore,  
The remenaunt was all forlore.  
Herof he madé mochel mone.

<sup>1</sup> *Ferketh*, hastens.      <sup>2</sup> Wait to learn.

<sup>3</sup> *To-rofe*, was riven to shreds.

<sup>4</sup> *Table*, plank.

“Thus was this yongé lorde alone  
All naked in a pouér plite.

His colour which was whilom white  
Was than of water fade and pale,  
And eke he was so sore a cale,<sup>1</sup>  
That he wist of him self no bote,  
It helpe him no thing for to mote<sup>2</sup>  
To gete ayein that he hath lore.  
But she which hath his deth forbore,  
Fortúné, though she woll nought  
yelpe,<sup>3</sup>

All sodeinly hath sent him helpe  
Whan him thought allé grace away.  
There came a fisser in the wey  
And sigh a man there naked stonde.  
And whan that he hath understonde  
The cause, he hath of him great  
routh

And onlich of his pouér trowth  
Of suché clothés as he hadde  
With great pité this lord he cladde.  
And he him thonketh as he sholde  
And saith him that it shall be yolde,<sup>4</sup>  
If ever he gete his state ayein,  
And praieth, that he wolde him sain  
If nigh were any town for him.  
He saidé : ‘Ye, Pentopolim,  
Where bothé king and quené  
dwellen.’

Whan he this talé herdé tellen,  
He gladdeth him and gan besече,  
That he the wey him woldé teche.  
And he him taught. And forth he  
went

And praidé God with good entent  
To sende him joy after his sorwe.

“It was nought passéd yet mid-  
morwe,<sup>5</sup>

Than thiderward his wey he nam,  
Where sone upon the none he cam.  
He eté such as he might gete,  
And forth anone whan he had etc,

<sup>1</sup> *A cale*, a cold.

<sup>2</sup> *Mote*, sue.

<sup>3</sup> *Yelpe*, boast.

<sup>4</sup> *Yolde*, repaid.

<sup>5</sup> *Midmorwe*, half way between sunrise and noon.



He goth to se the town about,  
 And cam there as he found a rout  
 Of yongé lusty men withall.  
 And as it shuldé tho befall,  
 That day was set of such assise,  
 That they shulde in the londés gise  
 As he herde of the people say  
 Her comun gamé thanné pley.  
 And criéd was, that they shuld come  
 Unto the gamés all and some  
 Of hem that ben deliver<sup>1</sup> and wight  
 To do such maistry as they might.  
 They made hem naked as they  
 sholde,

For so that ilké gamé wolde  
 And it was tho custume and use,  
 Amongés hem was no refuse.  
 The floure of all the town was there  
 And of the court also there were,  
 And that was in a largé place  
 Right even before the kingés face,  
 Whiche Artestrates thanné hight.  
 The pley was pleied right in his sight,  
 And who most worthy was of dede  
 Receive he shulde a certain mede  
 And in the citee bere a price.

“Appollinus which ware and wise  
 Of every gamé couth an ende,  
 He thought assay how so it wende.  
 And fell among hem into game,  
 And there he wanne him such a  
 name,

So as the king him self accompteth,  
 That he all other men surmounteth  
 And bare the prise above hem alle.  
 The king bad that into his halle  
 At souper time he shall be brought.  
 And he cam than and lefte it nought,  
 Withouté compaigný alone.  
 Was none so semelich of persone,  
 Of visage and of limmés bothe,  
 If that he haddé what to clothe.  
 At souper timé nethéles

<sup>1</sup> *Deliver*, supple. Chaucer's Squire was  
 “wonderly deliver and grete of strength.”

The king amidés all the pres  
 Let clepe him up amonge hem alle  
 And bad his mareshall of his halle  
 To setten him in such degré  
 That he upon him mighté se.  
 The king was soné sette and served,  
 And he which had his prise deserved  
 After the kingés owné worde,  
 Was made begin a middel borde  
 That bothé king and quene him sight.  
 He sette and cast about his eye,  
 And sigh the lordés in estate  
 And with him self wax in debate  
 Thinkénd of what he haddé lore,  
 And such a sorwe he toke therfore,  
 That he sat ever still and thought,  
 As he which of no meté rought,

“The king behelde his heviness  
 And of his greté gentillesse  
 His daughter which was faire and  
 good

And atté bord before him stood,  
 As it was thilké time uságe,  
 He bad to go on his messáge  
 And foundé<sup>1</sup> for to make him glad.  
 And she did as her fader bad  
 And goth to him the softé pas  
 And axeth whenne and what he was,  
 And praith he shulde his thoughtés  
 leve.

“Hesaith: ‘Madamé, by your leve.  
 My name is hote Appollinus,  
 And of my richesse it is thus,  
 Upon the see I have it lore.  
 The contré where as I was bore,  
 Where that my lond is and my rente,  
 I lefte at Tere whan that I wente,  
 The worship there of which I ought  
 Unto the God I there betought.’  
 And thus to-gider as they two speke,  
 The térés ran down by his cheke.  
 The king, which therof toke good  
 kepe,  
 Had great pité to se him wepe

<sup>1</sup> *Foundé*, try.

And for his doughter send ayein  
 And praid her faire and gan to sain  
 That she no lenger woldé drecche,<sup>1</sup>  
 But that she wolde anone forth  
 fecche

Her harpe and done all that she can  
 To gladdé with that sory man.  
 And she to done her faders hest  
 Her harpé set and in the feste  
 Upon a charé which they sette  
 Her self next to this man she sette.  
 With harpé both and eke with  
 mouthe

To him she did all that she couthe  
 To make him chere, and ever he  
 siketh,

And she him axeth how him liketh.

‘Madamé, certés well,’ he saide,  
 ‘But if ye the mesuré plaide  
 Which, if you list, I shall you lere,  
 It were a glad thing for to here.’  
 ‘Ha, levé siré,’ tho quod she,  
 ‘Now take the harpe and let me se,  
 Of what mesuré that ye mene.’

“Tho praith the king, tho praith  
 the quene,

Forth with the lordés all arewe,  
 That he some merthé woldé shewe.  
 He taketh the harpe and in his wise  
 He tempreth, and of suche assise  
 Singend he harpeth forth withall  
 That as a vois celestiall

Hem thought it sounéd in her ere,  
 As though that he an angel were.  
 They gladen of his melody,  
 But most of all the company  
 The kingés doughter, which it herde,  
 And thoughte ke of that he answérde  
 Whan that it was of her apposed,  
 Within her hert hath well supposed  
 That he is of great gentillesse;  
 His dedés ben therof wisse  
 Forth with the wisdomé of his lore,  
 It nedeth nought to seché more.

<sup>1</sup> *Drecche*, delay.

He might nought havésuch manere,  
 Of gentil blood but if he were.  
 Whan he hath harpéd all his fill  
 The kingés hesté to fulfill,  
 Away goth dish, away goth cup,  
 Down goth the bord, the cloth was  
 up,

They risen and gone out of halle.

“The king his chamberlein let  
 calle

And bad, that he by allé wey  
 A chambre for this man purvey,  
 Which nigh his owné chambre be.  
 ‘It shall be do, my lord,’ quod he.

“Appollinus, of whom I mene,  
 Tho toke his leve of king and quene  
 And of the worthy maide also,  
 Which praid unto her fader tho,  
 That she might of the yongé man  
 Of the sciénces which he can,  
 His loré have. And in this wise  
 The king her graunteth his apprise,  
 So that him self therto assent.

Thus was accorded er they went  
 That he with all that ever he may  
 This yongé fairé freshé may<sup>1</sup>  
 Of that he couthé shulde enforme.  
 And ful assented in this forme  
 They token leve as for that night.

“And whan it was on morweright,  
 Unto this yongé man of Tire  
 Of clothés and of good attire  
 With gold and silver to despénde  
 This worthy yongé lady sende.  
 And thus she made him well at ese,  
 And he with all that he can plese  
 Her serveth well and faire ayeine.  
 He taught her till she was certéine  
 Of harpé, citole and of riote<sup>2</sup>  
 With many a tune and many a note,  
 Upon musíque, upon mesúre,  
 And of her harpé the temprure

<sup>1</sup> *May*, maid.

<sup>2</sup> *Citole*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers; *riote*, rote, three-stringed fiddle played with a bow.

He taught her eke, as he well couth.  
But as men sain that frele is youth,  
With leiser and continuance,  
This maidé fell upon a chaunce,  
That love hath made him a quarele  
Ayeine her youthé fresh and frele,  
That malgré where<sup>1</sup> she wold or  
nought,

She mot with all her hertés thought  
To love and to his lawe obey.  
And that she shall full sore abey,  
For she wot never what it is,  
But ever among she feleth this,  
Thenkend upon this man of Tire,  
Her herte is hote as any fire,  
And otherwise it is acale.<sup>2</sup>  
Now is she red, now is she pale  
Right after the condition  
Of her ymaginación.

But ever among her thoughtés alle,  
She thoughté, what so may befallé,  
Or that she laugh, or that she wepe,  
She wolde her godé namé kepe  
For fere of womanissché shame.  
But what in earnest, what in game,  
She stant for love in such a plite  
That she hath lost all appetite  
Of mete and drinke, of nightés rest,  
As she that not<sup>3</sup> what is the best.  
But for to thenken all her fille  
She helde her ofté timés stille  
Within her chambre and goth  
nought out.

The king was of her life in doubt,  
Which wisté nothing what it ment.

“But fell a time, as he out went  
To walke, of princes sonés thre  
There came and fellé to his knee,  
And eche of hem in sondry wise  
Besought and profreth his servíce,  
So that he might his daughter have.  
The king, which wold her honour  
save,

<sup>1</sup> Where, whether.

<sup>2</sup> Acale, acold.

<sup>3</sup> Not, knows not.

Saith, she is sike, and of that speche  
Tho was no timé to beseche,  
But eche of hem to make a bille  
He bad and write his owné wille,  
His name, his fader and his good.  
And whan she wist how that it stood,  
And had her billés oversein,  
They shulden have answeere ayein.  
Of this counseil they weren glad  
And writen as the king hem bad,  
And every man his owné boke  
Into the kingés hond betoke.  
And he it to his daughter sende  
And praide her for to make an ende  
And write ayein her owné honde,  
Right as she in her herté fonde.

“The billés weren well received,  
But she hath all her lovés weived  
And thoughté tho was time and space  
To put her in her faders grace  
And wrote ayein and thus she saide :

‘The shamé which is in a maide  
With speché dare nought beunloke,  
But in writng it may be spoke.  
So write I to you, fader, thus,  
But if I have Appollinus,  
Of all this world what so betide  
I woll non other man abide.  
And certes if I of him faile  
I wot right well withouté faile  
Ye shull for me be doughterles.’

This letter came, and there was pres  
To-fore the king there as he stode.  
And whan that he it understode,  
He yave hem answeere by and by.  
But that was done so privély,  
That none of others counseil wiste.  
They toke her leve, and where hem  
liste,

They wenté forth upon her wey.

“The king ne woldé nought  
bewrey

The counseil for no maner high,<sup>1</sup>  
But suffreth till he time sigh.

<sup>1</sup> *Hight*, for *hie*, haste.

And whan that he to chambre is  
come,

He hath unto his counseil nome  
This man of Tire and lete him se  
The letter, and all the priveté  
The which his doughter to him sente.  
And he his kne to grounde bente  
And thonketh him and her also.  
And er they wenten than a two  
With good herte and with good  
corage

Of full love and full mariage  
The kinge and he ben hole accorded,  
And after, whan it was recorded  
Unto the doughter how it stood,  
The yifte of all this worldés good  
Ne shuld have made her half so  
blithe.

And forthwith all the kinge als swithe,  
For he woll have her good assent,  
Hath for the queene her moder sent.  
The queene is come, and whan she  
herde

Of this matere how that it ferde,  
She sigh debate she sigh disese  
But if she wolde her doughter plese,  
And is therto assented ful,  
Whiche is a dedé wonderful,  
For no man knew the sothé cas,  
But he him self, what man he was.  
And nethéles so as hem thought  
His dedés to the sothé wrought,  
That he was come of gentil blood,  
Him lacketh nought but worldés  
good,

And as therof is no despeire,  
For she shall be her faders heire  
And he was able to governe,  
Thus woll they nought the lové werne<sup>1</sup>  
Of him and hiré by no wise,  
But all accordéd they devise  
The day and time of mariage,  
Where love is lorde of the corage.  
Him thenketh longe er that he spede,

<sup>1</sup> *Werne*, forbid.

But atté laste unto the dede  
The time is come, and in her wise  
With great offrénd and sacrifice  
They wedde and make a riché fest,  
And every thing was right honést  
Withinné hous and eke without.  
It was so done, that all about  
Of great worship and great noblesse  
There criéd many a man largesse  
Unto the lordés high and loude.  
The knightes, that ben yonge and  
proude,

They jesté<sup>1</sup> first and after daunce.  
The day is go, the nightés chaunce  
Hath derké all the brite sonne.  
This lord hath thus his lové wonne.

“ Now have I tolde of the spou-  
sailes.

But for to speke of the merveiles,  
Which afterward to hem befelle,  
It is a wonder for to telle.

“ It fell a day they riden out  
The kinge and queene and all the rout  
To pleiën hem upon the stronde,  
Where as they seen toward the londe  
A ship sailénd of great array ;  
To knowé what it mené may,  
Till it be comé they abide.

Than se they stonde on every side  
Endlong the shippés bord to shewe  
Of penouncéls a riché rewe.  
They axen whenne the ship is come,  
Fro Tire, anone answérdé some.  
And over this they saiden more .  
The causé why they comen fore  
Was for to seche and for to finde  
Appollinus, which is of kinde  
Her legé lord. And he appereth  
And of the talé whiche he hereth  
He was right glad, for they him tolde,  
That for vengeaünce, as God it wolde,  
Antiochus as men may wite  
With thunder and lightning is for-  
smite.

<sup>1</sup> *Jesté*, joust.

His doughter hath the samé chaunce,  
 So be they both in o balaunce,  
 Forthý, our legé lord, we say  
 In name of all the lond and pray,  
 That left all other thing to done  
 It liké you to comé sone  
 And se your owné legé men  
 With other that ben of your ken  
 That live in longing and desire  
 Till ye be come ayein to Tere.  
 This tale after the king it had  
 Pentapolim all oversprad.  
 There was no joié for to seche,  
 For every man it had in speche  
 And saiden all of one accorde :  
 ‘A worthy king shall ben our lorde ;  
 That thought us first an hevinesse  
 Is shape us now to great gladnéssc.’  
 Ths goth the tidng over all.

“But nede he mot that nedé shall.  
 Appollinus his levé toke,  
 To God and all the lond betoke<sup>1</sup>  
 With all the people longe and brode,  
 That he no lenger there abode.

“The king and quené sorwe made,  
 But yet somdele they weren glade  
 Of such thing as they herden tho.  
 And thus betwene the wele and wo  
 To ship he goth, his wife with childe,  
 The which was ever meke and milde  
 And woldé nought departe him fro,  
 Such lové was betwene hem two.  
 Lichorida for her office  
 Was také, which was a norice,  
 To wendé with this yongé wife,  
 To whom was shape a wofull life.  
 Within a time, as it betid,  
 Whan they were in the see amid,  
 Out of the north they sigh a cloude,  
 The storme aros, the windés loude  
 They blewen many a dredefull blast,  
 The welken was all overcast.  
 The derké night the sonne hath  
 under,

<sup>1</sup> *Betoke*, commended, entrusted.

There was a great tempést of  
 thunder.

The mone and eke the sterrés bothe  
 In blacké cloudés they hem clothe,  
 Wherof her brighté loke they hide,  
 This yongé lady wept and cride  
 To whom no comfort might availe,  
 Of childé she began travaile  
 Where she lay in a caban close.  
 Her wofull lord fro her arose,  
 And that was long er any morwe,  
 So that in anguish and in sorwe  
 She was delivered all by night  
 And deidede in every mannés sight.

“But netheles for all this wo  
 A maidé child was bore tho.

“Appollinus whan he this knewe,  
 For sorwe a swoune he owerthrewe  
 That no man wist in him no life,  
 And whan he woke, lie saide : ‘Ha,  
 wife,

My joy, my lust and my desire,  
 My welth and my recoverire,  
 Why shall I live, and thou shalt deie ?  
 Ha, thou Fortune, I the defie,  
 Now hast thou do to me thy werst.  
 Ha, herté, why ne wolt thou berst,  
 That forth with her I mighté passe ?  
 My painés weré well the lasse,  
 In such weping and suché crie  
 His dedé wife which lay him by  
 A thousand sithés he her kiste,  
 Was never man that sigh ne wiste  
 A sorwe to his sorwe liche,  
 Was ever among upon the liche.<sup>1</sup>  
 He fell swounéde as he that thought  
 His owné deth, which he besought  
 Unto the goddés all above  
 With many a pitous word of love.  
 But suché wordés as tho were  
 Yet herdé never mannés ere,  
 But only thilké which he saide.  
 The maister shipman came and  
 praide

<sup>1</sup> *The liche*, the body (of his dead wife).

With other such as ben therinne,  
 And sain that he may nothing winne  
 Ayein the deth, but they him rede  
 He be well ware and také hede,  
 The see by wey of his natúre  
 Receivé may no créature  
 Within him self as for to holde  
 The which is dede. Forthý they  
 wolde,

As they counseflen all about,  
 The dedé body casten out.  
 For better it is, they saiden all,  
 That it of hiré so befall,  
 Than if they shulden allé spillé.

“The king, which understode  
 her will  
 And knew her counseil that was  
 trewe,

Began ayein his sorwe newe  
 With pitous hért and thus to say :  
 ‘It is all reson that ye pray.

I am,’ quod he, ‘but one alone,  
 So wolde I nought for my persone  
 There fellé such adversité.

But whan it may no better be  
 Doth thanné thus upon my worde,  
 Let make a coffre stronge of borde,  
 That it be firm with led and piche.’

Anone was made a coffre siche  
 All redy brought unto his honde.  
 And whan he sighe and redy fonde  
 This coffre made and well englued,  
 The dedé body was besewed  
 In cloth of gold and laid therinne.

And for he wolde unto her winne  
 Upon some coste<sup>1</sup> a sepulture,  
 Under her heved in adventúre  
 Of gold he laidé sommés great  
 And of juéls a strong beyéte  
 Forth with a letter, and said thus :

‘I, king of Tíre, Appollinus  
 Doth allé maner men to wite,  
 That here and se this letter write,  
 That helpélés withouté rede

Here lith a kingés doughter dede,  
 And who that hapneth her to finde  
 For charité take in his minde  
 And do so that she be begrave  
 With this tresór which he shal have.’

“Thus whan the letter was full  
 spoke,

They have anone the coffre stoke  
 And bounden it with iron faste,  
 That it may with the wawés laste,  
 And stoppen it by such a wey  
 That it shall be withinné drey,  
 So that no water might it greve.  
 And thus in hope and good beleve  
 Of that the corps shall well arrive,  
 They cast it over borde as blive.

“The ship forth on the wawés  
 went.

The prince hath chaungéd his entent,  
 And saith, he woll nought come at  
 Tíre

As thanné, but all his desire  
 Is first to sailen unto Tharse.  
 The windy storm began to scarce,  
 The sonne aríst, the weder clereth,  
 The shipman which behindé stereth,  
 Whan that hesigh the windéssaught,  
 Towardés Tharse his cours he  
 straught.

“But now to my matere ayein,  
 To telle as oldé bokés sain  
 This dedé corps of whiche ye knowe  
 With winde and water was forth  
 throwe,

Now here, now there, till atté last  
 At Ephesim the see upcast  
 The coffre and all that was therinne.  
 Of great merveilé now beginne  
 May heré who that sitteth still.  
 That God woll savé may nought spill.  
 Right as the corps was throwe a  
 londe,

There cam walkénd upon the stronde  
 A worthy clerke and surgién  
 And eke a great phisicién,

<sup>1</sup> *Coste*, coast.

Of all that lond the wisest one,  
Which highté maister Cerimon.  
There were of his disciples some.  
This maister is to the coffre come,  
He peiseth there was somewhat in  
And had hem bere it to his inne,  
And goth him selvé forth with all.  
All that shall fallé, fallé shall.

“They comen home and tarie  
nought.

This coffre into his chambre is  
brought,

Which that they findé fasté stoke,  
But they with craft it have unloke.  
They loken in, whereas they founde,  
A body dede, which was iwounde  
In cloth of gold, as I said ere.

The tresor eke they founden there  
Forth with the letter, which they rede.  
And tho they token better hede.

Unsowéd was the body sone,  
As he that knewe what was to done,  
This noble clerk with allé haste  
Began the veinés for to taste.<sup>1</sup>

And sigh her agé was of youthe;  
And with the craftés which he  
couthe

He sought and found a signe of life.  
With that this worthy kingés wife  
Honestély they token out  
And maden frés all about.

They laid her on a couché softe,  
And with a sheté warméd ofte  
Her coldé brest began to hete,  
Her herte also to flacke<sup>2</sup> and beté.

This maister hath her every jointe  
With certain oil and balsme anointe,  
And put a liquour in her mouthe  
Which is to fewé clerkes couthe,  
So that she covereth atté laste.

And first her eyen up she caste,  
And whan she more of strengthé  
caught,

Her armés bothé forth she straught,

<sup>1</sup> Taste, try by touch.

<sup>2</sup> Flacke, flutter.

Held up her hond and pitously  
She spake and saidé: ‘Where am I?  
Where is my lord, what world is  
this?’

As she that wot nought how it is,  
But Cerimon that worthy leche  
Answerde anone upon her speche  
And said: ‘Madamé, ye ben here,  
Where ye be sauf, as ye shall here  
Hereafterward, forthy as now  
My counseil is, comfórteth you.  
For tristeth wel, withouté faile,  
There is no thing which shall you  
faile,

That ought of reson to be do.’  
Thus passen they a day or two;  
They speke of nought as for anende,  
Till she began somdele amende,  
And wist her selven what shemente.

“Tho for to knowe her hole  
entente

This maister axeth all the cas,  
How she cam there, and what she  
was.

‘How I came heré, wote I nought,’  
Quod she, ‘but wel I am bethought  
Of other thingés all about  
Fropoint to point,’ and tolde him out  
Als ferforthly as she it wiste.

And he her tolde how in a kiste  
The see her threwe upon the londe,  
And what tresór with her he fonde,  
Which was all redy at her will,  
As he that shope him to fulfill  
With al his might what thing he  
shuld.

She thonketh him that he so wolde,  
And all her herté she discloseth  
And saith him well that she sup-  
poseth,

Her lord be dreint, her childe also.  
So sigh she nought but allé wo.  
Wherof as to the world no more  
Ne wolle she torne and praieth ther-  
fore,

That in some temple of the citee  
To kepe and holde her chasteté  
She might among the women dwelle.  
Whan he this talé herdé telle  
He was right glad, and made her  
knowen

That he a daughter of his owen  
Hath, which he woll unto her yive  
To servé while they bothé live,  
In stede of that which she hath loste;  
All only at his owne coste  
She shall be rendred forth with her.  
Shé saith, 'Graunt mercy, levé sir,  
God quite it you, there I né may.'  
And thus they drivé forth the day  
Till timé cam that she was hole.  
And tho they take her counseil hole  
To shape upon good ordenaunce  
And make a worthy purveaunce  
Ayein the day whan they be veiled.  
And thus whan that they were  
counseiled,

In blacké clothés they hem clothe  
This lady and the daughter bothe  
And yoldé hem to religiún.  
The feste and the professiún  
After the reule of that degré  
Was made with great solempnité,  
Where as Diane is sanctified.  
Thus stant this lady justified  
In ordre where she thenketh to  
dwelle.

"But now ayeinward for to telle,  
In what plite that her lord stood inne.  
He saileth till that he may winne  
The haven of Tharse, as I saide ere.  
And whan he was arrivéd there,  
Tho it was through the cité knowe,  
Men mighté se within a throwe  
As who saith all the towné at ones,  
They come ayein him for the nones  
To yiven him the reverénce,  
So glad they were of his présénce.  
And though he were in his coráge  
Diseséd, yet with glad viságe

He made hem chere and to his inne,  
Where he whilom sojournéd in,  
He goth him straught and was  
received.

And whan the press of people is  
weived,

Hé taketh his host unto him tho  
And saith, 'My frend Strangulio,  
Lo thus and thus it is befallé.  
And thou thy self art one of alle,  
Forth with thy wife, which I most  
trist,

Forthý if it you bothé list,  
My daughter Thaisé by your levé  
I thenké shall with you beleve  
As for a time, and thus I pray  
That she be kept by allé way,  
And whan she hath of agé more,  
That she be set to bokés lore.  
And this avow to God I make,  
That I shall never for her sake  
My berdé for no liking shave  
Till it befallé that I have  
In covenáble time of age  
Besette her unto mariáge.

"Thus they accorde, and all is  
well.

And for to resten him somdele  
Yet for a while he ther sojórneþ,  
And than he taketh his leve and  
torneth

To ship and goth him home to Tire,  
Where every man with great desire  
Awaiteth upon his comíng.  
But whan the ship cam in sailing  
And they perceiven it is he,  
Was never yet in no citee  
Such joié made, as they tho made.  
His hert also began to glade  
Of that he seeth his people glad.  
Lo, thus Fortúne his hap hath lad,  
In sondry wise he was travailed.  
But how so ever he be assailed,  
His latter endé shall be good.

"And for to speke how that it stood



Of Thaise his daughter, wher she  
dwelleth,

In Tharse as the croniqué telleth  
She was well kept, she was well loked,  
She was wel taught, she was wel  
boked,

So well she sped her in her youth  
That she of every wisdom couth,  
That for to seche in every londe  
So wise an other no man fonde  
Ne so well taught at mannés eye.  
But wo worth ever false envý.

For it befell that timé so,  
A daughter hath Strángulio,  
The which was clepéd Philotenné.  
But Famé, which woll ever renne,  
Came all day tō her modérs ere  
And saith, wher ever hēr daughter  
were

With Thaisé set in any place  
The commun vois the commun grace  
Was all upon that other maide,  
And of her daughter no man saide.  
Who was wroth büt Dionisé than?  
Her thought a thousand yere till  
whan

She mighté be of Thaisé wreke  
Of that she herdé folk so speke.  
And fell that ilké samé tide,  
That dede was trewé Lichoride  
Whiche haddé be servaúnt to  
Thaise,

So that she was the wors at ese.  
For she hath thanné no servise  
But onely through this Dioníse  
Which was her dedlich enemy.  
Through puré treson and envý  
She that of allé sorwé can  
Tho spake unto hēr bondéman  
Which clepéd was Theophilus  
And made him swere in counseil  
thus,

That he such time as shé him set  
Shall come Thaisé for to fet  
And ledé her out of allé sight

Where that no man hēr helpé might  
Upon the strondé nigh the see,  
And there hē shall this maiden slee.  
This cherlés hert is in a traunce,  
Ashewhich drad him of vengeaunce  
Whan timé comth an other day.  
But yet durst he nought saié nāy,  
But swore and said he shall fulfill  
Her hestés at her owné will.

“The treson and the time is shape,  
So fell it that this cherlish knape<sup>1</sup>  
Hath lad this maiden wher he wold  
Upon the strondé, and what she  
sholde

She was adrad, and he out braide  
A rusty swerde and to her saide:  
‘Thou shalt be dede.’ ‘Alas,’  
quod shē,

‘Why shall I so?’ ‘Lo thus,’ quod hē,  
‘My lady Dionise hath bedé,  
Thou shalt be murdred in this stede.’  
This maiden tho for feré shrighite  
And for the lové of God Allmichte  
She praith that for a litel stounde  
She mighté knele upon the grounde  
Toward the heven for to crave,  
Her wofull soule if shé may save.

And with this noise and with this cry,  
Out of a bargé fasté by,  
Which hid was there on scomer-fare,<sup>2</sup>  
Men sterten out and weren ware  
Of this felón, and he to go,  
And she began to crié tho,  
‘Ha, mercy, help for Goddes sake,’  
Into the bargé they her take,  
As the vess schulde, and forth they went.  
Upon the see the wind hem hent  
And malgré wher they wold éornone  
To-fore the weder forth they gone,  
There halp nō sail there halp none oře  
For storméd and forblowen sōre

<sup>1</sup> Knape, lad.

<sup>2</sup> Scomer-fare, ? for lying in wait in creeks,  
from some word having its root in *scā* or *scū*,  
to cover and conceal, whence *skua*, *sceldo*,  
shadow?

In great peril so forth they drive,  
Till atté lasté they arrive  
At Miteléné the citee,  
In haven sauf and whan they be  
The maister shipman made him  
bouné<sup>1</sup>

And goth him out into the towne  
And profreth Thaisé for to selle.  
One Leonin it herdé telle,  
Which maister of the bordel was,  
And bad him gon a redy pas  
To fecchen her, and forth he went  
And Thaise out of his barge he hent  
And solde her to the bordel tho.  
No wonder is though she be wo  
Clos in a chambre by her self.  
Eche after other ten or twelf  
Of yongé men in to her went.  
But suche a gracé God her sent,  
That for the sorwe which she made,  
Was none of hem which power had  
To done her any vilainy.

“This Leonin let ever aspy  
And waiteth after great beyete,  
But all for nought, she was forlete,  
That no man woldé theré come.  
Whan he therof hath hede nome  
He sent his man, but so it ferde,  
Whan he her wofull pleintés herde  
And he therof hath také kepe,  
Him listé better for to wepe  
Than don ought ellés to the game.  
And thus she kepte herself fro shame  
And kneléd down to therthe and  
praide

Unto this man and thus she saide :

‘If so be, that thy maister wolde  
That I his gold encresé sholde  
It may nought fallé by this wey,  
But suffre me to go my wey  
Out of this hous where I am in,  
And I shall make him-for to win  
In some place ellés of the town,  
Be so it be of religioun,

<sup>1</sup> *Boune, ready.*

Where that honésté women dwelle,  
And thus thou might thy maister  
telle,

That whan I have a chambre there  
Let him do cry ay widé where,  
What lord that hath his daughter  
dere

And is in will that she shall lere  
Of such a scolé that is trewe,  
I shall her teche of thingés newe  
Whiche as none other woman can  
In all this londe.’ And tho this man  
Her tale hath herde he goth ayein  
And tolde unto his maister plein,  
That she hath saide. And therupon,  
Whan that he sigh beyeté none  
At the bordél because of hire,  
He bad his man to gon and spire  
A placé where she might abide,  
That he may winne upon some side  
By that she can. But atté lest  
Thus was she sauf of this tempést.

“He hath her fro the bordel take,  
But that was nought for Goddés  
sake,

But for the lucre, as she him tolde.  
Now comen tho that comen wolde,  
Of women in her lusty youth  
To hereand se what thing she couth.  
She can the wisdomé of a clerke,  
She can of any lusty werke  
Which to a gentil woman longeth.  
And some of hem she underfongeth  
To the citole and to the harpe,  
And whom it liketh for to carpe  
Proverbés and demaundés slich  
An other such they never sigh  
Which that sciencé so well taught,  
Wherof she greté yiftés caught,  
That she to Leonin hath wonne.  
And thus her name is so begonno  
Of sondry thingés that she techeth,  
That all the londé to her secheth  
Of yongé women for to lere.

“Now letté we this maiden here

And speke of Dionise ayeine  
 And of Theophile the vilaine  
 Of which I spake of now to-fore,  
 Whan Thaiséshulde have beforlore,  
 This falsé cherle to his lady  
 Whan he cam home all prively,  
 He saith, ‘Madamé, slain I have  
 This maidé Thaise, and is begrave  
 In privé place, as ye me bede.  
 Forthy, madamé, taketh hede  
 And kepe counsefl, how so it  
 stonde.’

This fend, which hath this under-  
 stonde,

Was glad and weneth it be soth.  
 Now herke, hereafter how she doth.  
 She wepeth, she sorweth, she com-  
 pleigneth,

And of sikenessé which she feigneth,  
 She saith, that Thaisé sodeinly  
 By night is dede, as she and I  
 To-gider lien nigh my lorde.  
 She was a woman of recórde,  
 And all is levéd that she saith,  
 And for to yive a moré feith,  
 Her husébonde and eke she bothe  
 In blacké clothés they hem clothe,  
 And make a great enterrément,  
 And for the people shall be blent  
 Of Thaise as for the rémembraunce,  
 After the réal<sup>1</sup> olde usaunce  
 A tumbé of laton noble and riche  
 With an ymage unto her liche  
 Liggénd abové therupon  
 They made and set it up anon.  
 Her epitaphe of good assise  
 Was write about, and in this wise  
 It spake: ‘O ye, that this beholde,  
 Lo, here lieth she, the which was  
 holde

The fairest and the floure of alle,  
 Whose namé Thaisis men calle.  
 The king of Tیره Appollinus  
 Her fader was, now lieth she thus.

<sup>1</sup> *Real*, regal.

Fourtené yere she was of age,  
 Whan deth her toke to his viage.’

Thus was this falsé treson hid,  
 Which afterward was widé kid,  
 As by the tale a man shall here.  
 But to declaré my matere  
 To Tیره I thinké torne ayein  
 And telle as the croniquéés sain.  
 Whan that the king was comen home  
 And hath left in the salté fome  
 His wife which he may nought  
 foryete,

For he some comfort woldé gete  
 He let sommone a parlément,  
 To which the lordés were assent.<sup>1</sup>  
 And of the time he hath ben out,  
 He seeth the thingés all about ;  
 And tolde hem eke, how he hath fare,  
 While he was out of londé fare,  
 And praide hem allé to abide,  
 For he wolde at the samé tide  
 Do shapé for his wivés minde<sup>2</sup>  
 As he that woll nought ben unkinde.  
 Solempné was that ilke office,  
 And riché was the sacrifice,  
 The festé réally<sup>3</sup> was holde.  
 And therto was he well beholde :  
 For suche a wife as he had one  
 In thilké daiés was there none.

“Whan this was done, than he  
 him thought

Upon his daughter, and besought  
 Such of his lordés as he wolde,  
 That they with him to Tharsé sholde  
 To fet his daughter Thaisé there,  
 And they anone all redy were.  
 To ship they gone and forth they went  
 Till they the haven of Tharsé hent.  
 They londe and failé of that they  
 seche,

By coverture and sleight of speche.  
 This falsé man Strangulio  
 And Dionise his wife also,

<sup>1</sup> *Assent*, summoned.

<sup>2</sup> In memory of his wife.

<sup>3</sup> *Really*, royally.

That he the better trowé might,  
 They ladden him to have a sight,  
 Where that her tombé was arraiéd,  
 The lassé yet he was mispaiéd.  
 And nethéls sò as he durst,  
 He curseth and saith all the wòrst  
 Unto Fortúné, as to thè blinde,  
 Which can no siker weié finde,  
 For she him newéth ever amonge  
 And medleth sorwe with his songe.  
 But sithe it may no better be,  
 He thonketh God and forth goth he  
 Sailéndé toward Tìre ayeine.  
 But sodéinly the windé and reine  
 Began upon the see debate,  
 So that he suffre mote algate  
 The lawé, which Néptúne  
 déineth,

Wherof full ofté time he pleignèth  
 And held him wel thè more esmaied  
 Of that he hath to-fore assaiéd,  
 So that for puré sorwe and càre  
 Of that he seeth this world so fare,  
 The reste hè leveth of his cabán,  
 That for the counsèil of no man  
 Ayein thèrin he noldé comé  
 But hath beneth his placé nome,  
 Where hè wepénd alloné lay  
 Thèrè as hè sigh no light of day.

“And thus to-fore the wind they  
 drive

Till longe and laté they arrive  
 With great distressé, as it was sène,  
 Upon this town of Mitelene,  
 Which was a noble cité tho.  
 And happneth thilké timé sò,  
 The lordés both and thè commúne  
 Thè híghé festés of Néptuné  
 Upon the strónd at the rivage,  
 As it was custume and uságe,  
 Solempneliché they besigh.

“Whan thèy this straungé vessel  
 sigh

Come in, and hath his saile aveled,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Aveled*, lowered.

The town therof hath spoke and  
 taled.

The lord which of that cité was,  
 Whose name is Athenagoras,  
 Was there and said, he woldé se  
 What ship it is, and who they be  
 That ben thèrin. And after sone,  
 Whan that he sigh it was to done,  
 His bargé was for him arraiéd,  
 And he goth forth and hath assaiéd.  
 He found the ship of great array,  
 But what thing it amounté may,  
 He sigh they maden hevychere,  
 But well him thenketh by thè manere,  
 That thèy be worthy men of blood,  
 And axeth of hem how it stood.  
 And thèy him tellen all the cas,  
 How that her lord fordrivé was,  
 And what a sorwé that he made  
 Of which there may no mán him  
 glade.

He praieth that hè her lord may se.  
 But thèy him toldé it may nought be,  
 For he lith in so derké a place  
 That there may no wight sèn his face.  
 But for all thát, though hem be loth,  
 He found the ladder and down he  
 goth

And to him spake, but none answer  
 Ayein of him ne might he bere,  
 For ought that he can do or sain.  
 And thus he goth him up ayein.

“Tho was there spoke in many  
 wise

Amongés hem that wèren wise,  
 Now this, now that, but atté last  
 Thè wisdom of the town thus cast,  
 That yóngé Thaisé wèren assent.  
 For if there be amendément  
 To gladdé with this wofull king,  
 She can so moch of every thing  
 That she shall gladen him anone.

“A messenger for her is gone.  
 And she came with her harp on honde  
 And saide hem, that she woldé fonde

By allé weiés that she can,  
 To gladdé with this sory man.  
 And what he wás, shé wiste nought.  
 But all the ship her hath besought  
 That she her wit on him despende  
 In aunter if he might aménde,  
 And saín, ' It shall be well aquit.'<sup>1</sup>  
 Whan she hath understonden it,  
 She goth her down, theré as he lay,  
 Where that she harpeth many a lay  
 And lich an aungel sang with alle.  
 But he no moré than the walle  
 Toke hede of ány thing he herde.  
 And whan she sigh that he so ferde,  
 She falleth with him unto wordes,  
 And telleth him of sondry bordes,  
 And axeth him demaundés straunge  
 Wherof she made his herté change,  
 And to her speche his ere hé laide  
 And hath merveile, of that she saide.  
 For in provérbe and in probléme  
 She spake and bade he shuldé deme  
 In many a subtil questión.  
 But he for no suggestión  
 Which toward him shé couthe stere  
 He woldé nought o word answe're,  
 But as a mad man atté laste,  
 His heved weping away he caste  
 And half in wrath he bad her go.  
 But yet she woldé nought do so,  
 And in the derké forth she goth,  
 Till she him toucheth, and he wróth  
 And after híré with his honde  
 He smote. And thus whan she  
 him fonde  
 Diseséd, courteisly she saide :  
 ' Avoy my lorde, I am a maide.  
 And if ye wisté what I am,  
 And out of what lignáge I cam,  
 Ye woldé nought be so salváge.'<sup>2</sup>  
 With that he sobreth his coráge  
 And put away his hevychere.  
 But of hem two a man may lere,  
 What is to be so sibbe of blood.  
 None wist of other how it stood,

And yet the fader atté last  
 His herte upon this maide cast,  
 That he her loveth kindly,  
 And yet he wisté never why ;  
 But all was knowe'er that they went.  
 For God, which woté her hole entent,  
 Her hertés both anone descloseth.  
 This king unto this maide opposeth  
 And axeth first, What is her name,  
 And where she lernéd all this game,  
 And of what kin that she was come ?  
 And she, that hath his wordés nome,  
 Answereth and saith : ' My name  
 is Thaise,  
 That was sometímé well at ése.  
 In Tharse I was forthdrawe and  
 fedde,  
 There lernéd I till I was spedde  
 Of that I can. My fader eke  
 I not<sup>1</sup> where that I shulde him séke,  
 He was a king, men toldé me.  
 My moder dreint was in the see.'  
 Fro point to point all she him toldé,  
 That she hath longe in herté holde,  
 And never dursté make her mone,  
 But only to this lord alone,  
 To whom her herté can nought hele,<sup>2</sup>  
 Torne it to wo torne it to wele,  
 Torne it to good torne it to harme.  
 And he tho toke her in his arme.  
 But such a joy as he tho made  
 Was never sene ; thus be they glade  
 That sory hadden be to-forne.  
 Fro this day forth Fortúne hath  
 sworne  
 To set him upward on the whele ;  
 Sogoth the world ; now wo, now wele.  
 " This king hath foundé newé  
 grace,  
 So that out of his derké place  
 He goth him up into the light,  
 And with him cam that sweté wight  
 His daughter Thaise, and forth anone  
 They bothe into the caban gone

<sup>1</sup> Not, know not.<sup>2</sup> Hele, conceal.

Which was ordeinéd for the kinge.  
 And there he did of all his thinge  
 And was arraiéd reály,  
 And out he cam all openly  
 Where Athenagoras he fonde  
 The which was lorde of all the  
 londe.

He praieth the king to come and se  
 His castell bothe and his citee.  
 And thus they gone forth all in fere,  
 This king, this lord, this maiden  
 dere.

This lord tho made hem riché feste  
 With every thing which was  
 honéste

To plesé with this worthy kinge,  
 Ther lacketh hem no maner thinge.  
 But yet for al his noble array  
 Wifeles he was unto that day,  
 As he that yet was yonge of age.  
 So fell there into his coráge  
 The lusty wo, the gladdé peine  
 Of lové which no man restreigne  
 Yet never might as now to-fore.  
 This lord thenketh all his world  
 forlore

But if the king woll done him grace.  
 He waiteth time he waiteth place  
 Him thought his herté woll to-breke,  
 Till he may to this maidé speke  
 And to her fader eke also  
 For mariáge. And it fell so,  
 That all was do, right as he thought,  
 His purpos to an ende he brought,  
 She wedded him as for her lorde ;  
 Thus be they alle of one accorde.

“Whan al was do right as they  
 wolde,

The kinge unto his soné tolde  
 Of Tharsé thilké treterie,  
 And said, how in his compaignie  
 His daughter and him selven eke  
 Shall go vengeaúncé for to seke.  
 The shippés weré redy sone.  
 And whan they sigh it was to done

Withouté let of any went,<sup>1</sup>  
 With saile up drawé forth they wente  
 Towardés Tharse upon the tide.  
 But he that wot what shall betide,  
 The highe God which wolde him  
 kepe,

Whan that this king was faste a slepe  
 By nightés time he hath him bede  
 To saile unto another stede ;  
 To Ephesim he bad him drawe,  
 And as it was that timé lawe,  
 He shall do there his sacrifice.

And eke he bad in allé wise,  
 That in the temple amongés alle  
 His Fortune, as it is befallé,  
 Touchend his daughter and his wife  
 He shall beknowe upon his life.

The king of this avisión  
 Hath great ymaginación  
 What thinge it signifié may.  
 And nethéles whan it was day  
 He bad cast anker and abode.  
 And while that he on anker rode,  
 The wind, which was to-fore  
 straunge,

Upon the point began to change  
 And torneth thider as it shulde.  
 Thoknewe he well, that God it wolde,  
 And bad the maister make him yare,  
 To-fore the wind for he wold fare  
 To Ephesim, and so he dede.  
 And whan he came into the stede,  
 Whereas he shuldé londe, he londeth  
 With all the haste he may, and  
 fondeth

To shapen him in suche a wise,  
 That he may by the morwe arise  
 And done after the maundément  
 Of him, which hath him thider sent.  
 And in the wisé that he thought,  
 Upon the morwe so he wrought.  
 His daughter and his sone he nome  
 And forth unto the temple he come

<sup>1</sup> *Let of any went*, hindrance of any turning  
 aside.

With a great route in compaigný  
 His yiftés for to sacrificý.  
 The citezeins tho herden say  
 Of such a king that came to pray  
 Unto Diané the goddésse  
 And lefe all other besnesse,  
 They comen thider for to se  
 The king and the solempnité.  
 "With worthy knightés environéd  
 The king him self hath abandóned  
 Into the temple in good entente.  
 The dore is up and in he wente,  
 Whereas with great devoción  
 Of holy contemplación  
 Within his herte hemade his shrifte.  
 And after that a riché yifte  
 He offreth with great reveréce,  
 And there in open audiéce  
 Of hem that stoden all about  
 He tolde hem and declareth out  
 His hap such as him is befallé;  
 There was no thing foryete of alle.  
 His wife, as it was Goddés grace,  
 Which was professéd in the place  
 As she that was abbéssé there,  
 Unto his tale hath laid her ere,  
 She knew the vois and the viságe,  
 For puré joy as in a rage  
 She straught unto him all at ones  
 And fell a swoune upon the stones  
 Wherof the temple flore was paved.  
 She was anone with water laved,  
 Till she came to her self ayein.  
 And thanné she began to sain:  
 'Ha, blessed be the highé sonde,  
 That I may se min husébonde,  
 Which whilom he and I were one.'  
 The king with that knewe heranone  
 And toke her in his arme and kist,  
 And all the town thus sone it wist.  
 Tho was there joié manyfold,  
 For every man this tale hath told  
 As for mirácle, and were glade.  
 But never man such joié made  
 As doth the king which hath his wife.

And whan men herde how that her  
 life

Was savéd and by whom it was,  
 They wondren all of suche a cas.  
 Through all the londe arose the  
 speche

Of maister Cerimon the leche  
 And of the curé which he dede.  
 The king him self tho hath him bede  
 And eke this quené forth with him,  
 That he the town of Ephesim  
 Woll leve and go where as they be,  
 For never man of his degre  
 Hath do to hem so mochel good.  
 And he his profite understood  
 And graunteth with hem for to  
 wende.

And thus they maden there anende  
 And token leve and gone to ship  
 With all the holé felaship.

"This king, which now hath his  
 desire,

Saith he woll holde his cours to Tire.  
 They hadden wind at willé tho  
 With topsail-cole,<sup>1</sup> and forth they go.  
 And striken never till they come  
 To Tire wher as they haven nome,  
 And londen hem with mochel blisse.  
 There was maný a mouth to kisse,  
 Eche oné welcometh other home.  
 But whan the quene to londé come  
 And Thaise her daughter by herside,  
 The joié which was thilké tide  
 There may no mannés tungé telle.  
 They saiden all, 'Here cometh the  
 welle

Of alle womanisshé grace.'  
 The king hath take his réal place,  
 The quene is into chambre go;  
 There was great feste arraiéd tho.  
 Whan timé was they gone to mete,  
 All oldé sorwés ben foryete,  
 And gladen hem with joiéés newe.  
 The descolouréd palé hewe

<sup>1</sup> See note, page 253.

Is now become a ruddy cheke,  
There was no merthé for to seke,  
But every man hath what he wolde,  
The king as he well couthe and  
sholde

Maketh to his people right good  
chere.

And after sone, as thou shalt here,  
A parlément he hath sommóned,  
Where he his doughter hath coróned  
Forth with the lorde of Mitelene,  
That one is king, that other quene.  
And thus the faders ordenaunce  
This londe hath set in governaunce,  
And saidé that he woldé wende  
To Tharsé for to make an ende  
Of that his doughter was betraied,  
Wherof were allé men well paid,  
And said, how it was for to done.

“The shippés weren redy sone.  
A strong powér with him he toke,  
Up to the sky he cast his loke  
And sigh the wind was covenáble.  
They hale up anker with the cable,  
They sailon high, the stere on honde,  
They sailen till they come a londe  
At Tharsé nigh to the citee.  
And when they wisten it was he,  
The town hath done him reverence.  
He telleth hem the violence,  
Which the tretoúr Strangulio  
And Dionise him haddé do  
Touchéndehis doughter, as ye herde.  
And when they wisté how it ferde,  
As he which pees and lové sought,  
Unto the town this he besought  
To done him right in jugément.  
Anone they weré both assent  
With strengthe of men, and comen  
sone,

And as hem thought it was to done,  
Atteint they weré by the lawe  
And deméd for to honge and drawe  
And brent and with the wind to-  
blowe,

That all the world it mighté knowe,  
And upon this condición  
The dome in execución  
Was put anone withouté faille,  
And every man hath great mervéle,  
Whiche herdé tellen of this chaunce,  
And thonketh Goddés purveaunce,  
Which doth mercý forth with justíce.  
Slain is the mordrer and mordrice  
Through verray trowth of right-  
wisnesse,  
And through mercý sauf is simplesse  
Of hiré whom mercý preserveth ;  
Thus hath he wel that wel deserveth.

“Whan all this thing is done  
and ended,

This king which lovéd was and  
frended,

A letter hath, which came to him  
By shippé fro Pentapolim,  
In which the lond hath to him write  
That he wolde understonde and  
wite,

How in good minde and in good pees  
Dede is the kinge Artestrates,  
Wherof they all of one accorde  
Him praiden, as her legé lorde,  
That he the letter wol conceive  
And come his regné to receive  
Which God hath yove him and  
Fortúne.

And thus besoughté the commúne  
Forth with the greté lordés alle.  
This king sigh how it was befallé,  
Fro Tharse and in prosperité  
He toke his leve of that citee  
And goth him into ship ayein.  
The wind was good, the se was plain,  
Hem nedeth nought a riff to slake,<sup>1</sup>  
Till they Pentapolim have take.  
The lond which herde of that tidíng  
Was wonder glad of his comíng.  
He resteth him a day or two  
And toke his counseil to him tho

<sup>1</sup> To slacken a reef.



And set a time of parlement,  
Where all the londe of one assent  
Forth with his wife have him co-  
roned,

Where allé good him was foisoned.<sup>1</sup>

“Lo, what it is to be well  
grounded,

For he hath first his lové founded  
Honestélich as for to wedde,  
Honestélich his love he spedde  
And haddé children with his wife,  
And as him list he lad his life,  
And in ensauple his life was write,  
That allé lovers mighten wite  
How atté last it shal be sene  
Of lové what they wolden mene.

For se now, on that other side,  
Antiochus with all his pride  
Which set his love unkindély,  
His ende he haddé sodeinly  
Set ayein kinde upon vengeaunce,  
And for his lust hath his penaunce.

“Lo thus, my soné, might thoulere,  
What is to love in good manere,  
And what to love in other wise.  
The mede ariseth of the servíce,  
Fortuné though she be nought  
stable,

Yet at sometime is favourable  
To hem that ben of lové trewe.  
But certés it is for to rewe  
To se love ayein kindé falle,  
For that maketh sore a man to falle,  
As thou might of to-foré rede.  
Forthy my sone, I woldé rede  
To let all other love awey,  
But if it be through such a wey  
As love and reson wold accorde.”—

“My fader, how so that it stonde,  
Your tale is herde and understonde,  
As thing which worthy is to here,  
Of great ensauple and gretematere,  
Wherof, my fader, God you quite.  
But in this point my self aquite

<sup>1</sup> *Foisoned*, poured out profusely.

I may right wel, that never yit  
I was assoted in my wit,  
But onely in that worthy place  
Where allé lust and allé grace  
Is set, if that Daunger ne were,  
But that is all my mosté fere.  
I not what ye Fortúne accompte,  
But what thing Daunger may  
amunte

I wot wel, for I have assaid.  
For whan min hert is best arraied  
And I have all my wit through sought  
Of lové to beseche her ought,  
For all that ever I skillé may  
I am concluded with a nay,  
That o silláble hath over throwe  
A thousand wordés on a rowe  
Of suche as I best speké can,  
Thus am I but a lewdé man.  
But fader, for ye ben a clerke  
Of love, and this matere is derke  
And I can ever lenger the lasse  
But yet I may nought let it passe,  
Your holé counseil I beseche,  
That ye me by some weié teche,  
What is my best, as for an ende.”—

“My sone, unto the trouthé wende  
Now woll I for the love of the  
And lete all other trifles be.

“The moré that the nede is high,  
The more it nedeth to be sligh  
To him which hath the nede on  
honde.

I have well herd and understonde,  
My sone, all that thou hast me saied  
Ande ke of that thou hast me praied.  
Nowe at this timé that I shall  
As for conclusión fináll  
Counseil upon thy nedé set,  
So thenke I finally to knet  
Thy causé where it is to-broke,  
And make an ende of that is spoke,  
For I behighté the that yift  
First whan thou come under my  
shrift,

That though I toward Venus were,  
 Yet spake I suché wordés there,  
 That for the presthode which I have,  
 Min order and min estate to save,  
 I saide, I wolde of min office  
 To vertu moré than to vice  
 Encline and teché the my lore.  
 Forthý to speken overmore  
 Of Lové which the may availe,  
 Take Lové where it may nought faile.  
 For as of this which thou art in,  
 By that thou seest it is a sinne,  
 And sinné may no prise deserve,  
 Withouté prise and who shall serve  
 I not what profit might availe.  
 Thus folweth it, if thou travaile  
 Where thou no profit hast ne prise  
 Thou art toward thy self unwise,  
 And sith thou mightest lust atteine,  
 Of every lust the ende is peine  
 And every pein is good to flee.  
 So it is wonder thing to se  
 Why such a thing shall be desired,  
 The moré that a stock is fired  
 The rather<sup>1</sup> into ashe it torneth.  
 The fote which in the weié sporneth  
 Full ofte his heved hath overthrowe.  
 Thus Love is blinde and can nought  
 knowe  
 Where that he goth till he be falle.  
 Forthý but if it so befalle  
 With good counseil that he be lad,  
 Him oughté for to ben adrad.  
 For counseil passeth allé thing  
 To him which thenketh to ben a  
 king.  
 And every man for his party  
 A kingdom hath to justifý,  
 That is to sain, his owné dome.  
 If he misreulé that kingdóme,  
 He lest him self, and that is more,  
 Than if he losté ship and ore  
 And all the worldés good with all,  
 For what man that in speciáll

<sup>1</sup> Rather, sooner.

Hath nought him self, he hath  
 nought ellés,  
 No more the perlés than the shelles,  
 All is to him of o value—  
 Though he had all his retenue  
 The widé world right as he wolde—  
 Whan he his hert hath nought  
 witholde  
 Toward him self, all is in vein.  
 And thus, my sone, I woldé sain,  
 As I said er, that thou arise  
 Er that thou falle in such a wise  
 That thou ne might thyselfrekever;  
 For Lové, which that blind was ever,  
 Maketh all his servaunts blinde also.  
 “My sone, and if thou have be so,  
 Yet it is timé to withdrawe  
 And set thin hert under that lawe  
 The which of Reson is govérned  
 And nought of Will. And to be  
 lerned  
 Ensamples thou hast many one  
 Of now and eke of timé gone,  
 That every lust is but a while.  
 And who that woll him self beguile,  
 He may the rather be deceived.  
 My soné, now thou hast conceived  
 Somwhat of that I woldé mene,  
 Here afterward it shall be sene,  
 If that thou leve upon my lore.  
 For I can do to the no more,  
 But teché the the righté way.  
 Now chese, if thou wilt live or  
 deie.”—  
 “**My fader**, so as I have herde  
 Your talé, but it were answérde,  
 I weré mochel for to blame.  
 My wo to you is but a game,  
 That feleth nought of that I fele.  
 The feling of a mannés hele  
 May nought be likened to the herte;  
 I wot that though I wolde asterte  
 And ye be fre from all the peine  
 Of lové wherof I me pleine,  
 It is right esy to commaunde.

The hert which fre goth on the launde  
 Not<sup>1</sup> of an oxé what him eileth,  
 It falleth oft a man merveileth  
 Of that he seeth another fare.  
 But if he knew himself the fare  
 And felt it as it is in soth,  
 He shuldé do right as he doth  
 Or ellés wors in his degré.  
 For wel I wote and so do ye,  
 That love hath ever yet ben used,  
 So mote I nedés ben excused.  
 But fader, if ye woldé thus  
 Unto Cupide and to Venús  
 Be frendly toward my quarele,  
 So that my herté were in hele  
 Of lové which is in my breste,  
 I wot wel than a better preste  
 Was never made to my behove.  
 But all the whilé that I hove  
 In none certein betwene the two,  
 And not where<sup>2</sup> I to well or wo  
 Shall torné, that is all my drede,  
 So that I not what is to rede.  
 But for fináll conclusión  
 I thenke a supplicación  
 With pleiné wordés and expresse  
 Write unto Venus the goddessse,  
 The which I praié you to bere  
 And bring ayein a good answeré.”

**Tho was betwene** my prest  
 and me

Debate and great perplexeté.  
 My Reson understode him wele  
 And knewe it was soth every dele  
 That he hath said, but nought forthý  
 My Will hath no thing set ther by.  
 For touching of so wise a porte  
 It is unto love no disporte.  
 Yet mighté never man beholde  
 Resón, where Lové was witholde,<sup>3</sup>  
 They be nought of o governaunce.  
 And thus we fellen in distaunce  
 My prest and I, but I spake faire

<sup>1</sup> Not, knows not.

<sup>2</sup> Not where, know not whether.

<sup>3</sup> Witholde, held with.

And through my wordés debonaire  
 Than atté lasté we accorden,  
 So that he saith, he woll accorden  
 To speke and stond upon my side  
 To Venus both and to Cupide,  
 And bad me writé what I wolde.  
 And said me truly that he sholde  
 My letter bere unto the quene.  
 And I sat down upon the grene  
 Fulfilléd of Loves fantasy  
 And with the terés of min eye  
 In stede of inke I gan to write  
 The wordés which I wol endite  
 Unto Cupide and to Venus,  
 And in my letter I saide thus:—

**The wofull peine** of lovés  
 maladie,

Ayein the which may no phisque  
 availe, [sotie,  
 Min hert hath so bewhappéd with  
 That wheré so that I reste or travaile  
 I finde it ever redy to assaile  
 Myreson, which that can him nought  
 defende.  
 Thus seche I help wherof I might  
 amende.

First to Natúre if that I me com-  
 pleine,  
 There finde I how that every créature  
 Somtime a yere<sup>1</sup> hath love in his  
 demaine,  
 So that the litel wrenne in his mesúre  
 Have yet of kinde a love under his  
 cure.  
 And I but one desiré, which I misse,  
 And thus but I hath every kinde his  
 blisse.

The reson of my wit it overpasseth,  
 Of that Natúré teché me the wey  
 To love and yet no certein she  
 compásseth

<sup>1</sup> At some time in each year.

How shal I spede; and thus between  
the twey  
I stonde and not<sup>1</sup> if I shall live or dey.  
For though Resón aye in my will  
debate,  
I may nought flee that I ne love  
algate.

Upon my self this ilké talé come,  
How whilom Pan, which is the god  
of kinde,  
With Lové wrestled and was over-  
come,  
For ever I wrestle and ever I am  
behinde,<sup>2</sup>  
That I no strength in all min herté  
finde  
Wherof that I may stonden any  
throwe,  
Sofer my wit with love is overthrowe.

Whom nedeth help, he mot his helpé  
crave  
Or helpéles he shall his nedé spille.  
Plainly throughsought my wittés al  
I have,  
But none of hem can help after my  
wille.  
And al so well I mighté sité stille  
As pray unto my lady of any helpe,  
Thus wote I nought wherof my self  
to helpe.

Unto the greté Jove and if I bid  
Todo me grace of thilké sweté tonne  
Which under key in his cellér amid  
Lith couchéd, that Fortúne is over-  
ronne;  
But of the bitter cuppe I have be-  
gonne, [game,  
I not how ofte, and thus finde I no  
For ever I axe and ever it is the same.

<sup>1</sup> *Not*, know not.

<sup>2</sup> For e'er I wrestl' and e'er I am behind. So  
in last line of next stanza but one, "e'er" . . .  
"e'er."

I se the world stond ever upon  
eschaunge,  
Now windés loudé, now the weder  
softe,  
I may seek the greté moné change,  
And thing which now is low is eft  
alofté;  
The dredful werrés into pees ful ofte  
They torne, and ever is Daunger in  
o place,  
Which woldé change his Will to  
do me grace.

But upon this the greté clerk Ovíde,  
Of Lové whan he maketh rémem-  
braúnce,  
He saith: Ther is the blindé god  
Cupide,  
The which hath love under his  
governaúnce  
And in his hond with many a firy  
launce  
He woundeth ofté where he woll  
nought hele,  
And that somdele is cause of my  
quarele.

Ovídeeke saith, that lové to performe  
Stant in the hond of Venus the  
goddésse,  
But whan she taketh counseil with  
Satorne  
There is no grace, and in that time  
I gesse  
Began my love, of which min hevi-  
nesse  
Is now and ever shall, but if I spede,  
So wot I nought my self what is to  
rede.

Forthý to you, Cupide and Venus  
both,  
With all min hertés obeisaúnce I  
pray,  
If ye were atté firsté timé wroth,

Whan I began to loven, I you say,  
Now stint, and do thilké Fortúne  
away,  
So that Daungér, which stant of  
retenué  
With my lady, his placé may remue.

O thou Cupidé, god of lovés lawe,  
That with thy dart brennénd hast  
set a fire  
My herté, do that woundé be with-  
drawe,  
Or yivé me salve, suche as I desire.  
For service in thy court withouten  
hire  
To me which ever yet have kept  
thin heste,  
May never be to lovés lawe honeste.

O thou, gentilé Venus, lovés quene,  
Withouté gilt thou dost on me thy  
wreche,  
Thou wost my pein is ever alich grene  
For love, and yet I may it nought  
areche.<sup>1</sup>  
Thus wolde I for my lasté word  
beseche  
That thou my love aquite as I  
deserve,  
Or ellés do me plainly for to sterve.

**Whan** I this supplicación  
With good deliberación,  
In suche a wise as ye now wite,  
Had after min ententé write  
Unto Cupide and to Venus,  
This presté which hight Geniús  
It toke on hondé to presente.  
On my message and forth he wente  
To Venus for to wit her wille.  
And I bode in the placé stille  
And was there but a litel while  
Noughtfull the mountance of a mile,  
Whan I behelde and sodeinly

<sup>1</sup> *Arecche*, reach to.

I sigh where Venus stood me by.  
So as I might, under a tree  
To groundé I felle upon my knee  
And preid her for to do me grace.  
She cast her chere upon my face  
And as it were halving a game  
She axeth me, what wás my name.  
'Madame,' I saidé, 'Iohan Gower.'  
'Now Iohan,' quod she, 'in my  
power

Thou must as of thy lové stonde.  
For I thy bill have understonde  
In which to Cupide and to me  
Somdele thou hast compleigné the;  
And somdele to Natúre also,  
But that shall stonde among you two  
For therof have I nought to done,  
For Natúre is under the mone  
Maistresse of every livés kinde,  
But if so be that she may finde  
Some holy man that woll withdrawe  
His kindly lust, ayein her lawe.  
But seldéwhan it falleth so,  
For fewé men there ben of tho.  
But of these other inowé be,  
Whiche of her owné nicité  
Ayein Natúre and her office  
Deliten hem in sondry vice  
Wherof that she full oft hath  
pleigned;

Andeke my Court it hath disdeigned  
And ever shall, for it receiveth  
None such that kindé so desceiveth.  
For all onlich of gentil love  
My Court stant allé Courts above  
And taketh nought into retenué  
But thing which is to Kindé due.  
For ellés it shall be refused,  
Wherof I holdé the excused.  
For it is many daiés gone,  
That thou amongés hem were one  
Which of my court shall be witholde,  
So that the more I am beholde  
Of thy disesé to commúne  
And to remüé that Fortune

Which many daiés hath the greved.  
 But if my counseil may be leved,  
 Thou shalt be eséd er thou go  
 Of thilke unsely jolif wo  
 Wherof thou saist thin hert is fired.  
 But as of that thou hast desired  
 After the sentence of thy bill,  
 Thou must therof done at my will  
 And I therof me woll advise.  
 For be thou hole, it shall suffice ;  
 My medicine is nought to seke  
 The which is holsome to the seke,  
 Nought all perchaunce as ye it wolde  
 But so as ye by reson sholde,  
 Accordaunt unto lovés kinde.  
 For in the plite which I the finde,  
 So as my Court it hath awarded,  
 Thou shalt be duëly rewarded.  
 And if thou woldest moré crave,  
 It is no right that thou it have.'

**Venus**, which stant withouté  
 lawe,

In none certeine, but as men drawe  
 Of rageman upon the chaunce,  
 She laith no peise in the balaunce,  
 But as her liketh for to weie  
 The trewé man full ofte aweie  
 She put, which hath her gracé bede,  
 And sette an untrue in his stede.

Lo, thus blindly the world she  
 demeth

In Lovés cause, as to me semeth,  
 I not what other men wold sain  
 But I algate am so beseine,  
 And stonde as one amonges alle  
 Which am out of her gracé falle.  
 It nedeth také no witsnesse,  
 For she, which said is the goddessse  
 To whether parte of love it wende,  
 Hath set me for a finall ende  
 The point wherto that I shall holde.

Forwhan she hath me well beholde  
 Halving of scorne she saidé thus :  
 "Thou wost well that I am Venús,  
 Which all only my lustés seche.

And well I wot though thou beseche  
 My lové lustés ben there none  
 Which I may take in thy persone,  
 For lovés lust and lockés here  
 In chambre accorden nevermore.  
 And though thou feigne a yong  
 coráge,

It sheweth well by thy viságe,  
 That oldé grisel is no fole.  
 There ben full many yerés stole  
 With the and other suché mo  
 That outward feignen youthé so  
 And ben within of pouer assay.  
 ' My herté wolde, and I ne may,'  
 Is nought beloved now a daies.  
 Er thou make any such assaies  
 To love, and faile upon thy fete,  
 Bet is to maké *beau retirete*.'

" My sone, if that thou well be-  
 thought,

This toucheth the, foryete it nought,  
 The thing is tornéd into 'was,'  
 The which was whilome grene gras  
 Is welkéd heie as timé now.  
 Forthy my counseil is, that thou  
 Remembre well how thou art olde."

Whan Venus hath her talé tolde,  
 And I bethought was all aboute,  
 And wisté wel withouten doubté  
 That there was no recoverie,  
 And as a man the blase of fire  
 With water quencheth, so ferde I.  
 A coldé me caught sodeinly ;  
 For sorwe that my herté made  
 My dedly facé pale and fade  
 Becam, and swoune I fel to grounde.  
**And as I lay** the samé stounde  
 Ne fully quick, ne fully dede,  
 Me thought I sigh to-fore min hede  
 Cupidé with his bowé bent  
 And like unto a parlément  
 Which were ordeiné for the nones,  
 With him cam all the world atones  
 Of gentil folke, that whilom were  
 Lovérs, I sigh hem alle there

Forth with Cupide in sondry routes.  
 Min eye and as I cast aboutes  
 To know among hem who was who,  
 I sigh where lusty youthé tho,  
 As he which was a capitein  
 To-fore all other upon the plein  
 Stood with his routé well begon,  
 Her hedes kempt, and therupon  
 Garlondés, nought of o colour,  
 Some of the lefe some of the floure,  
 And some of greté perles were.  
 The newé guise of Beawmé there  
 With sondry thingés well devised  
 I sigh, wherof they be queintised.  
 It was all lust that they with ferde.  
 There was no song that I ne herde  
 Which unto lové was touchfng,  
 Of Pan and all that was likfng,  
 As in piping of melodie  
 Was herde in thilké compaignie,  
 So loudé that on every side  
 It thought as all the heven cride  
 In suche accorde and suche a soune  
 Of bombarde and of clarioúne  
 With cornemúse and with shalméle,  
 That it was half a mannés hele  
 So glad a noisé for to here.

And as me thought in this manere  
 All fresshe I sigh hem sprunge and  
 daunce,

And do to love her entendaúnce  
 After the lust of youthés hest,  
 There was inough of joy and fest.  
 For ever among they laugh and pley  
 And putten care out of the wey,  
 That he with hem ne sat ne stode.  
 And over this I understode,  
 So as min ere it might arecche,  
 The mosté matere of her speche  
 It was of knighthode and of armes,  
 And what it is to ligge in armes  
 With lové whan it is acheved.

There was Tristram, which was  
 beveled  
 With Bele Isolde, and Lancelot

Stode with Gunnór, and Galahot  
 With his lady, and as me thought,  
 I sigh where Jason with him brought  
 His lové, which Creisa hight.  
 And Hercules which mochel might  
 Was theré bering his great mace,  
 And most of all in thilké place  
 He peineth him to maké chere  
 With Eölen which was him dere.  
 Theseüs though he were untrewé  
 To love, as allé women knewe,  
 Yet was he theré nethéles  
 With Fedra which to love he ches.  
 Of Grece eke there was Thelamon,  
 Which fro the kingé Lamedon  
 At Troy his daughter reft away  
 Eseönen as for his pray,  
 Which také was whan Jason cam  
 Fro Colchos and the citee nam  
 In vengeaunce of the firsté hate  
 That made hem after to debate  
 Whan Priamus the newé town  
 Hath made. And in avisióun  
 Me thoughté that I sigh also  
 Hector forth with his brethern two,  
 Him self stood with Pantasilee,  
 And next to him I mighté see,  
 Where Paris stood with faire Heleine,  
 Which was his joié souveraine.  
 And Troilus stood with Cresiede,  
 But ever among although he pleide,  
 By semblaunt he was hevy chered.  
 For Diomede, as him was lered,  
 Claimeth to be his partenére,  
 And thus full many a bachelere,  
 A thousand mo than I can sain,  
 With youth I sigh there well besein  
 Forth with her lovés glad and blith.

And some I sigh, which ofte sith  
 Compleignen hem in sondry wise,  
 Among the which I sigh Narcise  
 And Piramus, that sory were.  
 The worthy Greke also was there,  
 Achilles, which for lové deied.  
 Agámenon eke as men saied,

And Menelay the King also  
 I sigh with many an other mo  
 Which hadden be fortunéd sore  
 In lovés cause. And overmore  
 Of women in the samé cas  
 With hem I sigh where Dido was  
 Forsaké which was with Enee.  
 And Phillis eke I mighté see,  
 Whom Demophon deceivéd hadde,  
 And Adriagne her sorwe ladde,  
 For Theseús her suster toke  
 And her unkindély forsoke.  
 I sigh there eke among the pres  
 Compleigning upon Herculés  
 His firsté lové Deianire,  
 Which set him afterward a fire.  
 Medea was there eke and pleigneth  
 Upon Jasón for that he feigneth  
 Withouté cause and toke a newe,  
 She saidé, 'Fie on all untrewé !'  
 I sigh theré Deídamie,  
 Which haddé lost the compaignie  
 Of Áchillés, whan Diomede  
 To Troy him fet upon the nede.  
 Among these other upon the grene  
 I sigh also the wofull quene  
 Cleópatrás, which in a cave  
 With serpents hath her self begrave  
 All quick,<sup>1</sup> and so she was to-tore  
 For sorwe of that she haddé lore  
 Antónie, which her love hath be.  
 And forth with her I sigh Tisbé,  
 Which on the sharpé swerdés pointe  
 For lové deied in sory pointe.  
 And as min ere it mighté knowe,  
 She saidé, 'Wo worth alle slowe.'  
 The pleint of Progne and Philomene  
 There herde I what it woldé mene,  
 How Tereús of his untrouthe  
 Undid hem both, and that was  
 routhé.  
 And next to hem I sigh Canace,  
 Which for Machair her faders grace  
 Hath lost and deied in wofull plite.

<sup>1</sup> *Begrave all quick*, buried alive.

And as I sigh in my spiríte,  
 Me thought amongés other thus  
 The daughter of king Priamus,  
 Políxena, whom Pirrus slough,  
 Was there and madé sorwe inough,  
 As she which deide giletes  
 For love, and yet was lovéles.  
 And for to také the desporte  
 I sigh there some of other porte,  
 And that was Circes and Calipse,  
 That couthen do the moné clipse,  
 Of men and chaungé the liknesse,  
 Of artmagiqué sorceresse,  
 They helde in hondé many one  
 To lové, where they wolde or none.  
 But above allé that there were  
 Of women I sigh fouré there,  
 Whosé name I herdé most com-  
 mended.

By hem the court stode all amended.  
 For where they comen in présence  
 Men diden hem the reverence  
 As though they hadden ben god-  
 désses

Of all this world or emperresses.  
 And as me thought an ere I laid  
 And herde, how that these others said :  
 'Lo, thesé ben the fouré wives,  
 Whose feith was provéd in her lives  
 For in ensample of all good  
 With mariágé so they stood  
 That Famé, which no great thing  
 hideth

Yet in cronique of hem abideth.'  
 Penelope that one was hote,  
 Whom many a knight hath loved  
 hote

While that her lorde Ulixes laie  
 Full many a yere and many a daie  
 Upon the greté siege of Troy :  
 But she which hath no worldés joy  
 But only of her husebonde,  
 While that her lord was out of londe,  
 So well hath kept her womanhede,  
 That all the world therof toke hede



And namélich of hem in Grece,  
 That other woman was Lucrece,  
 Wife to the Romain Collatine.  
 And she constreignéd of Tarquine  
 To thing which was ayein her will,  
 She woldé nought her selven still,  
 But deide only for drede of shame  
 In keping of her godé name,  
 As she which was one of the beste.  
 The thridde wife which hote Alceste,  
 Which whan Admetus shuldé die  
 Upon his greté maladie,  
 She praied unto the goddés so,  
 That she receiveth all the wo  
 Anddeied her self to yive him life,—  
 Se where this were a noble wife!  
 The ferthé wife which I there sigh,  
 I herde of hem that weré nigh,  
 How she was cleped Alcíone,  
 Which Ceíx hiré lord allone  
 And to no mo her body kepte,  
 And whan she sighe him dreint,  
 she lepte

Into the wawés where he swam,  
 And there a see foule she becam.  
 And with her wingés him besprad  
 For lové that she to him had.

Lo, thesé fouré weren tho,  
 Which I sigh as me thoughté tho  
 Among the greté compaignie,  
 Which lové haddé for to gie.<sup>1</sup>  
 But Youthé, which in speciáll  
 Of Lovés court was maréshall,  
 So besy was upon his lay,  
 That he none hedé where he lay  
 Hath take. And than as I behelde,  
 Me thought I sigh upon the felde,  
 Where Eldé came a softé pas  
 Toward Venús, there as she was,  
 With him great compaignie he ladde,  
 But nought so fele as Youthé hadde.  
 The mosté part were of great age,  
 And that was sene in her viságe,  
 And nought forthý, so as they might,

<sup>1</sup> *Gie*, guide.

They made hem yongly to the sight.  
 But yet herde I no pipés there  
 To maké merth in mannés ere,  
 But the musique I mighté knowe  
 For oldé men, which souned lowe  
 With harpe and lute and with citoie  
 The hové daunce and the carole,<sup>1</sup>  
 In suche a wise as love hath bede,  
 A softé pas they daunce and trede,  
 And with the women otherwhile  
 With sobre chere among they smile,  
 For laughter was there none on  
 high.

And nethéles full well I sigh  
 That they the moré queint it made  
 For love in whom they weren gládé.  
 And there me thought I mighté see  
 The king Davíd with Bersabee,  
 And Salomon was nought withoute  
 Passing an hundred in a route  
 Of wivés and of concubines;  
 Jewesses eke and Sarazínes  
 To him I sigh all entendaunt,  
 I not where he were suffisaunt.  
 But nethéles for all his wit  
 He was attachéd with that writ  
 Which Lové with his hondenseleth,  
 From whom none erthly man ap-  
 peleth.

And over this, as for no wonder,  
 With his león, which he put under,  
 With Dálilá Sampson I knewe,  
 Whos love his strength all over-  
 threwe.

I sigh there Aristotle also,  
 Whom that the quene of Grece al so  
 Hath bridled, that in thilké time  
 She made him such a silogime,  
 That he foryate all his logique,  
 There was none arte of his practique,  
 Through which it mighté ben ex-  
 cluded,  
 That he ne was fully concluded

<sup>1</sup> *Hové daunce*, court dance. *Carole*, an old round dance.

To love and did his obeisaunce.  
 And eke Virgile of áqueintaúnce  
 I sigh, where he the maiden praid  
 Which was the doughter, as men  
 said,

Of temperoúr whilom of Rome.  
 Sortés and Plato with him come,  
 So did Ovdé the poete.

I thoughté than how love is swete  
 Which hath so wisé men reclaimed,  
 And was my self the lasse ashamed  
 Or for to lese or for to winne

In the mischefe that I was inne,  
 And thus I lay in hope of grace.

And whan they comen to the place,  
 Where Venus stood and I was falle,  
 These oldé men with o vois alle  
 To Venus praiden for my sake.

And she that mighté nought forsake  
 So great a clamour as was there,  
 Let pité come into her ere

And forth with all unto Cupide  
 She praieth that he upon his side  
 Me woldé through his gracé sende  
 Some comfort, that I might amende  
 Upon the cas which is befallé.

And thus for me they praiden alle  
 Of hem that weren old aboute,  
 And eke some of the yongé route,  
 Of gentilésse and puré trowth  
 I herde hem tel it was great routh,  
 That I withouten help so ferde.

And thus me thought I lay and herde.

Cupidé, which maie hurt and hele  
 In Lovés cause, as for min hele  
 Upon the point which him was praid  
 Cam with Venús where I was laid  
 Swounénd upon the grené gras.  
 And as me thought anone there was  
 On every sidé so great pres,  
 That every life began to pres,  
 I wot nought wel how many score,  
 Suche as I spake of now to-fore,  
 Lovers, that comen to beholde,  
 But most of hem that weren olde.

They stoden there at thilké tide  
 To se what endé shall betide  
 Upon the cure of my sotie.  
 Tho might I heré great partie  
 Spekénd, and eche his own avis  
 Hath tolde, one that another this.  
 But among allé this I herde,  
 They weren wo that I so ferde,  
 And saiden that for no rióte  
 An oldé man shuld nought assote.  
 For as they tolden redely  
 There is in him no causé why,  
 But if he wold him self be nice,  
 So were he well the moré nice.  
 And thus desputen some of tho,  
 And somé saiden no thng so,  
 But that the wildé lovés rage  
 In mannés life forbereth none age,  
 While there is oilé for to fire  
 The lampe is lightly set a fire  
 And is full hard er it be queint,  
 But only if he be some seint,  
 Which God preserveth of his grace.  
 And thus me thought in sondry place,  
 Of hem that walken up and down  
 There was divers opinioún.  
 And for a whilé so it laste,  
 Till that Cupidé to the laste,  
 Forth with his moder full avised  
 Hath détermínéd and devised,  
 Unto what point he woll descend.  
 And all this time I was liggénd  
 Upon the ground to-fore his eyen.  
 And they that my disésé sighen  
 Supposen nought I shuldé live.  
 But he which woldé thanné yive  
 His gracé, so as it maie be,  
 This blindé god which may nought se  
 Hath gropéd till that he me fonde.  
 And as he putté forth his honde  
 Upon my body, where I lay,  
 Me thought a firy lancegay  
 Which whilom through my hert he  
 cast

He pulleth out, and al so fast

As this was do, Cupidé nam  
 His wey; I not where he becam;  
 And so did all the remenaunt  
 Which unto him was entendaunt  
 Of hem that in avisió  
 I had a revelació,  
 So as I toldé now to-fore.  
**But Venus wenté nough** ther-  
 fore,  
 Ne Genius, which thilké time  
 Abiden bothé fasté by me.  
 And she, which may the hertés binde  
 In lovés cause and eke unbinde,  
 Er I out of my traunce arose,  
 Venús, which helde a buisté close  
 And woldé nought I sholdé deie,  
 Toke out, more colde then ony keie  
 An oignément, and in such point  
 She hath my wounded hert anoint,  
 My temples and my reins also.  
 And forth with all she toke me tho  
 A wonder mirroure for to holde,  
 In which she bad me to beholde  
 And také hede of that I sigh;  
 Wherin anone min hertés eye  
 I cast and sigh my colour fade,  
 Min eien dim and all unglade,  
 My chekés thinne, and all my face  
 With elde I mighté se deface,  
 So riveled and so wo besein  
 That there was nothing full ne plein.  
 I sigh also min hairés hore,  
 My will was tho to se no more,  
 On which for there was no plesaunce.  
 And than into my rémembraunce  
 I drough min oldé daiés passed,  
 And as resón it hath compassed,  
 I made a likeness of my selve  
 Unto the sondry monthés twelve,  
 Wherof the yere in his estate  
 Is made, and stant upon debate,  
 That lich til other none accordeth.  
 For who the timés wel recordeth,  
 And than at Marche if he beginne,  
 Whan that the lusty yere comth inne

Till Augst bepasséd and Septembre,  
 The mighty youth hemay remembre,  
 In which the yere hath his deduit<sup>1</sup>  
 Of grass, of lefe, of floure, of fruit,  
 Of corne, and of the winy grape.  
 And afterward the time is shape  
 To frost, to snow, to wind, to rain,  
 Till eft that March be come ayein.  
 The Winter woll no Somer knowe,  
 The grené lefe is overthrowe,  
 The clothéd erth is thanné bare,  
 Despuiléd is the somer fare,  
 That erst was hete is thanné chele.  
 And thus thenkéndé thoughtés fele  
 I was out of my swoune affraid,  
 Wherof I sigh my wittés straid  
 And gan to clepe hem home ayein.  
**And whan Pleson** it herde sain  
 That lovés ragé was away,  
 He cam to me the righté wey  
 And hath remeved the sotie  
 Of thilke unwisé fantasie  
 Wherof that I was wont to plein,  
 So that of thilké fryr pein  
 I was made sobre and hole inough.  
 Venus beheld me than and lough  
 And axeth, as it were in game,  
 "What lové was?" And I forshame  
 Ne wisté what I shulde answeré.  
 And nethéles I gan to swere  
 That "By my trouth I knewe him  
 nought,"  
 So fer it was out of my thought,  
 Right as it haddé never be.  
 "My godé soné," tho quod she,  
 "Now at this time I leve it wele,  
 So goth the fortune of my whele.  
 Forthý my counseil is, thou leve."—  
 "Madame," I saidé, "by your  
 leve,  
 Ye weten well, and so wote I,  
 That I am unbehovély  
 Your Court for this day for to serve.  
 And for I may no thank deserve,

<sup>1</sup> *Deduit*, delight.

And also for I am refused,  
 I praié you to ben excused.  
 And nethéles as for to lasté,  
 While that my wittés with me laste,  
 Touchendé my confessión,  
 I axe an absolutión  
 Of Genius, er that I go."

The prest anone was redy tho,  
 And saidé: "Sone, as of thy shrifte,  
 Thou hast full pardon and foryifte.  
 Foryete it thou, and so will I."

"Min holy fader, graunt mercý,"  
 Quod I to him, and to the quene  
 I fell on knees upon the grene,  
 And toke my levé for to wende.  
 But she, that woldé make an ende,  
 As therto, which I was most able,  
 A paire of bedés blacke as sable  
 She toke and heng my necke about.  
 Upon the gaudés all without  
 Was write of gold *pur reposer*.  
 "Lo," thus she said, "Iohan Gower,  
 Now thou art atté lasté caste. †  
 Thus have I for thin esé caste  
 That thou no more of lové seche.  
 But my will is, that thou beseche  
 And pray hereafter for the pees,  
 And that thou make a plein relees  
 To love which taketh litel hede  
 Of oldé men upon the nede,  
 Whan that the lustes ben away,  
 Forthy to the nis but o wey,  
 In which let Reson be thy guide.  
 For he may sone him self misguide,  
 That seeth nought the perill to-fore.

"My soné, be well ware therefore  
 And kepe the sentence of my lore  
 Tarie thou in my court no more,  
 But go there vertue moral dwelleth,  
 Wherebenthy bokés, as men telleth,  
 Whiche of long timé thou hastwrite.  
 For this I do the well to wite,  
 If thou thin helé wolt purcháce  
 Thou might nought maké sute and  
 chace

Where that the game is nought  
 prováble,  
 It were a thing unresonáble,  
 A man to be so overseie.  
 Forthý take hede of that I saie.  
 For in the lawe of my commune  
 We be nought shapé to commune,  
 Thy self and I, never after this.  
 Now have I said all that there is  
 Of love, as for thy final ende.  
 Adieu, for I mot fro the wende."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. Harl. 3490:

And grete well Chaucer, whan ye mete,  
 As my disciple and my poete.  
 For in the floures of his youth,  
 In sondry wise, as he well couth,  
 Of dittees and of songes glade,  
 The which he for my sake made,  
 The lond fulfilled is over all,  
 Wherof to him in speciall  
 Above all other I am most holde.  
 Forthy now in his daies olde  
 Thou shalt him telle this message,  
 That he upon his later age  
 To sette an end of all his werke,  
 As he, which is min owne clerke,  
 Do make his testament of love,  
 As thou hast do thy shrifte above,  
 So that my court it may recorde.  
 Madame, I can me well accorde,  
 Quod I, to telle as ye me bidde.  
 And with that worde it so betidde  
 Out of my sight all sodeinly,  
 Enclosed in a sterry sky,  
 Up to the heven Venus straught.  
 And I my righte waie sought  
 Home fro the wode and forth I wente,  
 Where as with al min hole entente  
 Thus with my bedes upon honde  
 For hem that true love fonde  
 I thenke bidde while I live,  
 Upon the point which I am shrive.  
 He, which withinne daies seven  
 The large world forth with the heven  
 Of his eternal providence  
 Hath made and thilke intelligence  
 In mannes soule resonable,  
 Wherof the man of feture  
 Of alle erthly creature  
 After the soule is immortal,

And with that word all sodeinly  
 Encloséd in a sterréd sky  
 Venús, which is the quene of love,  
 Was take into her place above,  
 More wist I nought where she  
 becam.

And thus my leve of her I nam,  
 And forth with al that samé tide

To thilke lord in speciall  
 As he, which is of alle things  
 The creator and of the kinges  
 Hath the fortune upon honde  
 His grace and mercy for to fonde,  
 Upon my bare knees I pray,  
 That he my worthy king convey  
 Richard by name the secounde,  
 In whom hath ever yet be founde  
 Justice medled with pite,  
 Largesse forth with charite,  
 In his persone it may be shewed,  
 What is a king to be well thewed  
 Touching of pite namely,  
 For he yet never unpetously  
 Ayein the leges of his londe  
 For no defaute which he fonde  
 Through cruelte vengeance sought.  
 As though the worldes chaunce in  
 brought

Of infortune great debate,  
 Yet was he nought infortunate,  
 For he, which the fortune ladde,  
 The highe god him overspradde  
 Of his justice and kept him so,  
 That his estate stood evermo  
 Sauf as it oughte wel to be  
 Lich to the sonne in his degre,  
 Which with the cloudes up alofte  
 Is derked and beshadewed ofte,  
 But how so that it trouble in thaire  
 The sonne is ever bright and faire  
 Within him self and nought unpeired,  
 All though the weder be despeired,  
 The heved planetes is nought to wite.  
 My worthy prince, of whom I write,  
 Thus stant he with him selve clere  
 And doth what lith in his powere,  
 Nought only here at home to seke  
 Love and accorde, but outward eke,  
 As he, that save his people wolde.  
 So ben we alle well beholde

Her Prest, which woldé nought  
 abide,

Or be ine lefe or be me loth,  
 Out of my sighté forth he goth.  
 And I was left withouten helpe,  
 So wist I nought wherof to yelpe,  
 But only that I haddé lore  
 My time and was sorfe therefore.

To do service and obeisaunce  
 To him, which of his high suffraunce  
 Hath many a gréat debate appesed  
 To make his lege men ben esed,  
 Wherefore that his cronique shall  
 For ever be memoriall  
 To the loenge of that he doth.  
 For this wote every man in soth,  
 What king that so desireth pees,  
 He taketh the way which Criste ches,  
 And who that Christes weies sueth,  
 It proveth well that he escheueth  
 The vices and is vertuuous,  
 Wherof he mot be gracious  
 Toward his god and acceptable.  
 And so to make his regne stable  
 With all the will that I may yive  
 I pray and shall while that I live,  
 As I which in subjection  
 Stonde under the protection  
 And may my selven nought bewelde,  
 What for sikenesse and what for elde,  
 Which I receive of goddes grace,  
 But though me lacke to purchace  
 My kinges thank as by deserté,  
 Yet the simplesse of my pouerte  
 Unto the love of my legeaunce  
 Desireth for to do plesaunce.  
 And for this cause in min entent  
 This pouer book here I present  
 Unto his highe worthinesse  
 Write of my simple besinesse,  
 So as sikenesse it suffre wolde,  
 And in such wise as I first tolde,  
 Whan I this boke began to make,  
 In some partie it may be take  
 And for to laugh and for to pley,  
 And for to loke in other wey  
 It may be wisdom to the wise,  
 So that somedele for good apprise,  
 And eke somedele for lust and game  
 I have it made for thilke same.

And thus bewhaped in my thought,  
 Whan all was tornéd into nought,  
 I stood amaséd for a while,  
 And in my self I gan to smile,  
 Thenkend upon the bedés blacke,  
 And how they weren me betake  
 For that I shuldé bid and praie.  
 And whan I sigh none other waie,  
 But only that I was refused,  
 Unto the life whiche I had uséd  
 I thoughté never torne ayein.  
 And in this wisé soth to sain  
 Homward a softé pas I went,  
 Where that with all min hole entent,  
 Upon the point that I am shrive,  
 I thenke biddé while I live.

**Se**, which withinné daiés seven  
 This largé worlde forth with the  
 heven,  
 Of his eternal providence  
 Hath made, and thilke intelligence  
 In mannés soulé resonáble  
 Hath shapé to be perdurable,  
 Wherof the man of his fetúre  
 Above all erthly créature  
 After the soule is immortáll,  
 To thilké lorde in speciáll,  
 As he which is of allé thinges  
 The Créator and of the kinges  
 Hath the fortunés upon honde,  
 His grace and mercy for to fonde,  
 Upon my baré knees I praie,  
**That he this londe** in siker waie  
 Woll set upon good governaunce.  
 For if men take in remembrance,  
 What is to live in unité,  
 There is no state in his degré,  
 That ne ought to desiré pes,  
 Withoute which it is no les  
 To seche and loke into the past,  
 There may no worldés joié last.  
**First** for to loké the clergie,

Hem oughté well to justifie  
 Thing which belongeth to their cure,  
 As for to praie and to procure  
 Our pees toward the heven above,  
 And eke to setté rest and love  
 Among us on this erthé here ;  
 For if they wrought in this manere  
 After the reule of charité  
 I hopé that men sholden se  
 This lond amende.

**And** over this  
 To seche and loke how that it is  
 Touchénd of the chivalérie,  
 Which for to loke in some partie  
 Is worthie for to be commended  
 And in some part to be amended,  
 That of her largé retenue  
 The lond is full of maintenue,  
 Which causeth that the comun right  
 In fewé contres stont upright.  
 Extorción, kontek, ravine  
 Witholdé ben of that covine.  
 All day men heré great compleint  
 Of the disese, of the constreint,  
 Wherof the people is sore oppressed,  
 God graunt it moté be redressed.  
 For of knighthodé thorder wolde,  
 That they defende and kepé sholde  
 The comun right and the franchise  
 Of Holy Chirche in allé wise,  
 So that no wicked man it dere,  
 And therof serveth shielde and spere.  
 But for it goth now other waie,  
 Our gracé goth the more awaie.

**And for to loken** overmore,  
 Wherof the people pleignen sore  
 Toward the lawes of our londe,  
 Men sain that trouth hath broke  
 his bonde

And with brocáge is gone away,  
 So that no man can se the wey,  
 Where for to findé rightwisnesse.

**And if men sech** in sikernesse  
 Upon the lucre of marchandie,  
 Compassément and trecherie

Of singlar profit to winne,  
Men sain is cause of mochel sinne,  
And namely of división,  
Which many a noble worthy town  
Fro welth and fro prosperité  
Hath brought to great adversité ;  
So were it good to ben all one.  
For mochel gracé therupon  
Unto the citees shuldé fall,  
Which might availé to us all,  
If these estates amended were,  
So that the Vertues stoden there,  
And that the Vices were away,  
Me thinketh I dorste thanné say,  
This londes gracé shulde arise.

**But yet to loke** in other wise,  
There is a state, as ye shall here,  
Above all other on erthé here,  
Which hath the londe in his  
balaunce ;

To him belongeth the legeaunce  
Of clerke, of knight, of man of lawe,  
Under his honde all is forthdrawe  
The marchaunt and the laborer,  
So stant it all in his powér  
Or for to spille, or for to save.

But though that he such power have,  
And that his mightés ben so large,  
He hath hem nought withouten  
charge

To which that **every king** is swore.  
So were it good, that he therefore  
First unto rightwisnesse entende,  
Wherof that he him self amende  
Toward his God, and levé vice,  
Which is the chefe of his office.  
And after all the remenaunt  
He shall upon his covenant  
Governe and lede in such a wise,  
So that there be no tirannise  
Wherof that he his people greve.  
Or elles may he nought acheve  
That longeth to his Regalie.

**For if a king** will justifie  
Hislonde and hem that ben withinne,

First at him self he mot beginne  
To kepe and reule his own estate,  
That in him self be no debate  
Toward his God. For otherwise  
Ther may none erthly King suffice  
Of his kingdóm the folk to lede,  
But he the King of Heven drede.  
For what King sette him upon pride  
And taketh his iust on every side  
And will nought go the righté weie,  
Though God his gracé cast aweie,  
No wonder is, for atté last  
He shall well wite it maynought last,  
The pompé whiche he secheth here.  
But what King that with humble  
chere

After the Lawe of God escheueth  
The Vices, and the Vertues sueth,  
His gracé shall be suffisaunt  
To governe all the remenaunt,  
Which longeth unto his dueté ;  
So that in his prosperité  
The people shall nought be op-  
pressed,  
Wherof his namé shall be blessed  
For ever and be memoriall.

**And now** to speke as in finall  
Touchéndé that I undertoke  
In English for to make a boke  
Which stant betwene ernést and  
game,

I have it made as thilké same,  
Which axé for to be excused,  
And that my boke benoughtrefused  
Of leréd men whan they it se  
For lack of curiosité ;  
For thilké scole of eloquence  
Belongeth nought to my sciéce,  
Upon the forme of rhetorique  
My wordes for to peint and pike,  
As Tullius somtimé wrote.  
But this I knowe and this I wote,  
That I have do my trewé peine  
With rudé wordés and with pleine

In all that ever I couthe and might,  
 This boke to write as I behight,  
 So as siknése it suffer wolde.  
 And also for my daiés olde  
 That I am feble and impotent,  
 I wot nought how the worlde is  
 went,<sup>1</sup>

So pray I to my lordés alle,  
 Now in min age, how so befallé,  
 That I mot stonden in her grace.  
 For though me lacké to purchace  
 Her worthy thank, as by deserte,  
 Yet the simplésse of my pouerte  
 Desireth for to do plesaunce  
 To hem under whose governaunce  
 I hopé siker to abide.  
 But now, upon my lasté tide,  
 That I this boke have made and  
 write,

My Musé doth me for to wite  
 And saith, it shall be for my beste,  
 Fro this day forth to také reste,  
 That I no more of lové make,<sup>2</sup>  
 Which many a herte hath overtake  
 And overtornéd as the blinde  
 Fro reson into lawe of kinde,

<sup>1</sup> *Went*, turned.

<sup>2</sup> *Make*, write poetry.

Where as the wisdom goth aweie  
 And can nought se the righté weie  
 How to governe his own estate,  
 But every day stant in debate  
 Within him self and can nought leve.

And thus forth<sup>h</sup> my finall leve  
 I také now for evermore  
 Withouté making<sup>1</sup> any more  
 Of love and of his dedly hele,  
 Which no phisicien can hele.  
 For his natúre is so divers,  
 That it hath ever some travers  
 Or of to moch or of to lite,  
 That plainly may no man delite,  
 But if him faile or that or this.  
 But thilké Lové, which that is  
 Within a mannés herte affirmed  
 And stant of Charité confirmed,  
 Such Love is goodly for to have,  
 Such Lové may the body save,  
 Such Lové may the soule amende,  
 The Higue God such Love us sende  
 Forth with the remenaunt of grace,  
 So that above in thilké place,  
 Where resteth Love and alle Pees,  
 Our joie may ben endélés.

<sup>1</sup> *Making*, writing poems.

*Explicit iste liber, qui transeat obsecro liber,  
 Ut sine livore vigeat lectoris in ore.  
 Qui sedet in scannis celi det, ut ista Johannis  
 Perpetuis annis stet pagina grata Britannis.*



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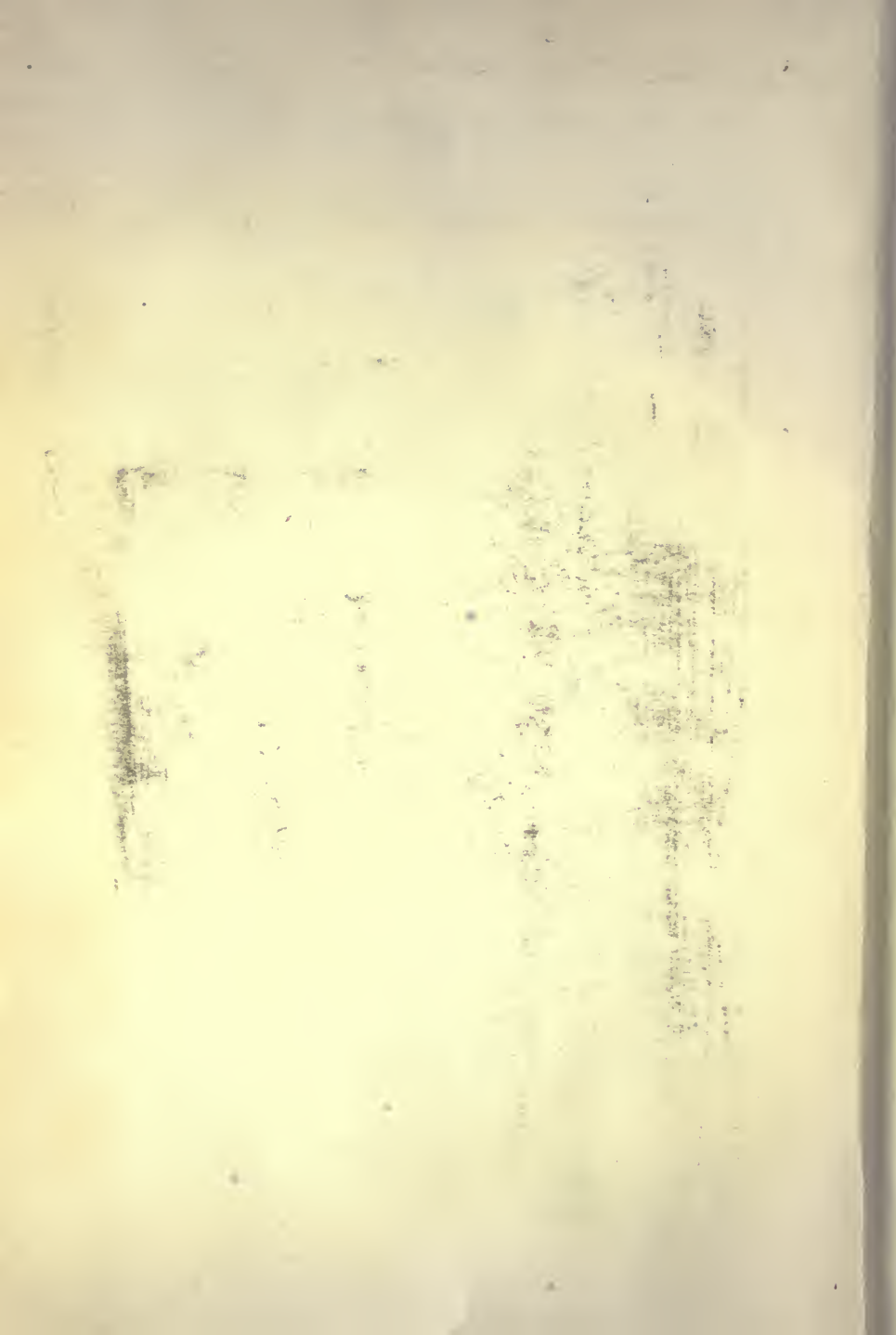
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