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THE  
CANTERBURY TALES

OF  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

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DATE .....



A New Text, with Illustrative Notes,

51776  
1901

BY

THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq., M.A. F.S.A. &c.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

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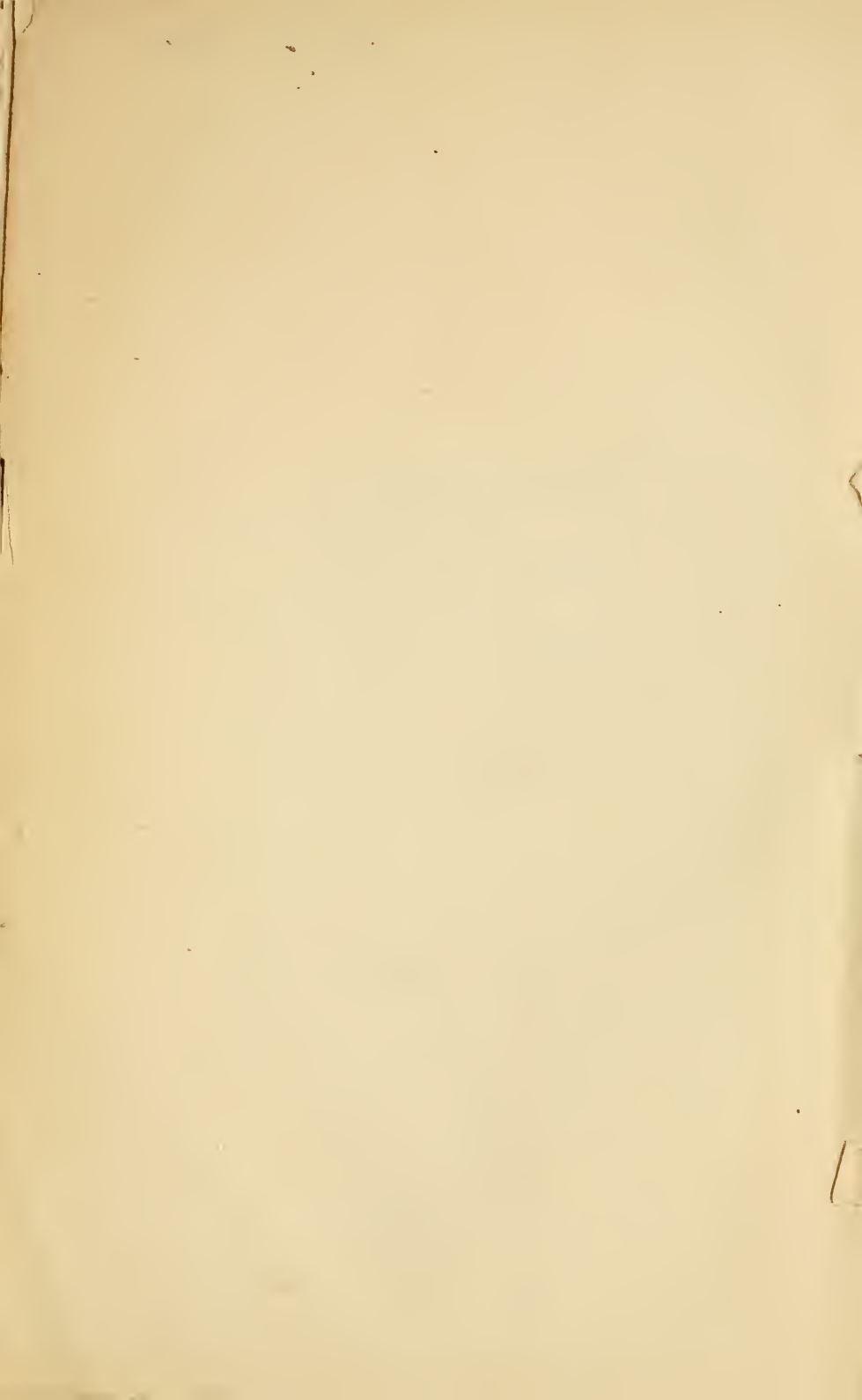
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*Low: Chapman*  
*August, 1864.*

BEQUEST OF  
REV. CANON SCADDING, D. D.  
TORONTO, 1901.





## INTRODUCTION.



FOR about two centuries after the Norman conquest, Anglo-Norman was almost exclusively the language of literature in this country. The few exceptions belong to the last expiring remains of an older and totally different Anglo-Saxon style, or to the first attempts of a new English one, formed upon a Norman model. Of the two grand monuments of the poetry of this period, Layamon belongs to the former of these classes, and the singular poem entitled the *Ormulum* to the latter. After the middle of the thirteenth century, the attempts at poetical composition in English became more frequent and more successful, and previous to the age of Chaucer we have several poems of a very remarkable character, and some good imitations of the harmony and spirit of the French versification of the time.

During this latter period there had been a great movement in intelligence and art throughout Europe, which was shewing itself sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, and which was giving great promises of a splendid future. By the end of the thirteenth century it broke out in Italy in Dante, and a little later in Petrarch. In France it shewed itself in a multitude of poetical compositions, remarkable for their spirit and harmony of versification. In England it became magnificently embodied in Chaucer, almost to rise and die with him; for two centuries passed away before another poet was produced who could lay any claim to rivalry with his great predecessor.

According to the best information that can be collected, Geoffrey Chaucer was born somewhere near the year 1328,\* his family being apparently citizens of London. The accounts of his earlier years and of his education are vague and unsatisfactory; but he was certainly a man of extensive learning, and he had the education of a gentleman: he is generally believed to have been bred to the law. We learn from Chaucer's own testimony, given at a later period, in the case of the Grosvenor peerage, that in the autumn of 1356 he was in the army with which Edward III. invaded France, which was his first military service, and that he was made prisoner by the French during the expedition which terminated with the peace of Chartres in May 1360.

We know nothing further of Chaucer's history until 1367, when a pension of twenty marks yearly for life was granted by the king to the poet, as one of the valets of the king's chamber, in consideration of his services. About the same time he married Philippa, his of the ladies in attendance on the queen, who is said to have been the eldest daughter of Sir Payne Roet, king-of-arms of Guienne, and sister of Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, and subsequently wife of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. In 1370, as we find from the records, Chaucer was employed in the king's service abroad. Two years after this, on the 12th of November, 1372, the poet was sent on a mission to Genoa, to try on the choice of a port in England where the Genoese might form a commercial establishment; he appears to have remained in Italy nearly a year, as we do not trace him in England until the latter part of November 1373, and we then find, by the allowance of his expenses, that he had been on the king's service to Florence as well as to Genoa. We ar

\*The following notice of the personal history of the poet is chiefly an abridgment, of J. J.

Theriot's Nicolas, who gathered together a mass of facts from







Above all other, I am most holde.  
 Forthy nowe in his dayes olde  
 Thou shalle him telle this message,  
 That he uppon his latter age,  
 To sette an end of al his werke,  
 As he whiche is myn owne clerke,  
 Do make his Testament of Love,  
 As thou hast done thy shrift above,  
 So that my courte yt may recorde."

It has been supposed, on very slight grounds, that Chaucer's friendship for Gower met with some interruption towards the end of his life.\*

Soon after his return from Italy, Chaucer appears to have been again employed on foreign service, for the records shew that he was absent from May to December 1379. In 1382 he received the appointment of comptroller of the petty customs of the port of London, in addition to his previous office of comptroller of the customs and subsidies; and in February 1385 he obtained the still greater favour of being allowed to nominate a permanent deputy, by which the poet must have been partially released from duties which can never have been agreeable to his tastes.

Several circumstances shew that Chaucer had some intimate connection with the county of Kent, where he probably held property; and he was elected a knight of the shire for that county in the parliament which met at Westminster on the 1st of October, 1386, and which closed its session on the 1st of November following; shortly after which (before the 4th of December, 1386), Chaucer was dismissed from his employments, but for what reason we have not the slightest intimation, though it was doubtless connected with some of the petty intrigues of this intriguing reign. Probably, as Sir Harris Nicolas supposes, he had become obnoxious to the Duke of Gloucester and the other ministers who had succeeded his patron, the Duke of Lancaster, in the government; and it is well known that the proceedings of the parliament just alluded to were directed against the Duke of Lancaster's party.

We know nothing further of Chaucer's history until the year 1388, except that he continued regularly to receive his two pensions of twenty marks each; but on the 1st of May in the latter year, the grants of these pensions were at his request cancelled, and the annuities assigned to John Scalby, which has been considered as a proof that the poet was at that time in distress, and obliged to sell his pensions. Exactly a year after this, in May 1389, on the young king's assumption of the reins of government, the Duke of Lancaster's party were restored to power, and Chaucer again appeared at court. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the poet was appointed to the valuable office of clerk of the king's works, palace of Westminster, the Tower of London, the castle of Berkhamstead, and the manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, at the royal lodge of Hathenburgh in the New Forest, at the lodges in the parks of Clarendon, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, and at the mews for the king's falcons at Charing Cross. He was expressly permitted to perform his duties by deputy, and his salary was fixed at two shillings a day. Chaucer held this office, however, only two years, having been dismissed from it before the 16th of September 1391, but the cause of his removal is unknown.

During the latter years of Richard's reign Chaucer was evidently suffering from poverty; for instead of receiving, as formerly, his pension in half-yearly payments when due, we find him constantly taking sums in advance; and as these were not always paid into his own hands, we are led to suppose that he was labouring under sickness as well as want. He was now aged as well as poor and needy; but the accession of Henry IV. came suddenly to cast a gleam of brightness on his declining days. Within four days after he came to the throne, Henry granted him, on the 3d of October, 1399, a yearly pension of forty marks, in addition to the annuity of twenty pounds which had been given him by

\* See a note on the Man of Law's Tale, l. 4498, and Sir H. Nicolas's *Life of Chaucer*, p. 29.

King Richard. On Christmas eve, 1399, the poet obtained the lease of a house near Westminster Abbey, where it is probable that he closed his days. His name appears in the issue rolls, as continuing to receive his pension, until the 1st of March, 1400, when it was received for him by Henry Somere, the clerk of the receipt of the exchequer, who is supposed to have been a relation of the "frere John Somere," whose calendar is mentioned in Chaucer's treatise on the Astrolabe. Chaucer is stated, and with probable correctness, in an epitaph placed in 1550 near his grave in Westminster Abbey by Nicholas Brigham (a poet of that time), to have died on the 25th of October, 1400, at which time, according to the supposed date of his birth, he would have reached the age of seventy-two.

The above are all the circumstances of importance connected with the life of Chaucer that are known to be true. Although, in the documents in which they are found, he is looked upon only as an actor in the eventful politics of the day, we have other evidence that his poetical talents were highly appreciated by his contemporaries, as well as in the age which followed his death. By the English poets of his time, Gower and Occleve, he is spoken of in the warmest terms of praise; and that his reputation was high on the continent, we have a remarkable proof in a ballad addressed to him by the French poet Eustace Deschamps, which has been printed in Sir Harris Nicolas's *Life* and in my *Anecdota Literaria*. This latter document shews us also that Chaucer was on terms of friendship at least with the French poets of his day. Occleve not only paid a tribute of affection to his "maister" in his poetry, but he painted his portrait in the margin of the manuscript; and this portrait, evidently a good one, was copied at different times and in different forms, and was no doubt the original of all the portraits of Chaucer we now have. The best copy appears to be that in the Harleian Ms. No. 4866.

#### THE CANTERBURY TALES.

Chaucer's capital work is doubtless the *Canterbury Tales*. The idea of thus joining together a number of stories by means of a connecting narrative, or frame, appears to have originated in the East; but long before the time of Chaucer it had been made popular in Europe by the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Peter Alfonsi and its translations, and by the still more widely-spread romance of the *Seven Sages*. It is probable that the latter, of which an edition has been published by the Percy Society, gave Chaucer the hint of his plot, rather than the *Decameron*, with which I think it doubtful if Chaucer were acquainted. But Chaucer's plan was far superior to that of any of the similar collections which had preceded it, not only for the opportunity it afforded for diversity of style in the stories, but for the variety of character it admitted in the personages to be introduced. The general introduction to the *Canterbury Tales* is one of the most perfect compositions in the English language.

The *Canterbury Tales* appear to have been the compilation of Chaucer's latter years; or they contain allusions to events so late as the year 1386, and if (as there appears little room for doubt) there are allusions in the *Man of Lawes Tale* to the *Confessio Amantis* of Gower, this part of the work must have been composed at a still later period, as that poem is stated by its author to have been written in the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard II. *i. e.* 1392-3. I have used the word compilation, because it appears to me not only evident that Chaucer composed the *Canterbury Tales* not continuously, but in different portions which were afterwards to be joined together; but it is more than probable that he worked up into it tales which had originally been written, and perhaps published, as separate poems. Chaucer tells us, in the *Legend of Good Women*, that he had thus published the *Knights Tale*,—

"Al the love of Palamon and Arcite,  
Of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite;"

as well as the life of St. Cecilia, or the *Second Nonnes Tale*,—

"And made the life also of Saint Cecile."

It is quite clear that we possess the *Canterbury Tales* in an unfinished form. Tyrwhitt makes the following general observations on this subject:—

“The general plan of the *Canterbury Tales* may be learned in a great measure from the prologue which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He supposes there that a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury assemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree that, for their common amusement on the road, each of them shall tell at least one tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence; and that he who shall tell the best tales shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same inn. This is, shortly, the *fable*. The *characters* of the pilgrims are as various as, at that time, could be found in the several departments of *middle* life; that is, in fact, as various as could, with any probability, be brought together, so as to form one company; the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears, further, that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the tales told by the pilgrims, but also to describe their journey, *And all the remnant of their pilgrimage* [ver. 726]; including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add, that the tales, besides being nicely adapted to the characters of their respective relators, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes, and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in verse, we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking; and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius which in an advanced age could begin so vast a work, we shall rather lament than be surprised that it has been left imperfect. In truth, if we compare those parts of the *Canterbury Tales* of which we are in possession, with the sketch which has been just given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one-half is wanting. The prologue we have, perhaps, nearly complete, and the greatest part of the journey to Canterbury; but not a word of the transactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the epilogue, which, we may suppose, was to have concluded the work, with an account of the prize supper and the separation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury, it will be necessary to take notice of certain defects and inconsistencies, which can only be accounted for upon the supposition that the work was never finished by the author.”

After a careful consideration of this question, I am inclined to believe that Chaucer not only left his grand poem in an unfinished state, but that he left it in detached portions only partially arranged, and that it was reduced to its present form after his death. This would explain satisfactorily the great variations of the manuscripts in the order of the tales, and the evident want of the connecting prologue in more than one instance. All the manuscripts agree in the order of the tales of the knight, miller, reve, and cook, and in placing them immediately after the general prologue, and it is therefore probable that they were left in that state by Chaucer. The *Cookes Tale* was evidently left unfinished by the author, and it was probably the person who reduced the whole to its present form that first introduced the tale of Gamelyn, to fill up what he supposed a *lacuna*, but whence he obtained this tale it is difficult to conjecture. Tyrwhitt is so entirely wrong in saying that this tale is not found in any manuscript of the first authority, that it occurs in the Harleian Ms. from which the present text is taken, and which I have no hesitation in stating to be the best and oldest manuscript of Chaucer I have yet met with. The style of Gamelyn would lead us to judge that it is not Chaucer's, but we can only reconcile this judgment with its being found so universally in the manuscripts, by means of the supposition of the posthumous arrangement of the *Canterbury Tales*, and its insertion by the arranger. I have printed the tale of Gamelyn from the same Harleian Ms. which has been the base of my text of the remainder of the poem; but I have distinguished it from the rest by printing it in smaller type, both on account of the apparently well-founded doubts of its being a genuine work of Chaucer, and in order not to interfere with the numbering of the lines in Tyrwhitt's edition, which I have thought it advisable to preserve.



After the *Cookes Tale*, the order of the tales differs very much in different manuscripts, until we arrive at the tale of the Manciple, with which, and the *Parson's Tale*, they all conclude. In the present text, I have strictly followed the Harleian manuscript, which agrees nearly with the order adopted by Tyrwhitt. The *Man of Lawes Tale* is not connected by its prologue with the tale which precedes it; and the *Wyf of Bathes Tale* evidently wants a few introductory lines, which Chaucer would have added had he lived to complete the poem. It is not improbable that in the state in which he left it, the Wife of Bath's prologue was the beginning of a portion of manuscript which contained the tales of the Wife of Bath, the Friar, and the Sompnour; and perhaps those of the Clerk, the Merchant, and the Squier, formed another portion. This latter portion appears to have been left unfinished, for the *Squieres Tale* breaks off abruptly in the middle, which is the more to be regretted, as it is one of Chaucer's best stories, and it is a story not found elsewhere. It appears by its prologue, that the *Frankelynes Tale* was intended to follow the *Squieres Tale*. The *Second Nonnes Tale*, or the life of St. Cecilia, has no prologue, and appears to be in the same form in which it was originally written for separate publication. The prologue to the *Chanones Yemannes Tale* shews that this latter was intended to follow the Life of St. Cecilia. These two tales are placed, in Tyrwhitt's edition, after the tale of the Nun's Priest. Of the tales of the Doctour and the Pardoner we can only say that they were clearly intended to come together, though they are differently placed in manuscripts with respect to those which precede and follow. The tales of the Shipman, the Prioress, Chaucer's two tales of Sir Thopas and Melibeus, the Monk's tale, and the tale of the Nun's Priest, are all connected together by their prologues, and appear to have occupied another portion of Chaucer's manuscript, which also was apparently defective at the end, the prologue which was to have connected it with the next tale being unfinished. The prologue to the tale of the Manciple contains no reference to a preceding tale; but from the way in which the Cook is introduced in it, it would seem to have been composed at a time when Chaucer did not intend to introduce the Cook's tale after that of the Reve. The Parson's tale is connected by its prologue with that of the Manciple, and follows it in all the manuscripts. The old printed editions after 1542, inserted between these a poem, which was evidently misplaced, under the title of the *Plowman's Tale*, but on what authority it was placed there we are totally ignorant. The "retractation" at the end of the *Parsones Tale* was perhaps introduced by the person who arranged the text after Chaucer's death.

With the tale, or rather discourse, of the Parson, Chaucer brings his pilgrims to Canterbury; but his original plan evidently included the journey back to London. Some writer, within a few years after Chaucer's death, undertook to continue the work, and produced a ludicrous account of the proceedings of the pilgrims at Canterbury, and the story of Beryn, which was to be the first of the stories told on their return. These are printed by Urry from a manuscript of which I have not been able to trace the subsequent history, and, if it should not previously be found, I shall reprint them from Urry's edition, correcting the more apparent errors, for Urry's faithlessness to his manuscript is quite extraordinary.

The immense popularity of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is proved by the number of manuscript copies still remaining. It was one of the first books printed in England, and went through a considerable number of editions before the seventeenth century. For the information of those who are interested in the biographical portion of a subject like this, I give Tyrwhitt's history of the printed editions of the *Canterbury Tales*, omitting some of the notes.

"The art of printing had been invented and exercised for a considerable time, in most countries of Europe, before the art of criticism was called in to superintend and direct its operations. It is, therefore, much more to the honour of our meritorious countryman, William Caxton, that he chose to make the *Canterbury Tales* one of the earliest productions of his press, than it can be to his discredit that he printed them very incorrectly. He probably took the first Ms. that he could procure to print from, and it happened,

unluckily, to be one of the worst in all respects that he could possibly have met with. The very few copies of this edition which are now remaining\* have no date, but Mr. Ames supposes it to have been printed in 1475 or 6.

"It is still more to the honour of Caxton, that when he was informed of the imperfections of his edition, he very readily undertook a second, 'for to satisfy the author' (as he says himself), 'whereas tofore by ignorance he had erred in hurting and diffaming his book.' His whole account of this matter, in the preface to this second edition, is so clear and ingenuous, that I shall insert it below in his own words.† This edition is also without date, except that the preface informs us that it was printed six years after the first.

"Ames mentions an edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 'Collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde at Westmestre, in 1495. Folio.' He does not appear to have seen it himself, nor have I ever met with any other authority for its existence; which however I do not mean to dispute. If there was such an edition, we may be tolerably sure that it was only a copy of Caxton's.

"This was certainly the case of both Pynson's editions. He has prefixed to both the introductory part of Caxton's Prohemye to his second edition, without the least alteration. In what follows, he says that he purposes to imprint his book [in the first edition] *by a copy of the said Master Caxton* and [in the second] *by a copy of William Caxton's imprinting.*‡ That the copy, mentioned in both these passages, by which Pynson purposed to imprint, was really Caxton's second edition, is evident from the slightest comparison of the three books: Pynson's first edition has no date, but is supposed (upon good grounds, I think) to have been printed not long after 1491, the year of Caxton's death. His second edition§

\* "The late Mr. West was so obliging as to lend me a complete copy of this edition, which is now, as I have heard, in the King's Library. There is another complete copy in the library of Merton College, which is illuminated, and has a ruled line under every printed one, to give it the appearance, I suppose, of a Ms. Neither of these books, though seemingly complete, has any preface or advertisement."

† "Preface to Caxton's second edition from a copy in the Library of St. John's College, Oxford. Ames, p. 55.—Whiche book I have dyligently overseen, and duly examyned to the ende that it be made accordyng unto his owen makyng; for I fynde many of the sayd bookes, whiche wyrters have abyrdgyrd it, and many thynges left out, and in some places have sette certayn versys that he never made ne sette in hys booke, of whyche bookes so incorreete was one broughte to me VI. yere passyd, whiche I supposed had ben veray true and correete, and accordyng to the same I dyde do emprynte a certayn number of them, whyche anon were solde to many and dyverse gentylmen, of whom one gentylman cam to me, and sayd that this book was not accordyng in many places unto the book that Geferey Chaucer had made. To whom I answered, that I had made it accordyng to my cope, and by me was nothyng added no mynusshyd. Thenne he sayd, he knewe a book whyche hys fader had much lovyd, that was very trewe, and accordyng unto his owen first book by hym made; and sayd more, yf I wold emprynte it agayn, he wold gete me the same book for a cople. How be it he wyst well that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it. To whom I said, in caas that he coude gete me suche a booke, trewe and correete, yet I wold ones ende-

voyre me to emprynte it agayn, for to satisfy the auctour, where as tofore by ygnoraunce I erryd in hurtyng and dyffamyng his book in dyverse places, in setting in somme thynges that he never sayd ne made, and leving out many thynges that he made, whyche ben requysite to be sette in it. And thus we fyll at accord, and he full gentyly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyvered it to me, by whiche I have corrected my book, as here after alle alonge by the ayde of almighty God shal folowe, whom I humbly besече, &c.

"Mr. Lewis, in his *Life of Caxton*, p. 104, has published a minute account of the contents of this edition from a copy in the Library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, but without deciding whether it is the first or the second edition.

"It is undoubtedly the second; but the preface is lost. There is an imperfect copy of this edition in the Museum, and another in the library of the Royal Society. Both together would not make a complete one."

‡ "See the *Prohemies* to Pynson's first and second editions in the preface to Urry's Chaucer. There is a complete copy of Pynson's first edition in the library of the Royal Society."

§ "I venture to call this Pynson's second edition, though Ames (from some notes of Bagford) speaks of editions in 1520 and 1522. He does not appear to have seen them himself. Mr. West had a copy of the edition of 1526, in which the name of the printer and the date of the impression are regularly set down at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*. After that follow '*Troilus and Creside*' and '*the Boke of Fame*,' at the end of which last is a note, copied from Caxton's edition of the same book, with this addition, *And here foloweth another of his workes.*



is dated in 1526, and was the first in which a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to the *Canterbury Tales*.

“The next edition which I have been able to meet with was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532. If this be not the very edition which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette, with the assistance of Mr. William Thynne, (as I rather suspect it is,) we may be assured that it was copied from that. Mr. Thynne’s dedication to Henry VIII. stands at the head of it; and the great number of Chaucer’s works never before published which appear in it, fully entitles it to the commendations which have always been given to Mr. Thynne’s edition on that account. Accordingly it was several times reprinted as the standard edition of Chaucer’s works, without any material alteration, except the insertion of the Plowman’s tale in 1542.

“As my business here is solely with the *Canterbury Tales*, I shall take no notice of the several miscellaneous pieces, by Chaucer and others, which were added to them by Mr. Thynne in his edition, and afterwards by Stowe and Speght in the editions of 1561, 1597, and 1602. With respect to the *Canterbury Tales* I am under a necessity of observing, that upon the whole they received no advantage from the edition of 1532. Its material variations from Caxton’s *second* edition are all, I think, for the worse. It confounds the order of the *Squier’s* and the *Frankelcin’s* tales, which Caxton, in his *second* edition, had set right. It gives the *Frankelcin’s* prologue to the *Merchant*, in addition to his own proper prologue. It produces for the first time two prologues, the one to the *Doctour’s*, and the other to the *Shipman’s* tale, which are both evidently spurious; and it brings back the lines of ribaldry in the *Merchant’s* tale, which Caxton, in his *second* edition, had rejected upon the authority of his good Ms.

“However, this edition of 1532, with all its imperfections, had the luck, as I have said, to be considered as the standard edition, and to be copied, not only by the booksellers, in their several editions\* of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght, (the first editor in form, after Mr. Thynne, who set his name to his work,) in 1597 and 1602. In the dedication to Sir Robert Cecil, prefixed to this last edition, he speaks indeed of having ‘reformed the whole work, both by old written copies and by Ma. William Thynnes praiseworthy labours;’ but I cannot find that he has departed in any material point from those editions, which I have supposed to be derived from Mr. Thynne’s. In the very material points above mentioned, in which those editions vary from Caxton’s second, he has followed *them*. Nor have I observed any such verbal varieties as would induce one to believe that he had consulted any good Ms. They who have read his preface will probably not regret that he did not do more towards correcting the text of Chaucer.

“In this state the *Canterbury Tales* remained† till the edition undertaken by Mr. Urry, which was published, some years after his death, in 1721. I shall say but little of that

But in Mr. West’s copy nothing followed. The writer of the preface to Ed. Urr. seems to have had the use of a copy of this edition in 1526, which contained some other pieces of Chaucer’s, and several by other hands. See the preface to Ed. Urr.”

\* “There are some other editions mentioned by Ames, without date; but it is probable that, upon inspection, they would appear to be one or other of the editions whose dates are here given. It seems to have been usual to print books in partnership, and for each partner to print his own name to his share of the impression. See Ames, p. 252. A Bible is said to be printed in 1551, by Nicholas Hill—‘at the cost and charges of certayne honest menne of the occupacyon, whose names be upon their bokes.’”

† “It may be proper just to take notice, that

Mr. Speght’s edition was reprinted in 1687, with an advertisement at the end, in which the editor pretended to publish from a Ms. *the conclusion of the Coker’s Tale, and also of the Squires Tale, which in the printed books are said to be lost or never finished by the author.* These conclusions may be seen in the Preface to Ed. Urr. Whoever the editor was, I must do him the justice to say, that they are both really to be found in Ms. The first is to be found in Ms. B. a. and the other in Ms. B. a. from which Hearne has also printed it, as a choicé discovery, in his letter to Bagford. App. to R. G. p. 601. If I thought the reader had any relish for such supplements to Chaucer, I could treat him from Ms. B. a. with at least thirty more lines, which have been inserted in different parts of the *Coker’s Tale*, by the same hand that wrote this Conclusion.”

edition. as a very fair and full account of it is to be seen in the modest and sensible preface prefixed to it by Mr. Timothy Thomas, upon whom the charge of publishing Chaucer devolved, or rather was imposed, after Mr. Urry's death. The strange license in which Mr. Urry appears to have indulged himself, of lengthening and shortening Chaucer's words according to his own fancy, and of even adding words of his own, without giving his readers the least notice, has made the text of Chaucer in his edition by far the worst that was ever published."

PLAN OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

During the latter half of the twelfth century and the earlier part of the thirteenth, the language spoken by our Saxon forefathers was rapidly breaking up, and losing its original grammatical inflections, and much of its characteristic phraseology. Books or songs written in English during this period were intended for the edification of the lower classes, or for the *bourgeoisie*, which still retained its Saxon habits. Great changes in language are generally coeval with political movements and convulsions, and the character of our language was completely changed by the baronial wars of the thirteenth century, which brought into prominence the Anglo-Saxon portion of the population, and made its language fashionable in high society. The consequence was, that it went through further changes in form, and became largely mixed with words having a French (or Anglo-Norman) origin. About the end of the reign of Edward I. the English language took a definite shape, which continued during the fourteenth century with very little alteration in its grammatical forms, and the only alterations in other respects arising from words becoming obsolete, and from the facility with which French or Anglo-Norman words were adopted or received at the will of the author, and according to the class of society in which he moved and for which he wrote. This arose from the circumstance that English and the form of French spoken here were co-existent in our island as the languages of common life. This form of the English language was that of the author of *Piers Ploughman* and of Geoffrey Chaucer; the former representing the popular feelings and containing fewest French words, while Chaucer, as the poet of the higher society, uses French words in much greater abundance. In our language of the present day we have lost as much of the English of *Piers Ploughman* as we have of the French of the *Canterbury Tales*.

The general character and the grammatical constructions of the English of the fourteenth century were preserved during the opening years of the fifteenth; but they soon began to break up more rapidly even than in the thirteenth century, until, at the time of the Reformation, our language took nearly its modern form, the orthography excepted.

The language in which any man wrote could only be preserved correctly in manuscripts written in his own time, or very near it; for we find by experience that copyists invariably altered what they copied to the form of the language at the time in which they wrote, and, which is still more embarrassing, to the local dialect of the county in which they lived. It is evident, therefore, that the plan of forming the text of any work of the periods of which we are speaking, from a number of different manuscripts, written at different times and different places, is the most absurd plan which it is possible to conceive. Yet this was the method professedly followed by Tyrwhitt, in forming a text of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer. He even did worse: for he seems to have taken for his foundation merely one of the old editions, printed at a time when all the grammatical forms were lost, changing words or lines for others which pleased him better from any manuscript which happened to contain them. It is true that he has given a list of manuscripts, in which he points out those which he considers the best, and which he followed in preference to others; but Tyrwhitt was so entirely unacquainted with the palæographical and philological knowledge necessary for the appreciation of them, that he places among his manuscripts of "highest authority," copies on paper of the latter part of the fifteenth century, while excellent manuscripts of an earlier date are looked upon with indifference. The more caution is necessary in this respect with the text of Chaucer, because the greater



number of the manuscripts are of the latter part or middle of the fifteenth century, when the language was very much changed from that of Chaucer's time.

Tyrwhitt's entire ignorance of the grammar of the language of Chaucer is exhibited in almost every line, few of which could possibly have been written by the poet as he has printed them. It need only be stated, as an instance of this, that in the preterites of what the modern Teutonic philologists term the strong verbs (which our common grammarians distinguish by the unfortunate title of *irregular verbs*), Tyrwhitt has invariably placed a verb in the plural with a noun in the singular. This is explained by the circumstance that, in our modern form of the language, the ancient plural of the preterite has been adopted for singular as well as plural. Examples of this (in the verbs *to bear*, of which the correct forms were, sing. bar, pl. bare; *to come*, s. cam, pl. come; *to swear*, s. swor, pl. swore; *to give*, s. gaf, pl. gave; *to speak*, s. spak, pl. spake; *to rise*, s. ros, roos, pl. rose; *to take*, s. took, pl. toke; &c.) occur almost in every sentence. In the verb *to sit*, of which the pret. s. and pl. was sette, Tyrwhitt has substituted set, a form which did not exist; and in the same manner, in the verb *to creep*, he has given pret. s. crept, when the forms were s. creep, crope, pl. crope. In the same manner, Tyrwhitt has in most instances substituted the plural of adjectives for the singular, and the inflected cases of nouns for the nominative, besides an infinity of errors in the orthographical forms of the language.

Under these circumstances it is clear that, to form a satisfactory text of Chaucer, we must give up the printed editions, and fall back upon the manuscripts; and that, instead of bundling them all together, we must pick out one best manuscript which also is one of those nearest to Chaucer's time. The latter circumstance is absolutely necessary, if we would reproduce the language and versification of the author. At the same time, it cannot but be acknowledged, that the earliest manuscript might possibly be very incorrect and incomplete, from the ignorance or negligence of the scribe who copied it. This, however, is fortunately not the case with regard to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

The Harleian manuscript, No. 7334, is by far the best manuscript of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that I have yet examined, in regard both to antiquity and correctness. The handwriting is one which would at first sight be taken by an experienced scholar for that of the latter part of the fourteenth century, and it must have been written within a few years after 1400, and therefore soon after Chaucer's death and the publication of the *Canterbury Tales*. Its language has very little, if any, appearance of local dialect; and the text is in general extremely good, the variations from Tyrwhitt being usually for the better. Tyrwhitt appears not to have made much use of this manuscript, and he has not even classed it among those to which most credit is due.

This manuscript I have adopted as the text of the present edition; the alterations I have ventured to make in it being comparatively few, and only such as appeared absolutely necessary. I hardly need inform those who are in the habit of consulting medieval manuscripts in whatever language they may be written, that none of them are clerically accurate. Some of them are literally filled with errors, which it requires very little knowledge to perceive and correct. Many errors of this kind are found in the Harleian manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* of which I am speaking, and I have not felt the least hesitation in correcting them by comparison with another manuscript. As an example of the kind of error to which I allude, it may be stated that ll. 3779, 3780 stand thus in the Ms. :—

“Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,  
And eek *more ryalte*, and holynesse.”

I have without hesitation followed another Ms. in correcting the two words in italics to *moralité*; and in cases like this I have not thought it necessary to load the book with notes pointing out the alterations. In other instances, where a reading in the Harl. Ms., although affording a tolerable meaning, has appeared to me a decided bad one, I have



changed it for a better, always (when there is room for the least doubt) giving the original reading of the manuscript in a foot-note. For this purpose, I have collated the text throughout with the Lansdowne Ms. No. 851, which appears to be, of those in the British Museum, next in antiquity and value to the Ms. Harl.; and I have also collated it, as far as the *Wyff of Bathes Tale*, with two manuscripts in the public library of the University of Cambridge, bearing the shelf-marks Mm. 2. 5. (which I have quoted as C. 1), and li. 3, 26 (C. 2); but I found so little real use from these latter manuscripts, that I thought it unnecessary to collate them further. In general, I have reaped little advantage from collating a number of manuscripts.

Tyrwhitt's want of philological knowledge has rendered his text unharmonious as well as ungrammatical. The final *e*, most distinctly pronounced, and which was most necessary to the metrical completeness of the line, was the one which marked grammatical inflections and adverbial forms; and this he has constantly dropped, and he has therefore printed an imperfect line, or given it supposed perfection by adding a word or placing a final *e* to a word which ought not to have it. I may observe, that it was a constant rule to elide the final *e* in pronunciation, when it preceded a word beginning with a vowel or with the letter *h*, and that this was the source of frequent errors of the scribes, who, pronouncing the lines as they copied them, omitted sometimes to write the letter which they did not pronounce, and thus made a grammatical error, which, however, every reader at the time could see and correct. Instances of this kind of error are not of unfrequent occurrence in the Harl. Ms. of the *Canterbury Tales*; but I have resisted the temptation to correct them, because it appeared to me dangerous, in our present knowledge of mediæval English, to presume too far on our acquaintance with every nicety of the grammar of the fourteenth century. In many cases, however, these are certainly errors. Thus, in l. 5911:—

“Have thou ynough, what thar the *recch* or care.”

We ought to read *recche*, which is the infinitive of the verb. For the same reason, in l. 6128,—

“And for to *walk* in March, Averil, and May,”

we should read *walke*. In both these instances the final *e* has been lost before a word beginning with a vowel. The older termination of the infinitive was in *en*, but the *n* was subsequently dropped, and during the fourteenth century, and earlier part of the fifteenth, the two terminations of the infinitive in *en* and *e* were used indiscriminately, at the will or caprice of the writer. In poetry before a word beginning with a consonant, it was immaterial which form was used, but before a word beginning with a vowel, or with *h*, the *n* might be dropt or retained accordingly as the final syllable of the word was required or not for the metre. In these cases the scribe has not unfrequently omitted the *n* when it ought to have been retained; but probably the thing was so well understood, that it mattered little how it was written, the reader using the *n* or not as the verse required it, whether he saw it in the manuscript or not.

With the exception of the cases above mentioned, I have reproduced the text of the Harleian Ms. with literal accuracy. My object has been to give Chaucer, as far as can be done, in his own language, which certainly has not yet been done in print. I doubt much if the different attempts at half or wholly modernising his language, which have been made in latter years, will ever render him popular; and his poetry is entirely lost in translations. Surely, when we remember the oft-repeated saying, that the trouble of learning Spanish is well repaid by the simple pleasure of reading *Don Quixote* in the original, we may well be allowed to wonder that any Englishman of taste should refuse the comparatively trifling labour of making himself acquainted with his own language of little more than four centuries ago, for the satisfaction of reading and understanding the poetry of his glorious countryman Geoffrey Chaucer. Changing and mutilating is not, in my opinion, the right way to make any thing popular; and in the present work my object

is not the mere production of a correct (or, at least, as correct as under all the circumstances can be expected) edition of the father of our poetry; I would try the experiment of making his writings popular by the very fact of their being correctly printed, and by the addition of popular (and not scholastic) notes—notes, the aim of which is to explain and illustrate, in a simple and unpretending manner, allusions and expressions which may not be generally known to those who are not in the habit of studying the documents and the antiquities of Chaucer's age. For this purpose, I avail myself of every thing within my reach. Although I have felt it necessary to speak unreservedly of Tyrwhitt's text—for which we must of course make some allowance in consideration of the low state of philological science, as far as it regarded the middle ages, in his time—yet it must be confessed to his credit that he entered upon his labours, in editing Chaucer, with zeal, and executed them with no small share of industry and research. His notes on the *Canterbury Tales* contain much that is useful and valuable, and this I have unscrupulously transferred to my own edition, either in his own words or in an abridged form.





THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS.

From an illuminated ms. in the Brit. Mus., Reg. 18, D. ii.

## THE CANTERBURY TALES.

### THE PROLOGUE.

WHAN that Aprille with his schowres swoote 1  
 The drought of Marche hath perced to the roote,  
 And bathud every veyne in swich licour,  
 Of which vertue engendred is the flour ;—  
 Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth  
 Enspirud hath in every holte and heeth 6  
 The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
 Hath in the Ram his halfe cours i-ronne,  
 And smale fowles maken melodie,  
 That slepen al the night with open yhe,  
 So priketh hem nature in here corages :—  
 Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,  
 And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes,  
 To ferne halwes, kouthe in sondry londes ; 14  
 And specially, from every schires ende

Of Engelond, to Canturbury they wende,  
 The holy blisful martir for to seeke,  
 That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

Byfel that, in that resoun on a day,  
 In Southwerk at the Tabbard as I lay,  
 Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage 22  
 To Canturbury with ful devout corage,  
 At night was come into that hostelryc  
 Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,  
 Of sondry folk, by aventure i-falle  
 In felaschipe, and pilgryms were thei alle,  
 That toward Canturbury wolden ryde.  
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,  
 And wel we weren esud atte beste. 29  
 And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,  
 So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,  
 That I was of here felawschipe anon,  
 And made forward erly to aryse,  
 To take oure weye ther as I yow devyse.  
 But natheles, whiles I have tyme and space,  
 Or that I ferther in this tale pace,  
 Me thinketh it acordant to resoun,  
 To telle yow alle the condicioun  
 Of eche of hem, so as it semed me,

8. *the Ram.* Tyrwhitt thinks that Chaucer has made a mistake, and that it ought to be the Bull, because, the showers of April having pierced the drouth of March to the root, the sun must have passed through the sign of the Ram and entered that of the Bull.

14. *ferne.* Nearly all the mss. I have examined, and certainly the best, agree in this reading. Tyrwhitt has adopted the reading *serve*, which probably originated in mistaking "ferne" for "ferue,"—*ferne halwes* means *distant saints*.



And which they weren, and of what degré ;  
And eek in what array that they were inne ;  
And at a knight than wol I first bygygne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,  
That from the tyme that he first bigan  
To rydea out, he lovede chyvalrye,  
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie. 46  
Ful worthi was he in his lordes werre,  
And thereto hadde he riden, noman ferre,  
As wel in Cristendom as in hethenesse,  
And evere honoured for his worthinesse.

At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne.  
1 ofte tyme he hadde the bord bygonne 52  
Owe alle nacions in Puce.

Lettowe hadde reyced and in Ruce,  
A cristen man so ofte of his degré.  
t. Gernade atte siege hadde he be  
Of Algesir, and riden in Belmarie,  
At Lieys was he, and at Satalie,  
Whar they were wonne ; and in the Greete see  
At many a noble arive hadde he be.

At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene, 61  
And foughten for our feith at Tramassene  
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.  
This ilke worthi knight hadde ben also  
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,  
Ageyn another hethene in Turkye :  
And everemore he hadde a sovereyn prys.  
And though that he was worthy he was wys, 68  
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.

He never yit no vilouye ne sayde  
In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.  
He was a verray perfight gentil knight.  
But for to telle you of his aray,  
His hors was good, but he ne was nought gay.  
Of fustyan he wered a gepoun 75  
Al bysmoterud with his haburgeoun,  
For he was late comen from his viage,  
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,  
A lovyer, and a lusty bachelere,  
With lokkes crulle as they were layde in presse.  
Of twenty yeer he was of age I gesse.  
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe, 83  
And wonderly delvyer, and gret of strengthie.  
And he hadde ben somtyme in chivachie,  
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and in Picardie,  
And born him wel, as in so litel space,

43. *A knight.* It was a common thing, in this age, for knights to seek employment in foreign countries which were at war. Tyrwhitt cites from Leland the epitaph of a knight of this period, Matthew de Gournay, who "en sa vie fist a la bataille de Benamarin, et ala après a la siege d'Algezire sur les Sarazines, et aussi a les batailles de L'Escluse, de Cressy, de Deyngenesse, de Peytres, de Nazare, d'Orrey, et a plusieurs autres batailles et assages."

51. *Alisandre.* Alexandria, in Egypt, was taken by Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, in 1365, but immediately afterwards abandoned.

53. *Puce.* The knights of the Teutonic order in Prussia were engaged in continual warfare with their Pagan neighbours in Lithuania (*Lettowe*), Russia, &c.

56. *Gernade.* The city of Algezir was taken from the Moorish king of Grenada in 1344. Belmarie appears to have been one of the Moorish States in Africa. Layas (*Lieys*), in Armenia, was taken from the Turks by Pierre de Lusignan, about 1367. Satalie was taken by the same prince soon after 1352. Tremessene was one of the Moorish states in Africa. Palathia, in Anatolia, was one of the lordships held by Christian knights after the Turkish conquests.

55. *chivachie.* Every reader of the contemporary histories of Edward III.'s wars in France knows the pride which knights took in shewing their courage in the continual little excursions, into the enemy's country.

In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
Embrowdid was he, as it were a mede  
Al ful of fresche floures, white and reede.  
Syngyng he was, or flowtyng, al the day ; 91  
He was as fresh as is the moneth of May.  
Schort was his goune, with sleeves long and wyde.  
Wel cowde he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.  
He cowde songes wel make and endite,  
Justne and eek daunce, and wel purtay and write.  
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale  
He sleep nomore than deeth a nightyngale.  
Curteys he was, lowly, and servysable, 99  
And carf byforn his fadur at the table.

A YEMAN had he, and servantes nomoo  
At that tyme, for him lust ryde soo ;  
And he was clad in coote and hood of grene.  
A shef of pock arwes bright and kene  
Under his belte he bar full thriftily.  
Wel cowde he dresse his takel yomanly ;  
His arwes drowpd nought with feteheres lowe.  
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe. 108  
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.  
Of woode-craft cowde he wel al the usage.  
Upon his arme he bar a gay bracer,  
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler,  
And on that other side a gay daggere,  
Harneysed wel, and scharp as poynt of spere ;  
A Cristofre on his brest of silver schene.  
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene ; 116  
A forster was he sothely, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,  
That of hire smylng was ful symple and coy ;  
Hire grettest ooth nas but by seynt Loy ;  
And sche was clept madam Englyntyne.  
Ful wel sche sang the servise devyne, 122  
Entuned in hire nose ful semyly ;  
And Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,  
Aftur the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.  
At mete wel i-taught was sche withalle ;  
Sche leet no morsel from hire lippes falle,  
Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe.  
Wel cowde sche carie a morsel, and wel keepe, 130  
That no drope fil upon hire brest.  
In curtesie was sett al hire lest.

94. *faire.* I have substituted this reading from other MSS., in place of *wel cowde he*, given by the Harl. Ms., which appears to be a mere blundering repetition.

104. *pock arwes.* Arrows fletched with peacock's feathers. They appear to have been larger than the common arrows. In a compotus of the Bishop of Winchester, in 1471 (cited by Warton, Hist. E. P. ii. p. 211), we have one head.—"Sagittæ magnæ. Et de cristli. sagittis magnis barbatic cum penis pavonum."

115. *A Cristofre.* A figure of St. Christopher was used as a brooch. On the use of these brooches, or signs, see an interesting paper, by Mr. C. Roach Smith, in the Journal of the British Archeological Association, vol. i. p. 200. The figure of St. Christopher was looked upon with particular reverence among the middle and lower classes; and was supposed to possess the power of shielding the person who looked on it from hidden dangers.

120. *St. Loy.* Probably a corruption of St. Eloy, or St. Eligius. It is the reading of all the MSS.; and Tyrwhitt ought not to have changed it. The same oath occurs in the Freres Tale, l. 7143.

124. *Frensch.* The French taught in England was the debased form of the old Anglo-Norman, somewhat similar to that used at a later period in the courts of law; and it was this at which Chaucer, and some of his contemporaries, sneered. The writer of the Visions of Piers Ploughman speaks of French of Norfolk, l. 2949.

127. *At mete.* These remarks agree, almost literally, with the directions contained in the different mediæval tracts written for the purpose of teaching manners at table.

Hire overlippe wyput sche so clene,  
 That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene  
 Of grees, whan sche dronken hadde hire draught.  
 Ful semely aftur hire mete sche raught.  
 And sikurly sche was of gret disport,  
 And ful plesant, and amyable of port, 138  
 And payned hire to counterfete cheere  
 Of court, and ben estalich of manere,  
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
 But for to speken of hire conscience,  
 Sche was so charitable and so pitous,  
 Sche wolde weepe if that sche sawe a mous 144  
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.  
 Of smale houndes hadde sche, that sche fedde  
 With rostid fleissch and mylk and wastel breed.  
 But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were deed,  
 Or if men smot it with a yerde smerte :  
 And al was conscience and tendre herte.  
 Ful semely hire wymple i-pynched was ;  
 Hire nose streight ; hire eyen grey as glas ; 152  
 Hire mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed ;  
 But sikurly sche hadde a fair forheed.  
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe ;  
 For hardily sche was not undurgrowe.  
 Ful fetys was hire cloke, as I was waar.  
 Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche baar  
 A peire of bedes gaudid al with grene ;  
 And theron heng a broch of gold ful schene, 160  
 On which was first i-writen a crowned A,  
 And after that, *Amor vincit omnia*.  
 Anothur NONNE also with hire hadde sche,  
 That was hire chapelleyn, and PRESTES thre.  
 A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,  
 An out-rydere, that loved vènyere ;  
 A manly man, to ben an abbot able.  
 Full many a deynté hors hadde he in stable :  
 And whan he rood, men might his bridel heere 169  
 Gyngle in a whistlyng wynd so cleere,  
 And eek as lowde as doth the chapel belle,  
 Ther as the lord was keeper of the selle.

149. *men smot*. The word *men*, used in this phrase, appears here construed with a singular verb, as though it had been man (*on froppa*). So again, below, l. 163, *men might*. So in a poem in my *Political Songs*, p. 330. "Where shal men nu finde."

152. *eyen grey*. This appears to have been the favourite colour of ladies' eyes in the time of Chaucer. The young girl, in the *Reves Tale*, is described—

With camoys nose, and eyghen gray as glas.

160. *a broch*. In 1845 a brooch, of the form of an A, was found in a field in Dorsetshire. It appeared to be of the fourteenth century, and affords a curious illustration of this passage of Chaucer. The inscription on one side seems to be,—

IO FAS AMER E DOZ DE AMER.

166. *loved vènyere*. The monks of the middle ages were extremely attached to hunting and field-sports; and this was a frequent subject of complaint with the more austere ecclesiastics, and of satire with the laity.

170. *gyngle*. It was a universal practice among riders who wished to be thought fashionable, to have their horses' bridles hung with bells. The Templars were blamed for this vanity in the thirteenth century. In the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion, the Sultan of Damas has a trusty mare, of which we are told,

Hys crouper heng al ful of belles,  
 And his peytrel, and his arsson,  
 Three myle nyghte men hear the sown.

Wycliffe, in his *Trilogie*, inveighs against the priests of his time for their "fair hors, and joly and gay sades, and bridles ringing by the way." At a much later period, Spencer describes a lady's steed,—

Her wanton palfrey all was overspread  
 With tinsel trappings, wovnen like a wave,  
 Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave.

The reule of seynt Maure or of seint Beneyt,  
 Bycause that it was old and somdel streyt, 175  
 This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,  
 And helde aftur the newe wolle the space.  
 He gaf nat of that text a pulled hen,  
 That seith, that hunters been noon holy men ;  
 Ne that a monk, whan he is cloysterles,  
 Is likned to a fische that he is wairles ;  
 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.  
 But thiike text hild he not worth an oystre.  
 And I seelde his opinioun was good. [wood,  
 What schulde he studie, and make himselfen  
 Uppon a book in cloystre alway to powre, 185  
 Or swynke with his handes, and labour,  
 As Austyn byt? How schal the world be served?  
 Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.  
 Therefore he was a pricasour aright ;  
 Greyhoundes he hadde as swifte as fowel in flight ;  
 Of prikyng and of huntingyng for the hare  
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare. 192  
 I saugh his sleeves purfild atte hond  
 With grys, and that the fynest of a lond.  
 And for to festne his hood undur his chyn  
 He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pyn :  
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.  
 His heed was ballid, and schon as eny glas,  
 And eek his face as he hadde be anyoynt.  
 He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt, 200  
 His eyen stedp, and rolyng in his heed,  
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed ;  
 His bootes souple, his hors in gret estat.  
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat ;  
 He was not pale as a for-pyned goost.  
 A fat swan loved he best of eny roost.  
 His palfrey was as broun as eny berye.

A FREERE ther was, a wantoun and a merye,  
 A lymytour, a ful solempe man. 209

In alle the ordres foure is noon that can  
 So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.  
 He hadde i-made many a fair marriage  
 Of yonge wymmen, at his owne cost.  
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post.  
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he  
 With frankleyns over al in his cuntré,  
 And eek with worthi women of the toun : 217  
 For he hadde power of confessioun.  
 As seyde himself, more than a curat,  
 For of his ordre he was licenciat.  
 Ful sweetly herde he confessioun,  
 And plesaunt was his absolioun ;  
 He was an esy man to geve penance  
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitance ;  
 For unto a povre ordre for to geve 225  
 Is signe that a man is wel i-schreve.  
 For if he gaf, he dorste make avaunt,

173. *The reule*. The rules of St. Maure and St. Benet were the oldest forms of monastic discipline in the Romish church.

175. *olde thinges*. This is the reading of most of the mss., and I have adopted it instead of that of the Ms. Harl., *forby hem*, which appears to give no clear sense.

179. *cloystres*. This is also the reading of a Cambridge ms. The passage is a literal translation of one from the *Decretal* of Gratian, as cited by Tyrwhitt,—"*Sicut piscis sine aqua caret vita, ita sine monasterio monachus.*" The other readings, *rochies*, *recholes*, &c., found in most of the mss., present considerable difficulties; and Tyrwhitt's explanation seems hardly admissible.

203. *souple*. "This is part of the description of a smart abbot, by an anonymous writer of the thirteenth century—'*Ocreas habitat in cruribus, quasi innatus essent, sine plicis porrectas.*'—Ms. Bodl., James, n. 6. p. 121."—*Tyrwhitt*.



- He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
 He may not wepe though him sore smerte.  
 Therefore in stede of wepyng and prayeres,  
 Men mooten given silver to the pore freres.  
 His tyket was ay farsud ful of knyfes  
 And pyynes, for to give faire wyfes. 234  
 And certayn he hadde a mery noote.  
 Wel couthe he synge and pleye on a rote.  
 Of yeddynge he bar utturly the prys.  
 His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys.  
 Therto he strong was as a champioun.  
 He knew wel the tavernes in every toun,  
 And every ostiller or gay tapstere,  
 Bet than a lazer, or a beggere, 242  
 For unto such a worthi man as he  
 Acorded not, as by his faculté,  
 To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.  
 It is not honest, it may not avauce,  
 For to delen with such poraile,  
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.  
 And over al, ther eny profyt schuld arise,  
 Curteys he was, and lowe of servyse.  
 Ther was no man nowher so vertuous.  
 He was the beste begger in al his hous, 252  
 For though a widewe hadde but oo schoo,  
 So plesaunt was his *In principio*,  
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing or he wente.  
 His purchase was better than his rente.  
 And rage he couthe and pleye as a whelpe,  
 In love-dayes ther couthe he mochil helpe.  
 For ther was he not like a cloysterer, 261  
 With a thredbare cope, as a pore scoler,  
 But he was like a maister or a pope.  
 Of double worstede was his semy-cope,  
 That rounded was as a belle out of presse.  
 Somwhat he lippede, for wantounesse,  
 To make his Englisch swete upon his tunge;  
 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde sunge,  
 His eyghen twynkeled in his heed aright, 269  
 As don the sterres in the frosty night.  
 This worthi lymytour was called Huberd.  
 A MARCHAUNT was ther with a forked berd,  
 In motteleye, and high on horse he sat, 273  
 Uppon his heed a Flaundrisch bever hat;  
 His botus clapsud faire and fetously.  
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,  
 Sownynge alway the eneres of his wynnyng.  
 He wolde the see were kepud for eny thinge  
 Betwixe Middulburgh and Orewelle.  
 Wel couthe he in eschange scheeldes stelle.  
 This worthi man ful wel his witte bisette; 281  
 Ther wiste no man that he was in dette,  
 So estately was he of governance,  
 With his bargayns, and with his chevysaunce.  
 For sothe he was a worthi man withalle,  
 237. *yeddynge*. Ms. C. 2, reads *weddynge*.  
 252. After this line, the two following are added in  
 Tyrwhitt:—  
 And gave a certaine ferme for the grant,  
 Non of his bretheren came in his haunt.  
 They are wanting in all the mss. I have consulted; a cir-  
 cumstance of which Tyrwhitt takes no notice, though  
 they are an evident interpolation. He seems to have  
 taken them from the old printed editions.  
 253. *purchase*. This sentiment, or proverb, is taken li-  
 terally from a line in the Romance of the Rose:—  
 Mieux vault mon purchas que ma rente.  
 278. *forked berd*. In Shottesbrooke church, Berks, there  
 is a brass of a Franklin of the time of Edward III., in  
 which he is represented with such a forked beard, which  
 seems to have been the fashionable mode of dressing the  
 beard among the bourgeoisie. The Anglo-Saxons wore  
 forked beards.
- But soth to say, I not what men him calle.  
 A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,  
 That unto logik hadde longe i-go.  
 Al so lene was his hors as is a rake, 289  
 And he was not right fat, I undertake;  
 But lokede holwe, and therto souburly.  
 Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy,  
 For he hadde nought geten him yit a benefice,  
 Ne was not worthy to haven an office.  
 For him was lever have at his beddes heed  
 Twenty bookes, clothed in blak and reed,  
 Of Aristotil, and of his philosophie, 297  
 Then robus riche, or fithul, or sawtrie.  
 But al though he were a philosopre,  
 Yet hadde he but litul gold in cofre;  
 But al that he might of his frendes hente,  
 On bookes and his lernynge he it spente, 302  
 And busily gan for the soules pray  
 Of hem that gaf him wherwith to scolay.  
 Of studie tooke he most cure and heede.  
 Not oo word spak he more than was neede;  
 Al that he spak it was of heye prudence,  
 And schort and quyk, and ful of gret sentence.  
 Sownynge in moral manere was his speche,  
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche. 310  
 A SERGEANT OF LAWE, war and wys,  
 That often hadde ben atte parvys,  
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.  
 Discret he was, and of gret reverence:  
 He semed such, his wordes were so wise,  
 Justice he was ful often in assise,  
 By patent, and by pleyn commissioun; 318  
 For his science, and for his heih renoun,  
 Of fees and robes had he many oon.  
 So gret a purchasour was ther nowher noon.  
 Al was fee symple to him in effecte, [pecte.  
 His purchasyng might nought ben to him sus-  
 Nowher so besy a man as he ther nas, 323  
 And yit he semed besier than he was.  
 In termes hadde caas and domes alle,  
 That fro the tyme of kyng Will were falle.  
 Therto he couthe endite, and make a thing,  
 Ther couthe no man pynche at his writyng.  
 And every statute couthe he pleyn by roote.  
 He rood but hoomly in a medled coote,  
 Gird with a seynt of silk, with barres smale; 331  
 Of his array telle I no longer tale.  
 A FRANKLEYN ther was in his companye;  
 Whit was his berde, as the dayesyng.  
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.  
 Wel loved he in the morn a sop of wyn.  
 To lyve in delite was al his wone,  
 For he was Epicurius owne sone,  
 That heeld opynioun that pleyn delyt 339  
 Was verrailly felicite perfyt.  
 An househaldere, and that a gret, was he;  
 Seynt Julian he was in his countré.
301. *might of his frendes hente*. This is the reading of  
 most of the mss., and appears to be the right one. The  
 Ms. Harl. reads, *might gete and his frendes s'nde*.  
 304. *gaf him*. An allusion to the common practice, at  
 this period, of poor scholars in the Universities, who wan-  
 dered about the country, begging, to raise money to support  
 them in their studies. See Piers Ploughman, l. 4525, and note.  
 312. *parvys*. This is generally explained as a portico  
 before a church. The *parvis* at London, supposed to be  
 that of St. Paul's, was anciently frequented by sergeants-  
 at-law, as we learn from Fortescue, de Laud. leg. Angl.  
 c. 51—4 *Post meridiem curia non tenetur; sed placitantes  
 tunc se divertunt ad perisum et alibi, consulentes cum seruien-  
 tibus ad legem et alius consiliarius suos.*" See also Warton's  
 Hist. of Eng. Poetry, edit. of 1840, vol. ii. p. 212.  
 342. St. Julian was the patron of hospitality.

His breed, his ale, was always after noon;  
 A better envied man was nowher noon.  
 Withoute bake mete was never his hous,  
 Of fleisch and fisch, and that so plentyvous,  
 It newed in his hous of mete and drynk,  
 Of alle deyntees that men cowde thynke.  
 Aftur the sondry seousons of the yeer,  
 He chaunged hem at mete and at soper. 350  
 Ful many a fat partrich had he in mewe,  
 And many a brem and many a luce in stewe.  
 Woo was his cook, but if his sauce were  
 Poynant and scharp, and redy al his gere.  
 His table dormant in his halle alway  
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.  
 At sessions ther was he lord and sire.  
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.  
 An anlas and a gipser al of silk  
 Heng at his gerdul, whit as morne mylk. 360  
 A schirreve hadde he ben, and a counter;  
 Was nowher such a worthi vavasour.  
 An HABURDASSHER and a CARPENTER,  
 A WEBBE, a DEYER, and a TAPICER,  
 Weren with us eek, clothed in oo lyveré,  
 Of a solempe and gret fraternité.  
 Ful freissch and newe here gere piked was;  
 Here knyfes were i-chapud nat with bras,  
 But al with silver wrought ful clene and wel,  
 Here gurdles and here pouches every del. 370  
 Wel semed eche of hem a fair burgeys,  
 To sitten in a geldehalle on the deys.  
 Every man for the wisdom that he can,  
 Was schaply for to ben an aldurman.  
 For catel hadde they inough and rente,  
 And eek here wyfes wolde it wel assente;  
 And elles certeyn hadde they ben to blame.  
 It is right fair for to be clept *madame*,  
 And for to go to vigilies al byfore,  
 And han a mantel rially i-bore. 380  
 A COOK thei hadde with hem for the nones,  
 To boyle chiknes and the mary bones,  
 And poudre marchant, tart, and galyngeale.  
 Wel cowde he knowe a draught of Londone ale.  
 He cowde roste, sethe, broille, and frie,  
 Make mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
 But gret harm was it, as it semede me,  
 That on his schyne a normal hadde he;  
 For blankmanger he made with the beste. 389  
 A SCHIPMAN was ther, wonyng fer by weste:  
 For ought I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.  
 He rood upon a rouncey, as he couthe,  
 In a gowne of faldyng to the kne.  
 A dagger hangyng on a laas hadde he  
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.  
 The hote somer had maad his hew al broun;  
 And certeinly he was a good felawe.  
 Ful many a draught of wyn had he drawe [sleep.  
 From Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman  
 Of nyce conscience took he no keep. 400

If that he foughte, and hadde the heigher hand,  
 By water he sente hem hoom to every land.  
 But of his craft to rikne wel the tydes,  
 His stremes and his dangers him bisides,  
 His herbergh and his mone, his lodemenage,  
 Ther was non such from Hulle to Cartage.  
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;  
 With many a tempest hadde his berd ben schake.  
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as thei were,  
 From Scotlond to the cape of Fynestere, 410  
 And every cryk in Bretayne and in Spayne;  
 His barge y-clepd was the Magdelayne.

Ther was also a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK,  
 In al this world ne was ther non him lyk  
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye;  
 For he was groundid in astronomye.  
 He kepte his pacient a ful gret del  
 In houres by his magik naturel. 420  
 Wel cowde he fortune the ascendent  
 Of his ymagis for his pacient.  
 He knew the cause of every maladye,  
 Were it of cold, or hete, or moyst, or drye,  
 And where thei engendrid, and of what humour;  
 He was a verrey parficht practisour.  
 The cause i-knowe, and of his harm the roote,  
 Anon he gaf the syke man his boote.  
 Ful redy hadde he his apotecaries,  
 To sende him dragges, and his letuaries,  
 For eche of hem made othur for to wyne;  
 Here friendschipe nas not newe to begynne. 430  
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,  
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus;  
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;  
 Serapyon, Razis, and Aveyen;  
 Averrois, Damascen, and Constantyn;  
 Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertyn.  
 Of his diete mesurable was he,  
 For it was of no superfluité,  
 But of gret norisching and digestible.  
 His studie was but litel on the Bible. 440  
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,  
 Lyned with taffata and with sendal.  
 And yit he was but esy in dispence;  
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.

410. *Scotlond*. Most of the mss. have *Gotland*, the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt, and possibly the correct one.

416. *Astronomye*. A great portion of the medical science of the middle ages depended on astrological and other superstitious observations.

417. *a ful gret del*. This is the reading of most of the mss.; the Ms. Harl. has *wonderly wel*.

431. *Wel knew he*. The authors mentioned here were the chief medical text-books of the middle ages. Rufus was a Greek physician of Ephesus, of the age of Trajan; Haly, Serapion, and Avicen, were Arabian physicians and astronomers of the eleventh century; Rhasis was a Spanish Arab, of the tenth century; and Averroes was a Moorish scholar, who flourished in Morocco in the twelfth century; Johannes Damascenus was also an Arabian physician, but of a much earlier date; Constantius Afer, a native of Carthage, and afterwards a monk of Monte Cassino, was one of the founders of the school of Salerno—he lived at the end of the eleventh century; Bernardus Gordonius, professor of medicine at Montpellier, appears to have been Chaucer's contemporary; John Gatisden was a distinguished physician of Oxford, in the earlier half of the fourteenth century; Gilbertyn is supposed by Warton to be the celebrated Gilbertus Anglicus. The other names mentioned here are too well known to need further observation. The names of Hippocrates and Galen were, in the middle ages, always (or nearly always) spelt *Ypocras* and *Galenus*.

444. *pestilence*. An allusion, probably, to the great pestilences which devastated Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, and to which we owe the two cele-

352. *in stewe*; i.e. in a fish-pond. The great consumption of fish under the Romish régime rendered a fish-pond a necessary accessory to every gentleman's house.

355. *table dormant*. Probably the fixed table at the end of the hall.

384. *Londone ale*. Tyrwhitt has cited a passage of an old writer, which shows that London ale was prized above that of other parts of the country.

396. *the hote somer*. Perhaps this is a reference to the summer of the year 1351, which was long remembered as the dry and hot summer. Other allusions in this general prologue seem to show that Chaucer intended to lay the plot of his Canterbury pilgrimage soon after this date.



For gold in phisik is a cordial;

Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good Wir was ither or byside *BATHIE*,  
But sche was somdel deaf, and that was skathe.

Of cloth-makynge sche hadde such an haunt,  
Sche passed hem of Ypris and of Gaunt. 450

In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon  
That to the offryng byforn hire schulde goon,

And if ther dide, certeyn so wroth was sche,  
That sche was thanne out of alle charité.

Hire kevercheffs weren ful fyne of grounde;  
I durste swere they weyghede ten pounde

That on the Sunday were upon hire heed.  
Hire hosen were of fyn scarlett reed, [newe.

Ful streyte y-tyed, and schoos ful moyste and  
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe. 460

Sche was a worthy woman al hire lyfe,  
Housbondes atte chirche dore hadde sche fyfe,

Withouten othur companye in youthe;  
But therof needeth nought to speke as nouthe.

And thries hadde sche ben at Jerusalem;  
Sche hadde passid many a straunge stream;

At Rome sche hadde ben, and at Bolyne,  
In Galice at seynt Jame, and at Coloyne.

Sche cowde moche of wandryng by the weye.  
Gattothud was sche, sothly for to seye. 470

Uppon an amblere esely sche sat,  
Wymplid ful wel, and on hire heed an hat

As brood as is a bocler or a targe;  
A foot-mantel aboute hire hupes large,

And on hire feet a paire of spores scharpe.  
In felawschipe wel cowde lawghe and carpe.

Of remedies of love sche knew parchaunce,  
For of that art sche knew the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,  
And was a pore PERSON of a toun; 480

But riche he was of holy thought and werk.  
He was also a lerned man, a clerk

That Cristes gospel truly wolde preche;  
His parischens devoutly wold he teche.

Benigne he was, and wondur diligent,  
And in adversité ful pacient;

And such he was i-proved ofte sithes.  
And loth were him to curse for his tythes;

But rather wolde he geven out of dowte,  
Unto his pore parischens aboute, 490

brated works, the Decameron of Boccaccio, and the Visions  
of Piers Ploughman.

449. *cloth making*. The west of England, and especially  
the neighbourhood of Bath, from which the "good wir"  
came, was celebrated, till a comparatively recent period,  
as the district of cloth-making. Ipres and Ghent were  
the great clothing marts on the Continent.

456. *ten pounde*. This is the reading of all the best mss.  
I have consulted. Tyrwhitt has a *pound*. It is a satire  
on the fashionable head-dresses of the ladies at this time,  
which appear in the illuminations to be composed of large  
quantities of heavy wadding; and the satirist takes the  
liberty of exaggerating a little.

459. *moyste*. One of the Cambridge mss. reads *softe*,  
which was, perhaps, originally a gloss to *moyste*.

462. *atte chirche dore*. The priest formerly joined the  
hands of the couple, and performed a great part of the  
marriage-service in the church porch. See Warton's *History*  
of English Poetry, ii. 201 (ed. of 1840).

463. *Coloyne*. At Cologne the bones of the three Kings  
of the East were believed to be preserved.

477. *remedyes*. An allusion to the title and subject of  
Ovid's book, *De Remedio Amoris*.

480. Chancer, in his beautiful character of the person,  
sets up the industrious secular clergy against the lazy  
wicked monks.

483. *truly*. I have substituted this word, which is found  
in most of the other mss., for *gladly*, the reading of the  
Ms. Harl.

Of his offrynge, and eek of his substance.

He cowde in litel thing han suffisance.

Wyd was his parisch, and houses fer asondur,  
But he ne laste not for reyn ne thondur,

In siknesse ne in meschief to visite  
The ferrest in his parissche, moche and lite,

Uppon his feet, and in his hond a staf.  
This noble ensample unto his sheep he gaf,

That ferst he wroughte, and after that he taughte,  
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte, 500

And this figure he addid yit therto,  
That if gold ruste, what schulde yren doo?

For if a prest be foul, on whom we truste,  
No wondur is a lewid man to ruste;

And schame it is, if that a prest take kepe,  
A schiten schepperd and a clene schepe;

Wel oughte a prest ensample for to give,  
By his clenesse, how that his sheep schulde

lyve.  
He sette not his benefice to huyre,

And lefte his sheep encombred in the myre, 510  
And ran to Londone, unto seynte Poules,

To seeken him a chaunterie for soules,  
Or with a brethurhede be withholde;

But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
So that the wolf ne made it not myscharye.

He was a schepperde and no mercenarie;  
And though he holy were, and vertuous,

He was to senful man nought dispitous,  
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,

But in his teching discret and benigne. 520  
To drawe folk to heven by fairnesse,

By good ensample, was his busynesse:  
But it were eny persone obstinat,

What so he were of high or lowe estat,  
Him wolde he snybbe sharply for the nones.

A better preest I trowe ther nowher non is.  
He waytud after no pompe ne reverence,

Ne made him a spiced conscience,  
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,

He taught, and ferst he folwed it himselfe. 530  
With him ther was a PLOUGHMAN, his brothur,

That hadde i-lad of dong ful many a fothur.  
A trewe swynk and a good was hee,

Lyyng in pees and parficht charitee.  
God loved he best with al his trewe herte

At alle tymes, though him gained or smerte,  
And thanne his neighebour right as himselfe.

He wolde threisshe, and therto dyke and delve,  
For Cristes sake, with every pore wight,

Withouten huyre, if it laye in his might. 540  
His tythes payede he ful faire and wel,

Bathe of his owne swynk and his catel.  
In a tabbard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a reeve and a mellere,  
A sompneur and a pardonor also,

A maunciple, and my self, ther was no mo.  
The MELLERE was a stout carl for the nones,

Ful big he was of braun, and eek of boones;  
That prevede wel, for over al ther he cam,

At wrastlyng he wolde bere away the ram. 550  
He was schort schuldred, broode, a thikke knarre,

521. *fairnesse*. This is the reading of most of the mss.  
The Ms. Harl. has *clennesse*, which seems not to give so  
good a sense.

550. *the ram*. "This was the usual prize at wrestling-  
matches. See below, ver. 13671; and Gamelyn, ver. 343  
and 555. M. Paris mentions a wrestling-match at West-  
minster, in the year 1222, a' which a ram was the prize."

—Tyrwhitt.



Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,  
 Or breke it with a rennyng with his heed.  
 His berd as ony sowe or fox was reed,  
 And therto brood, as though it were a spade.  
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade  
 A werte, and theron stood a tuft of heres,  
 Reede as the berstles of a sowes eeres.  
 His nose-thurles blake were and wyde.  
 A swerd and a boeler baar he by his side. 560  
 His mouth as wyde was as a gret forneys.  
 He was a jangler, and a golyardeys,  
 And that was most of synne and harlotries.  
 Wel cowde he stele corn, and tollen thries;  
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold pardé.  
 A whight cote and blewe hood wered he.  
 A baggepipe cowde he blowe and sowne,  
 And therewithal he brought us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPE was ther of a temple,  
 Of which achatours mighten take exemple 570  
 For to be wys in beyng of vitaille.  
 For whether that he payde, or took by taille,  
 Algate he wayted so in his acate,  
 That he was ay biforn and in good state.  
 Now is not that of God a ful fair grace,  
 That such a lewed mannes wit schal pace  
 The wisdom of an heep of lernede men?  
 Of maystres hadde moo than thries ten,  
 That were of lawe expert and curious;  
 Of which ther were a doseyn in an hous, 580  
 Worthi to be stiwardes of rente and lond  
 Of any lord that is in Engelond,  
 To make him lyve by his propre good,  
 In honour detteles, but if he were wood,  
 Or lyve as scarsly as he can desire;  
 And able for to helpen al a schire  
 In many caas that mighte falle or happe;  
 And yit this maunciple sette here aller cappe.

The REEVE was a sklendre colerik man,  
 His berd was schave as neigh as ever he can. 590  
 His heer was by his eres rounde i-schorn.  
 His top was dockud lyk a preest bifore.  
 Ful longe wern his leggas, and ful lene,  
 Al like a staff, ther was no calf y-sene.  
 Wel cowde he kepe a gerner and a bynne;  
 Ther was non auditour cowde on him wyne.  
 Wel wiste he by the drought, and by the reyn,  
 The yeldyng of his seed, and of his greyn.  
 His lordes scheep, his meet, and his dayerie,

552. *harre*. This is the reading of all the oldest and best mss.; *barre*, a later reading, adopted by Tyrwhitt, appears to have originated with some one who did not know the meaning of the other word.

564. *stele corn*. During the middle ages millers enjoyed, above all other tradesmen, the reputation of being thieves; and their depredations were the more generally felt, as people in all classes of society carried their own corn to the mill to be ground, often in small quantities.

565. *a thombe of gold*. "If the allusion be, as is most probable, to the old proverb—*every honest miller has a thumb of gold*, this passage may mean, that our miller, notwithstanding his thefts, was an honest miller,—i. e. as honest as his brethren."—Tyrwhitt.

567. *a baggepipe*. The baggepipe was a very popular instrument of music in the middle ages, and figures in the illuminated manuscripts of various countries. In modern times its use has been restricted to Scotland (probably because minstrelsy was longer preserved there) until it was looked upon as the national music of that country.

588. *sette here aller cappe*; i. e. outwitted them all. This phrase occurs again in the Miller's Prologue.

591. *rounde*. The Ms. Harl. has *neighe*; but all the other mss. I have consulted agree in the reading I have adopted in the text.

His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrie, 600  
 Was holly in this reeves governynge,  
 And by his covenant gaft the rekenynge,  
 Syn that his lord was twenti yeer of age;  
 Ther couthe noman bringe him in arrerage.  
 Ther nas ballif, no herde, no other hyne,  
 That they ne knewe his sleight and his covyne;  
 They were adrad of him, as of the deth.  
 His wonyng was ful fair upon an heth,  
 With grene trees i-schadewed was his place.  
 He cowde bettre than his lord purchace. 610  
 Ful riche he was i-stored prively,  
 His lord wel couthe he plesse subtilly,  
 To geve and lene him of his owne good,  
 And have a thank, a cote, and eek an hood.  
 In youthe he lerned hadde a good mester;  
 He was a wel good wright, a carpenter.  
 This reeve sat upon a wel good stot,  
 That was a pomely gray, and highte Scot.  
 A long sureote of pers upon he hadde,  
 And by his side he bar a rusty bladde. 620  
 Of Northfolk was this reeve of which I telle,  
 Byside a toun men callen Baldeswelle.  
 Tukkud he was, as is a frere, aboute,  
 And ever he rood the hynderest of the route.

A SOMRNOUR was ther with us in that place,  
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynes face,  
 For sawceffem he was, with eyghen narwe.  
 As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe,  
 With skalled browes blak, and piled berd;  
 Of his visage children weren sore aferd. 630  
 Ther nas quyksilver, litarge, ne brimstone,  
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,  
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,  
 That him might helpen of his whelkes white,  
 Ne of the knobbes sittyn on his cheekes.  
 Wel loved he garleek, oynouns, and ek leekes,  
 And for to drinke strong wyn reed as blood.  
 Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.  
 And when that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn. 640  
 A fewe termes hadde he, tuo or thre,  
 That he hadde lerned out of som deeree;  
 No wondur is, he herde it al the day,  
 And eek ye knowe wel, how that a jay  
 Can clepe Watte, as wel as can the pope.  
 But who so wolde in othur thing him grope,  
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie,  
 Ay, *Questio quid juris*, wolde he crye.  
 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;  
 A bettre felaw schulde men nowher fynde. 650  
 He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn  
 A good felawe to han his concubyn  
 A twelve moneth, and excuse him atte fulle.  
 And prively a fynch eek cowde he pulle.  
 And if he fond owher a good felawe,

619. *pers*. The Ms. Harl. alone reads *blew*; *perse* was a sky-blue colour.

622. *Baldeswelle*. A parish in Eynford hundred, Norfolk.  
 628. *cherubynes face*. H. Stephens, *Apol. Herod.* i. 80, quotes the same thought from a French epigram,—

Nos grands docteurs du cherubin visage.

648. *Questio quid juris*. "This kind of question occurs frequently in Ralph de Hengham. After having stated a case, he adds, *quid juris?* and then proceeds to give the answer to it. See *Heng. Mag.*, c. xi. *Esto autem quod reus nullo modo venerit ad hunc diem, quid juris?* &c. See also c. xii."—Tyrwhitt.

649. *harlot*. Chaucer gives us here an excellent picture of the class of society to which this name was applied in the middle ages. See the Glossary.

He wolde teche him to have non awe  
 In such a caas of the archedecknes curs;  
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
 For in his purs he scholde punnyssched be.  
 "Purs is the ercedeknes helle," quod he. 660  
 But wel I woot he lyeth right in dede;  
 Of cursyng oweth ech guilty man to drede;  
 For curs wol slee right as assouillyng saveth;  
 And also ware him of a *significavit*.  
 In dangger he hadde at his owne assise  
 The yonge gurlcs of the diocise,  
 And knew here counseil, and was al here red.  
 A garland had he set upon his heed,  
 As gret as it were for an ale-stake;  
 A bokeler had he maad him of a cake. 670

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER  
 Of Rouncival, his frend and his comper,  
 That streyt was comen from the court of Rome.  
 Ful lowde he sang, Come hider, love, to me.  
 This sompnour bar to him a stif burdoun,  
 Was nevere trompe of half so gret a soun.  
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelwe as wax,  
 But smothe it heng, as doth a strike of flex;  
 By uncs hynge his lokkes that he hadde,  
 And therwith he his schuldres overspradde. 680  
 Ful thenne it lay, by culpons on and oon,  
 But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,  
 For it was trussud up in his walet.  
 Him thought he rood al of the newe get,  
 Dischevele, sauf his cappe, he rood al bare.  
 Suche glaryng eyghen hadde he as an hare.  
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.  
 His walet lay byforn him in his lappe,  
 Bret ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.  
 A voys he hadde as smale as eny goot. 690  
 No berd ne hadde he, ne never scholde have,  
 As smothe it was as it ware late i-schave;  
 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.  
 But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware,  
 Ne was ther such another pardoner.  
 For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer,  
 Which, that he saide, was oure lady veyl:  
 He seide, he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
 That seynt Petur hadde, whan that he wente  
 Uppon the see, till Jhesu Crist him hente. 700  
 He hadde a cros of latoun ful of stones,  
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
 But with these reliques, whanne that he fand  
 A pore persoun dwelling uppon land,  
 Upon a day he gat him more moneye  
 Than that the persoun gat in monthes tweye.  
 And thus with feyned flaterie and japes,  
 He made the persoun and the people his apes.  
 But trewely to tellen atte laste,

664. *significavit*. "The writ *de excommunicato capiendo*, commonly called a *significavit*, from the beginning of the writ, which is as follows: *Rea vicecomiti L. salutem. Significavit nobis venerabilis pater H. L., episcopus, &c. Cod. Jur. Ecc., p. 1054.*"—*Tyrwhitt*.

665. *in dangger*. The old meaning of the word *danger* was jurisdiction, or dominion whereby persons were liable to fine for certain offences to him in whose *danger* they were. Most of the mss. have *gise* instead of *assise*.

674. *Come hider, love, to me*. Probably the burden of a popular song.

675. *bar . . . a stif burdoun*. "Sang the bass. See ver. 4163, and Ducange in *v. Eurdo*."—*Tyrwhitt*.

684. *newe get*. New fashion. Tyrwhitt has illustrated this phrase by a passage from Occleve's poem, *De regimine principis* :—

Also ther is another *newe gette*,  
 Al foule waste of cloth and excessif.

He was in churche a noble ecclesiaste. 710  
 Wel cowde he rede a lessoun or a storye,  
 But altherbest he sang an offertorie;  
 For wel wyst he, whan that song was songe,  
 He moste preche, and wel affyle his tunge,  
 To wyne silver, as he right wel cowde;  
 Therefore he sang ful meriely and lowde.

Now have I told you shortly in a clause  
 Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause  
 Why that assembled was this companye  
 In Southwerk at this gentil ostelrie, 720  
 That highte the Tabbard, faste by the Belle.  
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle  
 How that we bare us in that ilke night,  
 Whan we were in that ostelrie alight;  
 And aftur wol I telle of oure viage,  
 And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.

But first I pray you of your curtesie,  
 That ye ne rette it nat my vilanye,  
 Though that I speke al pleyn in this matere,  
 To telle you here wordes and here cheere; 730  
 Ne though I speke here wordes properly.  
 For this ye knowen al so wel as I,  
 Who so schal telle a tale aftur a man,  
 He moste reherce, as neigh as ever he can,  
 Every word, if it be in his charge,  
 Al speke he never so rudely ne large;  
 Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
 Or feyne thing, or fynde wordes newe.  
 He may not spare, though he were his brother;  
 He moste as wel sey oo word as another. 740  
 Crist spak himself ful broode in holy writ,  
 And wel ye woot no vilanye is it.  
 Eke Plato seith, who so that can him rede,  
 The wordes mot be cosyng to the dede.  
 Also I pray you to forgeve it me,  
 Al have I folk nat set in here degre  
 Here in this tale, as that thei schulde stonde;  
 My witt is schorte, ye may wel undirstonde.

Greet cheere made oure ost us everichon,  
 And to the souper sette he us anon; 750  
 And served us with vitaille atte beste.  
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.  
 A semely man oure ooste was withalle  
 For to han been a marchal in an halle;  
 A large man was he with eyghen stepe,  
 A fairere burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:  
 Bold of his speche, and wys and well i-taught,  
 And of manhede lakkede he right naught.  
 Eke therto he was right a mery man,  
 And after soper playen he bygan, 760  
 And spak of myrthe among othur thinges,  
 Whan that we hadde maad oure rekenynges;  
 And sayde thus; "Lo, lordynges, trewely  
 Ye ben to me right welcome hertly:  
 For by my trouthe, if that I schal not lye,  
 I ne saugh this yer so mery a companye  
 At oones in this herbergh as is now.  
 Fayn wold I do yow merthe, wiste I how.  
 And of a merthe I am right now bythought,

721. *the Belle*. Stowe mentions an inn named the *Bull* as being near the Tabard; but I have found no mention of the Bell.

743. *Plato*. Tyrwhitt thinks that Chaucer took this saying of Plato from Boethius, iii. pr. 12.

748. *schorte*. This is the reading in which the mss. generally agree, and it seems the best; the Ms. Harl. reads *thyenne*.

756. *Chepe*. Cheapside was, in the middle ages, occupied by the wealthiest and most substantial citizens of London.



To doon you eese, and it schal coste nought. 770  
 Ye goon to Caunturbury; God you speede,  
 The blisful martir quyte you youre meede!  
 And wel I woot, as ye gon by the weye,  
 Ye schapen yow to talken and to pleye;  
 For trewely comfort ne merthe is noon,  
 To ryde by the weye dumb as a stoon;  
 And therefore wol I make you disport,  
 As I seyde erst, and do you som confort.  
 And if yow liketh alle by oon assent  
 Now for to standen at my juggement; 780  
 And for to werken as I schal you seye,  
 To morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,  
 Now by my fadres soule that is deed,  
 But ye be merye, smyteth of myn heed.  
 Hold up youre hond withoute more speche."  
 Oure counseil was not longe for to seche;  
 Us thoughte it nas nat worth to make it wys,  
 And graunted him withoute more ayys,  
 And bad him seie his verditte, as him leste. 779  
 "Lordynges," quoth he, "now herkeneth for the  
 But taketh not, I pray you, in disdayn; [beste;  
 This is the poynt, to speken schort and playn,  
 That ech of yow to schorte with youre weie,  
 In this viage, schal telle tales tweye,  
 To Caunturburi-ward, I mene it so,  
 And hom-ward he schal tellen othur tuo,  
 Of adventures that ther han bifalle.  
 And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,  
 That is to seye, that telleth in this caas  
 Tales of best sentence and of solas, 800  
 Schal han a soper at your alther cost  
 Here in this place sittynge by this post,  
 Whan that we comen ageyn from Cantarbery.  
 And for to make you the more merye,  
 I wol myselfen gladly with you ryde,  
 Right at myn owen cost, and be youre gyde.  
 And who so wole my juggement withseie  
 Schal paye for al we spenden by the weye.  
 And if ye vouchesauf that it be so,  
 Telle me anon, withouten wordes moo, 810  
 And I wole erely schappe me therefore."  
 This thing was graunted, and oure othus swore  
 With ful glad herte, and prayden him also  
 That he wolde vouchesauf for to doon so,  
 And that he wolde ben oure governour,  
 And of oure tales juggle and reportour,  
 And sette a souper at a certeyn prys;  
 And we wolde rowled be at his devyys,  
 In heygh and lowe; and thus by oon assent  
 We ben accorded to his juggement. 820  
 And therupon the wyn was fette anon;  
 We dronken, and to reste wente eechoon,  
 Withouten eny lengere tarynge.  
 A morwe whan that the day bigan to sprynge,  
 Up roos oure ost, and was oure althur cok,  
 And gaderud us togider alle in a flok,  
 And forth we riden a litel more than paas,  
 Unto the waterynge of saint Thomas;  
 And there oure ost bigan his hors areste,  
 And seyde; "Lordus, herkeneth if yow leste. 830  
 Ye woot yowre forward, and I it yon recorde.  
 If eve-song and morwe-song acorde,  
 Let se now who schal telle ferst a tale.  
 As evere I moote drinke wyn or ale,

Who so be rebel to my juggement  
 Schal paye for al that by the weye is spent.  
 Now draweth cut, er that we further twynne;  
 Which that hath the schortest schal bygynne."  
 "Sire knight," quoth he, "maister and my lord,  
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord. 840  
 Cometh ner, quoth he, my lady prioresse;  
 And ye, sir clerk, lat be your schamfastnesse,  
 Ne studieth nat; ley hand to, every man."  
 Anon to drawn every wight bigan,  
 And schortly for to tellen as it was,  
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,  
 The soth is this, the cut fil to the knight,  
 Of which ful glad and blithe was every wight;  
 And telle he moste his tale as was resoun,  
 By forward and by composicioun, 850  
 As ye han herd; what needeth wordes moo?  
 And whan this goode man seigh that it was so,  
 As he that wys was and obedient  
 To kepe his forward by his fre assent,  
 He seyde; "Syn I schal bygynne the game,  
 What, welcome be thou cut, a Goddus name!  
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."  
 And with that word we riden forth oure weye;  
 And he bigan with right a merie chere  
 His tale, and seide right in this manere. 860

## THE KNIGHTS TALE.

WHILOM, as olde stories tellen us,  
 Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;  
 Of Athenes he was lord and conquerour,  
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour,  
 That gretter was ther non under the sonne.  
 Ful many a riche contré hadde he wonne;  
 That with his wisdom and his chivalrie  
 He conquered al the regne of Femynye,  
 That whilom was i-cleped Cithea;  
 And weddede the queen Ipolita, 870  
 And brought hire hoom with him in his contré  
 With moche glorie and gret solemnité,  
 And eek hire yonge suster Emelye.  
 And thus with victorie and with melodye  
 Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,  
 And al his ost, in armes him beside.  
 And certes, if it nere to long to heere,  
 I wolde han told yow fully the manere,  
 How wonnen was the regne of Femenye  
 By Theseus, and by his chivalrye; 880  
 And of the grete bataille for the nones  
 Bytwix Athenes and the Amazones;  
 And how ascegid was Ypolita  
 The faire hardy quyen of Cithea;  
 And of the feste that was at hire weddyng,  
 And of the tempest at hire hoom comynge,

837. *draweth cut*. Froissart terms this method of drawing lots *tirer à la longue paille*.

860. *right in this manere*. Tyrwhitt reads *as ye shul here*, and inserts *anon* after *tale*.

*The Knights Tale*. This story is taken from the *Triseida* of Boccaccio, which was translated also into French verse; but whether Chaucer used the Italian or the French is not certain, as I have not been able to compare Chaucer with the French. The English story differs in some parts considerably, and is very much abbreviated, from the poem of Boccaccio. The extracts given in the following notes are repeated from Tyrwhitt. See Tyrwhitt's *Introductio* and Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poet.*

868. *Femynye*. A mediæval name for the kingdom of the Amazons. Gower (*Conf. Amant.*) terms *Penthesilea* *queen of Feminee*. *Cithea* is, of course, a corruption of *Scythia*.

886. *tempest*. Tyrwhitt has *temple*, but I think his rea-

823. *waterynge of saint Thomas*. The watering of St. Thomas was at the second mile-stone on the old Canterbury road. It is mentioned not unfrequently in the early dramatists.

But al that thing I most as now forbere.  
I have, God wot, a large feeld to ere;  
And wayke ben the oxen in my plough.  
The remenaunt of the tale is long inough, 890  
I wol not lette eek non of al this rowte.  
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,  
And lat see now who schal the soper wyne.  
And ther I lafte, I wolde agayn begynne.

This duk, of whom I make menciuon,  
Whan he was comen almost unto the toun,  
In al his wele and in his moste pryde,  
He was war, as he cast his eyghe aside,  
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye  
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye, 900  
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;  
But such a cry and such a woo they make,  
That in this world nys creature lvyngye,  
That herde such another waymentyngye.  
And of that cry ne wolde they never stenten,  
Til they the reynes of his bridel henten.  
"What folk be ye that at myn hom comyngye  
Pertourben so my feste with cryngye?"  
Quod Theseus, "have ye so gret envye  
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and erie? 910  
Or who hath yow misboden, or offendid?  
And telleth me if it may ben amendid;  
And why that ye ben clad thus al in blak?"

The oldest lady of hem alle spak,  
Whan sche had swowned with a dedly chere,  
That it was rounthe for to seen or heere;  
And seyde; "Lord, to whom fortune hath geven  
Victorie, and as a conquerour lyen,  
Nought greveth us youre glorie and honour;  
But we beseken mercy and socour. 920  
Have mercy on oure woo and oure distresse.  
Som drome of pitee, thurgh youre gentilnesse,  
Uppon us wrecchede women lat thou falle.  
For certus, lord, ther nys noon of us alle,  
That sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene;  
Now he we caytifs, as it is well seene:  
Thanked be fortune, and hire false wheel,  
That noon estat assureth to ben weel.  
And certus, lord, to abiden youre presence  
Here in the temple of the goddessse Clemence 930  
We han ben waytyng al this fourteenight;  
Now helpe us, lord, syn it is in thy might.  
I wrecche, which that wepe and waylle thus,  
Was whilom wyf to kyng Capaneus,  
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day;  
And alle we that ben in this array,  
And maken alle this lamentacioun,  
We leften alle oure houbondes at the toun,  
Whil that the sege ther aboute lay.  
And yet the olde Creon, welaway! 940  
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,  
Fulfilde of ire and of iniquité,  
He for despyt, and for his tyrannye,  
To do the dedde bodies vilonye,  
Of alle oure lordes, which that ben i-slawe,  
Hath alle the bodies on a heep y-drawe,  
And wol not suffren hem by noon assent  
Nother to ben y-buried nor i-brent,  
But maketh houndes ete hem in despite."  
And with that word, withoute more respite, 950  
They fillen gruf, and eriden pitously,  
"Have on us wrecched women som mercy,

And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte."  
This gentil duke doun from his courser sterte  
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.  
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,  
Whan he seyh hen so pitous and so maat,  
That whilom weren of so gret estat.  
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,  
And hem conforteth in ful good entente; 960  
And swor his oth, as he was trewe knight,  
He wolde do so ferforthly his might  
Upon the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,  
That all the people of Greece scholde speke  
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,  
As he that hath his deth right wel deserved.  
And right anon, withoute eny abood  
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood  
To Thebes-ward, and al his oost bysyde;  
No ner Athens wolde he go ne ryde, 970  
Ne take his cese fully half a day,  
But onward on his way that nyght he lay;  
And sente anon Ypolita the queene,  
And Emelye hir yonge suster schene,  
Unto the toun of Athens to dwelle;  
And forth he ryt; ther is no more to telle.

The reede statue of Mars with spere and targe  
So schyneth in his white baner large,  
That all the feeldes glitren up and doun;  
And by his baner was born his pynoun 980  
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was i-bete  
The Minatour which that he slough in Crete.  
Thus ryt this duk, thus ryt this conquerour,  
And in his oost of chevalrie the flour,  
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte  
Fayre in a feeld wher as he thoughte to fighte.  
But shortly for to speken of this thing,  
With Creon, which that was of Thebes kyng,  
He faught, and slough him manly as a knight  
In pleyn bataille, and putte his folk to flight; 990  
And by assaut he wan the cité aftur,  
And rente doun bothe wal, and sparre, and raftur;  
And to the ladies he restored agayn  
The bones of here houbondes that were slayn,  
To do exequies, as was tho the gyse.  
But it were al to long for to devyse  
The grete clamour and the waymentyngye  
Which that the ladies made at the brennyngye  
Of the bodies, and the grete honour  
That Theseus the noble conquerour 1000  
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;  
But shortly for to telle is myn entente.  
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,  
Hath Creon slayn, and Thebes wonne thus,  
Stille in the feelde he took al night his reste,  
And dide with al the contré as him leste.

To ransake in the cas of bodies dede  
Hem for to streepe of herneys and of wede,  
The pilours didn businesse and cure,  
After the bataille and discomfiture. 1010  
And so byfil, that in the cas thei founde,  
Thurgh girt with many a grevous bloody wounde,  
Two yonge knyghtes liggyng by and by,  
Bothe in oon armes clad ful richely;  
Of whiche two, Arcite hight that oon,  
And that othur knight hight Palamon.  
Nat fully quyk, ne fully deed they were,  
But by here coote armure, and by here gere,  
Heraudes knewe hem wel in special,

sons for this reading are not sufficiently weighty to authorise a departure from the text of the Ms. Harl., supported, as it is, by most of the good mss.

1007. *cas.* So the other best mss. Tyrwhitt has substituted *tas*, a heap.



As they that weren of the blood real 1020  
 Of Thebes, and of sistren tuo i-born.  
 Out of the chaas the pilours han hem torn,  
 And han hem caried softe unto the tente  
 Of Theseus, and ful sone he hem sente  
 Tathenes, for to dwellen in prisoun  
 Perpetuelly, he wolde no raunceoun.  
 And this duk whan he hadde thus i-doon,  
 He took his host, and hom he ryt anon  
 With laurer crowned as a conquerour;  
 And there he lyveth in joye and in honour 1030  
 Terme of his lyf; what wolle ye wordes moo?  
 And in a tour, in angwische and in woo,  
 This Palamon, and his felawe Arcite,  
 For evermo, ther may no gold hem quyte.  
 This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,  
 Till it fel oones in a morwe of May  
 That Emelie, that fairer was to seene  
 Than is the lile on hire stalkes grene,  
 And fresscher than the May with floures newe—  
 For with the rose colour strof hire heve, 1040  
 I not which was the fyner of hem two—  
 Er it was day, as sche was wont to do,  
 Sche was arisen, and al redy dight.  
 For May wole have no sloggardyte a night;  
 The seoun priketh every gentil herte,  
 And maketh him out of his sleepe sterte,  
 And seith, "Arys, and do thin observance."  
 This maked Emelye han remembrance  
 To do honour to May, and for to ryse.  
 I-clothed was sche fressh for to devye. 1050  
 Hire yolwe heer was browdid in a tresse,  
 Byhynde hire bak, a yerde long I gesse.  
 And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste  
 Sche walketh up and down wher as hire liste.  
 Sehe gadereth floures, partye whyte and reede,  
 To make a certeyn gerland for hire heede,  
 And as an aungel heavenly sche song.  
 The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,  
 Which of the castel was the cheef dongeoun.  
 (Ther as this knightes weren in prisoun, 1060  
 Of which I tolde yow, and telle schal)  
 Was evene joynyng to the gardeyn wal,  
 Ther as this Emely hadde hire pleyyng.  
 Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morwenyng,  
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,  
 As was his wone, by leve of his gayler  
 Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,  
 In which he al the noble cite seigh,  
 And eek the gardeyn, ful of braunches grene,  
 Ther as the fresshe Emelye the scheene 1070  
 Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.  
 This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon,  
 Gooth in the chambre romyng to and fro,  
 And to himself compleynyng of his woo;  
 That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, alas!  
 And so byfel, by aventure or cas,  
 That thurgh a wyndow thikke and many a barre

Of iren greet and squar as eny sparre,  
 He cast his eyen upon Emelya,  
 And therwithal he bleynte and cryed, a! 1080  
 As that he stongen were unto the herte.  
 And with that crye Arcite anon up sterte,  
 And seyde, "Cosyn myn, what eyeth the,  
 That art so pale and deedly for to see?  
 Why crydestow? who hath the doon offence?  
 For Goddes love, tak al in pacience  
 Oure prisoun, for it may non othir be;  
 Fortune hath geven us this adversité.  
 Som wikke aspect or disposicioun  
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun, 1090  
 Hath geven us this, although we hadde it sworn;  
 So stood the heven whan that we were born;  
 We moste endure it: this is the schort and pleyn."  
 This Palamon answered, and seyde ageyn,  
 "Cosyn, for sothe of this opynyoun  
 Thou hast a veyn ymaginacioun.  
 This prisoun caused me not for to crye.  
 But I was hurt right now thurgh myn yhe  
 Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.  
 The fairnesse of the lady that I see 1100  
 Yonde in the gardyn rome to and fro,  
 Is cause of my crying and my wo.  
 I not whethur sche be womman or goddesse;  
 But Venus is it, sothly as I gesse."  
 And therwithal on knees adoun he fil.  
 And seyde: "Venus, if it be youre wil  
 Yow in this gardyn thus to transigure,  
 Bifrom me sorwful wreeched creature, 360  
 Out of this prisoun help that we may scape.  
 And if so be oure destiné be schape 1110  
 By eterne word to deyen in prisoun,  
 Of oure lynage haveth sum compassioun,  
 That is so lowe y-brought by t-rannye."  
 And with that word Arcite gaf espye  
 Wher as this lady romed to and fro.  
 And with that sight hire beauté hurt him so,  
 That if that Palamon was wounded sore,  
 Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.  
 And with a sigh he seyde pitously:  
 "The freissche beauté sleeth me sodeynly 1120  
 Of hir that rometh yonder in the place.  
 And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,  
 That I may see hir alte leste weye,  
 I nam but deed; ther nys no more to seye."  
 This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,  
 Dispitously he loked, and answerde:  
 "Whether seistow in earnest or in pley?"  
 "Nay," quoth Arcite, "in earnest, in good fey:  
 God helpe me so, me lust ful evele pleye."  
 This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye: 1130  
 "It nere," quod he, "to the no gret honour,  
 For to be fals, ne for to be traytour  
 To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother  
 I-swore ful deepe, and ech of us to other,  
 That never for to deyen in the payne,

1049. *to do honour to May.* The early English poets are full of allusions to the popular reverence paid to the month of May, derived from the Pagan ages of our forefathers. Traces of these superstitions still remain in the custom in different parts of the country of going a-maying on the morning of the first day of the month. Such customs are repeatedly alluded to in Chaucer.

1059. *dongeoun.* The dongeon was the grand tower of the earlier castles; and beneath it, under ground, was the prison. As the castles were enlarged, the dongeon, or keep-tower, being the strongest part of the fortress, was frequently made the residence of prisoners of higher rank, who were not thrown into the subterranean vaults. Hence the modern use of the word *dungeon*.

1090. *Saturne.* According to the old astrological system, this was a very unpropitious star to be born under. It may be observed, that in the present story there is a constant allusion to medieval astrology, which could not be fully illustrated without long notes.

1134. *I-swore.* It was a common practice in the middle ages for persons to take formal oaths of fraternity and friendship, and a breach of the oath was considered something worse than perjury. This incident enters into the plots of some of the medieval romances. A curious example will be found in the Romance of Athelston, Reliq. Antiq. ii. p. 85.

1135. *deyen in the payne.* This appears to have been a proverbial expression, taken from the French. In Frois-

Til that deeth departe schal us twayne,  
 Neyther of us in love to hynder other,  
 Ne in non other cas, my levee brother;  
 But that thou schuldest trewly further me  
 In every caas, and I schal further thee. 1140  
 This was thyn othe, and myn oek certayn;  
 I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withsayn.  
 Thus art thou of my counseil out of doute.  
 And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute  
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,  
 And evere schal, unto myn herte sterve.  
 Now certes, fals Arcite, thou schal not so.  
 I loved hir first, and tolde the my woo  
 As to my counseil, and to brother sworn  
 To further me, as I have told biforn. 1150  
 For which thou art i-bounden as a knight  
 To helpe me, if it lay in thi might,  
 Or elles art thou fals, I dar wel sayn."  
 This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn.  
 "Thou schalt," quoth he, "be rather fals than I.  
 But thou art fals, I telle the uttirly.  
 For *par amour* I loved hir first then thow.  
 What wolt thou sayn? thou wost not yit now  
 Whether sche be a womman or goddesse.  
 Thyn is affeccioun of holynesse, 1160  
 And myn is love, as of a creature;  
 For which I tolde the myn aventure  
 As to my cosyn, and my brother sworn.  
 I wose, that thou lovedest hire biforn;  
 Forst thou nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,  
 At who schal geve a lover eny lawe,  
 And he is a grettere lawe, by my pan,  
 Then may be geve to eny erthly man?  
 Therefore posityf lawe, and such decreté,  
 Is broke alway for love in ech degree. 1170  
 A man moot ne never love maugré his heed.  
 He may nought do it, though he schulde be deed,  
 Al be sche mayde, or be sche widewe or wyf.  
 And that it is nat likly al thy lyf  
 To stonden in hire grace, no more schal I;  
 For wel thou wost thyselfen verrily,  
 That thou and I been dampned to prisoun  
 Perpetuelly, us gayneth no ransoun.  
 We stryve, as doth the houndes for the boon,  
 They foughte al day, and yit here part was noon;  
 Ther com a kyte, whil that they were wrothe,  
 And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe.  
 And therefore at the kynges court, my brother,  
 Eche man for himself, ther is non other.  
 Love if the list; for I love and ay schal;  
 And sothly, levee brother, this is al.  
 Eke in this prisoun moote we endure,  
 And every of us take his aventure."  
 Gret was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,  
 If that I hadde leysir for to seye; 1190  
 But to the effect, it happed on a day,  
 (To telle it yow as sehortly as I may)  
 A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,  
 That felaw was to the duk Theseus  
 Syn thilke day that they were children lyte,  
 sart, as cited by Tyrwhitt, Edward III. is made to declare  
 that he would bring the war to a successful issue, or *il*  
*mourroit en la peine.*

1137. *love.* The Harl. Ms. has *lande*.

1165. *the old clerkes sawe.* Boethius, who says, in his  
 treatise *De Consolat. Philos.* lib. iii. met. 12,—

Quis legem det amantibus?

Major lex amor est sibi.

1173. *houndes.* This is a medieval fable which I have  
 not met with elsewhere, though it may probably be found  
 in some of the inedited collections.

Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visite,  
 And for to play, as he was wont to do,  
 For in this world he loved noman so:  
 And he loved him as tendurly agayn.  
 So wel they loved, as olde bookes sayn, 1200  
 That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,  
 His felawe wente and sought him down in helle;  
 But of that story lyst me nought to write.  
 Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,  
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yeer;  
 And fynally at requeste and prayer  
 Of Perotheus, withoute any ransoun  
 Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,  
 Frely to go, wher him lust over al,  
 In such a gyse, as I you telle schal. 1210  
 This was the forward, playnly to endite,  
 Betwixe Theseus and him Arcite:  
 That if so were, that Arcite were founde  
 Evere in his lyf, by daye or night, o stound  
 In eny contré of this Theseus,  
 And he were caught, it was accorded thus,  
 That with a swerd he scholde lese his heed;  
 Ther nas noon other remedy ne reed,  
 But took his levee, and homward he him spedde;  
 Let him be war, his nekke lith to wedde. 1220  
 How gret a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!  
 The deeth he feleth thorough his herte smyte;  
 He weepeth, weyleth, cryeth pitously;  
 To slen himself he wayteth pryvly.  
 He seyde, "Allas the day that I was born!  
 Now is my prisoun werse than was biforne;  
 Now is me schape eternally to dwelle  
 Nought in purgatorie, but in helle.  
 Allas! that ever knewe I Perotheus!  
 For elles had I dweld with Theseus 1230  
 I-fetered in his prisoun for evere moo.  
 Than had I ben in blis, and nat in woo.  
 Oonly the sight of hir, whom that I serve,  
 Though that I hir grace may nat deserre,  
 Wold han sufficed right ynough for me.  
 O dere cosyn Palamon," quod he,  
 "Thyn is the victoire of this aventure,  
 Ful blisfully in prisoun to endure;  
 In prisoun? nay, certes but in paradys!  
 Wel hath fortune y-torned the the dys, 1240  
 That hath the sight of hir, and I the absence.  
 For possible is, syn thou hast hir presence,  
 And art a knight, a worthi and an able,  
 That by som cas, syn fortune is chaungable,  
 Thou maist to thy desir somtyme attayne.  
 But I that am exiled, and bareyne  
 Of alle grace, and in so gret despeir,  
 That ther nys water, erthe, fyr, ne eyr,  
 Ne creature, that of hem makid is,  
 That may me helpe ne comfort in this. 1250  
 Wel ought I sterve in wanhope and distresse;  
 Farwel my lyf and al my jolynesse.  
 Allas, why playnen folk so in comune  
 Of purveance of God, or of fortune,  
 That geveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse  
 Wel better than thei can hemself devyse?  
 Som man desireth for to have richesse,  
 That cause is of his morthre or gret seeknesse.  
 And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,  
 That in his hous is of his mayne slayn. 1260  
 Infinites harmes ben in this mateere;  
 We wote nevere what thing we prayen heere.

1202. *in helle.* An allusion to the classic story of The-  
 sens and Pirithous.



We faren as he that dronke is as a mows.  
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,  
 But he not nat which the righte wey is thider,  
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider,  
 And certes in this world so faren we.  
 We seeken faste after felicité,  
 But we gon wrong ful ofte twelye.  
 Thus may we seyen alle, namely I, 1270  
 That wende have had a gret opinioun,  
 That gif I mighte skape fro prisoun,  
 Than had I be in joye and parfyt hele,  
 Ther now I am exiled fro my wele.  
 Syn that I may not se yow, Emelye,  
 I nam but deed; ther nys no remedye."

Uppon that other syde Palamon,  
 Whan he wiste that Arcite was agoon,  
 Such sorwe maketh, that the grete tour  
 Resowneth of his yolling and clamour. 1280  
 The pure feteres of his schynes grete  
 Weren of his bitter salte teres wete.

"Allas!" quod he, "Arcite, cosyn myn,  
 Of al oure strif, God woot, the fruyt is thin.  
 Thow walkest now in Thebes at thi large,  
 And of my woo thou gevest litel charge.  
 Thou maiste, syn thou hast wysdom and manhede,  
 Assemble al the folk of oure kynrede,  
 And make a werre so scharpe in this cité,  
 That by som aventure, or by som treté, 1290  
 Thou mayst hire wyne to lady and to wyf,  
 For whom that I most needes leese my lyf.  
 For as by wey of possibilité,  
 Syn thou art at thi large of prisoun free,  
 And art a lord, gret is thin avantage,  
 More than is myn, that sterve here in a kage.  
 For I moot wepe and weyle, whil I lyve,  
 With al the woo that prisoun may me gyve,  
 And eek with peyne that love me geveth also,  
 That doubleth al my torment and my wo." 1300

Therwith the fury of jelousye upsterte  
 Withinne his brest, and hent him by the herte  
 So wodly, that lik was he to byholde  
 The box-tree, or the asschen deed and colde.  
 Tho seyde he; "O goddes cruel, that governe  
 This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,  
 And writen in the table of athamaunte  
 Your parlement and youre eterne graunte,  
 What is mankynde more to yow holde  
 Than is a scheep, that rouketh in the folde? 1310  
 For slayn is man right as another beste,  
 And dwelleth eek in prisoun and arreste,  
 And hath seknesse, and greet adversité,  
 And ofte tymes gilteles, pardé.  
 What governaunce is in youre prescience,  
 That gilteles tormenteth innocence?  
 And yet enereceth this al my penaunce,  
 That man is bounden to his observaunce  
 For Goddes sake to letten of his wille,  
 Ther as a beste may al his lust fulfillle. 1320  
 And whan a beste is deed, he ne hath no peyne;  
 But man after his deth moot wepe and pleyne,  
 Though in this world he have care and woo:  
 Withouten doute it may stonde so.  
 The answer of this I lete to divinis,  
 But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.  
 Allas! I se a serpent or a theef,  
 That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,

Gon at his large, and wher him lust may turne.  
 But I moste be in prisoun thurgh Saturne, 1330  
 And eek thurgh Juno, jalous and eke wood,  
 That hath destroyed wel neyh al the blood  
 Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.  
 And Venus sleth me on that other syde  
 For jelousye, and fere of him Arcyte."

Now wol I stynte of Palamon a lite,  
 And lete him stille in his prisoun dwelle,  
 And of Arcite forth than wol I telle.  
 The somer passeth, and the nightes longe  
 Encreseen double wise the peynes stronge 1340  
 Bothe of the lover and the prisoner.  
 I noot which hath the wofullere cheer.  
 For schortly for to sey, this Palamon  
 Perpetually is dampned to prisoun,  
 In cheynes and in feteres to be deed;  
 And Arcite is exiled upon his heed  
 For evere mo as out of that contré,  
 Ne nevere mo he schal his lady see.

Now lovyeres axe I this question,  
 Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon? 1350  
 That on may se his lady day by day,  
 But in prisoun he moot dwelle alway.  
 That other may wher him lust ryde or go,  
 But seen his lady schal he never mo.  
 Now deemeth as you luste, ye that can,  
 For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

Whan that Arcite to Thebes come was,  
 Ful ofte a day he swelde and seyde alas,  
 For seen his lady schal he never mo.  
 And schortly to concluden al his wo, 1360  
 So moche sorwe had never creature,  
 That is or schal wil that the world wol dure.  
 His sleep, his mete, his drynk is him byraft,  
 That lene he wexe, and drye as eny schaft.  
 His eyen holwe, grisly to biholde,  
 His hewe falwe, and pale as asschen colde,  
 And solitary he was, and ever alone,  
 And dwellyng all the night, making his mooun  
 And if he herde song or instrument, 13  
 Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nought be ste  
 So feble were his spirites, and so lowe, 60  
 And chaunged so, that no man couthe know  
 His speche nother his vois, though men it he  
 And in his gir, for all the world he ferde se.  
 Nought oonly lyke the lovers maladye  
 Of Hercules, but rather lik manye,  
 Engendrud of humour malencolyk,  
 Byforne in his selle fantastyk.  
 And schortly turned was al up-so-doun

1349. *this question.* An implied allusion to the medieval courts of love, in which questions of this kind were seriously discussed.

1378. *in his selle fantastyk.* Tyrwhitt reads, *Before his hed in his selle fantastike.* The division of the brain into cells, according to the different sensitive faculties, is very ancient, and is found depicted in medieval manuscripts. It was a rude forerunner of the science of phrenology. The 'fantastic cell' (*fantasia*) was in front of the head. In Ms. Harl. No. 4025, is a treatise entitled *Liber Theosuri Occulti*, in which (fol. 5<sup>vo</sup>), we are informed: "Et est in cerebro ratiōnativa, in corde irascibilis vel inspirativa, in epate voluntaria vel concupiscibilis. . . . Verumptamen certum est in prora cerebri esse fantāsim, in medio ratiōnem discretiōnis, in puppi memoriā; quarum si aliqua naturalī infirmitati vel percussione desipuerit et maxime memoria, prorsus et sompnia preempta sunt, si ratio vel fantasia vero destructa, sompnia quoquo modo ex memoria remanserunt. Si itaque homo multa per sompnium saepe viderit et oblitus fuerit ea quae vidit, scito memorialem partem cerebri ejus tenebrositate et obscuritate detentam esse. Similiter de ratiōne vel judiciō et fantasia praediandū est, et infirmitati futurae praevendū."

1264. *a dronke man.* From Boethius *De Consol.* lib. iii. pr. 2. "sed velut ebrius, domum quo tramite revertatur ignorat."

Bothe abytt and eek disposicioun 1330  
 Of him, this woful lovere daun Arcite.  
 What schulde I alway of his wo endite?  
 When he endured hadde a yeer or tuo  
 This cruel torment, and this peyne and woo,  
 At Thebes, in his contré, as I seyde,  
 Upon a night in sleep as he him leyde,  
 Him thought that how the wenged god Mereurie  
 Byforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.  
 His slepy yerd in hond he bar upright;  
 An hat he wered upon his heres bright. 1390  
 Arrayed was this god (as he took keepe)  
 As he was when that Argous took his sleep;  
 And seyde him thus: "To Athenes schalt thou  
 Ther is the schapen of thy wo an ende." [wende;  
 And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.  
 "Now trewely how sore that me smerte,"  
 Quod he, "to Athenes right now wol I fare;  
 Ne for the drede of deth schal I not spare  
 To see my lady, that I love and serve;  
 In hire presence I recche nat to sterve." 1400  
 And with that word he caught a gret myroun,  
 And saugh that changed was al his colour,  
 And saugh his visage was in another kynde.  
 And right anon it ran him into mynde,  
 That sethen his face was so disfigured  
 Of maladie the which he hath endured,  
 He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe,  
 Lyve in Athenes evere more unknowe,  
 And see his lady wel neih day by day.  
 And right anon he changed his aray. 1410  
 And clothed him as a pore laborer.  
 And al alone, save onoly a squyer,  
 That knew his pryvyte and al his cas,  
 Which was dysgyssed povrely as he was,  
 To Athenes is he go the nexte way.  
 And to the court he went upon a day,  
 And at the gate he profred his servyse,  
 To drugge and drawe, what so men wolde devyse.  
 And schortly of this matier for to seyn,  
 He fel in office with a chambirleyn, 1420  
 The which that dwellyng was with Emelye.  
 The he was wys, and couthe sone aspye  
 Pevery servaunt, which that served here.  
 Weouthe he hewe woode, and water bere,  
 The he was yonge and mighty for the nones,  
 And therto he was strong and bygge of bones  
 To doon that eny wight can him devyse.  
 A yeer or two he was in this servise,  
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the bright;  
 And Philostrate he seide that he hight. 1430  
 But half so wel beloved a man as he,  
 Ne was ther never in court of his degree.  
 He was so gentil of his condicioun,  
 That thoroughout al the court was his renoun.  
 They seyde that it were a charité  
 That Theseus wolde enbaunsen his degree,  
 And putten him in worschiful servyse,  
 Ther as he might his vertu exersise.  
 And thus within a while his name sponse  
 Bothe of his dedes, and of goode tonge, 1440  
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer  
 That of his chambre he made him squyer,  
 And gaf him gold to mayntene his degree;  
 And eek men brought him out of his countré

Fro yeer to yer ful pryvyly his rente,  
 But honestly and sleightly he it spente,  
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde.  
 And thre yeer in this wise his lyf he ladde,  
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,  
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath so derre.  
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite, 1451  
 And speke I wole of Palamon a lyte.  
 In derknes and orrible and strong prisoun  
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamon,  
 Forpnyed, what for woo and for destresse.  
 Who feleth double sorwe and hevynesse  
 But Palamon? that love destreyne so,  
 That wood out of his witt he goth for wo,  
 And eek therto he is a prisoner  
 Perpetually, not onoly for a yeer. 1460  
 Who couthe ryme in Englischch properly  
 His martirdam? for sothe it am nat I;  
 Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.  
 It fel that in the seventh yeer in May  
 The thridde night, (as olde bookes seyn,  
 That al this storie tellen more pleyn)  
 Were it by aventure or destené,  
 (As, whan a thing is schapen, it schal be,)  
 That soone aftur the mydynght, Palamon  
 By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun, 1470  
 And fleeth the cité fast as he may goo,  
 For he had give drinke his gayler soo  
 Of a clarré, maad of a certayn wyn,  
 With nereotykes and opye of Thebes fyn, [schake,  
 That al that night though that men wolde him  
 The gayler sleep, he mighte nought awake.  
 And thus he fleeth as fast as ever he may.  
 The night was schort, and faste by the day,  
 That needes cost he moste himselfen hyde.  
 And til a grove ther faste besyde 1480  
 With dredful foot than stalketh Palamon.  
 For schortly this was his opynoun,  
 That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,  
 And in the night then wolde he take his way  
 To Thebes-ward, his frendes for to preye  
 On Theseus to helpe him to werreye.  
 And schortelich, or he wolde lese his lyf,  
 Or wynnen Emelye unto his wyf.  
 This is the effect of his entente playn.  
 Now wol I torne unto Arcite agayn, 1490  
 That litel wiste how nyh that was his care,  
 Til that fortune hath brought him in the snare.  
 The busy larke, messenger of daye,  
 Salueth in hire song the morwe gray;  
 And fyry Phebus rysyth up so bright,  
 That al the orient laugheth of the light,  
 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves  
 The silver drops, hongyng on the leeves.  
 And Arcite, that is in the court ryal  
 With Theseus, his squyer principal, 1500  
 Is risen, and loketh on the mery day.  
 And for to doon his observance to May,  
 Remembryng of the poynt of his desire,  
 He on his courser, stertyng as the fire,  
 Is riden into feeldes him to pleye,  
 Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye.  
 And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,  
 By aventure his wey he gan to holde,  
 To make him a garland of the greves,  
 Were it of woodewynde or hawthorn leves, 1510

1384. I retain Tyrwhitt's reading of this line, which in the Harl. Ms. runs, *In this cruel torment, peyne, and woo.*  
 1439 *within*. The Ms. Harl. reads incorrectly *withinn*, which is the adverbial form of the preposition.

1493. *messenger of day*. The Harl. Ms. reads *of May*. Three lines below, Tyrwhitt reads *sight* for *light*, very unpoetically.



And lowde he song agens the sonne scheene:  
 "May, with all thyn floures and thy greene,  
 Welcome be thou, wel faire freische May,  
 I hope that I som grene gete may."  
 And fro his courser, with a lusty herte,  
 Into the grove ful lustily he sterte,  
 And in a pathe he romed up and down,  
 Ther by aventure this Palamoun  
 Was in a busche, that no man might him see.  
 Ful sore afered of his deth was he. 1520  
 Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite.  
 God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lite.  
 For soth is seyde, goon ful many yeres,  
 That feld hath eyen, and the woode hath eeres.  
 It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,  
 For al day meteth men atte unset stevene.  
 Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,  
 That was so neih to herken of his sawe,  
 For in the busche he stynteth now ful stille.  
 Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille, 1530  
 And songen al the roundel lustily,  
 Into a studie he fel so deynly,  
 As doth thes lovers in here quynte geeres,  
 Now in the crotte, now down in the breres,  
 Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.  
 Right as the Friday, sothly for to telle,  
 Now it schyneth, now it reyneth faste,  
 Right so gan gery Venus overcaste  
 The hertes of hire folk, right as hir day  
 Is grisful, right so chaungeth hire aray. 1540  
 Selde is the Fryday al the wyke i-like.  
 Whan that Arcite hadde songe, he gan to sike,  
 And sette him doun withouten eny more:  
 "Alas!" quod he, "that day that I was bore!  
 How longe, Juno, thurgh thy cruelte  
 Wiltow werreyen Thebes the citee?  
 Allas! i-brought is to confusioun  
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun;  
 Of Cadynus, the which was the first man  
 That Thebes bulde, or first the toun bygan, 1550  
 And of that cite first was crowned kyng,  
 Of his lynage am I, and his ofspring  
 By verray lyne, and of his stok ryal:  
 And now I am so caytyf and so thral,  
 That he that is my mortal enemy,  
 I serve him as his squyer povrely.  
 And yet doth Juno me wel more schame,  
 For I dar nought byknowe myn owne name,  
 But ther as I was wont to hote Arcite, 1559  
 Now hoote I Philostrate, nought worth a myte.  
 Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Juno,  
 Thus hath youre ire owre lynage fordo,  
 Save onny me, and wreechid Palamon,  
 That Thebes martyreth in prisoun.  
 And over all this, to slee me utterly,  
 Love hath his fyry dart so brennyngly  
 I-stykid thurgh my trewe careful herte,  
 That schapen was my deth erst than my scherte.

1524. *feld hath eyen*. This was a very popular old proverb. See my Essays on subjects connected with the Literature, &c. of the Middle Ages, i. p. 168. A Latin rhymor has given the following version of it, not uncommon in MSS.

*Campus habet lumen, et habet nemus auris acumen.*

1537. *now it schyneth*. Tyrwhitt reads *now schineth it*, and proposes on bad ms. authority *now itte shineth it*; but he was wrong in supposing that "*itte*" may have been a disyllable formerly, as well as *atte*."

1540. *grisful*. The two Cambridge mss. have *gerful* and *geriful*, which is perhaps right.

1563. *than my scherte*. This appears to have been a pro-

verbial phrase, and is explained by two passages from other poems of Chaucer. In the *Legende of good women*, l. 2618:—  
 Sens first that day, that shapen was my sherte,  
 And by the fatal suster had my dome.  
 and in the third book of *Troilus and Creseide*, l. 734,—  
 O fatal sustren, whiche, or any clothe  
 Me shapen was, my destinee me sponne.  
 1604. The Ms. Harl. reads, *But out of prisoun art y-ste dele by grace*, which probably arose from a mistake of the scribe who seeing that line 1603 was a repetition of 1593, thou that the next line (1594) was to be repeated also.

Ye slen me with youre eyhen, Emelye;  
 Ye ben the cause wherfore that I dye. 1.  
 Of al the remenant of al myn other care  
 Ne sette I nought the mountaunce of a tare,  
 So that I couthe do ought to youre plesaunce."  
 And with that word he fel down in a traunce  
 A longe tyme; and aftirward upsterte  
 This Palamon, that thoughte thurgh his herte  
 He felt a cold swerd so deynliche glyde;  
 For ire he quook, he nolde no lenger abyde.  
 And whan that he hath herd Arcites tale,  
 As he were wood, with face deed and pale, 1580  
 He sterte him up out of the bussches thikke,  
 And seyde: "Arcyte, false traitour wikke,  
 Now art thou hent, that lovest my lady so,  
 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,  
 And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn,  
 As I ful ofte have told the heere byforn,  
 And hast byjaped here the duke Theseus,  
 And falsly changed hast thy name thus;  
 I wol be deed, or elles thou schalt dye,  
 Thou schalt not love my lady Emelye, 1590  
 But I wil love hire onny and no mo;  
 For I am Palamon thy mortal fo.  
 And though that I no wepen have in this place,  
 But out of prisoun am y-stert by grace,  
 I drede not that other thou schalt dye,  
 Or thou ne schalt not love Emelye.  
 Chese which thou wilt, for thou schalt not asterte."  
 This Arcite, with ful despitous herte,  
 Whan he him knew, and had his tale herde,  
 As fers as a lyoun pulleth out a swerde, 1600  
 And seide thus: "By God that sitteth above,  
 Nere it that thou art sike and wood for love,  
 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,  
 Thou schuldest never out of this grove pace,  
 That thou ne schuldest deyen of myn hond.  
 For I defye the seurté and the bond  
 Which that thou seyst I have maad to the.  
 For, verray fool, think that love is fre;  
 And I wol love hire mawgré al thy might.  
 But, for thou art a gentil perfright knight, 1  
 And wenest to dereyne hire by batayle, 360  
 Have heere my trouthe, to morwe I nyl not  
 Withouten wityng of eny other wight,  
 That heer I wol be founden as a knight, &c.  
 And bryngen harneys right inough for the;  
 And ches the best, and lef the worst for me.  
 And mete and drynke this night wil I bryng  
 Inough for the, and cloth for thy beddyng.  
 And if so be that thou my lady wyne,  
 And sle me in this wood that I am inne, 1620  
 Thou maist wel have thy lady as for me."  
 This Palamon answereth, "I graunt it the."  
 And thus they ben departed til a-morwe,  
 Whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.  
 O Cupide, out of al charité!  
 O regne, that wolt no felaw have with the!

verbial phrase, and is explained by two passages from other poems of Chaucer. In the *Legende of good women*, l. 2618:—

Sens first that day, that shapen was my sherte,

And by the fatal suster had my dome.

and in the third book of *Troilus and Creseide*, l. 734,—

O fatal sustren, whiche, or any clothe

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1604. The Ms. Harl. reads, *But out of prisoun art y-ste dele by grace*, which probably arose from a mistake of the scribe who seeing that line 1603 was a repetition of 1593, thou that the next line (1594) was to be repeated also.

Both

Of h  
Wh  
Wol not, his thonkes, have no felaschipe.  
Th  
el fynden that Arcite and Palamon.  
Arcite is riden anon to the toum, 1630  
And on the morwe, or it were day light,  
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,  
Bothe sufficaunt and mete to darreyne  
The batayl in the feeld betwix hem tweyne.  
And on his hors, alone as he was born,  
He caryed al this harneys him byforn;  
And in the grove, at tyme and place i-sette,  
This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.  
Tho chaungen gan here colour in here face.  
Right as the honger in the regne of Trace 1640  
That stondesth in the gappe with a spere,  
Whan honted is the lyoun or the bere,  
And hereth him come russhyng in the greves,  
And breketh bothe the bowes and the leves,  
And thenketh, "Here cometh my mortel enemy,  
Withoute faile, he mot be deed or I;  
For eyther I mot slen him at the gappe,  
Or he moot slee me, if it me myshappe:"  
So ferden they, in chaungyng of here hew,  
As fer as eyther of hem other knewe. 1650  
Ther nas no good day, ne so saluyng;  
But streyt withouten wordes rehersyng,  
Every of hem helpeth to armen other,  
As frendly as he were his owen brother;  
And thanne with here scharpe speres stronge  
They foyneden ech at other wonder longe.  
Tho it semed that this Palamon  
In his fightyng were as a wood lyoun,  
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:  
As wilde boores gonne they togeder smyte, 1660  
That frothen white as fome for ire wood.  
Up to the ancle they faught in here blood.  
And in this wise I lete hem fightyng welle;  
And forthere I wol of Theseus telle.  
The destiné, mynistré general,  
That executeth in the world over al  
The purveans, that God hath seye byforn;  
Strong it is, that they the world had sworn  
The contrary of a thing by ye or nay,  
Whom tyme it schal falle upon a day 1670  
That falleth nought eft in a thousand yeere.  
And  
The, rteynly oure appetites here,  
Be it of werre, of pees, other hate, or love,  
Al is it reuled by the sight above.  
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,  
That for to honte is so desirous,  
And namely the grete hert in May,  
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,  
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde  
With hont and horn, and houndes him byside. 1680  
For in his hontyng hath he such delyt,  
That is his joye and his appetyt  
To been himself the grete herts bane,  
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.  
Cleer was the day, as I have told or this,  
And Theseus, with alle joye and blys,  
With his Ypolit, the fayre queene,  
And Emelye, clothed al in greene,  
On hontyng be thay riden ryally.  
And to the grove, that stood ther faste by, 1690

1666. *executeth*. The Ms. Harl. reads, *excused*.

1670. The sentiment expressed in this and the following line is taken direct from the Teseide,—

Ma come mi vegian venir in hora  
Cossa che in mille anni non avviene.

In which ther was an hert as men him tolde,  
Duk Theseus the streyte wey hath holde.  
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,  
There was the hert y-wont to have his flight,  
And over a brook, and so forth in his weye.  
This duk wol have of him a cours or tweye  
With houndes, which as him lust to comaunde.  
And whan this duk was come into the launde,  
Under the sonne he loketh, right anon  
He was war of Arcite and Palamon, 1700  
That foughten breeme, as it were boores tuo;  
The brighte swerdes wente to and fro  
So hidously, that with the leste strook  
It seemeth as it wolde felle an ook;  
But what they were, nothing yit he woot.  
This duk with spores his courser he smoot,  
And at a stert he was betwix hem tuoo,  
And pulld out a swerd and cride, "Hoo!  
Nomore, up peyne of leesyng of your heed.  
By mighty Mars, anon he schal be deed, 1710  
That smyteth eny strook, that I may seen!  
But telleteh me what mestir men ye been,  
That ben so hardy for to fighten heere  
Withoute jugge or other offeere,  
As it were in a lyste really."  
This Palamon answerde hastily,  
And seyde: "Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?  
We han the deth deserved bothe tuo.  
Tuo woful wrecches been we, and knytyves,  
That ben encmbred of oure owne lyves; 1720  
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,  
Ne geve us neyther mercy no refuge.  
And sle me first, for seynte charité;  
But sle my felaw eek as wel as me.  
Or sle him first; for, though thou knowe him lyte,  
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,  
That fro thy lond is banyscht on his heed,  
For which he hath i-served to be deed.  
For this is he that come to thi gate  
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate. 1730  
Thus hath he japed the many a yer,  
And thou hast maad of him thy cheef squyer.  
And this is he that loveth Emelye.  
For sith the day is come that I schal dye,  
I make pleynly my confessioun,  
That I am the woful Palamoun,  
That hath thy prisoun broke wikkedly.  
I am thy mortal foo, and it am I  
That loveth so hooete Emelye the bright,  
That I wol dye present in hire sight. 1740  
Therefore I aske deeth and my juwyse;  
But slee my felaw in the same wyse,  
For bothe we have served to be slayn."  
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,  
And seyde, "This is a schort conclusioun:  
Your owne mouth, by your owne confessioun,  
Hath dampned you bothe, and I wil it recorde.  
It nedeth nought to pyne yow with the corde.  
Ye schul be deed by mighty Mars the reede!"  
The queen anon for verray wommanhede 1750  
Gan for to wepe, and so dede Emelye,  
And alle the ladies in the companye.

1701. *boores tuo*. Tyrwhitt, with most of the mss., reads *bolles* (bulls).1749. *Mars the reede*. Tyrwhitt has quoted Boccaccio for the same epithet, used at the opening of his Teseide—"O rubicondo Marte"—it refers, of course, to the colour of the planet. The medieval writers constantly mixed up their astrological notions of the planets in their manner of looking at the poetical deities of the ancients.



Gret pité was it, as it thought hem alle,  
 That evere such a chaunce schulde falle;  
 For gentil men thi were and of gret estate,  
 And nothing but for love was this debate.  
 And saw here bloody woundes wyde and sore;  
 And alle they cryde lesse and the more,  
 "Have mercy, Lord, upon us wommen alle!"  
 And on here bare knees anon they falle, 1760  
 And wolde have kissed his feet right as he stood,  
 Til atte laste aslaked was his mood;  
 For pité renneth sone in gentil herte.  
 And though he first for ire quok and sterte,  
 He hath it al considered in a clause,  
 The trespas of hem bothe, and here cause:  
 And although his ire here gylt accused,  
 Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused;  
 And thus he thought that every maner man  
 Wol help himself in love if that he can, 1770  
 And eek delvery himself out of prisoun.  
 And eek in his hert had compassion  
 Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;  
 And in his gentil hert he thought anon,  
 And sothly he to himself seyde: "Fy  
 Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,  
 But be a lyoun bothe in word and dede,  
 To hem that ben in repentaunce and drede,  
 As wel as to a proud dispitious man,  
 That wol maynteyne that he first bigan. 1780  
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,  
 That in such caas can no divisoun;  
 But wayeth pride and humbleness after oon.  
 And shortly, whan his ire is over gon,  
 He gan to loken on hem with eyen light,  
 And spak these same wordes al in hight.  
 "The god of love, a! *benedicite*,  
 How mighty and how gret a lord is he!  
 Agayne his might ther gayneth non obstacle,  
 He may be cleped a god of his miracle; 1790  
 For he can maken at his owen gyse  
 Of ever herte, as him lust devyse.  
 Lo her is Arcite and Palamon,  
 That quytelly were out of my prisoun,  
 And might have lyved in Thebes ryally,  
 And witen I am here mortal enemy,  
 And that here deth lith in my might also,  
 And yet hath love, maugré here eyghen tuo,  
 I-brought hem hider bothe for to dye.  
 Now loketh, is nat that an heih folye? 1800  
 Who may not be a fole, if that he love?  
 Byholde for Goddes sake that smyth above,  
 Se how they blede! be they nought wel arrayed?  
 Thus hath here lord, the god of love, hem payed  
 Here wages and here fees for here servise.  
 And yet wenen they to ben ful wise,  
 That serven love, for ought that may bifalle.  
 But this is yette the beste game of alle,  
 That sche, for whom they have this jelousye,  
 Can hem therfore as moche thank as me. 1810  
 Sche woot no more of al this hoot fare,  
 By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.  
 But all moot ben assayed hoot or colde;  
 A man moot ben a fool other yong or olde;  
 I woot it by myself ful yore agon:  
 For in my tyme a servant was I on.

1761. The Ms. Harl. reads *bare feet*, which makes the line too long.

1785. *eyen light*. The Harl. Ms. has *black and light*, which makes the line too long, and the epithet *black* is evidently redundant.

And sythen that I knewe of loves peyne,  
 And wot how sore it can a man destreyne 2030  
 As he that hath often ben caught in his la  
 I you forgeve holly this trespace,  
 At the request of the queen that kneleth he  
 And eek of Emely, my suster deere.  
 And ye schullen bothe anon unto me swere,  
 That never ye schullen my crowne dere,  
 Ne make werre in me night ne day,  
 But be my freendes in alle that ye may.  
 I you forgeve this trespas every dele."  
 And they him swore his axying fayre and wele,  
 And him of lordschip and of mercy prayde,  
 And he hem graunted mercy, and thus he sayde:  
 "To speke of real lynage and riches, 1831  
 Though that sche were a queen or a prynces,  
 Ilk of yow bothe is worthy douteles  
 To wedde when tyme is, but natheles  
 I speke as for my suster Emelye,  
 For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye,  
 Ye woot youreself sche may not wedde two  
 At oones, though ye faughten ever mo:  
 That oon of yow, or be him loth or leef,  
 He may go pypen in an ivy leef; 1840  
 This is to say, sche may nought have bothe,  
 Al be ye never so jelous, ne so lothe.  
 For-thy I put you bothe in this degré,  
 That ilk of you schal have his destyné,  
 As him is schape, and herken in what wyse;  
 Lo here your ende of that I schal devyse.  
 My wil is this, for playn conclusioun,  
 Withouten eny replicacioun,  
 If that you liketh, tak it for the best,  
 That every of you schal go wher him lest 1850  
 Frely withouten ransoun or daungeer;  
 And this day fyfty wykes, fer ne neer,  
 Everich of you schal bryng an hundred knightes,  
 Armed for lystes ut at alle rightes  
 Al redy to derayne hir by batayle.  
 And thus byhote I you withouten fayle  
 Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knight,  
 That whethir of yow bothe that hath might,  
 This is to seyn, that whethir he or thou  
 May with his hundred, as I spak of now, 1860  
 Sle his contrary, or out of lystes dryve.  
 Him schal I geve Emelye to wyve,  
 To whom that fortune geveth so fair a grace.  
 The lyste schal I make in this place,  
 And God so wisly on my sowle rewte,  
 As I schal even juge ben and trewe.  
 Ye schul non othir ende with me make,  
 That oon of yow schal be deed or take.  
 And if you thinketh this is wel i-sayde,  
 Say youre avys, and holdeth yow apayde. 1870  
 This is youre ende and youre conclusioun."  
 Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?  
 Who spryngeth up for joye but Arcite?  
 Who couthe telle, or who couthe endite,  
 The joye that is made in this place  
 Whan Theseus hath don so fair a grace?  
 But down on knees wente every wight,  
 And thanked him with al here hertes might,

1817. *And sythen that*. Taken literally from the Te-seide,—

Ma pero che gia inamorato fui,  
 E per amor sovente folgiai,  
 M'e caro molto il perdonare altrui.

1828. *fayre and wele*. The Ms. Harl. reads *every dele* evidently a mere blundering repetition by the scribe of the conclusion of the preceding line.



Both

Of I . . . nely the Thebanes ofte sithe.  
 Whous with good hope and herte blithe 1880  
 W.aken here leve, and hom-ward they ryde  
 Th'ebes-ward, with olde walles wyde.  
 Arow men wolde it deme negligence,  
 Forgete to telle the dispence  
 Theseus, that goth so busily  
 maken up the lystes rially.  
 ad such a noble theatre as it was,  
 dar wel say that in this world ther nas.

The circuite ther was a myle aboute,  
 Walled of stoon, and dyched al withoute. 1890  
 Round was the schap, in maner of compaas,  
 Ful of degré, the height of sixty paas,  
 That whan a man was set in o degré  
 He letted nought his felaw for to se.

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,  
 West-ward such another in opposit.  
 And schortly to conclud, such a place  
 Was non in erthe in so litel space.  
 In al the lond ther nas no crafty man,  
 That geometry or arismetrike can, 1900  
 Ne portreyour, ne kerver of ymages,  
 That Theseus ne gaf hem mete and wages  
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.  
 And for to don his right and sacrifice,  
 He est-ward hath upon the gate above,  
 In worschip of Venus, goddess of love,  
 Don make an auter and an oratory;  
 And west-ward in the mynde and in memory  
 Of Mars, he hath i-naked such another,

That coste largely of gold a fother. 1910  
 And north-ward, in a toret on the walle,  
 Of alabaster whit and reed coralle  
 An oratory riche for to see,  
 In worschip of Dyane, goddess of chastité,  
 Hath Theseus i-wrought in noble wise.  
 But yit had I forgotten to devyse  
 The nobil keryng, and the purtretures,  
 The schap, the contynance of the figures,  
 That weren in these oratories thre. 1919

Furst in the temple of Venus thou may se  
 Wrought in the wal, ful pitous to byholde,  
 The broken slesp, and the sykles colde;  
 The sacred teeres, and the waymentyng;  
 The fury strokes of the desiryng,  
 That loves servauntz in thy lyf enduren;  
 The othes, that by her covenantz assuren.  
 Plesance and hope, desyr, fool-hardynesse,  
 Beauté and youthe, baudery and richesse,  
 Charmes and sorcery, lesynges and flattery,  
 Dispense, busynes, and jelousy, 1930  
 That werud of yolo guldres a gerland,  
 And a cukkow sittyng on hire hand;  
 Festes, instrumentz, carols, and daunces,  
 Lust and array, and al the circumstaunces  
 Of love, which I rekned and reken schal,  
 Ech by other were peynted on the wal,  
 And mo than I can make of mencion.

1882. I have added *ward* (which has evidently been omitted by the scribe of the Ms. Harl.) from one of the Cambridge mss.

1903. In all this description of the arena, there is a singular modification of the idea of an ancient amphitheatre, by clothing it in the description of a medieval tournament scene.

1923. *sorcery*. This reading, supported by several mss., is certainly superior to Tyrwhitt's *force*, which perhaps only arose from misreading the abbreviation, *for.c.* *sorcery* was considered one of the most effective modes of procuring love.

For sothly al the mount of Setheroun,  
 Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellyng,  
 Was schewed on the wal here portrayng, 1940  
 With alle the gardyn, and al the lustynes.  
 Nought was forgete; the porter Ydelnes,  
 Ne Narcisus the fayr of yore agon,  
 Ne yet the foly of kyng Salamon,  
 Ne eek the grete strengthe of Hercules,  
 Thenchemententz of Medea and Cerces,  
 Ne of Turnus the hard fury corage,  
 The riche Cresus caytif in servage.  
 Thus may we see, that wisdom and riches,  
 Beauté ne sleight, strengthe ne hardynes, 1950  
 Ne may with Venus holde champartye,  
 For as sche luste the world than may sche gye.  
 Lo, all this folk i-caught were in hire trace,  
 Til thay for wo ful often sayde allas.  
 Sufficeth this ensample on or tuo,  
 And though I couthe reken a thousand mo.  
 The statu of Venus, glorious for to see,  
 Was naked fletyng in the large see,  
 And fro the navel down all covered was  
 With waves grene, and bright as eny glas. 1960  
 A citole in hire right hond hadde sche,  
 And on hir heed, ful semely on to see,  
 A rose garland ful swete and wel smellyng,  
 And aboven hire heed dowves fleyng.  
 Bifrom hir stood hir sone Cupido,  
 Upon his schuldres were wynges two;  
 And bynd he was, as it is often seene;  
 A bowe he bar and arwes fair and greene.

Why schuld I nought as wel telle you alle  
 The portraiture, that was upon the walle 1970  
 Within the temple of mighty Mars the reede?  
 Al peynted was the wal in length and breede  
 Like to the estres of the grisly place,  
 That hight the gret tempul of Mars in Trace,  
 In that colde and frosty regioun,  
 Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mancioun.  
 First on the wal was peynted a foreste,  
 In which ther dwelled neyther man ne beste,  
 With knotty knarry bareyn trees olde  
 Of stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde; 1980  
 In which ther ran a swymbul in a swough,  
 As it were a storme schuld berst every bough:  
 And downward on an hil under a bent,  
 Ther stood the tempul of Marz armypotent,  
 Wrought al of burned steel, of which thentré  
 Was long and streyt, and gastly for to see.  
 And therout cam a rage and suche a prise,  
 That it maad al the gates for to rise.  
 The northen light in at the dore schon,  
 For wyndow on the walle ne was ther noon, 1990  
 Thorough the which men might no light discerne.  
 The dores wer alle ademauntz eterne,  
 I-clenched overthward and endelong  
 With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,  
 Every piler the tempul to susteene

1938. *Setheroun*. Citheron.

1963. *greene*. So the Harl. Ms. Others read *schene* and *kene*, the latter of which is perhaps the best.

1977. "I shall throw together a few lines of the Teseide, which Chaucer has plainly copied in this description" (Tyrwhitt)—

Ne v'era bestia ancora ne pastore . . .  
 Cerri . . . nodosi, aspri, rigidi, e vetusti . . .  
 E le porte eran de eterno adamante  
 Ferrato d'ogni parte tutte quante.

1981. *a swymbul*. This reading of Ms. Harl. is supported by other mss. Tyrwhitt, with some mss., has *a romble and a swough*.

Was tonne greet, of iren bright and schene.  
 Ther saugh I furst the derk ymaginyng  
 Of felony, and al the compassyng;  
 The cruel ire, as reed as cny gleede;  
 The pikepurs, and eek the pale drede; 2000  
 The smyler with the knyf under his cloke;  
 The schipne brennyng with the blake smoke;  
 The tresoun of the murtheryng in the bed;  
 The open werres, with woundes al bi-bled;  
 Contek with bloody knyf, and sharp manace.  
 Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place.  
 The sleer of himself yet saugh I there,  
 His herte-blod hath bathed al his here;  
 The navl y-dryve in the schode a-nyght;  
 The colde deth, with mouth gapyng upright. 2010  
 Amyddes of the tempul set mischaunce,  
 With sory comfort and evel contynauce.  
 I saugh woodnes laughyng in his rage;  
 The hunt strangled with wilde bores corage;  
 [The caroigne in the busshe, with throte y-corve;  
 A thousand slaine, and not of qualme y-storve;  
 The tiraunte, with the preyre by force y-raft;  
 The toun destroyed, ther was no thyng left;  
 Yet sawgh I brente the schippes hoppesteres;  
 The hunte strangled with the wilde beres:] 2020  
 The sowe freten the child right in the eradel;  
 The cook i-skalded, for al his longe ladel.  
 Nought both forgotten the infortune of Mart;  
 The carter over-ryden with his cart,  
 Under the whel ful lowe he lay adoun.  
 Ther were also of Martz divisoun,  
 The barbour, and the bowcher, and the smyth,

2000. *pikepurs*. The *pikepurses* were, I believe, the plunderers who followed the army, and their introduction here is not so inappropriate as Tyrwhitt seemed to think.

2005. *contek*. I have kept Tyrwhitt's reading, supported by most of the mss. The Harl. Ms. reads *kuttul*, evidently by error.

2013. Tyrwhitt, with most of the mss, has *Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage*, which is perhaps the correct reading. The Ms. Harl. reads *woundes* for *woodnes*, and *here* *rage*.

2015-2020. These lines, given here from Tyrwhitt, are omitted in Ms. Harl., and in some of the other mss. I have corrected Tyrwhitt's orthography by the best of the two Cambridge mss.

2023. *infortune of Mart*. Tyrwhitt thinks that Chancer might intend to be satirical in these lines; but the introduction of such apparently undignified incidents arose from the confusion already mentioned of the god of war with the planet to which his name was given, and the influence of which was supposed to produce all the disasters here mentioned. The following extract from the "Compost of Ptholomeus," already quoted, gives some of the supposed effects of Mars. "Under Mars is borne theves and robbers that kepe hie wayes, and do hurte to true men, and nyght walkers, and quarell pykers, bosters, mockers, and skoffers, and these men of Mars causeth warre and murder, and batayle, they wyll be gladly *smythes* or workers of yron. lyght fyngrod, and lyers, gret swerers of othes in vengeable wyse, and a great surmyler and crafty. He is red and angry, with blacke heer, and lytell iyen; he shall be a great walker, and a maker of swordes and knyves, and a sheder of mannes blode, and a fornycatour, and a speker of rybow dry. . . . and good to be a *barbour* and a blode letter, and to drawe tethe, and is peryllous of his handes." The following extract is from an old astrological book of the sixteenth century:—"Mars denoteth men with red faces and the skinne redde, the face round, the eyes yellow, horrible to behold, furious men, cruell, desperate, proude, sedicious, souldiers, captaynes, *smythes*, colliers, bakers, alcumistis, armourers, furnisshers, *butchers*, chirurgions, *barbers*, sargiantis, and hangmen, according as they shall be well or evill disposed."

2027. Tyrwhitt has altered this line to *The armerer, and the bowyer, and the smyth*. The barber and butcher, as well as the smyth, were under the influence of Mars. See the extracts in the last note.

That forgeth scharpe swerdes on his stith.  
 And al above depeynted in a tour  
 Saw I conquest sitting in gret honour, 2030  
 With the scharpe swerd over his heed  
 Hangyng by a sotil twyne threed.  
 Depeynted was ther the slaught of Julius,  
 Of grete Nero, and of Anthonius;  
 Al be that ilke tyme they were unborn,  
 Yet was here deth depeynted ther byforn,  
 By manasyng of Martz, right by figure,  
 So was it schewed right in the purtreture  
 As is depeynted in sterres above,  
 Who schal be slayn or elles deed for love. 2040  
 Sufficeth oon ensample in stories olde,  
 I may not reken hem alle, though I wolde.

The statue of Mars upon a carte stood,  
 Armed, and loked grym as he were wood;  
 And over his heed ther schyneth two figures  
 Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,  
 That oon Puella, that othur Rubius.  
 This god of armes was arayed thus.  
 A wolf ther stood byforn him at his feet  
 With eyen reed, and of a man he cet; 2050  
 With sotyl pencil depeynted was this storie.  
 In redoutyng of Mars and of his glorie.

Now to the temple of Dyane the chaste  
 As schortly as I can I wol me haste,  
 To telle you al the descripcioun.  
 Depeynted ben the walles up and doun,  
 Of huntyng and of schamefast chastité.  
 Ther saugh I how woful Calystopé,  
 Whan that Dyane was agreed with here,  
 Was turned from a womman to a bere, 2060  
 And after was sche maad the loode-sterre;  
 Thus was it peynted, I can say no ferre;  
 Hire son is eek a sterre, as men may see.  
 Ther sawgh I Dyane turned intil a tree,  
 I mene nought the goddess Dyane,  
 But Peneus daughter, the whiche hight Dane.  
 Ther saugh I Atheon an hert i-maked,  
 For vengance that he saugh Dyane al naked;  
 I saugh how that his houndes han him caught,  
 And freten him, for that they knew him naught.  
 Yit i-peynted was a litel forthermore, 2071  
 How Athalaunce huntyd the wilde bore,

And Melyagre, and many another mo,  
 For which Dyane wrought hem care and woo.  
 Ther saugh I eek many another story,  
 The which me list not drawe to memory.  
 This goddes on an hert ful hie seet,  
 With smale houndes al aboute hire feet,  
 And underneth the hir feet sche had the moone,  
 Waxyng it was, and schulde wane soone. 2080  
 In gaude greene hire statue clothed was,  
 With bowe in hande, and arwes in a cas.  
 Hir eyghen caste sche ful lowe adoun,  
 Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.  
 A womman travailyng was hire biforn,  
 But for hire child so longe was unborn  
 Ful pitously Lueyna gan sche calle,  
 And seyde, "Help, for thou mayst best of alle."  
 Wel couthe he peynte lyfly that it wrought,  
 With many a floren he the hewes bought. 2090

2039. *in sterres*. It was supposed by astrologers that every man's fortunes were depicted in the stars from the beginning of the world. Other mss., with Tyrwhitt, read *ceretes*.

2042. This line is left blank in Ms. Harl.

2063. *a sterre*. The Harl. Ms. reads, by an evident mistake, *is eek aftir as men may see*.



Now been these listes maad, and Theseus  
That at his grete cost arayed thus  
The temples and the theatres every del,  
Whan it was don, it liked him right wel.  
But styt I wil of Theseus a lite,  
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approacheth of her attournyng,  
That every schuld an hundred knyghtes bryng,  
The batail to derreyne, as I you tolde;  
And til Athenes, her covenant to holde, 2100  
Hath every of hem brought an hundred knyghtes,  
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.  
And sikerly ther trowed many a man  
That never, siththen that this world bigan  
For to speke of knightthod of her hond,  
As fer as God has naked see or lond,  
Nas, of so fewe, so good a company.  
For every wight that loveth chyvalry,  
And wold, his thankes, have a passant name,  
Hath preyed that he might be of that game; 2110  
And wel was him, that therto chosen was.  
For if ther felle to morwe such a caas,  
I knowe wel, that every lusty knight,  
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,  
Were it in Engelond, or elleswhere,  
They wold, here thankes, wilne to be there.  
To fighte for a lady; *benedicite!*  
It were a lusty sighte for to see.  
And right so ferden they with Palamon.  
With him ther wente knyghtes many ooz; 2120  
Some wol ben armed in an haburgoun,  
In a bright brest plat and a gypoun;  
And som wold have a peyre plates large,  
And som wold have a Puce scheld, or a targe;  
Som wol been armed on here legges weel,  
And have an ax, and eek a mace of steel.  
Ther nys no newe gyse, that it nas old.  
Armed were they, as I have you told,  
Everich after his owen opinioun.

Ther maistow se comyng with Palamoun 2130  
Ligurge himself, the grete kyng of Trace;  
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.  
The tercles of his eyen in his heed  
They gloweden bytwixe yolw and reed,  
And lik a griffoun loked he aboute,  
With kempe heres on his browes stowte;  
His lymes greet, his brawnes hard and stronge,  
His schuldres brood, his armes rounde and lounge.  
And as the gyse was in his centré,  
Ful heye upon a chare of gold stode he, 2140  
With foure white boles in a trays.  
In stede of cote armour in his harnays,  
With nayles yolwe, and bright as eny gold,  
He had a bere skyn, cole-blak for old.  
His lange heer y-kempt byhynd his bak,  
As eny raven fether it schon for blak.  
A wrethe of gold arm-gret, and huge of wight,  
Upon his heed, set ful of stoones bright,  
Of fyne rubeus and of fyn dyamauntz.  
Aboute his chare wente white alaunz, 2150  
Twenty and mo, as grete as eny stere,  
To hunte at the lyoun or at the bere,  
And folwed him, with mosel fast i-bounde,  
Colerd with golde, and torettes fyled rounde.  
An hundred lordes had he in his route  
Armed ful wel, with hertes stern and stoute.

With Arcite, in stories as men fynde,

2124. *Puce*. This is the reading of most of the MSS.  
The Ms. Harl. has *prys*

The gret Emetreus, the kyng of Ynde,  
Uppon a steede bay, trapped in steel,  
Covered with cloth and of gold dyapred wel, 2160  
Cam rydyng lyk the god of armes Mars.  
His coote armour was of a cloth of Tars,  
Cowched of perlys whyte, round and grete.  
His sadil was of brend gold newe bete;  
A mantelet upon his schuldre hangyng  
Bret-ful of rubies reed, as fir sparlyng.  
His criske her lik rynges was i-ronne,  
And that was yalwe, and gliteryng as the sonne.  
His nose was heigh, his eyen were crytayne,  
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn, 2170  
A fewe freknes in his face y-spreynd,  
Betwixe yolwe and somdel blak y-meynd,  
And as a lyoun he his lokyng caste.  
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.  
His berd was wel bygonne for to spryng;  
His voys was as a trumpe thunderyng.  
Upon his heed he wered of laurer grene  
A garlund freisch and lusty for to sene.  
Upon his hond he bar for his delyt  
An egle tame, as eny lylie whyt. 2180  
An hundred lordes had he with him ther,  
Al armed sauf here hedes in here ger,  
Ful richely in alle maner thinges.  
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kynges  
Were gadred in this noble companye,  
For love, and for eneres of chivalrye.  
Aboute the kyng ther ran on every part  
Ful many a tame lyoun and lepart.  
And in this wise thes lordes alle and some  
Been on the Sunday to the cité come 2190  
Aboute prime, and in the toun alight.  
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,  
Whan he had brought hem into his cité,  
And ynned hem, everich at his degré  
He festeth hem, and doth so gret labour  
To esen hem, and do hem al honour,  
That yit men wene that no mannes wyt  
Of non estat that cowde amenden it.  
The mynstralceye, the servyce at the feste,  
The grete giftes to the most and leste, 2200  
The riche aray of Theseus paleys,  
Ne who sat first ne last upon the deys,  
What ladies fayrest ben or best daunsyng,  
Or which of hem can daunce best or sing,  
Ne who most folyngly speketh of love;  
What haukes sitten on the perche above,  
What houndes lyen in the floor adoun:  
Of al this make I now no menciuyn;  
But of theeffect; that thinketh me the beste; 2209  
Now comth the poynt, and herketh if you leste.  
The Sunday night, or day bigan to springe,  
When Palamon the larke herde syngne,  
Although it were nought day by houres tuo,  
Yit sang the larke, and Palamon also  
With holy herte, and with an heih corage  
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrymage  
Unto the blisful Cithera benigne,  
I mene Venus, Honorable and digné.  
And in hire hour he walketh forth a paas

2162. *cloth of Tars*. A kind of silk, said to be the same as in other places is called *Tartarine* (*tartarinum*), but the exact derivation of which appears to be somewhat uncertain.

2201. *Theseus paleys*. The Ms. Harl. reads of *Thebes paleys*.

2219. *And in hire hour*. "I cannot better illustrate Chaucer's astrology than by a quotation from the old



Unto the lystes, ther hir temple was, 2220  
And down he kneleth, and, with humble cheer  
And herte sore, he seide as ye schal heer.

"Fairest of faire, o lady myn Venus,  
Doughter of Jove, and spouse to Vulcanus,  
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,  
For thilke love thou haddest to Adeoun  
Have pité on my bitter teeres smerte,  
And tak myn humble prayer to thin herte.  
Allas! I ne have no langage for to telle  
Theffectes ne the tormentz of myn helle; 2230  
Myn herte may myn harmes nat bewreie;  
I am so confus, that I may not seie.  
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wel  
My thought, and felest what harm that I fel,  
Consider al this, and rew on myn sore,  
As wisly as I schal for evermore  
Enforce my might thi trewe servant to be,  
And holde werre alday with chastité;  
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.  
I kepe nat of armes for to yelpe, 2240  
Ne nat I aske to morn to have victorie,  
Ne renoun in this caas, ne veyne glorie  
Of pris of armes, blowyng up and down,  
But I wolde have ful possessioun  
Of Emelye, and dye in thi servise;  
Fynd thou the maner how, and in what wyse.  
I recche nat, but it may better be,  
To have victorie of him, or he of me,  
So that I have my lady in myn armes.  
For though so be that Mars be god of armes,  
And ye be Venus, the goddess of love, 2251  
Youre vertu is so gret in heven above,  
Thy temple wol I worschipe evermo,  
And on thin auter, wher I ryde or go,  
I wol do sacrifice, and fyres beete.  
And if ye wol nat so, my lady sweete,  
Than pray I the, to morwe with a spere  
That Arcite me thurgh the herte bere.  
Thanne rekke I nat, when I have lost my lyf,  
Though that Arcite have hir to his wyf. 2260  
This is theeffect and ende of myn prayere;

Kalendrier de Bergiers, edit. 1500, sign. k. ii. b. Qui veult savoir comme bergiers scevent quel planete regne chascune heure du jour et de la nuit, doit savoir la planete du jour qui veult s'enquerir; et la premiere heure temporelle du soleil levant ce jour est pour celluy planete, la seconde heure est pour la planete ensuivant, et la tierce pour l'autre, &c. in the following order, viz. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna. To apply this doctrine to the present case. The first hour of the Sunday, reckoning from sun-rise, belonged to the Sun, the planet of the day; the second to Venus, the third to Mercury, &c.; and continuing this method of allotment, we shall find that the twenty-second hour also belonged to the Sun, and the twenty-third to Venus; so that the hour of Venus really was, as Chaucer says, two hours before sun-rise of the following day. Accordingly we are told in ver. 2273, that the third hour after Palamon set out for the temple of Venus, the Sun rose, and Emelie began to go to the temple of Diane. It is not said that this was the hour of Diane, or the Moon, but it really was; for, as we have just seen, the twenty-third hour of Sunday belonging to Venus, the twenty-fourth must be given to Mercury, and the first hour of Monday falls in course to the Moon, the presiding planet of that day. After this Arcite is described as walking to the temple of Mars, ver. 2369, in the *nexte houre of Mars*, that is, the *fourth hour of the day*. It is necessary to take these words together, for the *nexte houre*, singly, would signify the *second hour of the day*; but that, according to the rule of rotation mentioned above, belonged to Saturn, as the *third* did to Jupiter. The *fourth* was the *nexte houre of Mars*, that occurred after the hour last named.—*Tyrwhitt*.

2223. *Fairest of faire*. The Ms. Harl. reads *fairest, O fairest*.

Gif me my love, thou blisful lady deere." 2220  
When thorisoun was doon of Palamon,  
His sacrifice he dede, and that anon  
Ful pitously, with alle circumstances,  
Al telle I nat as now his observances.  
But at the last the statu of Venus schook,  
And made a signe, wherby that he took  
That his prayer accepted was that day.  
For though the signe schewed a delay, 2270  
Yet wist he wel that graunted was his boone;  
And with glad herte he went him hom ful soone.

The thrid hour inequal that Palamon  
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,  
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,  
And to the temple of Dian gan sche hye.  
Hir maydens, that sche with hir thider ladde,  
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,  
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al  
That to the sacrifice longen schal; 2280  
The hornes ful of meth, as is the gyse;  
Ther lakketh nought to do here sacrifice.  
Smokyng the temple, ful of clothes faire,  
This Emelye with herte debonaire  
Hir body wessch with watir of a welle;  
But how sche dide I ne dar nat telle,  
But it be eny thing in general;  
And yet it were a game to here it al;  
To him that meneth wel it were no charge:  
But it is good a man be at his large. 2290  
Hir brighte her was kempt, untressed al;  
A corone of a grene ok cerial  
Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete.  
Two fyres on the auter gan sche beete,  
And did hir things, as men may biholde  
In Stace of Thebes and the bokes olde.  
Whan kynled was the fyre, with pitous cheere  
Unto Dyan sche spak, as ye may heere.

"O chaste goddess of the woodes greene,  
To whom bothe heven and erthe and see is scene,  
Queen of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe, 2301  
Goddess of maydenes, that myn hert has knowe  
Ful many a yeer, ye woot what I desire,  
As keep me fro the vengans of thilk yre,  
That Atheen broughte trewely:  
Chaste goddess, wel wost thou that I  
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,  
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.  
I am, thou wost, yit of thi company,  
A mayden, and love huntynge and venery, 2310  
And for to walken in the woodes wyld,  
And nought to ben a wyf, and be with chyld.  
Nought wol I knowe the company of man.  
Now helpe me, lady, sythes ye may and kan,  
For the thre formes that thou hast in the.  
And Palamon, that hath such love to me,

2273. *The thrid hour inequal*. "In the astrological system, the day, from sun-rise to sun-set, and the night, from sun-set to sun-rise, being each divided into xii. hours, it is plain that the hours of the day and night were never equal, except just at the equinoxes. The hours attributed to the planets were of this *unequal* sort. See Kalendrier de Berg. loc. cit. and our author's treatise on the Astrolabe."—*Tyrwhitt*.

2291. *blighte her*. So in the Teseide, Emily is described as—

Dicho che i sno crin parevan d'oro,  
Non con trezza restretti, ma soluti  
E pinati.

2292. *a corone*. Corona di quercia cereale.—*Teseide*.

2296. *In Stace of Thebes*. In the Thebaid of Statius.

2315. *thre formes*. The Ms. Harl., probably by a mistake of the scribe, omits the word *thre*.

And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,  
 This grace I praye the withouten more,  
 As sende love and pees betwix hem two; 2320  
 And fro me torne away here hertes so,  
 That al here hoothe love, and here desire,  
 Al here hesy torment, and al here fyre  
 Be queynt, or turned in another place.  
 And if so be thou wol do me no grace,  
 Or if my destyné be schapid so,  
 That I schal needes have on of hem two.  
 So send me him that most desireth me.  
 Biholde, goddess of clene chastité,  
 The bitter teeres that on my cheekes falle.  
 Syn thou art mayde, and keper of us alle, 2330  
 My maydenhode thou kepe and wel conserve,  
 And whil I live a mayde I wil the serve."

The fyres bren upon the auter cleer,  
 Whil Emelye was in hire preyer;  
 But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynt,  
 For right anon on of the fyres queynt,  
 And quyked agayn, and after that anon  
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;  
 And as it queynt, it made a whistelyng,  
 As doth a wete brond in his brennyng. 2340  
 And at the brondes end out ran anon  
 As it were bloody drops many oon;  
 For which so sore agast was Emelye,  
 That sche was wel neih mad, and gan to crie,  
 For sche ne wiste what it signified;  
 But onely for feere thus sche cryed,  
 And wepte, that it was pité to heere.  
 And therwithal Dyane gan appeere,  
 With bow in hond, right as a hunteresse,  
 And seyde; "A! daughter, stynt thyn hevynesse.  
 Among the goddesses hys it is affermed, 2351  
 And by eterne wold write and confermed,  
 Thou schalt be wedded unto oon of tho,  
 That have for the so moche care and wo;  
 But unto which of hem may I nat telle.  
 Farwel, for I may her no lenger dwelle.  
 The fyres which that on myn auter bren  
 Schuln the declare, or that thou go hen,  
 Thyn adventure of love, and in this caas." 2360  
 And with that word, the arwes in the caas  
 Of the goddesses clatren faste and rynges,  
 And forth sche went, and made a vanyschyng,  
 For which this Emelye astoneyd was,  
 And seide, "What amounteth this, allas!  
 I put me under thy proteccioun,  
 Dyane, and in thi disposioun."  
 And boom sche goth anon the nexte way.  
 This is theffet, ther nys no mor to say.

The nexte hour of Mars folwyng this,  
 Arcite to the temple walkyd is, 2370  
 To fyry Mars to doon his sacrifice,  
 With al the rightes of his payen wise.  
 With pitous herte and heih devocioun,  
 Right thus to Mars he sayd his orison:  
 "O stronge god, that in the reynes cold  
 Of Trace honoured and lord art y-hold,  
 And hast in every regne and every land  
 Of armes al the bridel in thy hand,  
 And hem fortunest as the lust devyse,  
 Accept of me my pitous sacrifice. 2380  
 If so be that my youthe may deserve,  
 And that my might be worthi for to serve  
 Thy godhed, that I may ben on of thine,

Then pray I the to rewe on my pyne,  
 For thilke pyne, and that hoothe fyre,  
 In which whilom thou brendest for desyre,  
 Whan that thou uscest the gret bewte 2320  
 Of faire freissche Venus, that is so free,  
 And haddest hir in armes at thy wille;  
 And though the ones on a tyme mysfille, 2390  
 Whan Vulcanus had caught the in his laas,  
 And fand the liggyn by his wyf, allas!  
 For thilke sorwe that was in thin herte,  
 Have reuthe as wel upon my peynes smerte.  
 I am yong and unkonnyng, as thou wost,  
 And, as I trowe, with love offendid most,  
 That ever was eny lyves creature;  
 For sche, that doth me al this wo endure,  
 Ne rekketh never whether I synke or flete.  
 And wel I woot, or sche me mercy heete, 2400  
 I moot with strengthe wyn hir in the place;  
 And wel I wot, withouten help or grace  
 Of the, ne may my strengthe nought avayle.  
 Then help me, lord, to morn in my batayle,  
 For thilke fyr that whilom brende the,  
 As wel as this fire now brenneth me;  
 And do to morn that I have the victorie.  
 Myn be the travail, al thin be the glorie.  
 Thy sovereign tempul wol I most honouren  
 Of any place, and always most labouren 2410  
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes strong.  
 And in thy tempul I wol my baner hong,  
 And alle the armes of my companye,  
 And ever more, unto that day I dye,  
 Eterne fyr I wol bifore the fynde.  
 And eek to this arw I wol me bynde:  
 My berd, myn heer that hangeth longe adoun,  
 That never yit ne felt offensioun  
 Of rasour ne of schere, I wol thee give,  
 And be thy trewe servaunt whiles I live. 2420  
 Lord, have rowthe upon my sorwes sore,  
 Gif me the victorie, I aske no more."

The preyer stynt of Arcite the strange,  
 The rynges on the tempul dore that hange,  
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful fast,  
 Of which Arcite somewhat was agast.  
 The fyres brennen on the auter bright,  
 That it gan al the tempul for to light;  
 A swete smel anon the ground upgaf,  
 And Arcite anon his hand up haf, 2430  
 And more eneens into the fyr yett cast,  
 With othir rightes, and than atte last  
 The statu of Mars bigan his hauberk ryng.  
 And with that soun he herd a murmurynge  
 Ful lowe and dym, and sayde this, "Victorie."  
 For which he gaf to Mars honour and glorie.  
 And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,  
 Arcite anon unto his inne is fare,  
 As fayn as foul is of the brighte sonne.  
 And right anon such stryf is bygonne 2440  
 For that granntynge, in the heaven above,  
 Bitwix Venus the goddess of love,  
 And Martz the sterne god armypotent,  
 That Jupiter was busy it to stent;  
 Til that the pale Saturnes the colde,  
 That knew so many of adventures olde,  
 Fond in his olde experiens an art,  
 That he ful soone hath plesyd every part.  
 As soth is sayd, eelde hath gret avantage,  
 In eelde is bothe wisdom and usage; 2450  
 Men may the eelde at-ren, but nat at-rede.  
 Saturne anon, to stynte stryf and drede,

2375. The greater part of this prayer is taken almost literally from the *Teseide*.

Al be it that it be agayns his kynde,  
Of al this stryf he can a remedy fynde.  
"My deere doughter Venus," quod Satourne,  
"My cours, that hath so wyde for to tourne,  
Hath more power than woot eny man.  
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;  
Myn is the prision in the derke cote;  
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte;  
The murmur, and the cherles rebellyng; 2471  
The groynyng, and the pryvé empoysonyng.  
I do vengeance and pleyn correctioun,  
Whiles I dwelle in the signe of the lyoun.  
Myn is the ruen of the hihe halles,  
The fallyng of the toures and the walles  
Upon the mynour or the carpenter.  
I slow Sampson in schakying the piler.  
And mync ben the maladies colde,  
The derke tresoun, and the castes olde; 2470  
Myn lokyng is the fadir of pestilens.  
Now wepe nomore, I schal do my diligence,  
That Palamon, that is myn owen knight,  
Schal have his lady, as thou him bihight.  
Thow Martz schal kepe his knight, yetnevertheles  
Bitwixe you ther moot som tyme be pees;  
Al be ye nought of oo complexioun,  
That ilke day causeth such divisioun.  
I am thi ayel, redy at thy wille;  
Wepe thou nomore, I wol thi lust fulfillle." 2480  
Now wol I stynt of the goddes above,  
Of Mars, and of Venns goddes of love,  
And telle you, as plainly as I can,  
The grete effecte for that I bigan.  
Gret was the fest in Athenus that day,  
And eek that lusty sesoun of that May  
Made every wight to ben in such plesaunce,  
That al the Monday jousten they and daunce,  
And spende it in Venus heigh servise.  
But by the cause that they schuln arise 2490  
Erly a-morwe for to see that fight,  
Unto their rest wente they at nyght.  
And on the morwe whan the day gan spryng,  
Of hors and hernoys noyse and clateryng  
Ther was in the oostes al aboute;  
And to the paleys rood ther many a route  
Of lordes, upon steede and palfreys.  
Ther mayst thou see devysyng of herneys  
So uncowth and so riche wrought and wel  
Of goldsmithy, of browdyng, and of steel; 2500  
The scheldes bright, testers, and trappures;  
Gold-beten helmes, hauberks, and cote armures;  
Lordes in paramentes on her coursers,  
Knights of retenu, and eek squyers;  
Rayhyng the speres, and helmes bokelyng,  
Girdyng of scheeldes, with layneres lasyng;  
Ther as need is, they were nothing ydel;  
Ther fomen steedes, on the golden bridel  
Gnawyng, and faste armurers also  
With fyle and hamer prykying to and fro; 2510  
Yemen on foote, and knaves many oon  
With schorte staves, as thikke as they may goon;

2453. *agayns his kynde.* According to the "Compost of Ptholomeus," Saturn was influential in producing strife: "And the children of the sayd Saturne shall be great jangleres and chyders. . . . and they will never forgyve tyll they be revenged of theyr quarrell."

2456. *My cours.* The course of the planet Saturn. See the next note.

2457. *more power.* The "Compost of Ptholomeus," quoted above, says of Saturn, "he is mighty of hymself. . . . It is more than xxx yere or he may rounne his course. . . . Whan he doth reygne, there is moche debate."

Pypes, trompes, nakers, and clariounes,  
That in the batail blewe bloody sounes;  
The paleys ful of pepul up and down,  
Heer thre, ther ten, haldyng her questioun,  
Dyvynyng of this Thebans knyghtes two.  
Som seyden thus, som seyde it schal be so;  
Som heelde with him with the blake berd,  
Som with the ballyd, som with thikke hered; 2520  
Som sayd he loked grym as he wold fight;  
He hath a sparth of twenti pound of wight.  
Thus was the halle ful of devynyng,  
Lang after that the sonne gan to spryng.  
The gret Theseus that of his sleep is awaked  
With menstralcy and noyse that was makid,  
Held yit the chambre of his paleys riche,  
Til that the Thebanes knyghtes bothe i-liche  
Honoured weren, and into paleys fet.  
Duk Theseus was at a wyndow set. 2530  
Arayed right as he were god in trone.  
The pepul preseth thider-ward ful some  
Him for to seen, and doon him reverence,  
And eek herken his hest and his sentence.  
An herowd on a skaffold made a hoo,  
Til al the noyse of the pepul was i-doo;  
And whan he sawh the pepul of noyse al stille,  
Thus schewed he the mighty dukes wille.

"The lord hath of his heih discrecioun  
Considered, that it were destruccioun 2540  
To gentil blood, to fighten in this wise  
Of mortal batail now in this emprise;  
Wherefore to schapen that they schuld not dye,  
He wol his firste purpos modifye.  
No man therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,  
No maner schot, ne pollax, ne schort knyf  
Into the lystes sende, or thider bryng;  
Ne schorte swerd for to stoke the point bytyng  
No man ne draw, ne bere by his side.  
Ne noman schal unto his felawe ryde 2550  
But oon cours, with a sharpe spere;  
Feyne if him lust on foote, himself to were.  
And he that is at meschief, schal be take,  
And nat slayn, but be brought to the stake,  
That schal be ordeyned on eyther syde;  
But thider he schal by force, and ther abyde.  
And if so falle, a cheventen be take  
On eyther side, or elles sle his make,  
No lenger schal the turneynge laste. 2559  
God spede you; goth forth and ley on faste.  
With long swerd and with mace fight your fille.  
Goth now your way; with this is the lordes wille."

The voice of the poepul touchith heven,  
So lowde cried thei with mery steven:  
"God save such a lord that is so good,  
He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!"  
Up goth the trompes and the melodye,  
And to the lystes ryde the compagne  
By ordynance, thurgh the cité large,  
Hangyng with cloth of gold, and not with sarge  
Ful lik a lord this nobul duk can ryde,

2516. *heer thre.* So in the Teseide,—  
Qui tre, la quatro, e qui sei adunati,  
Tra lor mostrando diverse ragione.

2527. *held yit the chambre.* So the Teseide,—  
Anchor le riche camere tenea  
Del suo palazio.

2563. *The voice of the poepul.* So the Teseide,—  
Di nobili e del populo il romore  
Tocho le stelle, se fu alto e forte,  
Li dei, dicendo, servi tal signore  
Che de gli amici suoi fugie la morte.

2564. *mery.* The Ms. Harl. reads *mylde.*



These tuo Thebans on eyther side; 2572  
 And after rood the queen, and Emelye,  
 And after hem another companye  
 Of one and other, after here degré.  
 And thus they passeden thurgh that cité,  
 And to the lystes come thei by tyme;  
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryme.  
 Whan sette was Theseus riche and hye,  
 Ypolita the queen and Emelye, 2580  
 And other ladyes in here degrees aboute,  
 Unto the settes passeth al the route.  
 And west-ward, thourgh the gates of Mart,  
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his part,  
 With baners red ys entred right anoon;  
 And in that selve moment Palamon  
 Is, under Venus, est-ward in that place,  
 With baner whyt, and hardy cheer of face.  
 In al the world, to seeke up and down,  
 So even withoute variacioun 2590  
 Ther nere suche companyes tweye.  
 For ther nas noon so wys that cowthe seye,  
 That any had of other avantage  
 Of worthines, ne staat, ne of visage,  
 So evene were they chosen for to gesse.  
 And in two ringes faire they hem dresse.  
 And whan here names i-rad were everychon,  
 That in here nombre gile were ther noon,  
 Tho were the gates schitt, and cried lowde:  
 "Doth now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!"  
 The heraldz laften here prikyng up and down;  
 Now ryngede the tromp and clarioun;  
 Ther is nomore to say, but est and west  
 In goth the speres into the rest;  
 Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde;  
 In goth the scharpe spere into the side.  
 Ther schyveren schaftes upon schuldres thyk;  
 He feeleth thurgh the herto-spon the prik.  
 Up sprengen speres on twenty foot on hight;  
 Out goon the swerdes as the silver bright. 2610  
 The helmes there to-hewen and to-schrede;  
 Out brast the blood, with stoute stremes reede.  
 With mighty maces the bones thay to-breste.  
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng can threste.  
 Ther stomblen steedes strong, and down can falle.  
 He rolleth under foot as doth a balle.  
 He feyneth on his foot with a tronchoun,  
 And him hurteleth with his hors adoun.  
 He thurgh the body hurt is, and siththen take  
 Maugré his heed, and brought unto the stake, 2620  
 As forward was, right ther he most abyde.  
 Another lad is on that other syde.  
 And som tyme doth Theseus hem to rest,  
 Hem to refruisse, and drinke if hem lest.  
 Ful ofte a-day have this Thebans twoo  
 Togider y-met, and wrought his felaw woo;  
 Unhorsed hath eek other of hem tweye.  
 Ther nas no tyggyr in the vale of Galgopleye,  
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lite,  
 So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite 2630  
 For jelous hert upon this Palamon:  
 Ne in Belmary ther is no fel lyoun,  
 That hunted is, or is for hunger wood,  
 Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,  
 As Palamon to sle his foo Arcite.  
 The jelous strokes on here helmes byte;  
 Out renneth blood on bothe here sides reede.  
 Som tyme an ende ther is on every dede;  
 For er the sonne unto the reste went, 2640  
 The strange kyng Emetreus gan hent  
 This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,  
 And his swerd in his fleissch he did byte;  
 And by the force of twenti he is take  
 Unyolden, and i-drawe unto the stake.  
 And in the rescous of this Palamon  
 The stronge kyng Ligurgius is born adoun;  
 And kyng Emetreus for al his strengthe  
 Is born out of his sadel his swerdes lengthe,  
 So hit him Palamon er he were take; 2649  
 But al for nought, he was brought to the stake.  
 His hardy herte might him helpe nought;  
 He most abyde whan that he was caught,  
 By force, and eek by composicioun.  
 Who sorweth now but wofel Palamoun,  
 That moot nomore gon agayn to fight?  
 And whan that Theseus had seen that sight,  
 He cryed, "Hoo! nomore, for it is doon!  
 Ne noon schal lenger unto his felaw goon.  
 I wol be trewe juge, and nought partye.  
 Arcyte of Thebes schal have Emelye, 2660  
 That hath by his fortune hire i-wome."  
 Anoon ther is noyse bygonne  
 For joye of this, so lowde and hey withalle,  
 It semed that the listes wolde falle.  
 What can now fayre Venus doon above?  
 What seith sche now? what doth this queen of  
 But wepeth so, for wantyng of hir wille, [love?  
 Til that hire teeres in the lystes fille;  
 Sche seyde: "I am aschamed douteles."  
 Satourmus seyde: "Doughter, hold thy pees. 2670  
 Mars hath his wille, his knight hath his boone,  
 And by myn heed thou schalt be esed soone."  
 The trompes with the lowde mynstraleye,  
 The herawdes, that ful lowde yolle and cry,  
 Been in here joye for daun Arcyte.  
 But herkneþ me, and stynteth but a lite,  
 Which a miracle bifel anoon.  
 This Arcyte fersly hath don his helm adoun,  
 And on his coursor for to schewe his face  
 He priked endlange in the large place, 2680  
 Lokyng upward upon this Emelye;  
 And sche agayn him cast a frendly yghe,  
 (For women, as for to speke in comune,  
 Thay folwe alle the favour of fortune)  
 And was alle his in cheer, and in his hert.  
 Out of the ground a fyr infernal stert,  
 From Pluto send, at the request of Saturne,  
 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,  
 And leap asyde, and foundred as he leep;  
 And or that Arcyte may take keep, 2690  
 He pight him on the pomel of his heed,  
 That in that place he lay as he were deed,  
 His brest to-broken with his sadil bowe.  
 As blak he lay as eny col or erowe,  
 So was the blood y-ronne in his face.  
 Anon he was y-born out of the place  
 With herte sore, to Theseus paleys.  
 Tho was he corven out of his harneys,  
 And in a bed y-brought ful fair and blyve,  
 For yit he was in memory and on lyve, 2700

2574. *And after hem.* The Ms. Harl. reads these two lines thus,—

And after hem of ladyes another companye,

And after hem of comunes after here degré.

*Of ladyes* in the first line seems redundant, and the second line appears to have been blundered by a careless or ignorant scribe.

2617. *on his foot.* Conf. l. 2552.

2628. *Galgopleye.* Tyrwhitt reads *Galaphey*, and conjectures that Chancer meant Galapha in Mauritania Tingitana. *Delmarie* has been noticed before, l. 57.

And alway cryeng after Emelye.  
 Duk Theseus, and al his companye,  
 Is comen hom to Athenes his cite,  
 With alle blys and gret solempnité.  
 Al be it that this aventure was falle,  
 He nolde nought discomforten hem alle.  
 Men seyde eek, that Arcita schuld nought dye,  
 He schal be helyd of his maladye.  
 And of another thing they were as fayn,  
 That of hem alle ther was noon y-slayn, 2710  
 Al were they sore hurt, and namely oon,  
 That with a spere was thirled his brest boon.  
 To other woundes, and to broken armes,  
 Some hadde salve, and some hadde charmes,  
 Fermacies of herbes, and eek save  
 They dronken, for they wolde here lyves have.  
 For which this noble duk, as he wel can,  
 Comforteth and honoureth every man,  
 And made revel al the lange night,  
 Unto the straunge lordes, as was right. 2720  
 Ne ther was holden no discomfytynge,  
 But as a justes or as a turneyng;  
 For sothly ther was no discomfiture,  
 For fallynge is but an adventure.  
 Ne to be lad with fers unto the stake  
 Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take,  
 A person allone, withouten moo,  
 And rent forth by arme, foot, and too,  
 And eke his steede dryven forth with staves,  
 With footemen, bothe yemen and eke knaves, 2730  
 It was aretted him no vylonye,  
 Ne no maner man heldn it no cowardye.  
 For which Theseus lowd anon leet crie,  
 To stynten al rancour and al envye,  
 The gree as wel on o syde as on other,  
 And every side lik, as others brother;  
 And gaf hem giftes after here degré,  
 And fully heeld a feste dayes thre;  
 And conveyed the knyghtes worthily  
 Out of his toun a journee largely. 2740  
 And hom went every man the righte way,  
 Ther was no more, but "Farwel, have good day!"  
 Of this batayl I wol no more endite,  
 But speke of Palamon and of Arcyte.

Swelleth the brest of Arcyte, and the sore  
 Encresceth at his herte more and more.  
 The clothred blood, for eny leche-craft,  
 Corruppith, and is in his bouk i-laft,  
 That nother reyne blood, ne ventusyng,  
 Ne drynk of herbes may ben his helpyng. 2750  
 The vertu expulsif, or animal,  
 Pro thilke vertu cleped natural,  
 Ne may the venym voyde, ne expelle.  
 The pypes of his lounges gan to swelle,  
 And every lacerte in his brest adoun  
 Is schent with venym and corrupcioun.  
 Him gayneth nother, for to get his lyf,  
 Vomyt up-ward, ne down-ward laxatif;

2714, 2715. *charmes—save.* It may be observed that the salves, charms, and pharmacies of herbs, were the principal remedies of the physician in the age of Chaucer. *Save (salvia, the herb sage)* was considered one of the most universally efficient of the medieval remedies.

2738. *dayes thre.* Three days were the usual duration of a feast among our early forefathers. As far back as the seventh century, when Wilfred consecrated his church at Ripon, he held—*magnam convivium trium dierum et noctium reges cum omni populo lificantes.* Eddins, Vit. S. Wilf. c. 17. I am told that in Scotland these feasts of three days and three nights have been preserved traditionally to a comparatively recent period.

Al is to-broken thilke regioun;  
 Nature hath now no dominacioun. 2760  
 And certeynly wher nature wil not wirche,  
 Farwel phisik; go here the man to chirche.  
 This al and som, that Arcyte moste dye.  
 For which he sendeth after Emelye,  
 And Palamon, that was his cosyng deere.  
 Than seyde he thus, as ye schul after heere.  
 "Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte  
 Declare a poynt of my sorwes smerte  
 To you, my lady, that I love most;  
 But I byquethe the service of my gost 2770  
 To you aboven every creature,  
 Syn that my lyf may no lenger dure.  
 Allas, the woo! allas, the peynes stronge,  
 That I for you have suffred, and so longe!  
 Allas, the deth! allas, myn Emelye!  
 Allas, departyng of our companye!  
 Allas, myn hertes queen! allas, my wyf!  
 Myn hertes lady, ender of my lyf!  
 What is this world? what asken men to have?  
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave 2780  
 Alone withouten eny companye.  
 Farwel, my swete! farwel, myn Emelye!  
 And softe take me in your armes tweye,  
 For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.  
 I have heer with my cosyng Palamon  
 Had stryf and rancour many a day i-gon,  
 For love of yow, and eek for jealousye.  
 And Jupiter so wis my sowle gye,  
 To speken of a servaunt proprely,  
 With alle circumstaunces trewely, 2790  
 That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,  
 Wysdom, humblesse, astaat, and by kynrede,  
 Fredam, and al that longeth to that art,  
 So Jupiter have of my soule part,  
 As in this world right now ne know I non  
 So worthy to be loyed as Palamon,  
 That serveth you, and wol do al his lyf.  
 And if that ye schul ever be a wyf,  
 Forget not Palamon, that gentil man."  
 And with that word his speche faile gan; 2800  
 For fro his herte up to his brest was come  
 The cold of deth, that him had overcome.  
 And yet moreover in his armes twoo  
 The vital strength is lost, and al agoo.  
 Only the intellect, withouten moo,  
 That dwelled in his herte sik and sore,  
 Gan fayle, when the herte felte deth;  
 Duskyng his eyghen two, and fayled broth.  
 But on his lady yit he cast his ye;  
 His laste word was, "Mercy, Emelye!" 2810  
 His spyrty chaunged was, and wente ther,  
 As I can never, I can nat tellen wher.  
 Therefore I stynte, I nam no dyvynistre;  
 Of soules fynde I not in this registre,  
 Ne me list nat thopynyouns to telle  
 Of hem, though that thei wyten wher they dwelle.  
 Arcyte is cold, that Mars his soule gye;  
 Now wol I speke forth of Emelye.

Shright Emely, and howled Palamon,  
 And Theseus his susir took anon 2820  
 Swownyng, and bar hir fro the corps away.  
 What helpeth it to tarye forth the day,  
 To telle how sche weep bothe eve and morwe?

2813. *Therefore I stynte.* Up to this point, the description of Arcite's dying moments is taken literally from the *Tesside*. "This," Tyrwhitt observes, "is apparently a fling at Boccaccio's pompous description of the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven."

For in swich caas wommen can have such sorwe,  
 Whan that here housbonds ben from hem ago,  
 That for the more part they sorwen so,  
 Or elles fallen in such maladye,  
 That atte laste certynly they dye.  
 Infynyt been the sorwes and the teeres  
 Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeeres; 2830  
 So gret a wepyng was ther noon certayn,  
 Whau Ector was i-brought, al freissch i-slayn,  
 As that ther was for deth of this Theban;  
 For sorwe of him ther weepeth bothe child and  
 At Troye, allas! the pité that was there, [man  
 Cracchying of cheekes, rendyng eek of here.  
 "Why woldist thou be deed," this wommen crye,  
 "And haddest gold ynogh, and Emelye?"  
 No man mighte glade Theseus,  
 Savyng his olde fader Egeus, 2840  
 That knew this worldes transmudacioun,  
 As he hadde seen it torne up and down,  
 Joye after woo, and woo aftir gladnesse;  
 And schewed him ensample and likenesse.  
 "Right as ther deyde never man," quod he,  
 "That he ne lyved in erthe in som degree,  
 Yit ther ne lyvede never man," he seyde,  
 "In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.  
 This world nys but a thurghfare ful of woo,  
 And we ben pilgryms, passyng to and froo; 2850  
 Deth is an ende of every worldly sore."  
 And over al this yit seyde he mochil more  
 To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte  
 The peple, that they schulde him recomforte.  
 Duk Theseus, with al his busy cure,  
 Cast busyly wher that the sepulture  
 Of good Arcyte may best y-maked be,  
 And eek most honourable in his degré.  
 And atte last he took conclusioun,  
 That ther as first Arcyte and Palamon 2860  
 Hadden for love the batail hem bytwene,  
 That in the selve grove, soote and greene,  
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,  
 His compleynt, and for love his hooite fyres,  
 He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice  
 Of funeral he might al accomplyce;  
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and weve  
 The okes old, and lay hem on a rewe  
 In culpouns well arrayed for to brenne.  
 His officers with swifte foot they renne, 2870  
 And ryde anon at his comaundement.  
 And after this, Theseus hath i-sent  
 After a beer, and it al overspradde  
 With cloth of golde, the richest that he hadde.  
 And of the same sute he elad Arcyte;  
 Upon his hondes were his gloves white;  
 Eke on his heed a crowne of laurer grene;  
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.  
 He leyde him bare the visage on the beere,  
 Therwith he weep that pité was to heere. 2880  
 And for the poeple schulde see him alle,  
 Whan it was day he brought hem to the halle,  
 That roreth of the cry and of the soum.  
 Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,

With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heeres,  
 In clothis blak, y-dropped al with teeres,  
 And, passyng other, of wepyng Emelye,  
 The rewfullest of al the companye.  
 And in as moche as the service schulde be  
 The more nobil and riche in his degré, 2890  
 Duk Theseus leet forth thre steedes bryng,  
 That trapped were in steel al gliteryng,  
 And covered with armes of dan Arcyte.  
 Upon the steedes, that weren grete and white,  
 Ther setten folk, of which oon bar his scheeld,  
 Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;  
 The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys,  
 Of brend gold was the caas and eek the herneys;  
 And riden forth a paas with sorwful chere  
 Toward the grove, as ye schul after heere. 2900  
 The nobles of the Grekes that ther were  
 Upon here schulders carieden the beere,  
 With slak paas, and eyhen reed and wete,  
 Thurghout the cité, by the maister streete,  
 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye  
 Right of the same is al the stret i-wrye.  
 Upon the right hond went olde Egeus,  
 And on that other syde duk Theseus,  
 With vessels in here hand of gold wel fyn,  
 As ful of hony, mylk, and blood, and wyn; 2910  
 Eke Palamon, with a gret companye;  
 And after that com woful Emelye,  
 With fyr in hond, as was at that tyme the gyse,  
 To do thoffice of funeral servise.

Heygh labour, and ful gret apparailyng  
 Was at the service and at the fyr makyng,  
 That with his grene top the heven raughte,  
 And twenty fadme of brede tharme straughte;  
 This is to seyn, the boowes were so brode.  
 Of stree first was ther leyd ful many a loode. 2920  
 But how the fyr was makyd up on highte,  
 And eek the names how the trees highte,  
 As ook, fyr, birch, asp, aldir, holm, popler,  
 Wilw, elm, plane, asch, box, chesteyn, lynde,  
 Mapul, thorn, beech, basil, ew, wyppyltre, [laurer,  
 How they weren felde, schal nought be told for me;  
 Ne how the goddes rennen up and down,  
 Disheryt of here habitacioun,  
 In which they whilom woned in rest and pees,  
 Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadryes; 2930  
 Ne how the beestes and the briddes alle  
 Fledden for feere, whan the woode was falle;  
 Ne how the ground agast was of the light,  
 That was nought wont to see no somme bright;  
 Ne how the fyr was couchid first with stree,  
 And thanne with drye stykkes cloven in three,  
 And thanne with grene woode and spicerie,  
 And thanne with cloth of gold and with perrye,  
 And gerlandes hangyng with ful many a flour,  
 The myrre, thensens with al so gret odour; 2940  
 Ne how Arcyte lay among al this,  
 Ne what richesse aboute his body is;  
 Ne how that Emely, as was the gyse,  
 Putt in the fyr of funeral servise;  
 Ne how sche swowned whan sche made the fyre,  
 Ne what sche spak, ne what was hire desire;

2830. *folk, and folk.* The Ms. Harl. reads *olde folk that den of tendre.* The lines which follow are read by Tyrwhitt, on the authority of some of the MSS. (perhaps correctly), thus,—

In al the toun for deth of this Theban:  
 For him ther wepeth bothe childe and man.  
 So gret a wepyng was ther non certain,  
 Whan Hector was y-brought all fresh y-slain  
 To Troy, &c.

2897. *his bowe Turkeys.* In the Roman de la Rose, l. 913, Love is described as bearing *deux ars Turquois.*

2921. *But how the fyr.* The description of the funeral, and several other parts of this poem, are taken originally from the Thebaid of Statius, to which Chaucer has already made a direct reference, l. 2296.

2930. *Amadryes.* This is the reading of all the MSS. I have consulted. It is, of course, a corruption of *Hamadryades.*



Ne what jewels men in the fyr tho cast,  
 When that the fyr was gret and brente fast;  
 Ne how sum caste her scheeld, and summe her  
 spere,  
 And of here vestimentz, which that they were, 2950  
 And cuppes ful of wyn, and mylk, and blood,  
 Unto the fyr, that brent as it were wood;  
 Ne how the Grekes with an huge route  
 Thre tymes ryden al the fyr aboute  
 Upon the lefte hond, with an heih schoutyng,  
 And thries with here speres clateryng;  
 And thries how the ladyes gan to crye;  
 Ne how that lad was home-ward Emelye;  
 Ne how Arcyte is brent to aschen colde;  
 Ne how the liche-wake was y-holde 2960  
 Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye  
 The wake-pleyes, kepe I nat to seye;  
 Who wastleth best naked, with oyle enoynt,  
 Ne who that bar him best in no disjoynt.  
 I wol not telle eek how they ben goon  
 Hom til Athenes when the pley is doon.  
 But schortly to the poynt now wol I wende,  
 And maken of my longe tale an ende.

By proces and by lengthe of certeyn yeres  
 Al styntyd in the mornyng and the teeres 2970  
 Of alle Grekys, by on general assent.  
 Than semed me ther was a parlement  
 At Athenes, on a certeyn poynt and cas;  
 Among the whiche poyntes spoken was  
 To hau with certeyn contrees alliaunce,  
 And have fully of Thebans obeissance.  
 For which this noble Theseus anon  
 Let senden after gentil Palamon,  
 Unwist of him what was the cause and why;  
 But in his blake clothes sorfully 2980  
 He cam at his comaundement on hye.  
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.  
 When they were sette, and hussht was al the place,  
 And Theseus abyden hadde a space  
 Or eny word cam fro his wyse brest,  
 His eyen set he ther as was his lest,  
 And with a sad visage he syked stille,  
 And after that right thus he seide his wille,

“The firste moevere of the cause above,  
 When he first made the fayre cheyne of love, 2990  
 Gret was theeffect, and heigh was his entente;  
 Wel wist he why, and what therof he mente;  
 For with that faire cheyne of love he bond  
 The fyr, the watir, the eyr, and eek the lond  
 In certeyn boundes, that they may not flee;  
 That same prynce and moevere eek,” quod he,  
 “Hath stabled, in this wrecched world adoun,  
 Certeyn dayes and duracion  
 To alle that er engendrid in this place,

2953. *Grekys*. The scribe of the Ms. Harl. has by inadvertence (as it is only in this instance) substituted the more legitimate old English form of the word, *Grogys*. Chaucer, following the Italian, and acquainted with the classic writers, uses the form *Grekys* throughout the Knightes Tale.

2960. This line is omitted in Ms. Harl., by an oversight of the scribe.

2964. The description of the funeral, like that of the tournament, presents a curious mixture of classic and mediæval ideas, such as is found in other works of the same age.

2993. *cheyne of love*. This sentiment is taken from a Boethius, *De Consolat. Phil. lib. ii. met. 8.*—

Hanc rerum seriem ligat,  
 Terras ac pelagus regens,  
 Et cælo imperitans, amor.

What follows is taken from the same writer, lib. iv. pr. 6.

Over the which day they may nat pace, 3000  
 Al mowe they yit wel here dayes abregge;  
 Ther needeth non auctorité tallegge;  
 For it is preved by experience,  
 But that me lust declare my sentence.  
 Than may men wel by this ordre diseerne,  
 That thilke moevere stabul is and eterne.  
 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,  
 That every partye dryrveth from his hool.  
 For nature hath nat take his bygynnyng  
 Of no partye ne cantel of a thing, 3010  
 But of a thing that parfyt is and stable,  
 Descendyng so, til it be corumpable.  
 And therfore of his wyse purveance  
 He hath so wel biset his ordenaunce,  
 That spices of thinges and progressiouns  
 Schullen endure by successiouns,  
 And nat eterne be withoute lye:  
 This maistow understand and se at ye.

“Lo the ook, that hath so long norisschyng  
 Fro tyme that it gynneth first to spring, 3020  
 And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,  
 Yet atte laste wasted is the tree.

“Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon  
 Under oure foot, on which we trede and goon,  
 Yit wasteth it, as it lith by the weye.  
 The brode ryver som tyme wexeth dreye.  
 The grete townes see we wane and wende.  
 Than may I see that al thing hath an ende.

“Of man and womman se we wel also,  
 That wendeth in oon of this termes two, 3030  
 That is to seyn, in youthe or elles in age,  
 He moot ben deed, the kyng as schal a page;  
 Sum in his bed, som in the deepe see,  
 Som in the large feeld, as men may se.  
 Ther helpeth naught, al goth thilke weye.  
 Thanne may I see wel that al thing schal deye.  
 What maketh this but Jubiter the kyng?  
 The which is prynce and cause of alle thing,  
 Converting al unto his propre wille,  
 From which he is deryned, soth to telle. 3040  
 And here agayn no creature on lyve  
 Of no degré avayleth for to stryve.

“Than is it wisdom, as thenketh me,  
 To maken vertu of necessité,  
 And take it wel, that we may nat eschewe,  
 And namely that that to us alle is dewe.  
 And who so grucecheth aught, he doth folye,  
 And rebel is to him that al may gye.  
 And certeynly a man hath most honour  
 To deyen in his excellence and flour, 3050  
 When he is siker of his goode name.  
 Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no schame.  
 And glader ought his freend ben of his deth,  
 Than with honour is yolden up the breth.  
 Thanne when his name appelled is for age;  
 For al forgeten is his vasselage.

Thanne is it best, as for a worthi fame,  
 To dye when a man is best of name.  
 The contrary of al this is wilfulnesse.  
 Why gruechen we? why have we hevynesse, 3060  
 That good Arcyte, of chyvalry the flour,  
 Departed is, with worschip and honour  
 Out of this foule prision of this lyf?

5019. *Lo the ook*. From the *Teseide*.—

Li querci, che anno si lungo nutrimento  
 E tanta vita quanto noi vedemo,  
 Anno pur alcun tempo finimento.  
 Le dure pietre ancor, etc.

Why gruccheth heer his cosyn and his wyf  
Of his wolfare, that loven him so wel?  
Can he hem thank? nay, God woot, never a del,  
That bothe his soule and eek himself offende,  
And yet they may here lustes nat amende.

"What may I conclude of this longe serye,  
But aftir wo I rede us to be merye, 3070  
And thanke Jubiter of al his grace?  
And or that we departe fro this place,  
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,  
O parfyt joye lastyng ever mo:  
And loketh now wher most sorwe is her-inne,  
Ther wol we first amenden and bygynne.

"Sustyr," quod he, "this is my ful assent,  
With all thavy's heer of my parlement,  
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight, 3079  
That serveth yow with herte, will, and might,  
And ever hath doon, syn fyrst tyme ye him  
knewe,

That ye schul of your grace upon him rewe,  
And take him for your housbond and for lord:  
Lene me youre hand, for this is oure acord.  
Let see now of your wommanly pité.  
He is a kynges brothir sone, pardee;  
And though he were a pore bachiller,  
Syn he hath served you so many a yeer,  
And had for you so gret adversité,

It moste be considered, trusteth me. 3090  
For gentil mercy aughte passe right."  
Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;  
"I trowe ther needeth litel sermonyng  
To make you assente to this thing.

Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond."  
Bitwix hem was i-maad anon the bond,  
That highte matrimoyn or mariage,  
By alle the counsel of the baronage.  
And thus with blys and eek with melodye  
Hath Palamon i-wedded Emelye. 3100

And God, that al this wyde world hath wrought,  
Send him his love, that hath it deere i-bought.  
For now is Palamon in al his wele,  
Lyvyng in blisse, richesse, and in hele,  
And Emelye him loveth so tendirly,  
And he hir serveth al so gentilly,  
That never was ther wordes hem bitweene  
Of jelousy, ne of non othir tene.  
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;  
And God save al this fayre compaunye! 3110

#### THE PROLOGE OF THE MYLLER.

WHAN that the Knight had thus his tale i-told,  
In al the ronte nas ther yong ne old,  
That he ne seyde it was a noble story,  
And worthi to be drawn to memory;  
And namely the gentils evericheoon.  
Our Host tho lowh and swoor, "So moot I goon,  
This goth right wel; unbokeled is the male;  
Let se now who schal telle another tale;  
For trewely this game is wel bygonne.  
Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye konne 3120  
Somwhat, to quyte with the knightes tale."  
The Myller that for-drunken was al pale,  
So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,  
He wold avale nowther hood ne hat,  
Ne abyde no man for his curtesye,  
But in Pilates voys he gan to crye,

3126. *Pilates voys.* Pilate was probably represented in the popular Mysteries speaking in a gruff loud voice, as one in power, and authority.

And swor by armes and by blood and bones,  
"I can a noble tale for the noones,  
With which I wol now quyte the knightes tale."  
Oure Hoost saugh wel how dronke he was of ale,  
And seyde, "Robyn, abyde, my leve brother, 3131  
Som better man schal telle firste another;  
Abyd, and let us worken thriftyly."

"By Goddes soule!" quod he, "that wol nat I,  
For I wol speke, or elles go my way."  
Oure Host answerd, "Tel on, a devel way!  
Thou art a fool; thy witt is overcome."

"Now herkneþ," quod this Myller, "al and  
But first I make a protestacioun, [some;  
That I am dronke, I knowe wel by my soun;  
And therefore if that I mys-speke or seye, 3141  
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I you preye;  
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,  
How that the clerk hath set the wrightes cappe."

The Reve answered and seyde, "Stynt thi  
Let be thy lewed drunken harlottrye. [clappe.  
It is a synne, and eek a greet folye  
To apeyren eny man, or him defame,  
And eek to bryngge wyves in ylle name. 3150  
Thou mayst ynough of other things seyn."  
This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn,  
And seyde, "Leeve brother Osewold,  
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.  
But I seye not therfore that thou art oon,  
Ther been ful goode wyves many oon.

And ever a thousand goode agayns oon badde;  
That knowest thou wel thyself, but if thou madde.  
Why art thou angry with my tale now?  
I have a wyf, pardé! as wel as thou,  
Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plough,  
Take upon me more than ynough; 3160

Though that thou deme thiself that thou be oon,  
I wol bileve wel that I am noon.  
An housbond schal not be inquisityf  
Of Goddes pryveté, ne of his wyf.  
So that he may fynde Goddes foyssoun there,  
Of the remenaunt nedeth nought enquere."

What schuld I seye, but that this proud Myllere  
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,  
But tolde his cherlich tale in his manere,  
Me athinketh, that I schal reherce it heere. 3170  
And therfor every gentil wight I preye,  
For Goddes love, as deme nat that I seye,  
Of yvel entent, but for I moot reherse  
Here wordes alle, al be they better or werse,  
Or elles falsen som of my matere,

And therfor who so list it nat to heere,  
Turne over the leef, and cheese another tale;  
For he schal fynde ynowe bothe gret and smale,  
Of storial thing that toucheth gentilesse,  
And eek moralité, and holynesse. 3180  
Blameth nat me, if that ye cheese amys.  
The Miller is a cherl, ye know wel this;  
So was the Reeve, and othir many mo,  
And harlotry they tolden bothe two.  
Avyseth you, and put me out of blame;  
And men schulde nat make ernest of game.

#### THE MILLERES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwellyng at Oxenford  
A riche gnof, that gastes heeld to boorde,  
And of his craft he was a carpenter.

3156. The next two lines are omitted in Tyrwhitt's text.

With him ther was dwellyng a pore scoler, 3190  
 Had lerned art, but al his fantasye  
 Was torned for to lerne astrologye,  
 And cowde a certeyn of conclusiouns  
 To deme by interrogaciouns,  
 If that men axed him in certeyn houres,  
 Whan that men schuld han drought or ellys  
 schoures;  
 Or if men axed him what schulde bifalle  
 Of every thing, I may nought reken hem alle.  
 This clerk was cleped heende Nicholas;  
 Of derne love he cowde and of solas; 3200  
 And therwith he was sleigh and ful privé,  
 And lik a mayden meke for to se.  
 A chambir had he in that hostillerye  
 Alone, withouten eny compaignye,  
 Ful fetisly i-dight with herbes soote,  
 And he himself as swete as is the roote  
 Of lokorys, or eny ceteuale.  
 His almagest, and bookes gret and smale,  
 His astrylabe, longyng for his art,  
 His augrym stoones, leyen faire apart 3210  
 On schelves couched at his beddes heed,  
 His presse i-covered with a faldyng reed.  
 And al above ther lay a gay sawtrye,  
 On which he made a-nichtes melodye,  
 So swetely, that al the chambur rang;  
 And *Angelus ad virginem* he sang.  
 And after that he sang the kynges note;  
 Ful often blissed was his mery throte.  
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente,  
 After his frendes fyndyng and his rente. 3220  
 This carpenter had weddid newe a wyf,  
 Which that he loved more than his lyf;  
 Of eyghteteene yeer sche was of age.  
 Gelous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,  
 For sche was wild and yong, and he was old,  
 And demed himself belik a cokewold,  
 He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,  
 That bad man schulde wedde his similitude.  
 Men schulde wedde afir here astaat,  
 For elde and youthe ben often at debaat. 3230  
 But syn that he was brought into the snaere,  
 He moste endure, as othere doon, his care.  
 Fair was the yonge wyf, and therwithal  
 As eny wesil hir body gent and smal.  
 A seynt sche wered, barred al of silk;

*The Milleres Tale.* I have not met with this story else-where than in Chaucer, though it is more than probable that he took it from an older French fabliau, which is now lost, or only preserved in some inedited and little-known MS.

3203. *that.* The Ms. Harl. reads in *his hostillerye*. It may be observed, that it was usual in the University for two or more students to have one room.

3208. *almagest.* This book, the work of Ptolemy, derived from the Arabs, was the canon of astrological science among our forefathers in the middle ages.

3209. *astrylabe.* The astrolabe was the chief instrument for making astronomical calculations.

3210. *augrym stoones.* Augrim signifies arithmetic: it is not very certain what *augrim stoones* were; but they were probably counters marked with numerals, and used for calculating on a sort of abacus. Counters for reckoning with are mentioned in Shakespeare.

3216. *Angelus ad virginem.* One of the hymns of the Church service. It is more difficult to say what was the *kynges note* in the next line.

3227. *Catoun.* Chaucer alludes to the treatise of Cato de *Moribus*; but the sentiment is not taken from that book, but from a mediæval poem of a similar character entitled *Facetus*, which contains the following lines:

Duc tibi prole parem sponsam moreisque venustam,  
 Si cum pace velis vitam deducere justam.

A barm-cloth eek as whit as morne mylk  
 Upon hir lendes, ful of many a gore.  
 Whit was hir smok, and browdid al byfore  
 And eek byhynde on hir coler aboute,  
 Of cole-blak silk, withinne and eek withoute.  
 The tapes of hir white voluper 3241  
 Weren of the same sute of hire coler;  
 Hir fillet brood of silk y-set ful heyne.  
 And certeynly sche hadd a licorous eyghe;  
 Ful smal y-pulled weren hir browes two,  
 And tho were bent, as blak as a slo.  
 Sche was wel more blisful on to see  
 Than is the newe perjonette tree;  
 And softer than the wol is of a wethir.  
 And by hir gurdil hyng a purs of lethir, 3250  
 Tassid with silk, and perled with latoun.  
 In al this world to seken up and down  
 Ther nys no man so wys, that couthe theneke  
 So gay a popillot, or such a wenche.  
 For brighter was the schynyng of hir hewe,  
 Than in the Tour the noble i-forged newe.  
 But of hir song, it was as lowde and yerne  
 As eny swalwe chiteryng on a berne.  
 Therto sche cowde skippe, and make game,  
 As eny kyde or calf folwyng his dame. 3260  
 Hir mouth was swete as bragat is or meth,  
 Or hoord of apples, layd in hay or heth.  
 Wynsyng sche was, as is a joly colt;  
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.  
 A broch sche bar upon hir loue coleer,  
 As brod as is the bos of a bocleer.  
 Hir schos were laced on hir legges heyghe;  
 Sche was a primerole, a piggesneyghe,  
 For eny lord have liggyn in his bedde,  
 Or yet for eny good yeman to wedde. 3270  
 Now sir, and eft sir, so bifel the cas,  
 That on a day this heende Nicholas  
 Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,  
 Whil that hir housbond was at Oseneye,  
 As clerkes ben ful sotil and ful queynte.  
 And pryvely he caught hir by the queynte,  
 And seyde, "I-wis, but if I have my wille,  
 For derne love of the, lemman, I spille."  
 And heeld hir harde by the haunche boones,  
 And seyde, "Lemman, love me al at ones, 3280  
 Or I wol dye, as wisly God me save."

And sche sprang out as doth a colt in trave:  
 And with hir heed sche wried fast away,  
 And seyde, "I wol nat kisse the, by my fey!  
 Why let be," quod sche, "lat be thou, Nicholas,  
 Or I wol crye out harrow and allas!  
 Do wey your handes for your curtesye!"  
 This Nicholas gan merey for to crye,  
 And spak so faire, and profred him so faste,  
 That sche hir love him graunted atte laste, 3290  
 And swor hir oth by seynt Thomas of Kent,  
 That sche wol be at his comaundement,  
 Whan that sche may hir leysir wel aspye.  
 "Myn housbond is so ful of jelousie,  
 That but ye wayten wel, and be pryvé,  
 I woot right wel I am but deed," quod sche:  
 "Ye mosten be ful derne as in this caas."

3255. *schynyng.* The Ms. Harl. reads *smylyng*, contrary to the other MSS. that I have examined.

3256. *noble.* The gold noble of this period was a very beautiful coin: specimens are engraved in Ruding's *Annals of the Coinage*. It was coined in the Tower of London, the place of the principal London mint.

3274. *Oseneye.* The somewhat celebrated abbey of Oseney stood in the suburbs of Oxford.



"Therof ne care the nought," quod Nicholas:  
 "A clerk hath litherly byset his while,  
 But if he cowde a carpenter bygyle." 3300  
 And thus they ben acorded and i-sworn  
 To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforen.

Whan Nicholas had doon thus every del,  
 And thakked hire aboute the lendys wel,  
 He kist hir sweet, and taketh his sawtrye,  
 And pleyeth fast, and maketh melodye.  
 Than fyl it thus, that to the parish chireche  
 Cristes owen werkes for to wirche,  
 This goode wyf went on an haly day;  
 Hir forheed schon as bright as eny day, 3310  
 So was it waisschen, whan sche leet hir werk.

Now ther was of that chireche a parish clerk,  
 The which that was i-cleped Absolon.  
 Cruliþ was his heer, and as the gold it schon,  
 And strowed as a fan right large and brood;  
 Ful streyt and evene lay his jolly schood.  
 His rode was reed, his eyghen gray as goos.  
 With Powles wyndowes corven on his schoos.  
 In hosen reed he went ful fetusly.

I-clad he was ful smal and properly, 3320  
 Al in a kirtel of a fyn wachet;  
 Schapen with goores in the newe get.  
 And therupon he had a gay surpys,  
 As whyt as is the blomse upon the rys.

A mery child he was, so God me save;  
 Wel couthe he lete blood, and clippe and schave,  
 And make a chartre of lond and acquitaunce.  
 In twenty maners he coude skip and daunce,  
 After the scole of Oxenforde tho,

And with his legges casten to and fro; 3330  
 And pleyen songes on a small rubible;  
 Ther-to he sang som tyme a lowde quynible.

And as wel conde he pleye on a giterne.  
 In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne  
 That he ne visited with his solas,  
 Ther as that any gaylard tapster was.

But soth to say he was somdel squaymous  
 Of fartying, and of speche daungerous.  
 This Absolon, that joly was and gay, 3340  
 Goth with a senser on the haly day,  
 Sensing the wyves of the parish fast;

And many a lovely look on hem he cast,  
 And namely on this carpenteres wyf;  
 To loke on hire him thought a mery lyf;  
 Sche was so propre, sweete, and licorous.  
 I dar wel sayn, if sche had ben a mous,  
 And he a cat, he wold hir hent anon.

This parish clerk, this joly Absolon,  
 Hath in his herte such a love longyng,  
 That of no wyf ne took he noon offryng; 3350  
 For curtesy, he seyde, he wolde noon.

3318. *Powles wyndowes.* Three figures in the paintings formerly existing on the walls of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, represented shoes of Chaucer's time, which were cut in patterns not unlike the tracery of church-windows. Mr. C. Roach Smith has in his interesting museum some beautiful samples of shoes cut in this manner, even more elaborately. It has been conjectured that the phrase *Powles wyndowes* refers more especially to the rose-window of old St. Paul's Cathedral, which resembled the ornament in one of them. Warton, Hist. E. P. ii. 194, says that *calcei fenestrati* occur in ancient injunctions to the clergy. Chaucer, in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, speaks of Mirth as

Shod, with grete maistrise,  
 With shone decopid and with lace.

It may be observed, however, that this is a literal translation from the French original, *decoüpeé*.

3322. Instead of this line, Tyrwhitt reads,—

*Ful faire and thicke ben the pointes set.*

The moone at night ful cleer and brighte schoon,  
 And Absolon his giterne hath i-take,  
 For paramours he seyde he wold awake.

And forth he goth, jolyf and amerous,  
 Til he cam to the carpenteres hous,  
 A litel after the cok had y-crowe,  
 And dressed him up by a schot wyndowe  
 That was under the carpenteres wal.  
 He syngeth in his voys gentil and smal— 3360

"Now, deere lady, if thi wille be,  
 I praye yow that ye wol rewe on me,"

Ful wel acordyng to his gytermyng.

This carpenter awook, and herde him syng,  
 And spak unto his wyf, and sayde anon,  
 "What, Alisoun, herestow not Absolon,  
 That chaunteth thus under oure boure smal?"  
 And sche answered hir housbond therwithal,  
 "Yis, God woot, Johan, I heere it every del."

This passeth forth; what wil ye bet than wel?  
 Fro day to day this joly Absolon 3371

So woweth hire, that him is wo-bigon.  
 He waketh al the night and al the day,  
 To kembe his lokkes brode and made him gay.

He woweth hire by mene and by brocage,  
 And swor he wolde ben hir owne page.  
 He syngeth crowyng as a nightyngale;  
 And sent hire pyment, meth, and spiced ale,  
 And wafres pyping hoot out of the gleede;  
 And for sche was of toune, he profred meede. 3381

For som folk wol be wonne for richesse,  
 And som for strokes, som for gentillesse.

Som tyme, to schewe his lightnes and maistrye,  
 He pleyeth Herod on a scaffold hye.

But what avayleth him as in this caas?  
 Sche so loveth this heende Nicholas,

That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;  
 He ne had for al his labour but a skorn.

And thus sche maketh Absolon hir ape,  
 And al his earnest toorneth to a jape. 3390

Ful soth is this proverbe, it is no lye,  
 Men seyn right thus alway, the ney slye

Maketh the ferre leef to be loth.

For though that Absolon be wood or wroth,  
 Bycause that he fer was from here sight,

This Nicholas hath stonden in his light.

3358. *schot wyndowe.* I am not satisfied with the explanations of this term hitherto given. It would seem rather to mean a window projecting from the wall, from which the inmates might shoot upon any one who attempted to force an entry into the house by the door, and from which, therefore, it would be easy for a person within to expose any part of his body in the manner expressed in the sequel of the story.

3361. Tyrwhitt observes that this and the following line, comprising Absolon's song, appear to consist of four short lines, all rhyming together.

3367. *smal.* Tyrwhitt, with some mss., reads *boures wool*.

3377. *crowyng.* Some mss., with Tyrwhitt, have *brokking*.

3378. *pyment.* Piment was a kind of spiced wine. Tyrwhitt's reading, *pinnes*, is certainly much inferior to the one in the text.

3384. *pleyeth Herod.* Herod was a favourite part in the religious plays, and was perhaps an object of competition among the performers, and a part in which the actor endeavoured to shew himself off with advantage. Every reader knows Shakespeare's phrase of *out-heroding Herod*.

3387. *blowe the bukkes horn.* I presume this was a service that generally went unrewarded.

3391. *this proverbe.* The same proverb is found in Gower (*Conf. Amant. lib. iii. f. 58*)—

An olde sawe is: who that is slygh  
 In place wher he may be nyghe,  
 He maketh the ferre leef loth.

Now bere the wel, thou heende Nicholas,  
For Absolon may wayle and syngre allas.

And so bifelle it on a Satyrday  
This carpenter was gon to Osenay, 3400  
And heende Nicholas and Alisoun  
Acordid ben to this conclusioun,  
That Nicholas schal schapen hem a wyle  
This sely jelous housbond to begyle;  
And if so were this game wente aright,  
Sche schulde slepe in his arm al night,  
For this was hire desir and his also.  
And right anon, withouten wordes mo,  
This Nicholas no lenger wold he tarye,  
But doth ful softe into his chambur carye 3410  
Bothe mete and drynke for a day or tweye.  
And to hir housbond bad hir for to seye,  
If that he axed after Nicholas,  
Sche schulde seye, sche wiste nat wher he was;  
Of al that day sche saw him nat with eye;  
Sche trowed he were falle in som maladye,  
For no cry that hir mayden cowde him calle  
He nolde answeere, for nought that may bifalle.

Thus passeth forth al that ilke Satyrday,  
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay, 3420  
And eet, and drank, and dede what him leste  
Til Soneday the sonne was gon to reste.

This sely carpenter hath gret mervaille  
Of Nicholas, or what thing may him ayle,  
And seyde, "I am adrad, by seynt Thomas!  
It stondesth nat aright with Nicholas;  
God schilde that he deyde sodeinly.  
This world is now ful tykel sikerly;  
I saugh to-day a corps y-born to chirche.  
That now on Monday last I saugh him wirche.  
Go up," quod he unto his knave, "anon; 3431  
Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a stoon;  
Loke how it is, and telle me boldely."  
This knave goth him up ful sturdily,  
And at the chambir dore whil he stood,  
He cryed and knocked as that he were wood;  
"What how? what do ye, mayster Nicholay?  
How may ye slepen al this longe day?"  
But al for nought, he herde nat o word.  
An hole he fond right lowe upon the boord, 3440  
Ther as the cat was wont in for to creeze,  
And at that hole he loked in ful deepe,  
And atte laste he hadde of him a sight.

This Nicholas sat ever gapyng upright,  
As he had loked on the newe moone.  
Adoun he goth, and tolde his mayster soone,  
In what aray he sawh this ilke man.  
This carpenter to blessen him bygan,  
And seyde, "Now help us, seynte Frideswyde!  
A man woot lital what him schal betyde. 3450  
This man is falle with his astronomye  
In som woodnesse, or in som agonye.  
I thought ay wel how that it schulde be.  
Men schulde nought knowe of Goddes pryvyté.  
Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man,  
That nat but onoly his bileeve can.  
So ferde another clerk with astronomye;  
He walked in the feeldes for to pryve  
Upon the sterres, what ther schulde bifalle,  
Til he was in a marle pit i-falle. 3460

3449. *seynte Frideswyde.* This saint was appropriately invoked by the carpenter, as she was the patron of a rich monastic house at Oxford.

3460. *in a marle pit.* This tale, told of Thales by Plato, was very popular in the middle ages, and is found under different forms in a variety of collections of stories.

He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas!  
Me reweth sore for heende Nicholas;  
He schal be ratyd of his studyng,  
If that I may, by Jhesu heven kyng!  
Gete me a staf, that I may underspore,  
Whil that thou, Robyn, hevest up the dore:  
He schal out of his studyng, as I gesse."  
And to the chambir dore he gan him dresse.  
His knave was a strong karl for the noones, 3470  
And by the hasp he haf it up at oones;  
And in the floor the dore fil down anon.  
This Nicholas sat stille as eny stoon,  
And ever he gapyd up-ward to the eyr.  
This carpenter wende he were in despeir,  
And hent him by the schuldris mightily,  
And schook him harde, and cryed spitously,  
"What, Nicholas? what how, man? loke adoun;  
Awake, and thynk on Cristes passioun.  
I crowche the from elves and from righthes.  
Therwith the night-spel seyde he anon righthes.  
On the foure halves of the hous aboute, 3481  
And on the threishfold of the dore withoute.  
Lord Jhesu Crist, and seynte Benedight,  
Blesse this hous from every wikkede wight,  
Fro nyghtes verray, the white Pater-noster;  
Wher wonestow now, seynte Petres soster?"  
And atte laste, heende Nicholas  
Schal al the world be lost eftsones now?"  
This carpenter answerde, "What seystow? 3490  
What? thank on God, as we doon, men that  
swinke."

This Nicholas answerde, "Fette me drynke;  
And after wol I speke in pryvyté  
Of certeyn thing that toucheth the and me;  
I wol telle it non other man certayn."  
This carpenter goth forth, and comth agayn,  
And brought of mighty ale a large quart.  
Whan ech of hem y-dronken had his part,  
This Nicholas his dore gan to schitte,  
And dede this carpenter down by him sitte, 3500  
And seide, "Johan, myn host ful leve and deere,  
Thou schalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere,  
That to no wight thou schalt this counsel wreye;  
For it is Cristes counsel that I seye,  
And if thou telle it man, thou art forlore;  
For this vengannce thou schalt han therefore,  
That if thou wreye me, thou schalt be wood."  
"Nay, Crist forbede it for his holy blood!"  
Quod tho this sely man, "I am no labbe,  
Though I it say, I am nought leef to gabbe. 3510  
Say what thou wolt, I schal it never telle  
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!"  
"Now, Johan," quod Nicholas, "I wol not lye:  
I have i-founde in myn astrologye,  
As I have loked in the moone bright,  
That now on Monday next, at quarter night,  
Schal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,  
That half so gret was never Noes flood.  
This world," he seyde, "more than an hour  
Schal ben i-dreynt, so hidous is the schour: 3520  
Thus schal mankynde drench, and leese his lyf."  
This carpenter answerde, "Allas, my wyf!

3485. *verray.* This is the reading of the mss. I have consulted. Tyrwhitt reads *mare*, which is perhaps right.

3512. *him that harwed helle.* Our Saviour. The harrowing of hell was a very popular legend among our forefathers, and found a place in most of the collections of mysteries, from which representations the lower orders obtained their notions of Scripture history and theology.

And schal sche drenche? alas, myn Alisoun!"  
 For sorwe of this he fel almost adoun,  
 And seyde, "Is ther no remedy in this caas?"  
 "Why yis, for Gode," quod heende Nicholas;  
 "If thou wolt werken aftir lore and reed;  
 Thou maist nought worke after thin owen heed.  
 For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,  
 Werke by counseil, and thou schalt nat rewe.  
 And if thou werken wolt by good counsail, 3531  
 I undertake, withouten mast and sail,  
 Yet schal I saven hir, and the, and me.  
 Hastow nat herd how saved was Noe,  
 Whan that our Lord had warned him biforn,  
 That al the world with watir schulde be lorn?"  
 "Yis," quod this carpenter, "ful yore ago."  
 "Hastow nought herd," quod Nicholas, "also  
 The sorwe of Noe with his felaschipe,  
 That he hadde or he gat his wyf to schipe? 3540  
 Him hadde wel lever, I dar wel undertake,  
 At thilke tyme, than alle his wetheres blake,  
 That sche hadde had a schip hirself allone.  
 And therefore wostow what is best to doone?  
 This axeth hast, and of an hasty thing  
 Men may nought preche or make taryyng.  
 Anon go gete us fast into this in  
 A knedyng trowth or elles a kemelyn,  
 For ech of us; but loke that they be large,  
 In which that we may rowe as in a barge, 3550  
 And have therin vitaille suffisant  
 But for o day; fy on the remenant;  
 The water schal aslake and gon away  
 Aboute prime upon the nexte day.  
 But Robyn may not wite of this, thy knave,  
 Ne ek thy mayde Gille I may not save;  
 Aske nought why; for though thou aske me,  
 I wol nat tellen Goddes pryveté.  
 Sufficeth the, but if that thy witt madde,  
 To have as gret a grace as Noe hadde. 3560  
 Thy wyf schal I wel saven out of doute.  
 Go now thy wey, and speed the heer aboute;  
 And whan thou hast for hir, and the, and me,  
 I-goten us this knedyng tubbes thre,  
 Than schalt thou hange hem in the roof ful hie,  
 That no man of oure purveance aspye;  
 And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,  
 And hast oure vitaille faire in hem y-leyde,  
 And eek an ax to smyte the corde a-two  
 Whan that the water cometh, that we may goo,  
 And breke an hole an hie upon the gable 3571  
 Into the gardyn-ward over the stable,  
 That we may frely passen forth oure way,  
 Whan that the grete schour is gon away;  
 Than schaltow swymme as mery, I undertake,  
 As doth the white doke aftir hir drake;  
 Than wol I clepe, How Alisoun, how Jon,  
 Beoth merye, for the flood passeth anon.  
 And thou wolt seye, Heyl, maister Nicholas,  
 Good morn, I see the wol, for it is day. 3580  
 And than schul we be lordes al oure lyf  
 Of al the world, as Noe and his wyf.  
 But of oo thing I warne the ful right,  
 Be wel avysed of that ilke nyght,  
 That we ben entred into schippes boord,

That non of us ne speke not a word,  
 Ne clepe ne crye, but be in his preyere,  
 For it is Goddes owne heste deere.  
 Thy wyf and thou most hangen fer a-twynne,  
 For that bitwixe you schal be no synne, 3590  
 No more in lokyng than ther schal in dede.  
 This ordynauce is seyde; so God me speede.  
 To morwe at night, whan men ben aslepe,  
 Into our knedyng tubbes wol we crepe,  
 And sitte ther, abydyng Goddes grace.  
 Go now thy way, I have no lenger space  
 To make of this no lenger sermonyng;  
 Men seyn thus, send the wyse, and sey no thing;  
 Thou art so wys, it needeth nat the teche.  
 Go, save oure lyf, and that I the byseche." 3600  
 This seely carpenter goth forth his way,  
 Ful ofte he seyde, "Allas, and weylaway!"  
 And to his wyf he told his pryveté,  
 And sche was war, and knew it bet than he,  
 What al this queinte cast was for to seye.  
 But natheles sche ferd as sche schuld deye.  
 And seyde, "Allas! go forth thy way anon,  
 Help us to scape, or we be ded echon.  
 I am thy verray trewe wedded wyf;  
 Go, deere spouse, and help to save oure lyf." 3610  
 Lo, which a gret thing is affeccioun!  
 A man may dye for ymaginacioun,  
 So deepe may impressioun be take.  
 This seely carpenter bygynneth quake;  
 Him thenketh verrayly that he may se  
 Noes flood come walking as the see  
 To drenchen Alisoun, his hony deere.  
 He weepeth, wayleth, maketh sory cheere;  
 He siketh, with ful many a sory swongh,  
 And goth, and geteth him a knedyng trough, 3620  
 And after that a tubbe, and a kynelyn,  
 And pryvely he sent hem to his in,  
 And heng hem in the roof in pryveté.  
 His owne hond than made ladders thre,  
 To clymben by the ronges and the stalkes  
 Unto the tubbes hanging in the balkes;  
 And hem vitayled, bothe trough and tubbe,  
 With breed and cheese, with good ale in a jubbe,  
 Suffisyng right ynough as for a day.  
 But or that he had maad al this array, 3630  
 He sent his knave and eek his wenche also  
 Upon his neede to Londone for to go.  
 And on the Monday, whan it drew to nyght,  
 He schette his dore, withouten candel light,  
 And dressed al this thing as it schuld be.  
 And shortly up they clumben alle thre.  
 They seten stille wel a forlong way:  
 "Now, *Pater noster*, clum," quod Nicholas,  
 And "clum," quod Jon, and "clum," quod Alisoun.  
 This carpenter seyde his devoicioun, 3640  
 And stille he sitt, and byddeth his prayere,  
 Ay waytyng on the reyn, if he it heere.  
 The deede sleep, for verray busynesse,  
 Fil on this carpenter, right as I gesse,  
 Abowten courfew tyme, or litel more.  
 For travail of his goost he groneth sere,  
 And eft he routeth, for his heed myslyay.  
 Doun of the laddir stalketh Nicholas,  
 And Alisoun ful soft adoun hir spedde.  
 Withouten wordes mo they goon to bedde; 3650  
 Ther as the carpenter was wont to lye,  
 Ther was the revel and the melodye.  
 And thus lith Alisoun and Nicholas,  
 In busynesse of myrthe and of solas,

3540. *his wyf*. According to a mediæval legend, Noah's wife was unwilling to go into the ark; and the quarrel between her and her husband makes a prominent part of the play of Noah's Flood, in the Chester and Towneley Mysteries.

3577. *Jon*. See, further on, the note on l. 4011



Til that the belles of laudes gan to ryng,  
And freres in the chauncel gan to syng.

This parissch clerk, this amerous Absolon,  
That is for love so harde and woo bygon,  
Upon the Monday was at Osenay  
With company, him to desporte and play; 3660  
And axed upon caas a cloysterer  
Ful pryvely after the carpenter;  
And he drough him apart out of the chirche,  
And sayde, "Nay, I say him nat here wirche  
Syn Saturday; I trow that he be went  
For tymber, ther our abbot hath him sent.  
For he is wont for tymber for to goo,  
And dwellen at the Graunge a day or tuo.  
Or elles he is at his hous certayn.  
Wher that he be, I can nat sothly sayn." 3670

This Absolon ful joly was and light,  
And thoughte, "Now is tyme wake al night,  
For sikerly I sawh him nought styryng  
Aboute his dore, syn day bigan to spryng.  
So mote I thryve, I schal at cokkes crowe  
Ful pryvely go knocke at his wyndowe,  
That stant ful lowe upon his bowres wal;  
To Alisoun than wol I tellen al  
My love-longyng; for yet I schal not mysse  
That atte leste wey I schal hir kisse. 3680  
Som maner comfort schal I have, parfay!  
My mouth hath iched at this longe day;  
That is a signe of kysyng atte leste.  
Al nyght I mette eek I was at a feste.  
Therefore I wol go slepe an hour or tweye,  
And al the night than wol I wake and pleye."  
Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon  
Up ryst this jolyf lover Absolon,  
And him arrayeth gay, at poynt devys.  
But first he cheweth greyn and lycoris, 3690  
To smellen swete, or he hadde kempt his heere.  
Under his tunge a trewe love he beere,  
For therby wende he to be gracious.  
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,  
And stille he stand under the schot wyndowe;  
Unto his brest it raught, it was so lowe;  
And softe he cownith with a semysoun:  
"What do ye, honycomb, swete Alisoun?  
My fayre bryd, my swete cynamome,  
Awake, lemman myn, and speketh to me. 3700  
Ful litel thinke ye upon my wo,  
That for youre love I swelte ther I go.  
No wonder is if that I swelte and swete,  
I morne as doth a lamb after the tete.  
I-wis, lemman, I have such love-longyng,  
That like a turtill trewe is my mornyng.  
I may not ete more than a mayde."

"Go fro the wyndow, jakke fool," sche sayde;  
"As help me God, it wol not be, compame.  
I love another, and elles were I to blame, 3710  
Wel bet than the, by Jhesu, Absolon.  
Go forth thy wey, or I wol cast a stoon;  
And lete me slepe, a twenty deval way!"

3655. *belles of laudes*. The service of Laudes or Matins began at three o'clock in the morning. The bell was naturally rung a little before, and perhaps began at half-past two.

3668. *the Graunge*. The abbey had generally large granges attached to their more considerable estates, erected with so much strength that many of them have outlived the monasteries themselves. The distance of some of the estates from the abbey would naturally oblige those who went on business to stay a day or two away.

3690. *greyn*. Grains of Paris, or Paradise; a favourite spice at this period

"Allas!" quod Absolon, "and weylaway!  
That trewe love was ever so ylle byset;  
Thanne kisseth me, syn it may be no bett,  
For Jesus love, and for the love of me."  
"Wilt thou than go thy wey therwith?" quod sche.  
"Ye, certes, lemman," quod this Absolon.  
"Than mak the redy," quod sche, "I come anon."  
This Absolon donn sette him on his knees, 3721  
And seide, "I am a lord at alle degrees;  
For after this I hope ther cometh more;  
Lemman, thy grace, and, swete bryd, thyn ore."  
The wyndow sche undyd, and that in hast;  
"Have doon," quod sche, "com of, and speed the  
Lest that our neyghbours the aspye." [fast,  
This Absolon gan wipe his mouth ful drye.  
Derk was the night as picche or as a cole,  
Out atte wyndow putte sche hir hole; 3730  
And Absolon him fel no bet ne wers,  
But with his mouth he kist hir naked ers  
Ful savorly. Whan he was war of this,  
Abak he sterte, and thought it was amys,  
For wel he wist a woman hath no berd.  
He felt a thing al rough and long i-herd,  
And seyde, "Fy, allas! what have I do?"  
"Te-hee!" quod sche, and elapt the wyndow to;  
And Absolon goth forth a sory paas.

"A berd, a berd!" quod heende Nicholas; 3740  
"By Goddes corps, this game goth fair and wel."  
This seely Absolon herd every del,  
And on his lippe he gan for angir byte;  
And to himself he seyde, "I schal the quyte."

Who rubbith now, who frotheth now his lippes  
With dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with  
But Absolon? that seith ful ofte, "Allas, [chippes,  
My soule bytake I unto Sathanas!  
But me were lever than alle this toun," quod he,  
"Of this dispit awroken for to be. 3750  
Allas!" quod he, "allas! I nadde bleynt!"  
His hoot love was cold, and al i-queint.  
For fro that tyme that he had kist her ers,  
Of paramours ne sette he nat a kers,  
For he was helyd of his maledye;  
Ful ofte paramours he gan defye,  
And wept as doth a child that is i-bete.  
A softe paas went he over the strete  
Unto a smyth, men clepith daun Gerveys,  
That in his forge smythed plowh-harneys; 3760  
He scharpeth schar and cutre bysily.  
This Absolon knokketh al esily,  
And seyde, "Undo, Gerveys, and that anon."  
"What, who art thou?" "It am I Absolon."  
"What? Absolon, what? Cristes swete tree!  
Why ryse ye so rathe? *benedicite*,  
What eyleth you? some gay gurl, God it woot,  
Hath brought you thus upon the verytrot;  
By seinte Noet! ye wot wel what I mene."  
This Absolon ne roughte nat a bene 3770  
Of al his pleye, no word agayn he gaf;  
For he hadde more tow on his distaf [deere,  
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde,— "Freend so

3767. *gay gurl*. This appears to have been a common phrase for a young woman of light manners. In the time of Henry VIII. the lady Anne Berkeley, dissatisfied with the conduct of her daughter-in-law, lady Catherine Howard, is reported to have said of her: "By God's blessed sacrament, this gay gurl will beggar my son Henry!"

3769. *seinte Noet*. St. Neot.

3772. *tow on his distaf*. This seems to have been a common proverb of the time. Tyrwhitt quotes from Froissart, "Il aura en bref temps autres estoupes en sa quenille."

That hote cultre in the chymney heere  
 As lene it me, I have therwith to doone;  
 I wol it bring agayn to the ful soone." 3780  
 Gerveys answerde, "Certes, were it gold,  
 Or in a poke nobles al untold,  
 Ye schul him have, as I am trewe smyth.  
 Ey, Cristes fote! what wil ye do therwith?"  
 "Therof," quod Absolon, "be as be may;  
 I schal wel telle it the to morwe day;  
 And caughte the cultre by the colde stele,  
 Ful soft out at the dore he gan it stele,  
 And wente unto the carpenteres wal.  
 He cowneth first, and knokketh therwithal  
 Upon the wyndow, right as he dede er.  
 This Alisoun answerde, "Who is ther  
 That knokkest so? I warant it a theef." 3789  
 "Why nay," quod he, "God woot, my sweete leef,  
 I am thyn Absolon, o my derlyng.  
 Of gold," quod he, "I have the brought a ryng;  
 My mooder gaf it me, so God me save!  
 Ful fyn it is, and therto wel i-grave;  
 This wol I give the, if thou me kisse."  
 This Nicholas was rise for to pysse,  
 And thought he wold amenden al the jape,  
 He schulde kisse his ers or that he skape.  
 And up the wyndow dyde he hastily,  
 And out his ers putteth he pryvely 3800  
 Over the buttock, to the haunche bon.  
 And therwith spak this clerk, this Absolon,  
 "Spek, sweete bryd, I wot nat wher thou art."  
 This Nicholas anon let flee a fart,  
 As gret as it had ben a thundir dent,  
 And with that strook he was almost i-blent;  
 And he was redy with his yren hoot,  
 And Nicholas amid the ers he smoot.  
 Of goth the skyn an hande-brede aboute, 3810  
 The hote cultre brente so his toute;  
 And for the smert he wende for to dye;  
 As he were wood, anon he gan to crye,  
 "Help, watir, watir, help, for Goddes herte!"  
 This carpenter out of his slumber sterte,  
 And herd on crye watir, as he wer wood,  
 And thought, "Allas, now cometh Noes flood!"  
 He sit him up withoute wordes mo,  
 And with his ax he smot the corde a-two;  
 And down he goth; he fond nowthir to selle 3820  
 No breed ne ale, til he com to the selle  
 Upon the floor, and ther aswoun he lay.  
 Up styrt hir Alisoun, and Nicholay,  
 And cryden, "out and harrow!" in the strete.  
 The neyghebouris bothe smal and grete  
 In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,  
 That yet aswowne lay, bothe pale and wan;  
 For with the fal he brosten had his arm.  
 But stond he muste to his owne harm,  
 For whan he spak, he was anon born down  
 With heende Nicholas and Alisoun. 3830  
 They tolden every man that he was wood;  
 He was agast and feerd of Noes flood  
 Thurgh fantasie, that of his vanité  
 He hadde i-bought him knedyng tubbes thre,  
 And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;  
 And that he preyed hem for Goddes love  
 To sitten in the roof *par compaignye*.  
 The folk gan lawhen at his fantasie;

Into the roof they kyken, and they gape,  
 And torne al his harm into a jape. 3840  
 For whatsoever the carpenter answerde,  
 It was for nought, no man his resoun herde,  
 With othis greet he was so sworn adoun,  
 That he was holden wood in al the toun.  
 For every clerk anon right heeld with othis;  
 They seyde, "The man was wood, my leeve bro-  
 And every man gan lawhen at his stryf [ther;]"  
 Thus swyyed was the carpenteres wyf  
 For al his keepyng and his gelousye;  
 And Absolon hath kist hir nethir ye; 3850  
 And Nicholas is skaldid in his towte.  
 This tale is doon, and God save al the route.

## THE PROLOGE OF THE REEVE.

WHAN folk hadde lawhen of this nyce caas  
 Of Absolon and heende Nicholas,  
 Dyverse folk dyversely they seyde,  
 But for the moste part they lowh and pleyde;  
 Ne at this tale I sawh no man him greve,  
 But it were oonly Osewald the Reeve.  
 Bycause he was of carpentrye craft,  
 A litel ire in his herte is laft; 3860  
 He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite.  
 "So theek," quod he, "ful wel coude I the quyte  
 With bleryng of a prowrd mylleres ye,  
 If that me luste speke of ribaudye.  
 But yk an old; me list not pley for age;  
 Gras tyme is doon, my foddir is now forage.  
 My whyte top writeth myn olde yeeres;  
 Myn hert is al so moulde as myn heeres;  
 But yit I fare as doth an open-ers;  
 That ilke fruyt is ever lenger the wers, 3870  
 Til it be rote in mullok or in stree.  
 We olde men, I drede, so fare we,  
 Til we be roten, can we nat be rype;  
 We hopen alway, whil the world wol pype;  
 For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,  
 To have an hoor heed and a greene tayl,  
 As hath a leek; for though oure might be doon,  
 Oure wil desireth folye ever in oon;  
 For whan we may nat do, than wol we speke,  
 Yet in oure aisschen old is fyr i-reke. 3880  
 Foure gledys have we, which I schal devyse,  
 Avanting, lyng, angur, coveytise.  
 This foure sparkys longen unto eelde.  
 Oure olde lymes mowen be unweelde,  
 But wil ne schal nat fayle us, that is soth.  
 And yet I have alwey a coltes toth,  
 As many a yeer as it is passed henne,  
 Syn that my tappe of lyf bygan to renne.  
 For sikirlik, whan I was born, anon  
 Deth drough the tappe of lyf, and leet it goon; 3890  
 And now so longe hath the tappe i-ronne,  
 Til that almost al empty is the tonne.  
 The stream of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe.  
 The sely tonge may wel ryng and chimbe  
 Of wrecchednes, that passed is ful yore:  
 With olde folk, sauf dotage, is no more."  
 Whan that oure Host had herd this sermonyng,  
 He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng,  
 And seyde, "What amounteth al this wit?  
 What? schul we speke al day of holy wryt? 3900  
 The devyl made a reve for to preche,  
 Or of a sowter a schipman or a leche.

3819. *to selle.* So in the fabliau of Alou, in Barbazan, l. 691.

Qu'ainc tant come il mist à descendre  
 Ne trova point de pain à vendre.

3902. *Ex sutore nauclerus* and *ex sutore in-dicus* were both popular proverbs, and are found in medieval Latin writers.

Sey forth thi tale, and tarye nat the tyme;  
Lo heer is Depford, and it is passed prime;  
Lo Grenewich, ther many a schrewe is inne:  
It were al tyme thi tale to bygynne."

"Now, sires," quod this Osewold the Reeve.  
"I pray yow alle, that noon of you him greeve,  
Though I answer, and somewhat sette his howve,  
For leful is with force force to schowve. 3910  
This dronken Myllere hath i-tolde us heer,  
How that bygiled was a carpenter,  
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon;  
And by your leve, I schal him quyte anoon.  
Blight in his cherles termes wol I speke;  
I pray to God his nekke mot to-breke!  
He can wel in myn eye see a stalke,  
But in his owne he can nought seen a balke."

## THE REEVES TALE.

AT Trompyngtoun, nat fro Cantebrigge,  
Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge, 3920  
Upon the whiche brook ther stant a melle:  
And this is verray sothe that I you telle.  
A meller was ther dwellyng many a day,  
As eny peok he was prouwd and gay;  
Pipen he coude, and fische, and nettys beete,  
And turne cuppes, wrastle wel, and scheete.  
Ay by his belt he bar a long panade,  
And of a swerd ful treunchant was the blade.  
A joly popper bar he in his pouche;  
Ther was no man for perel durst him touche. 3930  
A Scheffeld thawitel bar he in his hose.  
Round was his face, and camois was his nose.  
As pyled as an ape was his skulle.  
He was a market-beter at the fulle.  
Ther durste no wight hand upon him legge,  
That he ne swor anon he schuld abergee.

A theef he was for soth of corn and mele,  
And that a sleigh, and usyng for to stele.  
His name was hoote deynous Symekyn.  
A wyf he hadde, come of noble kyn; 3940  
The persoun of the toun hir fader was.  
With hire he gaf ful many a panne of bras.  
For that Symekyn schuld in his blood allye.  
Sche was i-fostryd in a nonnerye;  
For Smykyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,  
But sche were wel i-norissched and a mayde,  
To saven his estaat and yomanrye.

3904. *passed prima*. Tyrwhitt reads *half-way prime*, and observes, "In the discourse, &c. § xiv. I have supposed that this means *half past prime*, about half an hour after seven A.M., the *half way* between Prime and Terce. In the fictitious *Modus tenendi parliamentum*, a book not much older than Chaucer, *hora medie prime* seems to be used in the same sense. *c. de diebus et horis parliamenti*. Ms. Cotton. Nero. D. vi. On common days *Parliamentum a bet inchoari hora medie prime—in diebus festiuis hora prima propter divinum servitium*. In a contemporary French translation of this treatise, Ms. Harl. 305, *hora medie prime* is rendered as *la my heure le prime*; in an old English version, Ms. Harl. 930, *the oure of myd pryme*; and in another, Ms. Harl. 1309, *middle prime time*. Our author uses *prime large*, ver. 10,674, to signify that prime was considerably past."

3909. *sette his howve*. The same as set his cap. See l. 588.

The *Reeves Tale*. This was a very popular story in the middle ages, and is found under several different forms. It occurs frequently in the jest and story books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Boccaccio has given it in the Decameron, evidently from a fabliau, which has been printed in Barbazan under the title of *De Gombert et des deux clers*. Chaucer took the story from another fabliau, which I have printed and first pointed out to notice in my *Anecdota Literaria*, p. 15.

And sche was proud and pert as is a pye.  
A ful fair sighte was ther on hem two;  
On haly dayes bifore hir wolde he go 3950  
With his tydet y-bounde aboute his heed;  
And sche cam aftir in a gyte of reed,  
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same.  
Ther durste no wight clepe hir but *madame*;  
Was noon so hardy walkyng by the weye.  
That with hir dorste rage or elles pleye,  
But if he wold be slayn of Symekyn  
With panade, or with knyf, or boydekyn:  
For gelous folk ben perillous everemo,  
Algate they wolde here wywes wende so. 3960  
And eek for sche was somdel smoterlich,  
Sche was as deyne as water in a dich,  
As ful of hokir, and of bissemare.

Hir thoughte ladyes oughen hir to spare,  
What for hir kynreed and hir nortelrye,  
That sche had lerned in the nonnerye.  
O doughter hadden they betwix hem two,  
Of twenti yeer, withouten eny mo,  
Savyng a child that was of half yer age,  
In eradil lay, and was a proper page. 3970  
This wenche thikke and wel i-grown was,  
With camois nose, and eyghen gray as glas;  
And buttokkes brode, and brestes round and hye,  
But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.  
The persoun of the toun, for sche was feir,  
In purpos was to maken hir his heir,  
Bothe of his catel and his mesuage,  
And straunge made it of hir marriage.  
His purpos was to bystow hir hye 3980  
Into som worthy blood of ancterye;  
For holy chirche good moot be despendid  
On holy chirche blood that is descendid.  
Therefore he wolde his joly blood honoure,  
Though that he schulde holy chirche devoure.

Gret soken hath this meller, out of doute,  
With whete and malt, of al the lond aboute;  
And namely ther was a gret collegge,  
Men clepe it the Soler-halle of Cantebregge,  
Ther was here whete and eek here malt i-grounde.  
And on a day it happed in a stounde, 3990  
Syk lay the maunceple on a maledye,  
Men wenden wisly that he schulde dye;  
For which this meller stal bothe mele and corn  
A thousand part more than byforn.  
For ther biforn he stal but curteysly;  
Bit now he is a theef outrageously.  
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare,  
But therof sette the meller not a tare;  
He crakked boost, and swor it was nat so.  
Thanne weren there poore scoleres tuo, 4000  
That dwelten in the halle of which I seye;  
Testyf they were, and lusty for to pleye;  
And, oonly for here mirthe and revelrye,  
Upon the wardeyn bysily they crye,  
To geve hem leve but a litel stound

3954. *madams*. In the description of the nun (l. 378), who also prided herself upon her gentility, Chaucer says—

It is right fair for to be clept *madame*,  
And for to go to vigilies al byfore.

3988. *the Soler-halle*. There was a tradition in the University of Cambridge, at least as early as the time of Cains, and it may perhaps be correct, that the college alluded to by Chaucer was Clare Hall. See Cains, Hist. Acad. p. 57, and Fuller's Hist. of the Univ. of Camb. p. 86 (ed. 1840). The name *Soler-halle*, of course, means the hall with the soler or upper story, which, as Warton observes, would be a sufficient mark of distinction in early times.



To go to melle and see here corn i-grounde;  
 And hardily they dursten ley here nekke,  
 The meller schuld nat stel hem half a pekke  
 Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve.  
 And atte last the wardeyn gaf hem leve. 4010  
 Johan hight that oon, and Alayn hight that other;  
 Of o toun were they born that highte Strothir,  
 Fer in the North, I can nat telle where.  
 This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,  
 And on an hors the sak he cast anon:  
 Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also Jon,  
 With good sword and with boeler by her side.  
 Johan knew the way, that hem needith no gyde;  
 And at the mylle the sak adoun he layth. 4019  
 Alayn spak first: "Al heil! Symond, in faith  
 How fares thy faire daughter and thy wyf?"  
 "Alayn, welcome," quod Symond, "by my lyf!  
 And Johan also; how now! what do ye here?"  
 "By God!" quod Johan, "Symond, neede has na  
 Him falles serve himself that has na swayn, [peere.  
 Or elles he is a fon, as clerkes sayn.  
 Oure maneyple, as I hope, wil be deed,  
 Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed:  
 And therefore I is come, and eek Alayn,  
 To grynde oure corn, and carie it ham ageyn.  
 I prey you speed us in al that ye may." 4031  
 "It schal be doon," quod Symkyn, "by my fay!  
 What wol ye do whil that it is in hande?"  
 "By God!" right by the hoper wol I stande,"  
 Quod Johan, "and se how that the corn gas inne.  
 Yet sawh I never, by my fader kynne!  
 How that the hoper waggis to and fra."  
 Aleyn answerde, "Johan, and wiltow swa?  
 Than wol I be byneth, by my croun!  
 And se how that the mele fallys down 4040  
 Into the trough, that schal be my desport;  
 For, Jon, in faith, I may be of your sort,  
 I is as ille a meller as ere ye."  
 This mellere smyleth for here nyceté,  
 And thought, "Al this is doon but for a wyle;  
 They wenen that no man may hem bigile.  
 But, by my thriit, yet schal I blere here ye,  
 For al here sleight and al here philosophie;  
 The more queynte knakkes that they make,  
 The more wol I stele whan I take. 4050  
 In stede of mele, yet wol I geve hem bren.  
 The grettest clerks beth not the wisest men,  
 As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare;

4011. *Johan*. This is the correct form of the name, the *a* being generally indicated by a dash on the upper limb of the *h*. In the manuscript from which our text is taken, the contraction is sometimes written *Johan*. *John*, as Tyrwhitt prints it, is a much more modern orthography. Where the name is required to be a monosyllable, it is here spelt *Jon*, probably an abbreviation of familiarity, as *Tom* and the like.

4012. *Strothir*. This was the valley of Langstroth, or Langstrothdale, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, as pointed out by Dr. Whitaker, *Hist. of Craven*, p. 493. I am informed that the dialect of this district may be recognised in the phraseology of Chaucer's "scoleres tuo."

4053. *the wolf*. The fable of the Wolf and the Lamb is found in the Latin Esopean collections, and in the early French poem of Renard le Contrefait, from whence it appears to have been taken into the English *Reynard the Fox*. In Renard le Contrefait the wolf utters a similar sentiment (though differently expressed) to that in Chaucer,—

Or voi-ge bien tont en apert  
 Que clergie bien sa saison pert;  
 Aueunes foiz vilain queaignent  
 Es leus où le clere se mehaignent.

Ge ne fis mie grant saivoir,  
 Quant ge vouloie clers devenir.

Of al her art ne counte I nat a tare."  
 Out at the dore he goth ful pryvyly,  
 Whan that he saugh his tyme sotlyly;  
 He loketh up and down, til he hath founde  
 The clerkes hors, ther as it stood i-bounde  
 Behynde the mylle, under a levesel;  
 And to the hors he goth him faire and wel. 4060  
 He strepeth of the bridel right anon.  
 And whan the hors was loos, he gan to goon  
 Toward the fen there wilde mares renne, [thenne.  
 Forth with "wi-he!" thurgh thikke and eek thurgh  
 This meller goth agayn, and no word seyde,  
 But doth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,  
 Til that her corn was fair and wel i-grounde.  
 And whan the mele was sakked and i-bounde,  
 This Johan goth out, and fynt his hors away,  
 And gan to crye, "Harrow and weylaway! 4070  
 Oure hors is lost! Alayn, for Goddes banes,  
 Step on thy feet, cum on, man, al at anes.  
 Allas! our wardeyn hath his palfrey lorn!"  
 This Aleyn al forgeteth mele and corn,  
 Al was out of his mynd his honsbondrye;  
 "What wikked way is he gan?" gan he crye.  
 The wyf cam lepyng in-ward with a ren,  
 Sche seyde, "Allas! your hors goth to the fen  
 With wyld mares, as fast as he may go; 4079  
 Unthank come on his heed that band him so,  
 And he that bettir schuld han knyht the reyne!"  
 "Allas!" quod Johan, "Aleyn, for Cristes peyne!  
 Leg doun thy sword, and I sal myn alswa;  
 I is ful wight, God wat, as is a ra;  
 By Goddes hart! he sal nat scape us bathe.  
 Why nad thou put the capil in the lathe?  
 Il hail, Aleyn, by God! thou is a fon!"  
 This sely clerkes speeden hem anon  
 Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek Jon.  
 And whan the myller sawh that they were gon,  
 He half a bussel of the flour hath take, 4091  
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.  
 He seyde, "I trowe the clerkes ben aferd!  
 Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd,  
 For al his art; ye, lat hem go here way!  
 Lo wher they goon! ye, lat the children play;  
 They get hyn nat so lightly, by my croun!"  
 This seely clerkes ronnen up and down, [derere!  
 With "Keep! keep! stand! stand! jossa, ware  
 Ga wighdy thou, and I sal keep him heere." 4100  
 But schortly, til that it was verray night,  
 They cowde nat, though they did al here might,  
 Here capil cacche, it ran away so fast,  
 Til in a diche they caught him atte last.  
 Wery and wete as bestys in the reyn,  
 Comth sely Johan, and with him comth Aleyn.  
 "Allas!" quod Johan, "that day that I was born!  
 Now are we dryve til hethyng and to scorn.  
 Oure corn is stole, men wolu us foles calle,  
 Bathe the wardeyn and eek our felaws alle, 4110  
 And namely the myller, weyloway!"  
 Thus pleyne Johan, as he goth by the way  
 Toward the mylle, and Bayard in his hand.  
 The myller sityng by the fyr he fand,  
 For it was night, and forther might they nought,  
 But for the love of God they him bisought  
 Of herberwh and of ese, as for her peny.  
 The myller sayd agayn, "If ther be eny,  
 Swich as it is, yit schul ye have your part.

4094. *make a clerkes berd*. A proverbial phrase taken from the French, *faire la barbe à quelqu'un*. It occurs again further on, l. 5943.

Myn hous is streyt, but ye han lerned art; 4120  
 Ye conne by argumentes make a place  
 A myl brood of twenty foote of space.  
 Let se now if this place may suffyse,  
 Or make it rom with speche, as is your gyse."  
 "Now, Symond," seyde this Johan, "by seynt  
 Cuthberd!

Ay is thou mery, and that is fair answerd.  
 I have herd say, men suld take of twa thinges,  
 Slik as he fynt, or tak slik as he brings.  
 But specially I pray the, host ful deere,  
 Get us som mete and drynk, and make us cheere,  
 And we wol paye trewly at the fulle; 4131  
 With empty hand men may na hawkes tulle.  
 Lo heer our silver redy for to spende."

This meller into toun his daughter sende  
 For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,  
 And band her hors, he schold no more go loos;  
 And in his owne chambir hem made a bed,  
 With schetys and with chalounes fair i-sprede,  
 Nat from his owen bed ten foot or i-twede.

His daughter had a bed al by hirselve, 4140  
 Right in the same chambre by and by;  
 It mighte be no bet, and cause why  
 Ther was no rommer herberw in the plaee.  
 They sowpen, and they speken of solae,  
 And dronken ever strong ale atte bedde.  
 Aboute mydnyght wente they to reste.

Wel hath the myller verrysshed his heed,  
 Ful pale he was, for-dronken, and nat reed;  
 He yoxeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose,  
 As he were on the quakke or on the pose. 4150  
 To bed he goth, and with him goth his wyf,  
 As eny jay sche light was and jolyf,  
 So was hir joly whistel wel y-wet;  
 The cradil at hire beddes feet is set,

To rokken, and to give the child to souke.  
 And whan that dronken was al in the crouke,  
 To bedde went the daughter right anon;  
 To bedde goth Aleyn, and also Jon,  
 Ther nas no more, him needeth no dwale.

This meller hath so wysly bibbed ale, 4160  
 That as an hors he snortith in his sleep,  
 Ne of his tayl bihynd took he no keep.  
 His wyf bar him a burdoun, a ful strong,  
 Men might her rowtyng heeren a forlong.

The wenche routeth eek *par compaignye*.  
 Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,  
 He pokyd Johan, and seyde, "Slepistow?  
 Herdistow ever slik a sang er now?  
 Lo, slik a conplyng is betwix hem alle,  
 A wilde fyr upon their bodyes falle! 4170

Wha herked ever swilk a ferly thing?  
 Ye, thei sul have the flour of ille endyng!  
 This lange night ther tydes me na rest.  
 But yet na fors, al sal be for the best.  
 For, Johan," sayd he, "as ever mot I thryve,  
 If that I may, yone wenche sal I swyve.

Som esement hath lawe schapen us;  
 For Johan, ther is a lawe that says thus,  
 That if a man in a point be agreved,  
 That in another he sal be releved. 4180

Oure corn is stohn, sothly, it is na nay,  
 And we have had an ylle fit to day;  
 And syn I sal have nan amendement

Agayn my los, I wol have esement.  
 By Goddes sale! it sal nan other be."  
 This Johan answerd, "Aleyn, avyse the;  
 The miller is a perulous man," he sayde,  
 "And if that he out of his sleep abrayde,  
 He mighte do us bothe a vilonye."  
 Aleyn answerd, "I count it nat a flye!" 4190  
 And up he roos, and by the wenche he erepte.  
 This wenche lay upright and faste slepte,  
 Til he so neih was or sche might aspye  
 That it had ben to late for to crye.  
 And shortly for to seye, they weren at oon.  
 Now pley, Aleyn, for I wol speke of Jon.

This Johan lith stille a forlong whyle or two,  
 And to himself compleyned of his woo.  
 "Allas!" quod he, "this is a wikked jape;  
 Now may I say that I am but an ape. 4200  
 Yet hath my felaw somwhat for his harm;  
 He hath the myllers daughter in his arm;  
 He aunted him, and has his needes sped,  
 And I lye as a draf-sak in my bed;  
 And when this jape is tald another day,  
 I sal be hald a daf, a cokenay.  
 Unhardy is unsel, as men saith.

I wol arise, and aunte it, in good faith."  
 And up he roos, and softly he wente  
 Unto the cradil, and in his hand it hente, 4210  
 And bar it softe unto his beddis feet.

Soone after this the wyf hir routyng leet,  
 And gan awake, and went hir forth to pisse,  
 And cam agayn, and gan hir eradel mysse,  
 And groped heer and ther, but sche fond noon.  
 "Allas!" quod sche, "I had almost mysgoon;  
 I had almost goon to the clerkes bed,  
 Ey, *benedicite!* than had I foule i-sped!"

And forth sche goth, til sche the cradil fand.  
 Sche gropith alway forther with hir hand, 4220  
 And fand the bed, and thoughte nat but good,  
 Byeause that the cradil by it stood,  
 Nat knowyng wher sche was, for it was derk;  
 But faire and wel sche creep in to the clerk,  
 And lith ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.

Withinne a while Johan the clerk up leep,  
 And on this goode wyf leyth on ful sore;  
 So mery a fytt he hadd sche nat ful yore.  
 He priketh harde and deepe, as he were mad.  
 This joly lyf han this twey clerkes had, 4230

Til that the thridde cok bygan to synge.  
 Aleyn wax wery in the dawenyng,  
 For he had swonken al the longe night,  
 And seyde, "Farwel, Malyn, my sweete wight!  
 The day is come, I may no lenger byde;  
 But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,

I am thin owen clerk, so have I seel!"  
 "Now, deere lemman," quod sche, "go, farwel!  
 But or thou go, o thing I wol the telle:  
 Whan that thouwendist hom-ward by the melle,  
 Right at the entré of the dre byhynde  
 Thou schalt a cake of half a busshel fynde,  
 That was i-made of thyn owen mele,  
 Which that I hilp myn owen self to stete.

And, goode lemman, God the save and kepe!"  
 And with that word almost sche gan to weepe.  
 Aleyn uprist, and thought, "Er that it dawe  
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe;"  
 And fand the cradil with his hand anon.

"By God!" thought he, "al wrong I have i-goon  
 My heed is toty of my swynk to nyght, 4251  
 That makes me that I ga nought aright.

4132. with empty hand. Conf. L. 5397, where the proverb is given somewhat differently.

4179. A marginal note in the ms. says,—Qui in uno gravatur, in alio debet relevari.



I wet wel by the cradel I have mysge;  
 Heer lith the myller and his wyf also."  
 Forth he goth in twenty deuel way  
 Unto the bed, ther as the miller lay.  
 He wende hawd croke by his felaw Jon,  
 And by the myller in he creep anon,  
 And caught him by the nekke, and soft he spak,  
 And seyde, "Jon, thou swyneshed, awak, 4260  
 For Cristes sowle! and here a noble game;  
 For, by that lord that cleped is seynt Jame,  
 As I have thries in this schorte night  
 Swyved the myllers doughter bolt upright,  
 Whiles thou hast as a coward ben agast."  
 "Ye, false harlot," quod this melle, "hast?  
 A! false traitour, false clerk!" quod he,  
 "Thou schalt be deed, by Goddes dignité!  
 Who durste be so bold to disparage  
 My doughter, that is come of hih lynage?" 4270  
 And by the throte-bolle he caught Aleyn,  
 And he hent him dispitously ageyn,  
 And on the nose he smot him with his fest.  
 Doun ran the bloddy stream upon his brest;  
 And in the flour with nose and mouth to-broke  
 They walweden as pigges in a poke;  
 And up they goon, and doun they goon anon,  
 Til that the millner stumbled at a ston,  
 And doun he felle bakward on his wyf,  
 That wyste nothing of this nyce stryf; 4280  
 For sche was falle asleepe a litel wight  
 With Jon the clerk, that waked al the night,  
 And with the falle right out of slepe sche brayde.  
 "Help, holy croys of Bromholme!" sche seyde,  
 "In manus tuas, Lord, to the I calle!  
 Awake, Symond, the feend is in thin halle!  
 My hert is broken! help! I am but deed!  
 Ther lythe upon my wombe and on myn heed.  
 Help, Symkyn! for this false clerkes fight."  
 This Johan stert up as fast as ever he might,  
 And grasped by the wallles to and fro, 4291  
 To fynde a staf; and sche sturt up also,  
 And knewe the estres bet than dede Jon,  
 And by the wal sche took a staf anon,  
 And sawh a litel glymeryng of a light;  
 For at an hool in schon the moone bright,  
 And by that light sche saugh hem bothe two;  
 But sikirly sche wiste nat who was who,  
 But as sche saugh a whit thing in hir ye, 4300  
 And whan sche gan this white thing aspye,  
 Sche wend the clerk had wered a volupeer;  
 And with a staf sche drough hir neer and neer,  
 And wend have hit this Aleyn atte fulle,  
 And smot this meller on the piled sculle,  
 That doun he goth, and cryeth, "Harrow! I dye!"  
 This clerkes becten him wel, and leet hym lye,  
 And greyth hem wel, and take her hors anon,  
 And cek here mele, and hoom anon they goon;  
 And at the millen dore they tok here cake  
 Of half a buissel flour ful wel i-bake. 4310

This is the prowde miller wel i-bete,  
 And hath i-lost the gryndyng of the whete,  
 And payed for the soper every del  
 Of Aleyn and of Johan, that beten him wel;

4284. *holy croys of Bromholme.* Portions of the real cross were said to compose the cross of the priory of Bromholm, in Norfolk, brought into England with great ceremony in 1223, and thenceforth an extraordinarily popular object of pilgrimage. "By the cross (or rood) of Bromholm!" seems to have been a very common formula of swearing, and is found in Piers Ploughman, and elsewhere.

His wyf is swyved, and his doughter als.  
 Lo! such it is a miller to be fals.  
 And therto this proverbe is seyde ful soth.  
 He thar nat weene wel that evyl doth.  
 A gylour schal himself bygiled be.  
 And God, that sitest in thy magesté, 4320  
 Save al this compaignie, gret and smale.  
 Thus have I quyit the miller in his tale.

#### THE COKES PROLOGE.

THE Cook of Londone, whil the Reeve spak,  
 For joye he thought he clawed him on the bak;  
 "Ha, ha!" quod he, "for Cristes passioun,  
 This meller hath a scharp conclusioun  
 Upon his argument of herburgage.  
 Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,  
 Ne bryng nat every man into thyn hous,  
 For herburgage by night is perilous. 4330  
 Wel aught a man avised for to be  
 Whom that he brought into his pryvyté.  
 I pray to God so gyf my body care,  
 Gif ever, siththen I highte Hogge of Ware,  
 Herd I a better miller set a-werke;  
 He hadde a jape of malice in the derke.  
 But God forbode that we stynten heere,  
 And therefore if ye vouchesauf to heere  
 A tale of me that am a pover man,  
 I wol yow telle as wel as I kan 4340  
 A litel jape that fel in oure citee."  
 Oure Host answerde and seyde, "I graunt it the.  
 Now telle on, Roger, and loke it be good;  
 For many a pastey hastow lete blood,  
 And many a Jakk of Dover hastow sold,  
 That hath be twyes hoot and twyes cold.  
 Of many a pylgrym hastow Cristes curs;  
 For thy persly they faren yet the wors,  
 That they have eten with the stubbil goos;  
 For in thy schoppe is many a flye loos. 4350  
 Now tell on, gentil Roger by thy name,  
 But yit I pray the be nought wroth for game;  
 A man may seyfe ful sothe in game and play."  
 "Thow saist ful soth," quod Roger, "by my fey!  
 But soth play quad play, as the Flemyng saith;  
 And therefore, Herry Baillif, by thy faith,  
 Be thou nat wroth, or we departe her,  
 Though that my tale be of an hostyler.  
 But natheles I wol not telle it yit,  
 But or we departe it schal be quyit." 4360  
 And therwithal he lowh and made chere,  
 And seyde his tale, as ye schal after heere.

#### THE COKES TALE.

A PRENTYS dwelled whilom in oure citee,  
 And of a craft of vitaillers was he;  
 Gaylard he was, as goldfynch in the schawe,  
 Broun as a bery, and a propre felawe,  
 With lokkes blak, and kempt ful fetously.

4318. *he thar nat.* The literal meaning of this proverb seems to be, "He need not imagine, or suppose, well, who does evil!"

4345. *Jakk of Dover.* Some article of cookery, which I have not found mentioned or alluded to elsewhere, and which it would therefore be vain to attempt to explain.

4353. This line, as well as l. 4356, is omitted in Ms. Harl., which reads by *my faith* in l. 4354, to make it rhyme with 4355.

4355. *soth play.* Tyrwhitt, to make Flemish of the phrase, reads *soth pley quade spel*, which, after all, is but half Flemish, and is contrary to the general authority of the mss. He quotes from Sir John Harrington's *Apologie for Poetrie* a similar English proverb, *soth bourde is no bourde*.



Mauncen he cowde wel and prately,  
That he was cleeped Perkyng Revellour.  
He was as ful of love and paramour 4370  
As is the honycombe of hony swete;  
Wel were the wenche that mighte him meete.  
[At every bridale wold he synge and hoppe;  
He loved bet the taverner than the schoppe.]

For whan ther eny rydyng was in Cheepe,  
Out of the schoppe thider wolde he lepe,  
And tyl he hadde al that sight i-seyn,  
And daunced wel, he nold nat come ageyn;  
And gadred him a meyné of his sort,  
To hoppe and synge, and make such disport. 4380  
And ther they setten stevene for to meete,  
To playen atte dys in such a strete.  
For in the toun ne was ther no prentys  
That fairer cowde caste a peyre dys  
Than Perkyng couthe, and therto he was free  
Of his dispence, in place of pryvyté.

That fand his mayster wel in his chaffare,  
For often tyme he fond his box ful bare.  
For such a joly prentys revelour,  
That haunteth dys, revel, or paramour, 4390  
His maister schal it in his schoppe abyte,  
Al have he no part of the mynstraleye.

For thefte and ryot be convertible,  
Al can they play on giterne or rubible.  
Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degré,  
They ben ful wroth al day, as ye may see.  
This joly prentys with his mayster bood,  
Til he was oute neygh of his prentys hood,  
Al were he snybbyd bothe erly and late,  
And som tyme lad with revel into Newgate. 4400

But atte laste his mayster him bythought  
Upon a day, whan he his papyr sought,  
Of a proverbe, that saith this same word,  
Wel bette is roten appul out of hord,  
Than that it rote al the remaunant.  
So fareth it by a ryotous servaunt;  
It is ful lasse harm to late him pace,  
Than he schend al the servanntes in the place.  
Therefore his mayster gaf him acquitaunce,  
And bad him go, with sorwe and with meschaunce.  
And thus the joly prentys had his leve. 4411

Now let hym ryot al the night or leve.  
And for ther is no thef withouten a lowke,  
That helpeth him to wasten and to sowke  
Of that he bribe can, or borwe may,  
Anon he sent his bedde and his aray  
Unto a comperer of his owen sort,  
That loved dis, and revel, and disport;  
And had a wyf, that held for contenaunce  
A schoppe, and swyved for hire sustenaunce. 4420

[Eye theron, it is so foule, I wil nowe telle no  
further,

For sehame of the harlotrie that seweth after;  
A velany it were thare of more to spelle, [telle.]  
Bot of a knyght and his sonnes my tale I wil forthe

## THE COKES TALE OF GAMELYN.

Litheth, and lestneth, and herkneth aright,  
And ye schal heere a talkyng of a doughty knyght;  
4373. This and the following line are omitted in Ms. Harl.

4375. *in Cheepe.* Cheapside was the grand scene of city festivals and processions.

4409. *acquitaunce.* The Ms. Harl. reads *acquyntaunce.*

4413. The lines from 4413 to 4420 are omitted in Ms. Harl., but they are evidently genuine.

*The Cokes Tale of Gamelyn.* Tyrwhitt omits this tale, as

Sire Johan of Boundys was his right name,  
He cowde of norture ynough and mochiol of game,  
Thre sones the knyght had, that with his body he wan;  
The eldest was a moche schrewe, and sone he bygan.  
His bretheren loved wel here fader, and of him were  
agast, [the last.]

The eldest deserved his fadres curs, and had it at  
The goode knyght his fader lyvede so yore, [sore.]  
That deth was comen him to, and handled him ful  
The goode knyght cared sore, sik ther he lay, 11  
How his children scholde lyven after his day.  
He hadde ben wyde wher, but non housbond he was,  
Al the lond that he had, it was verrey purchas.  
Fayn he wold it were dressed amonges hem alle,  
That ech of hem had his part, as it mighte falle.  
Tho sent he into euntré after wise knyghtes,  
To helpe delen his londes and dreschen hem to rightes.  
He sent hem word by lettres they schulden hys blyve,  
Yf they wolde speke with him whil he was on lyve. 20  
Tho the knyghtes herden sik ther he lay,  
Hadde they no reste nother night ne day,  
Til they comen to him ther he lay stille  
On his deth bedde, to abyde Goddes wille.  
Than seyde the goode knyght, syk ther he lay,  
"Lordes, I you warne for soth, withoute nay,  
I may no longere lyven heer in this stounde;  
For thurgh Goddes wille deth draweth me to  
grounde."

Ther nas non of hem alle that herd him aright,  
That they hadden reuthe of that ilke knyght, 30  
And seyde, "Sir, for Goddes love, no dismay you  
nought;

God may do bote of bale that is now i-wrought."  
Than spak the goode knyght, sik ther he lay,  
"Boote of bale God may sende, I wot it is no nay;  
But I byseke you, knyghtes, for the love of me,  
Goth and dresseth my lond among my sones thre.  
And, sires, for the love of God, deleth hem nat amys,  
And forgeth nat Gamelyn, my yonge sone that is.  
Taketh heed to that on, as wel as to that other;  
Selde ye see ony eyr helpen his brother." 40

The leete they the knyght lyen that was nought  
in hele,

And wenten in to counsil his londes for to dele;  
For to delen hem alle to oon, that was her thought,  
And for Gamelyn was yongest, he schuld have  
nought.

Al the lond that ther was they dalten it in two,  
And leeten Gamelyn the yonge withoute lond go,  
And ech of hem seyde to other ful lowde, [cowde.]  
His bretheren might geve him lond whan he good  
Whan they hadde deled the lond at here wille,  
They come agein to the knyght ther he lay fulstille,  
And tolden him anon right how they hadden  
wrought; 51

And the knyght there he lay liked it right nought.  
Than seyde the knyght, "I sware by soynt Martyn,  
For al that ye have y-doon yit is the lond myn;

being certainly not Chaucer's; in which judgment he is probably right. It is, however, found in the Ms. Harl. and all the mss. I have collated. Tyrwhitt ends abruptly with l. 4420. In Ms. Harl. the tale of Gamelyn begins without any introduction; I have added the introductory lines from the Lansdowne Ms. Other mss., instead of them, have only two,—

But herof I wille passe as nowe,  
And of yonge Gamelyn I wille telle yowe.

The tale of Gamelyn belongs to the Robin Hood cycle, and is curious as a picture of the times. It will be at once recognised as the foundation of Shakespeare's *As you like it*, though the dramatist appears to have taken it through the intermediation of Lodge's *Euphues Golden Legacy*, which is clearly built on the poem of Gamelyn, even the name of Adam Spencer being retained. In some mss. Gamelyn's father is called *Johan of Euvreux*, an additional link with Lodge's novel. See further remarks on this tale in the Introduction.

For Goddes love, neyhebour, stondest alle stille,  
 And I wil dele my lond after my wille.  
 Johan, myn eldeste sone, schal have plowes fyve,  
 That was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyve;  
 And my myddelste sone fyf plowes of lond,  
 That I halp for to gete with my right hond; 60  
 And al myn other purchas of londes and leedes  
 That I byggethe Gamelyn, and alle my goode steedes.  
 And I byseke yow, goode men, that lawe conne of  
 For Gamelynes love, that my queste stonde." [londe,  
 Thus dalte the knight his lond by his day,  
 Right on his deth bed sik ther he lay;  
 And sone aftirward he lay stoon stille,  
 And deyde than tyme com, as it was Cristes wille.  
 And anon as he was deed, and under gras i-grave,  
 Sone the elder brother gyled the yonge knave; 70  
 He took into his hond his lond and his leede,  
 And Gamelyn himselfe to clothen and to feede.  
 He clothed him and fed him yvel and eek wrothe,  
 And lect his londes for-fare and his houses bothe,  
 His parkes and his woodes, and dede nothing wel,  
 And seththen he it about on his faire fel.  
 So longe was Gamelyn in his brotheres halle,  
 For the strengest of good wil they doutiden him alle;  
 Ther was non therinne nowther yong ne olde  
 That wolde wratthe Gamelyn, were he never so  
 bolde. 80

Gamelyn stood on a day in his brotheres yerde,  
 And bygan with his hond to handlen his berde;  
 He thought on his londes that layen unsawe,  
 And his faire okes that doun were i-drawe;  
 His parkes were i-broken, and his deer byreved;  
 Of alle his goode steedes noon was him byleved;  
 His howses were unhillid and ful yvel dight.  
 Tho thoughte Gamelyn it wente nought aright.  
 Afterward cam his brother walkyng thare,  
 And seyde to Gamelyn, "Is our mete yare?" 90  
 Tho wratthed him Gamelyn, and swor by Goddes  
 book, [cook."  
 "Thou schalt go bake thiself, I wil nought be thy  
 "How? brother Gamelyn, how answerest thou now?  
 Thou spake never such a word as thou dost now."  
 "By my faith," seyde Gamelyn, "now me thinketh  
 neede,

Of alle the harmes that I have I tok never ar leede.  
 My parkes ben to-broken, and my deer byreved,  
 Of myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileved;  
 Al that my fader me byquath al goth to schame,  
 And therfor have thou Goddes curs, brother, by thy  
 name." 100

Than byspak his brother, that rape was of rees,  
 "Stond stille, gadel yng, and hold right thy pees;  
 Thou schalt be fayn for to have thy mete and thy  
 wede;

What spekest thou, Gamelyn, of lond other of leede?"  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn, the child that was yng,  
 "Cristes curs mot he have that clepeth me gadel yng!  
 I am no worse gadel yng, no no worse wight,  
 But born of a lady, and geten of a knight."  
 Ne durst he nat to Gamelyn ner a foote go,  
 But lepid to him his men, and seyde to hem tho, 110  
 "Goth and beteth this boy, and reveth him his wyt,  
 And lat him leren another tyme to answer me bet."  
 Thanne seyde the child, yonge Gamelyn,  
 "Cristes curs mot thou have, brother art thou myn;  
 And if I schal algate be beten anon,  
 Cristes curs mot thou have, but thou be that oon."  
 And anon his brother in that grete hete  
 Made his men to fette staves Gamelyn to bete.  
 Whan that everich of hem a staf had i-nome,  
 Gamelyn was war anon tho he seigh hem come; 120

Tho Gamelyn seyde hem come, he loked over al,  
 And was war of a pestel stood under a wal;  
 Gamelyn was light of foot and thider gan he lepe,  
 And drof alle his brotheres men right on an hepe.  
 He loked as a wude lyoun, and leyde on good woon;  
 Tho his brother say that, he began to goon;  
 He flep yntil a luff, and schete the dore fast.  
 Thus Gamelyn with the pestel made hem alle agast.  
 Some for Gamelynes love and some for his eyghe,  
 Alle they drowe by halves, tho he gan to playghe. 130  
 "What! how now?" seyde Gamelyn, "evel mot ye  
 Wil ye bygynne contek, and so sone fle?" [thee!  
 Gamelyn sought his brother, whider he was flowe,  
 And saugh wher he loked out at a wyndowe.  
 "Brother," seyde Gamelyn, "com a litel ner,  
 And I wil teche the a play atte bokeler."  
 His brother him answerde, and swor by seynt Rycher,  
 "Whil the pestel is in thin hond, I wil come no near:  
 Brother, I wil make thy pees, I swere by Cristes ore;  
 Cast away the pestel, and wratthe the nomore." 140  
 "I mot neede," seyde Gamelyn, "wratthe me at  
 oones,

For thou woldest make thy men to breke myne boones,  
 Ne had I hadde mayn and might in myn armes,  
 To have i-put hem fro me, he woldest have do me  
 harmes." [wroth,  
 "Gamelyn," seyde his brother, "be thou nought  
 For to scen the have harm it were me right loth;  
 I ne dide it nought, brother, but for a fondyng."  
 For to loken or thou were strong and art so yng."  
 "Com adoun than to me, and graunte me my bone,  
 Of thing I wil the aske, and we schul saught sone." 150  
 Doun than cam his brother, that fykil was and felle,  
 And was swithe sore agast of the pestelle.  
 He seyde, "Brother Gamelyn, aske me thy boone,  
 And luke thou me blame but I graunte sone."  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn, "Brother, i-wys, [this,  
 And we schulle ben at oon, thou most me graunte  
 Al that my fader me byquath whil he was on lyve,  
 Thou most do me it have, gif we schul nat stryve."  
 "That schalt thou have, Gamelyn, I swere by  
 Cristes ore! 160

Al that thi fader the byquath, though thou woldest  
 have more;

Thy lond, that lyth laye, ful wel it schal be sowe,  
 And thyn howses reysed yul, that ben leyd so low."  
 Thus seyde the knight to Gamelyn with mowthe,  
 And thought eek of falsnes, as he wel couthe.

The knight thought on tresoun, and Gamelyn on  
 noon, [at oon.

And went and kist his brother, and than they were  
 Allas! yonge Gamelyn, nothing he ne wiste

With which a false tresoun his brother him kiste.  
 Litheth, and lestneth, and holdeth your tonge,  
 And ye schul heere talkyng of Gamelyn the yonge.  
 Ther was ther bysiden cryed a wrastlyng, 171

And therfor ther was sette up a ram and a ryng;  
 And Gamelyn was in good wil to wende therto,  
 For to preven his might what he cowthe do.

"Brother," seyde Gamelyn, "by seynt Rieher,  
 Thou most lene me to nyght a litel courser  
 That is freisch to the spore, on for to ryde;

I most on an erande, a litel her byside." [stalle  
 "By God!" seyde his brother, "of steedes in my  
 Go and chese the the best, and spare non of alle, 180  
 Of steedes or of coursers that stonden hem byside;

And tel me, goode brother, whider thou wolt ryde."  
 "Her byside, brother, is cryed a wrastlyng,  
 And therfor schal be set up a ram and a ryng;  
 Moche worschip it were, brother, to us alle, [halle."  
 Might I the ram and the ryng bryng home to this  
 A steede ther was sadeled smertely and skeet;  
 Gamelyn did a paire spores fast on his feet,  
 He set his foot in the styrop, the steede he bystrood,

57. *plowes fyve*. A plough of land was as much as could be ploughed with one plough. It was in the middle ages a common mode of estimating landed property.

61. *and beles*. i. e. and bondmen; the portion of the population which was bought and sold with the land.

172. *a ram*. See before, the general prologue, l. 550.



And toward the wrastelyng the yonge child rood, 190  
 Tho Game yn the yonge was ride out at the gate,  
 The fals knight his brother lokked it after thate,  
 And bysonghte Jhesu Crist that is heven kyng  
 He mighte breke his nekke in that wrastlyng.  
 As sone as Gamelyn com ther the place was,  
 He lichte down of his steede, and stood on the gras,  
 And ther he herd a frankleyn wayloway syng,  
 And bighan bitterly his hondes for to wryng.

"Goode man," seyde Gamelyn, "why makestow  
 this fare?" 199

Is ther no man that may you helpe out of this care?"  
 "Allas!" seyde this frankleyn, "that ever was I  
 bore!"

For tweye stalworthe sones I wene that I have lore;  
 A champion is in the place, that hath i-wrought  
 me sorwe, [borwe,

For he hath slayn my two sones, but if God hem  
 I wold geve ten pound, by Jhesu Crist! and more,  
 With the nones I fand a man to handli him sore."

"Goode man," sayde Gamelyn, "wilt thou wel doon,  
 Hold myn hors, whil my man draweth of my schoon,  
 And help my man to kepe my clothes and my steede,  
 And I wil into place go, to loke if I may speede." 210

"By God!" sayde the frankleyn, "anon it schal  
 be doon;

I wil myself be thy man, to drawn of thy schoon,  
 And wende thou into the place, Jhesu Crist the  
 speede!" [steede."

And drede not of thy clothes, nor of thy goode  
 Barfoot and unger Gamelyn in cam,

All that weren in the place heede of him they nam,  
 How he durst aunter him of him to doon his might  
 That was so doughty champion in wrastlyng and  
 Up sterte the champion rably and anon, [in fight.

Toward yong Gamelyn he bigan to goon, 220  
 And sayde, "Who is thy fader and who is thy sere?  
 For sothe thou art a gret fool, that thou come here."

Gamelyn answerde the champion tho,  
 "Thou knewe wel my fader whil he couthe go,  
 Whiles he was on lyve, by seint Martyn!

Sir Johan of Boundys was his name, and I Gamelyn."  
 "Felaw," seyde the champion, "al so mot I thryve,  
 I knew wel thy fader, whil he was on lyve;

And thiself, Gamelyn, I wil that thou it heere,  
 Whil thou were a yong boy a moche schrewe thou  
 were." 230

Than seyde Gamelyn, and swor by Cristes ore,  
 "Now I am older woxe, thou schalt me fynd a  
 more." [thou be!

"Be God!" sayde the champion, "welcome mote  
 Come thou ones in myn hond, schalt thou never the."  
 It was wel withinne the night, and the moone schon,

Whan Gamelyn and the champion togider gon to  
 goon. [prest,

The champion caste tornes to Gamelyn that was  
 And Gamelyn stood stille, and bad him doon his best.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn to the champion,  
 "Thou art fast aboute to bryngne me adoun;

Now I have i-proved many torues of thyne, 240  
 Thow most," he seyde, "proven on or tuo of myne."  
 Gamelyn to the champion yede smartly anon,  
 Of alle the tornes that he cowthe he schewed him  
 but oon, [brak,

And kast him on the left syde, that thre ribbes to-  
 And therto his oon arm, that gaf a gret crak.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertly anon,  
 "Schal it be holde for a cast, or elles for noon?"

"By God," seyde the champion, "whether that it  
 bee, [thee!"

He that comes ones in thin hand schal he never  
 Than seyde the frankleyn, that had his sones  
 there, 250

"Blessed be thou, Gamelyn, that ever thou bore  
 were!" [him noon eye,

The frankleyn seyde to the champion, of him stood

"This is yonge Gamelyn that taughte the this  
 pleye." [welle,

Agein answerd the champion, that liked nothing  
 "He is a lither mayster, and his pley is right folle;  
 Sith I wrastled first, it is i-go ful yore,  
 But I was nevere my lyf handled so sore."

Gamelyn stood in the place allone withoute serk,  
 And seyde, "If ther be eny mo, lat hem come to werk;  
 The champion that peyned him to werkes sore, 260  
 It semeth by his continaunce that he wil nomore."

Gamelyn in the place stood as stille as stoon,  
 For to abyde wrastlyng, but ther com noon;  
 Ther was noon with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more,  
 For he handled the champion so wonderly sore.

Two gentilmen ther were yemede the place,  
 Comen to Gamelyn, God geve him goode grace!  
 And sayde to hem, "Do on thyn hosen and thy  
 For sothe at this tyme this feire is i-doon." [schoon,

And than seyde Gamelyn, "So mot I wel fare,  
 I have nought yet halvendel sold up my ware." 270  
 Tho seyde the champion, "So brouk I my sweere,  
 He is a fool that therof beyeth, thou sellest it so  
 deere."

Tho sayde the frankleyn that was in moche care,  
 "Felaw," he seyde, "why lakkest thou his ware?  
 Byseynt Jame in Galys, that many man hath sought,  
 Yet it is to good cheep that thou hast i-bought."

Tho that wardeynes were of that wrastlyng,  
 Come and broughte Gamelyn the ram and the ryng,  
 And seyden, "Have, Gamelyn, the ryng and the  
 For the best wrasteler that ever here cam." [ram,

Thus wan Gamelyn the ram and the ryng,  
 And wente with moche joye home in the mornyng.  
 His brother seih wher he cam with the grette rowte,  
 And bad schitte the gate, and holde him withoute.

The porter of his lord was ful sore agast,  
 And stert anon to the gate, and lokked it fast.  
 Now litheth, and lestneth, bothe yong and olde,  
 And ye schul heere gamen of Gamelyn the bolde.

Gamelyn come therto for to have comen in,  
 And thanne was it i-schet faste with a pyn;  
 Than seyde Gamelyn, "Porter, undo the yate,  
 For many good mannes sone stondest therate." 290

Than answerd the porter, and swor by Goddes berde,  
 "Thow ne schalt, Gamelyn, come into this yerde."  
 "Thow lixt," sayde Gamelyn, "so brokwe I my  
 chyn!" [the pyn.

He smot the wyket with his foot, and brak away  
 The porter seyde tho it might no better be,  
 He sette foot on erthe, and fast bigan to flee.

"By my faith," seyde Gamelyn, "that travail is  
 i-lore, [haddest swore."

For I am of foot as lighte as thou, though thou  
 Gamelyn overtook the porter, and his teene wrak,  
 And gert him in the nekke, that the bon to-brak, 300  
 And took him by that oon arm, and threw him in a  
 welle,

Seven fadmen it was deep, as I have herd telle.  
 Whan Gamelyn the yonge thus hadde pleyd his play,  
 Alle that in the yerde were dremen hem away;  
 They dreden him ful sore, for werkes that he  
 wroughte,

And for the faire company that he thider broughte.  
 Gamelyn yede to the gate, and leet it up wyde;  
 He leet in alle maner men that gon in wold or ryde,  
 And seyde, "Ye be welcome withouten eny greeve,  
 For we wiln be maistres heer, and aske no man leve.  
 Yestirday I left," seyde yonge Gamelyn, 311  
 "In my brother seller fyve tonne of wyn;  
 I wil not that this compaignye parten a-twynne,  
 And ye wil doon after me, whil eny sope is thyrnno;  
 And if my brother grucche, or make foul cheere,  
 Other for spense of mete or drynk that we spenden  
 I am oure catour, and bere oure aller purs, [hoere,  
 He schal have for his gruchyng seint Maries curs.  
 My brother is a nyggoun, I swer by Cristes ore, 319



And we wil spende largely that he hath spared yore ;  
 And who that maketh gruechyng that we here  
 He schal to the porter into the draw-welle." [dwelle,  
 Seven dayes and seven nyght Gamelyn held his feste,  
 With moche myrth and solas that was ther and no  
 In a litel toret his brother lay i-steke, [cheste ;  
 And sey hem wasten his good, but durst he not  
 Ery on a mornyn on the eighte day [speke.  
 The gastes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here  
 "Lordes," seyde Gamelyn, "will ye so hye? [way.  
 Al the wyn is not yet y-dronke, so brouk I myn ye."  
 Gamelyn in his herte was he ful wo, 331  
 When his gastes took her leve from him for to go ;  
 He wold they had lenger abide, and they seyde nay,  
 But bitaughte Gamelyn God, and good day.  
 Thus made Gamelyn his fest, and brought it wel to  
 And after his gestys took leve to wende. [ende,

Lithoth, and lestneth, and holdeth youre tonge,  
 And ye schul heere gamen of Gamelyn the yonge ;  
 Herkneþ, lordynges, and lesteneþ aright, [dight  
 Whan alle the gastes were goon how Gamelyn was  
 Al the whil that Gamelyn heeld his mangerye, 341  
 His brother thought on him be wreke with his trec-  
 Tho Gamelns gastes were riden and i-goon, [cherie.  
 Gamelyn stood alone, frendes had he noon ;  
 Tho after ful soome withinne a litel stoumde,  
 Gamelyn was i-take and ful hard i-bounde,  
 Forth com the fals knyght out of the selleer,  
 To Gamelyn his brother he yede ful neer,  
 And sayde to Gamelyn, "Who made the so bold  
 For to stroye my stoor of myn houshold?" 350  
 "Brother," seyde Gamelyn, "wrathte the right  
 nought,

For it is many day i-gon sithen it was bouht ;  
 For, brother, thou hast i-had, by seynt Richer,  
 Of fiftene plowes of lond this sixtene yer,  
 And of alle the beestes thou hast forth bred,  
 That my fader me biquath on his deth bed ;  
 Of al this sixtene yer I geve the the prow [now."  
 For the mete and the drynk that we have spendet  
 Thanne seyde the fals knyght, evel mot he the, 359  
 "Herkne, brother Gamelyn, what I wol geve the ;  
 For of my body, brother, geten heir have I noon,  
 I wil make the myn heir, I swere by seint Johan."  
 "Par ma foy!" sayd Gamelyn, "and if it so be,  
 And thou thanke as thou seyst, God yelde it the!"  
 Nothing wiste Gamelyn of his brotheres gyle ;  
 Therefore he him bigyled in a litel while.  
 "Gamelyn," seyde he, "o thing I the telle ;  
 Tho thou threwe my porter in the draw-welle,  
 I swor in that wrathte, and in that grete moot,  
 That thou schuldest be bounde bothe hand and foot ;  
 Therefore I the biseche, brother Gamelyn, 371  
 Lat me nought be forsworn, as brother art thou myn ;  
 Lat me bynde the now bothe hand and feot,  
 For to holde myn avow, as I the biheet."

"Brother," sayde Gamelyn, "al so mot I the !  
 Thou schalt not be forsworen for the love of me."  
 Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte, might he nat stonde,  
 Tyl they had him bounde bothe foot and honde,  
 The fals knyght his brother of Gamelyn was agast,  
 And sent after feteres to feteren him fast. 380  
 His brother made lesynges on him ther he stood,  
 And told hem that comen in that Gamelyn was wood.  
 Gamelyn stood to a post bounden in the halle,  
 Tho that comen in ther lokod on him alle.  
 Ever stood Gamelyn even upright ;  
 But mete ne drynk had he non neither day ne night.  
 Than seyde Gamelyn, "Brother, by myn hals,  
 Now I have aspied thou art a party fals ;  
 Had I wist that tresoun that thou haddest y-founde,  
 I wolde have geve the strokes or I had be bounde !"  
 Gamelyn stood bounden stille as any noon ; 391  
 Two dayes and two nightes mete had he noon.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn, that stode y-bounde stronge,  
 "Adam spenser, me thinkth I faste to longe ;

Adam spenser, now I bysech the,  
 For the mochel love my fader loved the,  
 Yf thou may come to the keyes, lese me out of bond,  
 And I wil parte with the of my free lond,"  
 Thanne seyde Adam, that was the spenser,  
 "I have served thy brother this sixtene yeer, 400  
 If I leete the goon out of this bour,  
 He wolde say afterward I were a traytour."

"Adam," sayde Gamelyn, "so brouk I myn hals !  
 Thou schalt fynde my brother atte laste fals ;  
 Therfor, brother Adam, louse me out of bond,  
 And I wil parte with the of my free lond."

"Up swich a forward," seyde Adam, "i-wys,  
 I wil do therto al that in me is."  
 "Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "al so mot I the,  
 I wol hold the covenant, and thou wil me." 410

Anon as Adames lord to bedde was i-goon,  
 Adam took the keyes, and leet Gamelyn out anon ;  
 He unlokked Gamelyn bothe hand and feet,  
 In hope of avauncement that he him byheet.

Than seyde Gamelyn, "Thanked be Goddes sonde !  
 Now I am loosed bothe foot and honde ;  
 Had I now eten and dronkon aright,  
 Ther is noon in this hous schulde bynde me this  
 Adam took Gamelyn, as stille as ony stoun, [night."  
 And ladde him into spence rapely and anon, 420

And sette him to soper right in a privé stede,  
 And bad him do gladly, and Gamelyn so dede.  
 Anon as Gamelyn hadde eten wel and fyn,  
 And therto y-dronke wel of the rede wyn,  
 "Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "what is now thy reed ?  
 Wher I go to my brother and girde of his heed ?"  
 "Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "it schal not be so,  
 I can teche the a reed that is worth the two.

I wot wel for sothe that this is no nay,  
 We schul have a mangery right on Sunday ; 430  
 Abbotes and priours many heer schal be,  
 And other men of holy chirehe, as I telle the ; [fast,  
 Thou schalt stonde up by the post as thou were hond-  
 And I schal leve hem unloke, away thou may hem  
 east. [hondes,

When that they have eten and waisschen here  
 Thou schalt biseke hem alle to bryng the out of  
 bondes ;

And if they will borwe the, that were good game,  
 Then were thou out of prisoun, and I out of blame ;  
 And if everich of hem say unto us nay.

I schal do another thing, I swere by this day ! 440  
 Thou schalt have a good staf and I wil have another,  
 And Cristes eurs have that oon that failthe that  
 other !"

"Ye, for Gode !" sayde Gamelyn, "I say it for me,  
 If I fayle on my syde, yvel mot I the !  
 If we schul algate assoile hem of here synne,  
 Warne me, brother Adam, whan I schal bygyrne."

"Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "by seynthe Charité,  
 I wil warne the byforn whan that it schal be ;  
 Whan I twynk on the, loke for to goon, 449  
 And cast away the feteres, and come to me anon."

"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "blessed be thy bones !  
 That is a good counseil gevyng for the nones ;  
 If they werne me thanne to bryng me out of bendes,  
 I wol sette goode strokes right on here lendes."

Tho the Sunday was i-come, and folk to the feste,  
 Faire they were welcomed bothe lest and meste ;  
 And ever as they atte halle dore comen in,  
 They easte their eye on yonge Gamelyn.

The fals knyght his brother, ful of trechory,  
 Alle the gastes that ther were atte mangery, 460  
 Of Gamelyn his brother he tolde hem with mouthe

420. *spence*. The spence, or, according to the original French form of the word, *despence*, was the closet or room in convents and large houses where the victuals, wine, and plate were locked up; and the person who had the charge of it was called the *spencer*, or the *despencer*. Hence originated two common family names.

Al the harm and the schame that he telle couthe.  
 Tho they were served of messes tuo or thre,  
 Than seyde Gamelyn, "How serve ye me?  
 It is nought wel served, by God that al made!  
 That I sytte fastyng, and other men make glade."  
 The fals knight his brother, ther that he stood,  
 Tolde alle his gestic that Gamelyn was wood;  
 And Gamelyn stood stille, and answerde nought,  
 But Adames wordes he held in his thought. 470  
 Tho Gamelyn gan speke dofully withalle  
 To the gret lordes that saten in the halle:  
 "Lordes," he seyde, "for Cristes passiuon,  
 Helpeth brynge Gamelyn out of prisoun."  
 Than seyde an abbot, sorwe on his cheeke!  
 "He schal have Cristes curs and seynte Maries eeke,  
 That the out of prisoun beggeth other borwe,  
 But everworthe hem wel that doth the moche sorwe."  
 After that abbot than spak another, 479  
 "I wold thin heed were of, though thou were my  
 Alle that the borwe, foule mot hem falle!" [brother!  
 Thus they seyde alle that were in the halle.  
 Than seyde a priour, vvel mot he thryve!  
 "It is moche skathe, boy, that thou art on lyve."  
 "Ow," seyde Gamelyn, "so brouk I my bon!  
 Now I have aspyed that freendes have I non.  
 Cursed mot he worthe bothe feisch and blood,  
 That ever do priour or abbot ony good!"  
 Adam the spencer took up the cloth, 489  
 And loked on Gamelyn, and say that he was wroth;  
 Adam on the pantry litel he thought,  
 But tuo goode staves to halle dore he brought.  
 Adam loked on Gamelyn, and he was war anoon,  
 And cast away the feteres, and he bigan to goon:  
 Tho he com to Adam, he took that oo staf,  
 And bygan to worche, and goode strokes gaf.  
 Gamelyn cam into the halle, and the spencer bothe,  
 And loked hem aboute, as they had be wrothe;  
 Gamelyn sprengeth holy-water with an oken spire,  
 That some that stode upright fel in the fire. 501  
 Ther was no lewede man that in the halle stood,  
 That wolde do Gamelyn eny thing but good,  
 But stode besyde, and lect hem bothe werche,  
 For they hadde no rewthe of men of holy cherche;  
 Abbot or priour, monk or chanoun,  
 That Gamelyn overtok, anon they yeeden doun.  
 Ther was non of hem alle that with his staf mette,  
 That he made him overthrowe and quythim his dette.  
 "Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "for seynte Charité,  
 Pay large lyverey, for the love of me, 510  
 And I wil kepe the dore, so ever here I masse!  
 Er they ben assoyled there shan noon passe."  
 "Dowt the nought," seyde Gamelyn, "whil we ben  
 in feere,  
 Kep thou wel the dore, and I wol werche heere;  
 Stere the, good Adam, and lat ther noon fece,  
 And we schul telle largely how many ther be."  
 "Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "do hem but good;  
 They ben men of holy chirche, draw of hem no blood,  
 Save wel the crone, and do hem non harmes,  
 But brek bothe her legges and siththen her armes."  
 Thus Gamelyn and Adam wroughte right fast, 521  
 And pleyden with the monkes, and made hem agast.  
 Thider they come rydyng jolly with swaynes,  
 But homagen they were-lad in cartes and in waynes.  
 Tho they hadden al y-don, than seyde a gray frere,  
 "Allas! sire abbot, what did we now here?  
 That that comen hider, it was a colde reed,  
 Us hadde ben better at home with water and breed."  
 Whil Gamelyn made ordres of monkes and frere,  
 Ever stood his brother, and made foul chere; 530  
 Gameyn up with his staf, that he wel knew,  
 And gert him in the nekke, that he overthrew;  
 A litel above the girdel the rigge-bon to-barst;  
 And sette him in the feteres ther he sat arst.  
 "Sitte ther, brother," seyde Gamelyn,  
 "For to colyn thy blood, as I dide myn."

As swithe as they hadde i-wroken hem on here foot,  
 They askeden watir and wisschen anoon,  
 What some for here love and some for awe,  
 Alle the servantz served hem of the beste lawe. 540  
 The scherreve was thennes but a fyve myle,  
 And al was y-told him in a litel while,  
 How Gamelyn and Adam had doon a sory rees,  
 Bounden and i-wounded men agein the kinges pees:  
 Tho bigan sone strif for to wake,  
 And the scherref aboute east Gamelyn for to take.  
 Now lytheth and lestmeth, so God gif you goode  
 fyn!  
 And yo schul heere good game of yonge Gamelyn.  
 Four and twenty yonge men, that heelden hem ful  
 bolde,  
 Come to the schirref and seyde that they wolde 550  
 Gamelyn and Adam fetten away.  
 The scherref gaf hem leve, soth as I you say;  
 They hyeden faste, wold they nought bylynne.  
 Til they come to the gate, ther Gamelyn was innce.  
 They knocked on the gate, the porter was ny,  
 And loked out at an hol, as man that was sly.  
 The porter hadde byholde hem a litel while,  
 He loved wel Gamelyn, and was adrad of gyle,  
 And asked hem withoute what was here wille. 560  
 For al the grette company thanne spak but oon,  
 "Undo the gate, porter, and lat us in goon."  
 Than seyde the porter, "So brouke I my chyn,  
 Ye schul sey your erand er ye comen in."  
 "Sey to Gamelyn and Adam, if here wille be,  
 We wil speke with hem wordes tuo or thre."  
 "Felaw," seyde the porter, "stond there stille,  
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille"  
 In went the porter to Gamelyn anoon, 569  
 And seyde, "Sir, I warne you her ben come your  
 The scherrees meyné ben atte gate, [foon,  
 For to take you bothe, schul ye nat skapa."  
 "Porter," seyde Gamelyn, "so moot I wel the!  
 I wil allowe the thy wordes whan I my tyme se:  
 Go agayn to the gate, and dwel with hem a while,  
 And thou schalt se right sone, porter, a gyle.  
 Adam," sayde Gamelyn, "looke the to goon;  
 We have foomen atte gate, and frendes never oon;  
 It ben the schirrefes men, that hider ben i-come,  
 They ben swore to-gidere that we schul be nome."  
 "Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "hve the right blyve, 581  
 And if I faille the this day, ever mot I thryve!  
 And we schul so welcome the scherrees men,  
 That some of hem schul make here beddes in the  
 Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out went, [den.  
 And a good cart staf in his hand he hente;  
 Adam hente some another gret staf,  
 For to helpe Gamelyn, and goode strokes gaf.  
 Adam felde tweyne, and Gamelyn felde thre.  
 The other setten feet on erthe, and bygonne fice. 590  
 "What?" seyde Adam, "so ever here I masse!  
 I have a draught of good wyn, drynk er ye passe."  
 "Nay, by God!" sayde they, "thy drynk is not  
 good,  
 It wolde make mannes brayne to lien in his hood."  
 Gamelyn stood stille, and loked him aboute,  
 And seih the scherreve come with a gret route.  
 "Adam," sayde Gamelyn, "my reed is now this,  
 Abide we no lenger, lest we fare amys:  
 I rede that we to wode goon that we be founde,  
 Better is us ther loose than in town y-bounde." 600  
 Adam took by the hond yonge Gamelyn;  
 And everich of hem tuo drank a draught of wyn,  
 And after took her cursers and wenten her way.  
 Tho fond the scherreve nest, but non ay.  
 The scherreve lighte adoun, and went into the halle,  
 And fond the lord y-fetere faste withalle.  
 The scherreve unfetere him sone, and that anoon,  
 And sent after a leche to hele his rigge-boon.  
 Lets we now this fals knight lye in his care,  
 And talke we of Gamelyn, and loke how he fare. 610



Gamelyn into the woode stalkede stille,  
 And Adam the spenser liked ful ylle;  
 Adam swor to Gamelyn, by seynt Richer,  
 "Now I see it is mery to be a spencer,  
 That lever me were keyes for to bere,  
 Than walken in this wilde woode my clothes to tere."  
 "Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "dismaye the right  
 nought;

Many good mannes child in care is i-brought."  
 And as they stode talkyng bothen in feere,  
 Adam herd talkyng of men, and neyh him thought  
 they were.

The Gamelyn under the woode loked aright, 621  
 Sevene score of yonge men he saugh wel adight;  
 Alle satte atte mete in compas aboute.  
 "Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "now have we no doute,  
 After bale cometh boote, thurgh grace of God  
 almight;

Me thynketh of mete and of drynk that I have a  
 Adam lokede tho under woode bowgh, [sight."  
 And whan he seyh mete he was glad ynough;  
 For he hopede to God for to have his deel,  
 And he was sore alonged after a good meel. 630  
 As he seyde that word, the mayster outlawe  
 Saugh Gamelyn and Adam under woode schawe.  
 "Yonge men," seyde the maister, "by the goode  
 roode,

I am war of gestes, God send us non but goode;  
 Yonder ben tuo yonge men, wonder wel adight,  
 And paraventure ther ben mo, who so loked aright.  
 Ariseth up, ye yonge men, and fettoth hem to me;  
 It is good that we witen what men they bee."  
 Up ther sterten zévene fro the dyner,  
 And metten with Gamelyn and Adam spenser. 640  
 Whan they were neyh hem, than seyde that oon,  
 "Yeldeth up, yonge men, your bowes and your  
 floon."

Thanne seyde Gamelyn, that yong was of elde,  
 "Moche sorwe mot he have that to you hem yelde!  
 I curse non other, but right myselve,  
 They ye fette to yow fyve, thanne ye be twelve."  
 Tho they herde by his word that might was in his  
 arm,

There was none of hem alle that wolde do him harm,  
 But sayd unto Gamelyn, myldely and stille, 649  
 "Com afore our maister, and sey to him thy wille."  
 "Yonge men," sayde Gamelyn, "by your lewte,  
 What man is your maister that ye wylth be?"  
 Alle they answerde withoute lesyng,  
 "Oure maister is i-crouned of outlawes kyng."  
 "Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "go we in Cristes name;  
 He may neyther mete nor drynk werne us for  
 schame.

If that he be heende, and come of gentil blood,  
 He wol geve us mete and drynk, and doon us som  
 good." [I gete,

"By seynt Jame!" seyde Adam, "what harm that  
 I wil aunte to the dore that I hadde mete." 660  
 Gamelyn and Adam wente forth in feere,  
 And they grette the maister that they founde there.  
 Than seide the maister, kyng of outlawaes,

"What seeke ye, yonge men, under woode schawes?"  
 Gamelyn answerde the kyng with his croune,  
 "He moste needes walke in woode, that may not  
 walke in towno.

Sire, we walke not heer noon harm for to do,  
 But if we meete with a deer, to scheete therte,  
 As men that ben hungry, and mow no mete fynde,  
 And ben harde bystad under woode lynde." 670  
 Of Gamelynes wordes the maister hadde routhe,  
 And seyde, "Ye schal have ynough, have God my  
 trowth."

He bad hem sitte ther adoun, for to take reste;  
 And bad hem eten and drynke, and that of the beste.  
 As they sete and ecten and dronke wel and fyn,  
 Than seyde that oon to that other, "This is Gamelyn."

Tho was the maister outlawe into counsell nome,  
 And told how it was Gamelyn that thider was i-come.  
 Anon as he herde how it was bifalle,  
 He made him maister under him over hem alle. 680  
 Within the thridde wyke him com tydyng,  
 To the maister outlawe that tho was her kyng,  
 That he schulde come hom, his pees was i-made;  
 And of that goode tydyng he was tho ful glad.  
 Tho seyde he to his yonge men, soth for to telle,  
 "Me ben comen tydynges I may no lenger dwelle."  
 Tho was Gamelyn anon, withoute tarryng,  
 Made maister outlawe, and erouned her kyng.

Tho was Gamelyn crouned kyng of outlawes,  
 And walked a while under woode schawes. 690  
 The fals knight his brother was scherreve and sire,  
 And leet his brother endite for hate and for ire.  
 Tho were his bonde-men sory and nothing glade,  
 Whan Gamelyn her lord wolves-heed was cryed and  
 made;

And sente out of his men wher they might him fynde,  
 For to seke Gamelyn under woode lynde,  
 To telle him tydynges how the wynd was went,  
 And al his good roved, and his men schent. 698  
 Whan they had him founde, on knees they hem sette,  
 And adoun with here hood, and here lord grette:  
 "Sire, wraththe you nought, for the goode roode,  
 For we have brought you tydynges, but they be nat  
 goode.

Now is thy brother scherreve, and hath the baillye,  
 And he hath endited the, and wolves-heed thothe  
 the erie."

"Allas!" seyde Gamelyn, "that ever I was so slak  
 That I ne hadde broke his nekke, tho his rigge brak!  
 Goth, greteth hem wel, myn housbondes and wyf,  
 I wol ben atte nexte schire, have God my lyf."  
 Gamelyn came wel redy to the nexte schire,  
 And ther was his brother bothe lord and sire. 710  
 Gamelyn com boldelych into the moot halle,  
 And put adoun his hood among the lordes alle:  
 "God save you alle, lordynges, that now here be!  
 But broke-hak scherreve, evel mot thou the!  
 Why hast thou do me that schame and vilonye,  
 For to late endite me, and wolves-heed me erye?"

Tho thought the fals knight for to ben awake,  
 And leet take Gamelyn, most he nomore speke;  
 Might ther be nomore grace, but Gamelyn atte last  
 Was cast into prison and fetere ful fast. 720  
 Gamelyn hath a brother that highte sire Ote,  
 As good a knight and heende as mighte gon on footo.  
 Anon ther yede a messenger to that goode knight,  
 And told him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight.  
 Anon as sire Ote herde how Gamelyn was adight,  
 He was wonder sory, was he nothing light,  
 And leet saddle a steede, and the way he nam,  
 And to his twayne bretheren anon right he cam.

"Sire," seyde sire Ote to the scherreve tho, 729  
 "We ben but thre bretheren, schul we never be mo,  
 And thou hast y-prisoned the best of us alle;  
 Swich another brother yvel mot him bifalle!"

694. *wolves-head.* This was the ancient Saxon formula of outlawry, and seems to have been literally equivalent to setting the man's head at the same estimate as a wolf's head. In the laws of Edward the Confessor, it is said of a person who has fled justice, "Si vero postea repertus fuerit, et retineri possit, vivus regi reddatur, vel caput ejus, si se defenderit. Lupinum enim gerit caput, quod agnoscit *wulf-sh-ofod* dicitur. Et hæc est lex communis et generalis de omnibus utlagatis."

698. *his men schent.* When a man's lands were seized by force or unjustly, the peasantry on the estates were exposed to be plundered and ill-treated by the followers of the intruder.

701. *wraththe you nought.* The messengers of ill tidings, however innocent themselves, often experienced all the first anger of the person to whom they carried them, in the ages of feudal power. Hence the bearer of ill news generally began by deprecating the wrath of the person addressed.



"Sire Ote," seide the fals knight, "lat be thi curs; By God, for thy wordes he schal fare the wurs; To the kynges prisoun anon he is y-nome, And ther he schal abyde til the justice come." "Pardé!" seide sir Ote, "better it schal be, I bidde him to maympris, that thou graunt him me, Til the nexte sitting of delyveraunce, And thanne lat Gamelyn stande to his chaunce." 740 "Brother, in swich a forthward take him to the; And by thi fader soule, that the bygat and me, But if he be redy whan the justice sitte, [witte." Thou schalt here the juggement for al thi grete "I graunte wel," seide sir Ote, "that it so be. Let delyver him anon, and tak him to me." Tho was Gamelyn delyvered to sire Ote his brother; And that night dwellect on with that other. On the morn seide Gamelyn to sire Ote the hecnde, "Brother," he seide, "I moot for sothe from the wende, 750 To loke how my yonge men leden here lyf, Whether they lyven in joie or elles in stryf." "Be God!" seide sire Ote, "that is a cold reed, Now I see that al the cark schal fallen on myn heed; For whan the justice sitte, and thou be nought y-founde, I schal anon be take, and in thy stede i-bounde." "Brother," sayde Gamelyn, "dismaye the nought, For by seint Jame in Gales, that many man hath If that God almighty hold my lyf and witt, [sought, I wil be ther redy whan the justice sitt." 760 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn, "God schilde the fro schame; [blame." Com whan thou seest tyme, and bring us out of Litheth, and lestneth, and holdeth you stille, And ye schul here how Gamelyn had al his wille. Gamelyn wente agein under woode rys, And fond there pleying yonge men of prys. Tho was yonge Gamelyn glad and blithe ynough, Whan he fond his mery men under woode bough. Gamelyn and his men talked in feere, 769 And they hadde good game here maister to heere; They tolden him of aventures that they hadde founde, [i-bounde. And Gamelyn hem tolde agein how he was fast Whil Gamelyn was outlawed, had he no cors; There was no man that for him ferde the wors, But abbotes and priours, monk and chanoun; On hem left he nothing whan he might hem nom. Whil Gamelyn and his men made merthes ryve, The fals knight his brother, yvel mot he thryve! For he was fast about bothe day and other, For to hyre the quest, to hangen his brother. 780 Gamelyn stood on a day, and as he biheld The woodes and the schawes in the wilde feeld, He thought on his brother how he him beheet That he wolde be redy whan the justice seet; He thoughte wel that he wolde, withoute delay, Come afore the justice to kepen his day, And seide to his yonge men, "Dighteth you yare, For whan the justice sit, we moote be thare, For I am under borwe til that I come, And my brother for me to prisoun schal be nome." 790 "By seint Jame!" seide his yonge men, "and thou rede therto, Ordeyne how it schal be, and it schal be do." Whil Gamelyn was comyng ther the justice sat, The fals knight his brother, forgat he nat that, To hyre the men on his quest to hangen his brother; Though he hadde nought that oon, he wolde have Tho cam Gamelyn fro under woode rys, [that other. And broughte with him his yonge men of prys. "I se wel," seide Gamelyn, "the justice is sette; Go aforn, Adam, and loke how it spette." 800

775. *abbotes.* Gamelyn's enmity to abbots and monks is entirely in character with the Robin Hood ballads; it was the feeling of the age.

Adam went into the halle, and loked al aboute, He seyh there stonde lordes gret and stoute, And sir Ote his brother fetere wel fast: Tho went Adam out of halle, as he were agast. Adam said to Gamelyn, and to his felaws alle, "Sir Ote stant i-fetere in the moot halle." alle; "Yonge men," seide Gamelyn, "this ye heeren Sire Ote stant i-fetere in the moot halle. If God gif us grace wel for to doo, He schal it abegge that broughte him thertoo." 810 Thanne sayde Adam, that lokkes hadde here, "Cristes curs most he have that him bond so sore! And thou wilt, Gamelyn, do after my red, Ther is noon in the halle schall bere away his heed." "Adam," seide Gamelyn, "we wilm nought don so, We wil seee the guiltyf, and lat the other go. I wil into the halle, and with the justice speke; On hem that ben guiltyf I wil ben awreke. Lat non skape at the dore; take, yonge men, yeme; For I wil be justice this day domes to deme. 820 God spede me this day at my newe werk! Adam, com on with me, for thou schalt be my clerk."

His men answereden him and bad him doon his best, "And if thou to us have neede, thou schalt fynde us prest; We wilm stande with the, whil that we may dure, And but we werke manly, pay us non hure." "Yonge men," seide Gamelyn, "so mot I wel the! As trusty a maister ye schal fynde of me." Right there the justice sat in the halle, In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle. 830

Gamelyn leet unfetere his brother out of beende. Thanne seide sire Ote, his brother that was heende, "Thou haddest almost, Gamelyn, dwellect longe, For the quest is oute on me, that I schulde honge." "Brother," seide Gamelyn, "so God gif me good rest! [quest;

This day they schuln ben hanged that ben on thy And the justice bothe that is jugges man, And the scherreve bothe, thurgh him it bigan." 839 Than seide Gamelyn to the justise, "Now is thy power y-don, thou most nedes arise; Thow hast given domes that ben yvel dight, I wil sitten in thy sete, and dreschen hem aright." The justice sat stille, and roos nought anon; And Gamelyn clevede his choeke boon; Gamelyn took him in his arm, and no more spak, But threw him over the barre, and his arm to-brak. Durste non to Gamelyn seye but good, For-fered of the company that withoute stood. 848 Gamelyn sette him doum in the justices sete, [foet. And sire Ote his brother by him, and Adam at his Whan Gamelyn was i-set in the justices stede, Herknech of a bourde that Gamelyn dede. He leet fetre the justice and his fals brother, And dede hem come to the barre, that oon with that other.

Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doon, had he no rest, Til he had enquired who was on the quest For to deme his brother, sir Ote, for to honge; Er he wiste which they were it thoughte ful longe. But as soon as Gamelyn wiste wher they were, He dede hem everichone fetere in feere, 860 And bringen hem to the barre, and sette hem in rewe; [is a schrew."

"By my faith!" seide the justice, "the scherreve Than seide Gamelyn to the justise, "Thou hast y-geve domes of the wors assise, And the twelve sisours that weren of the quests, They schul ben hanged this day, so have I reste." Thanne seide the scherreve to yonge Gamelyn, "Lord, I crie the mercy, brother art thou myn." "Therefore," seide Gamelyn, "have thou Cristes curs, [wors." For and thou were maister, yit I schulde have

But for to make short tale, and nought to tarie longe,  
 He ordeyned him a queste of his men so stronge; 872  
 The justice and the scherreve bothe honged hys,  
 To weyven with ropes and with the wynd drye;  
 And the twelve sisours, sorwe have that rekke!  
 Alle they were hanged fasto by the nekke.  
 Thus ended the fals knyght with his trecherie,  
 That ever had i-lad his lyf in falsnes and folye;  
 He was hanged by the nek, and nought by the purs,  
 That was the meede that he had for his fadres curs.  
 Sire Ote was eldest, and Gamelyn was ying, 881  
 They wenten with here freendes even to the kyng;  
 They made pees with the kyng of the best assise.  
 The kyng loved wel sir Ote and made him a justise.  
 And after the kyng made Gamelyn, bothe in est  
 Chef justice of al his fre forest; [and west,  
 Alle his wrighte yonge men the kyng forgaht here gilt,  
 And sithen in good office the kyng hem hath i-pilt.  
 Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede, [meede,  
 And wrak him of his enemys, and quyt hem here  
 And sire Ote his brother made him his heir,  
 And sithen wedded Gamelyn a wyf bothe good  
 and feyr; 892  
 They lyveden togidere whil that Crist wolde,  
 And sithen was Gamelyn graven under mooldo.  
 And so schal we alle, may ther no man fle:  
 God bryng us to the joye that ever schal be!

THE MAN OF LAWES PROLOGE.

OWRE Hoste sawh that the bryghte sonne  
 The arke of his artificial day hath i-ronne  
 The fourthe part, of half an hour and more;  
 And though he were nat depe expert in lore,  
 He wist it was the eightetene day  
 Of April, that is messenger to May;  
 And sawe wel that the schade of every tree  
 Was in the lengthe the same quantite  
 That was the body ereete, that caused it;  
 And therefore by the schadwe he took his wit, 4430  
 That Phebus, which that schoon so fair and bright,  
 Degrees was five and forty clombe on hight;  
 And for that day, as in that latitude,  
 It was ten of the klokke, he gan conclude;  
 And sodeynly he plight his hors aboute.  
 "Lordynges," quod he, "I warne you al the ronte,  
 The fourthe party of this day is goon;  
 Now, for the love of God and of saint Jon,  
 Leseth no tyme, as forthe as ye may.  
 Lordynges, the tyme passeth night and day, 4440  
 And stelth fro us, what pryvely slepyng,  
 And what thurgh necligence in oure wakyng,  
 As doth the stream, that torneth never agayn,  
 Descending fro the mounteyn into playn.  
 Wel can Senek and many philosopher  
 Bywaylen time, more than gold in cofre.  
 For losse of catel may recovered be,  
 But losse of tyme schendeth us, quod he.  
 It wil nat come agayn, withoute drede.  
 Nomore than wol Malkyns maydenhede, 4450  
 When sche had lost it in hir wantownesse.  
 Let us nat mowlen thus in ydelnesse.  
 "Sir Man of Lawe," quod he, "so have ye blisse,  
 Telle us a tale anon, as forward ys.  
 Ye be submitted thurgh your fre assent  
 To stonden in this cas at my judgement.

Acquytte yow, and holdeth youre byheste;  
 Than have ye doon your devour atte leste."  
 "Host," quod he, "*depardeux*, I assent;  
 To breke forward is nat myn entent. 4460  
 Byheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn  
 Al my byhest, I can no better sayn.  
 For such lawe as a man geveth another wight,  
 He schuld himselve usen it by right.  
 Thus wol oure text: but natheles certeyn  
 I can right now non other tale seyn,  
 That Chaucer, they he can but lewedly  
 On metres and on rymyng craftely,  
 Hath seyde hem in such Englishsch as he can,  
 Of olde tyme, as knoweth many man. 4470  
 And gif he have nought sayd hem, leeve brother,  
 In c bok, he hath seyde hem in another.  
 For he hath told of lovers up and down,  
 Moo than Ovide made of mencion  
 In his Epistelles, that ben so olde.  
 What schuld I tellen hem, syn they be tolde?  
 In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,  
 And sithen hath he spoke of everychon  
 These noble wyfes, and these lovers eek,  
 Who so wole his large volume seeke, 4480  
 Cleped the seintes legende of Cupide;  
 Ther may he see the large woundes wyde  
 Of Lucesse, and of Babiloun Tysbee;  
 The sorwe of Dido for the fals Enee;  
 The tree of Philles for hir Demephon;  
 The pleynt of Dyane and of Ermyon,  
 Of Adrian, and of Ysyphilee;  
 The barreyn yle stondyng in the see;  
 The dreynt Leandere for his fayre Erro;  
 The teeres of Eleyan, and eek the woo 4490  
 Of Bryxseyde, and of Ledomia;  
 The cruelte of the queen Medea,  
 The litel children hangyng by the hals,  
 For thilke Jason, that was of love so fals.  
 O Ypermystre, Penollope, and Alceste,  
 Your wyfhood he comendeth with the beste.  
 But certeynly no worde writeth he  
 Of thilke wikked ensample of Canace,  
 That loved hir owen brother synfully;  
 On whiche cored stories I seye fy; 4500  
 Or elles of Tyro Appoloneus,  
 How that the cursed kyng Anteocheus  
 Byrest his daughter of hir maydenhede,  
 That is so horrible a tale for to reede,  
 Whan he hir threw upon the pament.  
 And therefore he of ful avysement  
 Wolde never wryte in non of his sermons  
 Of such unkynde abhominacions;  
 Ne I wol non reherse, if that I may.  
 But of my tale how schal I do this day? 4510  
 Me were loth to be lykned douteles  
 To Muses, that men clepen Pycrides,

4477. *Ceys and Alcion*. This story forms the introduction to the *Book of the Duchess*.

4481. *Legende of Cupide*. This is the poem more frequently entitled the *Legende of good women*.

4486. *Dyane*. The Ms. Lansd. reads *Dianyre*, which Tyrwhitt adopts. The readings are very various, and not easy to be reconciled.

4498. *Canace*. This and the story of Apollonius of Tyre are told in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, whence it has been supposed that Chaucer intended here to blame that writer—a notion for which there appears to be no good foundation. The story of Apollonius was very popular in the middle ages, and was published in a variety of forms.

4512. *Pycrides*. "He rather means, I think, the daughters of Pierus, who contended with the Muses, and were changed into pies. Ovid. *Metam.* 1. v."—Tyrwhitt.

4425. *eightetene*. This is the reading in which the mss. seem mostly to agree. The Ms. Harl. reads *threhtenthe*. Tyrwhitt has *eight* and *twenty*.

4440. *passeth*. Most of the mss. read *wasteth*.

4445. *Malkyns maydenhede*. This appears to have been a proverbial saying, and occurs in *Piers Ploughman*.



(*Methamorphoseos* wot what I mene);  
 But natheles I recche nat a bene,  
 They I come after him with hawe-bake,  
 I speke in prose, and let him rymes make."  
 And with that word, he with a sobre cheere  
 Bygan his tale, as ye schal after heere.

## THE MAN OF LAWES TALE.

O HATEFUL harm, condicoun of povert, 4519  
 With thurst, with cold, with honger so confoundyd,  
 To asken help it schameth in thin hert,  
 If thou non aske, with neede so art thou woundyd,  
 That verray neede unwrappeth al thy wounde  
 Maugré thyn heed thou most for indigence [hyd;  
 Or stole, or begge, or borwe thy dispence.

Thow blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,  
 He mysdeparteth riches temporal;  
 And thyn neyghbour thou wytes synfully;  
 And seyst thou hast to lital, and he hath al.  
 Parfay, seystow, som tyme he rekne schal, 4530  
 Whan that his tayl schal brennen in the gleede,  
 For he nought helpeth the needful in his neede.

Herkneth what is the sentens of the wyse,  
 Bet is to dye than have indigence;  
 Thy selve neyghbour wol the despyse,  
 If thou be porc, farwel thy reverence.  
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence,  
 Alle the dayes of pore men be wikke;  
 Be war therfore or thou come to that prikke.

If thou be pore, thy brother hateth the, 4540  
 And alle thy frendes fleeth fro the, alas!  
 O riche marchaundz, ful of wele be ye,  
 O noble prudent folk as in this cas,  
 Youre bagges beth nat fuld with ambes aas,  
 But with sys synk, that renneth on your chaunce;  
 At Crystemasse wel mery may ye daunce.

Ye seeke land and see for youre wynnynges,  
 As wyse folk as ye knowe alle thastates  
 Of regnes, ye be fadres of tydynges,  
 Of tales, bothe of pees and of debates. 4550  
 I were right now of tales desolat,  
 Nere that a marchaunt, gon siththen many a  
 yere,

Me taught a tale, which ye schal after heere.

In Surrie dwelled whilom a companye  
 Of chapmen riche, and therto sad and trewe,  
 That wyde where sent her spycerye,  
 Clothes of gold, and satyn riche of hewe.  
 Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe,

*The Man of Lawes Tale.* This tale was probably taken direct from a French romance. All the incidents in it are of frequent occurrence in mediæval stories. The whole story is found in Gower; and a similar story forms the plot of the romance of Emare (printed in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*). The treachery of King Alla's mother enters into the French romance of the *Chevalier au signe*, and into the still more ancient Anglo-Saxon romance of King Offa, preserved in a Latin form by Matthew Paris. It is also found in the Italian collection, said to have been composed in 1378, under the title of *Il Peccone di ser Giovanni Fiorentino* (an imitation of the *Decameron*), *gior. x. No. 1.* The treason of the knight who murders Hermengilde is an incident in the French *Roman de la Violette*; and in the English metrical romance of *Le bone Florence of Rome* (printed in Ritson's collection); and is found in the English *Gesta Romanorum*, c. 69 (ed. Madden), joined in the latter place with Constance's adventure with the steward. It is also found in Vincent of Beauvais, and other writers. Gower's version appears to be taken from the French chronicle of Nicolas Trivet, Ms. Arundel, No. 56, fol. 45 vo.

4534. *Bet is to dye.* This saying of Solomon is quoted in the *Roman de la Rose*, as cited by Tyrwhitt:

Mieux vault mourir que pauvres estres.

That every wight had deynté to chaffare  
 With hem, and eek to selle hem of here ware.

Now fel it, that the maystres of that sort 4561  
 Han schapen hem to Rome for to wende,  
 Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,  
 Non other message nolde they thider sende,  
 But came hemself to Rome, this is the ende;  
 And in such place as thought hem avauantage  
 For here entent, they tooke her herburgage.

Sojourned have these marchauntz in the toun  
 A certeyn tyme, as fel to here plesaunce.  
 But so bifell, that the excellent renoun 4570  
 Of temperoures daughter dame Coustonce  
 Reported was, with every circumstance,  
 Unto these Surrienz marchauntz, in such wyse  
 Fro day to day, as I schal you devyse.

This was the comyn voys of every man:  
 "Oure emperour of Rome, God him see!  
 A daughter hath, that, sith the world bygan,  
 To rekne as wel hir goodnes as hir bewte,  
 Nas never such another as was sche.  
 I prey to God hir save and sustene, 4580  
 And wolde sche were of al Europe the queene.

"In hire is hye bewté, withoute pryde;  
 Yowthe, withoute grethed or flye;  
 To alle hire werkes vertu is hire gyde;  
 Humblesse hath slayne in hir tyrannye;  
 Sche is myroure of alle curtesye,  
 Hir herte is verrey chambre of holynesse,  
 Hir hond mynistré of fredom and almesse."

And al this voys is soth, as God is trewe. 4589  
 But now to purpos let us turne agein: [newe,  
 These marchauntz have don fraught here schippes  
 And whan they have this blisful mayde seyn,  
 Home to Surrey be they went agein,  
 And doon here needes, as they have don yore,  
 And lyven in wele, I can you say no more.

Now fel it, that these marchauntz stooden in  
 Of him that was the sowdan of Surrye. [grace  
 For whan they come for eny strange place,  
 He wolde of his benigne curtesye  
 Make hem good chere, and busily aspye 4600  
 Tydynges of sondry regnes, for to lere  
 The wordes that they mighte seen and heere.

Among other things specially  
 These marchauntz him told of dame Constance  
 So gret noblesse, in earnest so ryally,  
 That this sowdan hath caught so gret plesaunce  
 To have hir figure in his remembrance,  
 That al his lust, and al his besy cure,  
 Was for to love hir, whiles his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large booke, 4610  
 Which that is cleped the heven, i-write was  
 With sterres, whan that he his burthe took  
 That he for love schulde have his deth, alas!  
 For in the sterres, clerere then is glas,

4614. *in the sterres.* See before, l. 2039. Chaucer seems to have had in his eye in the following stanza a passage of the *Megaecismus* of Bernardus Silvestris, a rather popular Latin poet of the twelfth century. Some of these lines are quoted in the margin of Ms. Lansd.

Præcæp in stellis series, quam longior ætas  
 Explicet et spatiis temporis ordo suis,  
 Sceptra Phoronei, fratrum discordia Thebis,  
 Flamma Phaethontis, Deucalionis aqua.  
 In stellis Codri paupertas, copia Croesi,  
 Incestus Paridis, Hippolytique pudor.  
 In stellis Priami species, audacia Turni,  
 Sensus Ulyxeus, Herculesque vigor.  
 In stellis pugil est Pollux, et navita Typhis,  
 Et Cicero rhetor, et geometra Thales.  
 In stellis lepidum dicitur Maro, Milo figurat,



Is wryten, God woot, who so cowthe it rede,  
The deth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres many a wynter therbyfore,  
Was write the deth of Ector and Achilles,  
Of Pompé, Julius, er they were i-bore;      4620  
The stryf of Thebes, and of Ereules,  
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates  
The deth; but mennes wittes ben so dulle,  
That no wight can wel rede it al the fulle.

This souldan for his pryvé counseil sent,  
And shortly of this mater for to pace,  
He hath to hem declared his entent,  
And seyde hem certeyn, but he might have grace  
To have Constance withinne a litel space,  
He nas but deed, and charged hem in hyghe  
To schapen for his lyf som remedye.      4630

Dyverse men divers thinges seyde,  
The argumentes casten up and down;  
Many a subtyl resoun forþ they leyden;  
They spekyn of magike, and of abusoun;  
But fynally, as in conclusioun,  
They can nought seen in that non avauntage,  
Ne in non other way, save in mariage.

Than sawgh they therin such difficulté  
By wey of resoun, to speke it al playn,      4640  
Bycause that ther was such dyversité  
Bitwen here bothe lawes, as they sayn,  
They trowe that "no cristen prince wold fayn  
Wedden his child under our lawe swete,  
That us was taught by Mahoun oure prophete."

And he answerde: "Rather than I lese  
Constance, I wol be cristen douteles;  
I moot be heres, I may non other cheese;  
I pray you haldeth your arguments in pees,  
Saveth my lyf, and beth nat recheles.  
Goth, geteth hire that hath my lyf in cure,      4650  
For in this wo I may no lenger dure."

What needeth gretter dilatacioun?  
I say, by tretys and ambassatrye,  
And by the popes mediacioun,  
And al the ehirche, and al the chyvalrye,  
That in destrucioun of mawmetrye,  
And in encesse of Cristes lawe deere,  
They ben acordid, as ye schal after heere,

How that the souldan and his baronage,  
And alle his lieges schuld i-crysted be,      4660  
And he schal have Constance in mariage,  
And certeyn gold, I not what quantité,  
And therefore fouden they suffisant seurte.  
This same acord was sworn on every syde;  
Now, fair Constance, almighty God the guyde!

Now wolde som men wayten, as I gesse,  
That I schulde tellen al the purvyauce,  
That themperour of his gret noblesse  
Hath schapen for his daughter dame Constaunce.  
Wel may men knowe that so gret ordynaunce  
May no man telle in so litel a clause,      4671  
As was arrayed for so high a cause.

Bisschops ben schapen with hir for to wende,  
Lordes, ladyes, and knightes of renoun,  
And other folk ynowe, this is the ende.  
And notefied is thurghout the toun,  
That every wight with gret devoecioun  
Schalde preye Crist, that he this mariage  
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is come of hire departyng,      4680

Fulgurat in Latia nobilitate Nero.  
Astra notat Persis. Ægyptus parturit artes,  
Græcia docta legit, prælia Roma gerit.

(I say the woful day that than is come)  
That ther may be no lenger taryyng,  
But forthe-ward they dresse hem alle and so ne,  
Constance, that with sorwe is overeome,  
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende,  
For wel sche saugh ther nas non other ende.

Allas! what wonder is it though sche wepte,  
That schal be sent to straunge nacioun,  
Fro freendes, that so tenderly hir kepte,  
And to be bounde undir subjeecioun      4690  
Of oon sche knew nat his condicioun?  
Honsbondes ben al goode, and han be yore;  
That knowen wyfes, I dar say no more.

"Fader," sche seid, "thy wrecched child Con-  
Thy yonge daughter fostred up so softe, [staunce,  
And ye, my mooder, my soverayn plesaunce  
Over al thing, outaken Crist on lofte,  
Constaunce your child hir recomaundeth ofte  
Unto your grace; for I schal into Surrye,  
Ne schal I never see you more with ye.      4700

"Allas! unto the Barbre nacioun  
I most anon, sethens it is your wille:  
But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,  
So geve me grace his hestes to fulfille,  
I, wrecched womman, no fors they I spille!  
Wommen ben born to thraldam and penaunce,  
And to ben under mannes governaunce."

I trowe at Troye whan Pirrus brak the wal,  
Or Yleon that brend Thebes the citee,  
Ne at Rome for the harme thurgh Hanibal,      4710  
That Romayns have venquysshed tymes thre,  
Nas herd such tender wepyng for pité,  
As in the chamber was for hir partyng;  
But thour sche moot, whether sche weep or syng.

O firste mevyng cruel firmament,  
With thi diurnal swough that crowdest ay,  
And hurlest al fro est to occident,  
That naturally wold hold another way;  
Thyn crowdyng sette the heven in such array  
At the bygynnyng of this fiers viage,      4720  
That cruel Martz hath slayn this marriage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,  
Of which the lordes helpes falle, alas!  
Out of his angle into the derkest hous.  
O Mariz Attezere, as in this caas;  
O feble moone, unhappy been thi paas,  
Thou knetest the ther thou art nat receyved,  
Ther thou were wel fro thennes artow weyved.

Inprudent emperour of Rome, alas!  
Was ther no philosophor in al thy toun?      4730  
Is no tyme bet than other in such caas?  
Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,

4715. *firste mevyng.* The following note is written in the margin of the Lansd. Ms. "Unde Tholomeus, libro primo, capitulo 8: Primi motus cæli duo sunt, quorum unus est qui movet totum semper ab oriente in occidentem uno modo super orbem, etc. Alter vero motus est qui movet orbem stellarum currentium contra motum primum, viz. ab occidente in orientem super alios duos polos, etc."

4725. *O Mariz Attezere.* The readings of the mss. vary much. Tyrwhitt reads *O Mars, O Atyzar*. I have followed the Harl. Ms. It would require a deeper knowledge of mediæval astrology than I possess, to correct it with any certainty, or to determine if it need correction.

4732. *eleccioun.* The marginal note in the Lansd. Ms. quoted above, adds, "Omnes enim sunt concordati quod electiones sint debiles, nisi in divitiibus; habent enim isti, licet debilitentur eorum electiones, radicum, i. e. natiuitates eorum que confortant omnem planetam debilem in itinere: hæc philosophus." Tyrwhitt gives this from another ms. It is taken from the *Liber electionum* of Zahel, of which there is a copy in Ms. Harl. No. 80. The above passage occurs at fol. 68 v°.

Namly to folk of heigh condicioun,  
Nought wnan a roote is of a birthe i-knowe?  
Allas! we ben to lewed, and eek to slowe.

To schippe is brought this woful faire mayde  
Solempnely, with every circumstance.  
"Now Jhesu Crist so be with you," sche sayde.  
Ther nys nomor, but farwel, fair Custance;  
Sche peyneth hire to make good contenance.  
And forth I lete hire sayle in this manere, 4741  
And torne I wol agein to my matiere.

The moder of the sowdan, ful of vices,  
Aspyed hath hir sones playn entente,  
How he wol lete his olde sacrifices;  
And right anon sche for hir counseil sent,  
And they ben come, to knowe what sche ment;  
And when assembled was this folk in fere,  
Sche sette hir doun, and sayd as ye schal heree.

"Lordes," quod sche, "ye knowen everichon,  
How that my sone in poynt is for to lete 4751  
The holy lawes of our Alkaroun,  
Geven by Goddes messangere Makamete;  
But oon avow to grete God I hete,  
The lyf schuld rather out of my body stert,  
Or Makametes law go out of myn hert.

"What schal us tyden of this newe lawe  
But thraldam to oure body and penaunce,  
And afterward in helle to be drawe,  
For we reneyed Mahound oure creaunce? 4760  
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,  
As I schal say, assentyng to my lore?  
And I schal make us sauf for evermore."

They sworn and assenten every man  
To lyf with hir and dye, and by hir stonde;  
And everich in the beste wise he can  
To strengthen hir schal al his frendes fonde.  
And sche hath emperise take on honde.  
Which ye schul here that I schal devyse,  
And to hem alle sche spak in this wyse: 4770  
"We schul first feyne oure cristendom to take;  
Cold watir schal nat greve us but a lite;  
And I schal such a fest and revel make,  
That, as I trow, I schal the sowdan quyte.  
For though his wyf be cristned never so white,  
Sche schal have need to waissche away the rede,  
They sche a font of watir with hir lede."

O sowdones, root of iniquité,  
Virago thou Semyram the secoude;  
O serpent under feminité, 4780  
Lyk to the serpent deep in helle i-bounde;  
O feyned womman, alle that may confoude  
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malice,  
Is bred in the, as nest of every vice.

O Satan envious, syn thilke day  
That thou were chased for oure heritage,  
Wel knewest thou to wommen the olde way.  
Thou madest Eve to bryng us in servage,  
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.  
Thyn instrument so (weylaway the while!) 4790  
Makestow of wommen whan thou wolt bygyle.

This sowdones, whom I thus blame and wary,  
Let prively hir counseil gon his way;  
What schuld I in this tale lenger tary?  
Sche rideth to the soudan on a day,  
And seyde him, that sche wold reney hir lay,  
And cristendam of prestes handes fonge,  
Repentyng hir sche hethen was so longe;

4752. *Alkaroun.* The Koran was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, and it and the history of its author Mohammed were subjects of interest in the West.

Bysechyng him to doon hir that honour,  
That sche most have the cristen men to feste;  
"To plesen hem I wil do my labour." 4801  
The sowdan seith, "I wol do at your heste,"  
And knelyng, thanketh hir of that requeste;  
So glad he was, he nyst nat what to seye.  
Sche kyst hir sone, and hom sche goth hir weye.

Arryved ben the cristen folk to londe  
In Surry, with a gret solempn route,  
And hastily this sowdan sent his sonde,  
First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,  
And seyde, his wyf was comen out of doute, 4811  
And preyeth hir for to ride agein the queene,  
The honour of his regne to susteene.

Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray  
Of Surriens and Romayns mette in feere.  
The moder of the sowdan riche and gay  
Receyved hir with al so glad a cheere,  
As eny mooder might hir daughter deere;  
And to the nexte citee ther bysyde  
A softe paas solempnely thay ryde.

Nought trow I the triumpe of Julius, 4820  
Of which that Lukan maketh moche bost,  
Was ryaller, ne more curious,  
Than was thassemlé of this blisful oost.  
But this scorioun, this wikked goost,  
The sowdones, for al hir flatteryng,  
Cast under this ful mortally to styng.

The sowdan comth himself sone after this  
So really, that wonder is to telle;  
And welcometh hir with al joy and blys. 4829  
And thus with mirth and joy I let hem dwelle.  
The fruyt of this matier is that I telle.  
Whan tyme com, men thought it for the best  
That revel stynt, and men goon to her rest.

The tyme com, the olde sowdonesse  
Ordeyned hath this fest of which I told;  
And to the feste cristen folk hem dresse  
In general, bothe yong and old.  
Ther men may fest and realté byholde,  
And deyntes mo than I can of devyse, 4839  
But al to deere they bought it ar they ryse.

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour  
To worldly blis, spreynid is with bitterness  
The ende of oure joye, of oure worldly labour;  
Wo occupieth the fyn of oure gladnesse.  
Herken this counseil for thyn sikernesse;  
Upon thyn glade dayes have in thi mynde  
The unwar woo that cometh ay bihynde.

For shortly for to tellen at o word,  
The sowdan and the cristen everichone  
Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord, 4850  
But it were dame Constance allone.  
This olde sowdones, this cursed crone,  
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,  
For sche herself wold al the contré lede.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted,  
That of the counseil of the sowdon woot,  
That he nas al to-hewe or he asterted;  
And Constance have they take anon foot-hoot,  
And in a schippe, stereles, God it woot,

4847. *unwar woo.* This is a good example of the manner in which corruptions of the text gain ground. Some one had apparently given *or harm*, as a marginal gloss to *woo*; another scribe copied this into the text, and some mss. (as the Lansd. Ms. and one of the Cambridge Mss.) have *unwar wo or harme*. This was again altered to make apparent sense, and Tyrwhitt has the line,

*The unwar wo of harm, that cometh behinde.*



They have hir set, and bad hir lerne to sayle 4860  
Out of Surry agein-ward to Ytaile.

A certein tresour that sche thider ladde,  
And, soth to sayn, vitaille gret plenté,  
They have hir geven, and clothes eek sche hadde,  
And forth sche sayleth in the salte see.

O my Constaunce, ful of benignité,  
O emperoures yonge daughter deere,  
He that is lord of fortun be thi steere!

Sche blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys  
Unto the croys of Crist than seyde sche: 4870

"O cler, O welful auter, holy croys,  
Red of the lambes blood, ful of pité,  
That wiss the world fro old iniquité,  
Me fro the feend and fro his clowes keepe,  
That day that I schal drenchen in the deepe.

"Victorious tre, proteccioun of trewe,  
That only were worthy for to bere  
The kyng of heven, with his woundes newe,  
The white lamb, that hurt was with a spere;  
Flemer of feendes, out of him and here 4880

On which thy lymes feithfully extenden,  
Me kepe, and gif me might my lyf to menden."

Yeres and dayes flette this creature  
Thurghout the see of Grece, into the strayte  
Of Marrok, as it was hir adventure.

O many a sory mele may sche bayte,  
After hir deth ful ofte may sche wayte,  
Or that the wilde wawe wol hir dryve  
Unto the place ther as sche schal arryve.

Men mighten aske, why sche was nought slayn?  
Ek at the fest who might hir body save? 4891

And I answer to that demaunde agayn,  
Who saved Daniel in thorrrible cave,  
That every wight, sauf he, mayster or knave,  
Was with the lioun frete, or he asterte?  
No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.

God lust to schewe his wonderful miracle  
In hir, for we schuld seen his mighty werkes;  
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,  
By certeyn menes ofte, as known clerkes, 4900  
Doth thing for certeyn ende, that ful derk is  
To mannes witt, that for our ignoraunce  
Ne can nought knowe his prudent purryaunce.

Now sith sche was nat at the fest i-slave,  
Who kepte hir fro drenching in the see?  
Who kepte Jonas in the fisches mawe,  
Til he was spouted up at Ninive?  
Wel may men knowe, it was no wight but he  
That kepte the pepul Ebrayk fro hir drenchyng,  
With drye feet thurghout the see passyng. 4910

Who badde foure spiritz of tempest,  
That power han to noyen land and see,  
Bothe north and south, and also west and est,  
Anoyen neyther londe, see, ne tree?  
Sothly the comaunder of that was he  
That for the tempest ay this womman kepte,  
As wel when sche awok as when sche slepte.

Wher might this womman mete and drinke have?  
Thre yer and more, how lasteth hir vitaille?  
Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the cave, 4920  
Or in desert? no wight but Crist *saunz faile*.  
Fyf thousand folk it was a gret mervaille  
With loves fyf and fisches tuo to feede;  
God sent his foysoun at her grete neede.

Sche dryveth forth into oure ocean  
Thurghout oure wilde see, til atte last

4927. *that nempnen I ne can.* The ms. reads *that men nempnen can.*

Under an holte, that nempnen I ne can,  
Fer in Northumberland, the wawe hir cast,  
And in the sand the schip styked so fast,  
That thennes wold it nought in al a tyde; 4930  
The wille of Crist was that sche schold abyde.

The constabil of the castel down is fare  
To se this wrak, and al the schip he sought,  
And fond this verry womman ful of care;  
He fand also the tresour that sche brought;  
In hir langage mercy sche bisought,  
The lif out of hir body for to twyne,  
Hir to delyver of woo that sche was inne.

A maner Latyn corrupt was hir speche,  
But algates therby sche was understonde. 4940  
The constabil, whan him lust no lenger seche,  
This woful womman broughte he to londe.

Sche kneleth down, and thanketh Goddes sonde;  
But what sche was, sche wolde no man seye  
For foul ne faire, though sche scholde deye.  
Sche was, sche seyde, so mased in the see,  
That sche forgat hir mynde, by hire trowthe.

The constable had of hir so gret pitee,  
And eek his wyf, they wepeden for routhe;  
Sche was so diligent withouten slouth 4950  
To serve and plesse ever in that place,  
That alle hir loven that loken on hir face.

The constable and dame Hermegyld his wyf,  
To telle you playne, payenes bothe were;  
But Hermegyld loved Constance as hir lyf;  
And Constance hath so long herberwed there  
In orisoun, with many a bitter teere,  
Til Jhesu hath converted thurgh his grace  
Dame Hermegyld, the constables of the place.

In al the lond no cristen men durst route; 4960  
Al cristen men ben fled from that contré  
Thurgh payens, that conquered al aboute  
The places of the north by land and see.  
To Wales fled the cristianité  
Of olde Britouns, dwellyng in this yle;  
Ther was hir refut for the mene while.

But yit nere cristen Britouns so exiled,  
That ther nere some in here pryvité  
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bygiled;  
And neigh the castel such ther dwellid thre. 4970  
That oon of hem was blynd, and might nat see,  
But if it were with eyen of his mynde,  
With which men seen after that they ben blynde.

Bright was the sonne, as in someres day,  
For which the constable and his wif also  
And Constaunce had take the righte way  
Toward the see, a forlong wey or two,  
To pleyen, and to romen to and fro;  
And in that walk this blynde man they mette.  
Croked and olde, with eyen fast y-schete. 4980

"In name of Crist," cryed this old Britoun,  
"Dame Hermegyld, gif me my sight ageyn!"  
This lady wax affrayed of the soun,  
Lest that hir houseband, schortly to sayn,  
Wold hir for Jhesu Cristes love have slayn,  
Til Constaunce made hir bold, and bad hir werche  
The wil of Crist, as daughter of holy chiroche.

The constable wax abaisshed of that sight,

4939. *a maner Latyn corrupt.* In the romance of Fulke fitz Wariae (p. 91), where a pretended merchant from the East comes to London, we are told,—"Et quanqu'il parla fust Latyn corrupt, mès le meir le enteny bien."  
4954. Tyrwhitt gives (from other mss.) instead of this line,

*Were payenes, and that contree every wher.*  
The Harl. Ms. has in *peynes* for *payenes*.



And sayde, "What amounteth al this fare?"  
 Constance answered, "Sir, it is Cristes might,  
 That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare." 4991  
 And so ferforth sche gan hir lay declare,  
 That sche the constable, er that it was eve  
 Converted, and on Crist made him bileve.

This constable was not lord of the place  
 Of which I speke, ther he Constance fond,  
 But kept it strongly many a wynter space  
 Under Alla, kyng of Northumberlond,  
 That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond,  
 Agein the Scottes, as men may wel heere. 5000  
 But tourne agein I wil to my mateere.

Satan, that ever us wayteth to begile,  
 Sawe of Constance al hir peccocioun,  
 And cast anon how he might quyrt hir while;  
 And made a yong knight, that dwelt in the toun,  
 Love hir so hoot of foul affecioun,  
 That verraily him thought he schulde spille,  
 But he of hire ones had his wille.

He wovith hir, but it avayleth nought,  
 Sche wolde do no synne by no weye; 5010  
 And for despyt, he compassed in his thought  
 To maken hir a schamful deth to deye.  
 He wayteth whan the constable was aweye,  
 And pryvyly upon a nyght he crepte  
 In Hermyngyldes chambre whil sche slepte.

Wery, for-waked in here orisoun,  
 Slepeþ Constance, and Hermyngyld also.  
 This knight, thurgh Satanas temptacioun,  
 Al softly is to the bed y-go,  
 And kutte the throte of Hermegild a-two, 5020  
 And leyd the bloody knyf by dame Constance,  
 And went his way, ther God geve him meschaunce.

Some after comth this constable hom agayn,  
 And eek Alla, that kyng was of that lond,  
 And say his wyf dispitously i-slayn,  
 For which ful oft he wept and wrong his hond;  
 And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond  
 By dame Custaunce: allas! what might she say?  
 For verray woo hir witt was al away.

To king Alla was told al this meschaunce, 5030  
 And eek the tyme, and wher, and in what wyse  
 That in a schip was founden this Constance,  
 As here bifore ye have herd me devyse.  
 The kinges hert of pité gan agrise,  
 Whan he saugh so benigne a creature  
 Falle in disese and in mysaventure.

For as the lomb toward his deth is brought,  
 So stant this innocent bifore the kyng.  
 This false knight, that hath this tresoun wrought,  
 Bereth hir an hand that sche hath don this thing;  
 But nevertheles ther was gret murmuring 5041  
 Among the peopple, and seyn they can not gesse  
 That sche had doon so gret a wikkednesse.

For they han seyen hir so vertuous,  
 And lovyng Hermegylt right as hir lyf;  
 Of this bar witnessse everich in that hous,  
 Save he that Hermegylt slowgh with his knyf.  
 This gentil kyng hath caught a gret motyf  
 Of his witnessse, and thought he wold enquire  
 Depper in this cas, a trouthe to lere. 5050

5015. *Hermyngyldes*. The orthography of the name varies in different mss. Ms. Lansd. has *Ermenilda*; the two Cambridge Mss. used by me have, one, *Hermenchildes*, the other *Hermyngilde*. It is the Saxon *Eormengild*, which was the name of one of the daughters of Earconbehrt, king of Kent. See *Florence of Worcester*. Perhaps this romance existed in a Teutonic or even Anglo-Saxon original.

Allas! Constance, thou ne has no champioun,  
 Ne fighte canstow nat, so welaway!  
 But he that for oure redemeþioun  
 Bonde Sathan, and yit lith ther he lay,  
 So be thy stronge champioun this day;  
 For but Crist upon the miracle kythe,  
 Withouten gilt thou schalt be slayn as swithe.

Sche set hir down on knees, and than sche sayde,  
 "Immortal God, that savest Susanne  
 Fro false blame; and thou, mercyful mayde,  
 Mary I mene, daughter of seint Anne, 5061  
 Bifore whos child aungeles syng Osanne;  
 If I be gulties of this felonye,  
 My socour be, for elles schal I dye!"

Have ye not seye som tyme a pale face,  
 Among a prees, of him that hath be lad  
 Toward his deth, wher him geyneth no grace,  
 And such a colour in his face hath had,  
 Men mighte knowe his face was so bystad,  
 Among alle the faces in that route; 5070  
 So stant Constance, and loketh hire aboute.

O queenes lyvving in prosperité,  
 Duchesses, and ye ladies everychon,  
 Haveth som reuthe on hir adversité;  
 An emperoures daughter stond allon;  
 Sche nath no wight to whom to make hir moon;  
 O blod ryal, that stondest in this drede,  
 Ferre be thy frendes at thy grete neede!

This Alla kyng hath such compassioun,  
 As gentil hert is fulfid of pité, 5080  
 That from his eyen ran the water down.  
 "Now hastily do fech a book," quod he;  
 "And if this knight wil swere how that sche  
 This womman slowgh, yet wol we us avyse,  
 Whom that we wille schal be oure justise."

A Britoun book, i-write with Evaungiles,  
 Was fette, and on this book he swor anon  
 Sche gultif was; and in the mene whiles  
 An hond him smot upon the nekke boon,  
 That don he fel anon right as a stoon; 5090  
 And bothe his yen brast out of his face,  
 In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd, in general audience,  
 And seid, "Thou hast disclaundred gulteles  
 The daughter of holy chirche in hire presence;  
 Thus hastow doon, and yit I holde my pees."  
 Of this mervaile agast was al the prees,  
 As mased folk they stouden everychon  
 For drede of wreche, save Custaunce allon.

Gret was the drede and eek the repentance  
 Of hem that hadden wrong suspeioun 5101  
 Upon the sely innocent Custaunce;  
 And for this miracle, in conclusioun,  
 And by Custaunces mediacioun,  
 The kyng, and many other in the place,  
 Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe  
 By judgement of Alla hastily;  
 And yit Custaunce hath of his deth gret route.  
 And after this Jhesus of his mercy 5110  
 Made Alla wedde ful solempnely  
 This holy mayde, that is bright and schene,  
 And thus hath Crist i-maad Constance a queene.

But who was woful, if I schal not lye,  
 Of this wedding but Domegild and no mo.  
 The kynges mooder, ful of tyrannye?

5067. *him gezmeth*. Some of the mss. have *him geteth*. *Him* in cases like this answers to the Latin dative *sibi*: he gaineth for himself.

Hir thought hir cursed herte brast a-two;  
Sche wolde nat hir sone had i-do so;  
Hir thought despyte, that he schulde take  
So straunge a creature unto his make. 5120

Me lust not of the caf ne of the stree  
Make so long a tale, as of the corn.

What schuld I telle of the realté  
Of this marriage, or which cours goth biforn,  
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?  
The fruyt of every tale is for to seye; [pleye.

They ete and drynk, and daunce and syng and  
They gon to bed, as it was skile and right;  
For though that wyfes ben ful holy thinges,  
They moste take in pacience a-night 5130  
Such maner necessaries as ben plesynges  
To folk that han i-wodded hem with rynges,  
And halvendel her holynesse ley aside  
As for the tyme, it may non other betyde.

On hire he gat a knave child anon,  
And to a bisschope, and to his constable eeke,  
He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is goon  
To Scotlond-ward, his foomen for to seeke.  
Now faire Custauce, that is so humble and meeke,  
So long is goon with childe til that stille 5140  
Sche held hir chambre, abiding Goddes wille.

The tyme is come, a knave child sche bere;  
Mauricius atte funtstone men him calle.  
This constabil doth come forth a messenger,  
And wrot to his kyng that cleped was Alle,  
How that this blisful tydyng is bifalle,  
And other thinges spedful for to seye.  
He taketh the lettre, and forth he goth his weye.

This messenger, to doon his avauntage,  
Unto the kynges moder he goth ful swithe, 5150  
And salueth hire fair in his langage.  
"Madame," quod he, "ye may be glad and blithe,  
And thanke God an hundred thousand sithes;  
My lady queen hath child, withouten doute  
To joye and blis of al the reame aboute.

"Lo heer the lettres sealed of this thing.  
That I mot bere with al the hast I may;  
If ye wole ought unto youre sone the kyng,  
I am your servaunt bothe night and day." 5159  
Doungyld answerde, "As now this tyme, nay;  
But here al nyght I wol thou take thy rest,  
To morwen I wil say the what me lest."

This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,  
And stolen were his lettres pryvely  
Out of his box, whil he sleep as a swyn;  
And countrefet they were subtilly;  
Another sche him wroot ful synfully,  
Unto the kyng direct of this matiere  
Fro his constable, as ye schul after heere.

The lettre spak, the queen delyvered was 5170  
Of so orryble and feendly creature,  
That in the castel noon so hardy was  
That eny while dorste therein endure;  
The mooder was an elf by aventure  
Bycome by charmes or by sorcerie,  
And every man hatith hir compaignie.

Wo was this kyng whan he this lettre had sein,  
But to no wight he told his sorwes sore,  
But of his owen hand he wrot agayn:  
"Welcome the sond of Crist for evermore 5180  
To me, that am now lerned in this lore;  
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy pleaseance!  
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce.

1543 *Mauricius*. The Ms. Harl. reads *Maurius*, by an error of the scribe.

"Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,  
And eek my wyf, unto myn hom comyng;  
Crist whan him lust may sende me an hair  
More agreable than this to my lykyng."  
This lettre he seleth, pryvly wepyng,  
Which to the messenger he took ful sone,  
And forth he goth, ther nys no more to done.

O messenger, fullfid of dronkenesse, 5191  
Strong is thy breth, thy lymes faltren ay,  
And thou bywreyeste alle sykernesse;  
Thy mynde is lorn, thou janglest as a jay;  
Thy face is torned al in a newe array;  
Ther dronkenesse regneth in eny route,  
Ther is no counseil hid, withouten doute.

O Donegyld, I have non Englishich digne  
Unto thy malice and thy tyrannye;  
And therfor to the feend I the resigne, 5200  
Let him endyten of the trececherie.  
Fy, mannyssch, fy!—o nay, by God, I lye;  
Fy, feendly spirit, for I dar wel telle,  
Though thou here walke, thy spirit is in helle.

This messenger comth fro the kyng agayn,  
And at the kynges modres court he light,  
And sche was of this messenger ful fayn,  
And pleseth him in al that ever sche might.  
He drank, and wel his gurdel underpight;  
He slepeth, and he fareth in his gyse 5210  
Al nyght, unto the sonne gan arise.

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon,  
And countrefeted lettres in this wise:  
"The kyng comaundeth his constable anon,  
Up peyne of hangyng and of heigh justise,  
That he ne schulde suffre in no maner wyse  
Constaunce in his regne for to abyde  
Thre dayes, and a quarter of a tyde;

But in the same schip as he hir fond,  
Hire and hir yonge sone, and al hire gere, 5220  
He schulde putte, and crowde fro the londe,  
And charge hire that sche never eft come there."  
O my Constaunce, wel may thy goost have fere,  
And slepyng in thy drem ben in penaunce,  
Whan Donegyld cast al this ordynaunce.

This messenger a-morwe, whan he awook,  
Unto the castel held the nexte way;  
And to the constable he the lettre took;  
And whan that he the pitous lettre say,  
Ful ofte he seyde alas and welaway; 5230  
"Lord Crist," quod he, "how may this world en-  
So ful of synne is many a creature! [dure?

O mighty God, if that it be thy wille,  
Seth thou art rightful judge, how may this be  
That thou wolt suffre innocenz to spille,  
And wikked folk regne in prosperité?  
O good Constaunce, alla! so wo is me,  
That I moot be thy tormentour, or deye  
On schamful deth, ther is non other weye."

Wepen bothe yong and olde in al that place,  
Whan that the kyng this corsed lettre sent;  
And Constaunce with a dedly pale face 5242  
The fayre day toward hir schip sche went.  
But nevertheles sche taketh in good entent  
The wil of Christ, and knelyng on the grounde  
Sche sayde, "Lord, ay welcome be thy sonde!

He that me kepte fro the false blame,  
Whil I was on the lond amonges you,  
He can me kepe from harm and eek fro schame  
In the salt see, although I se nat how; 5250  
As strong as ever he was, he is right now,

5213. *Jayre*. Tyrwhitt has *fourthe*, perhaps correctly.



In him trust I, and in his mooder deere,  
That is to me my sayl and eek my steere."

Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm,  
And knelyng pitously to him sche sayde:  
"Pees, litel sone, I wol do the noon harm."  
With that hir kerchef of hir hed sche brayde,  
And over his litel eyghen sche it layde,  
And in hir arm sche lullith it wel faste,  
And unto heven hir eyghen up sche caste. 5260

"Moder," quod sche, "and mayde bright, Ma-  
Soth is, that thurgh wommannes eggement [rie,  
Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to dye,  
For which thy child was on a eros to-rent;  
Thyn blisful eyghen sawh al this torment;  
Then nys ther noon comparisoun bitwene  
Thy wo, and any woo may man sustene.

"Thow saugh thy child i-slaw by for thyn yen,  
And yit now lyveth my litel child, parfay; 5269  
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen,  
Thou glory of wommanhod, thou faire may,  
Thou heven of refute, brighte sterre of day,  
Rewe on my child, that of thyn gentilnesse  
Rest on every synful in destresse.

"O litel child, allas! what is thi gilt,  
That never wroughtest synne as yet, pardé?  
Why wil thyn harde fader han the spilt?  
O mercy, deere constable," seyde sche,  
"And let my litel child here dwelle with the;  
And if thou darst not saven him for blame, 5280  
So kys him oones in his fadres name."

Therwith sche loketh bak-ward to the lond,  
And seyde, "Farwel, housbond rewtheles!"  
And up sche rist, and walketh doun the stronde  
Toward the schip, hir folveth al the prees;  
And ever sche preyeth hir child to hold his poes,  
And took hir leve, and with an holy entent  
Sche blesseth hire, and to the schip sche went.

Vytailled was the schip, it is no drede,  
Abundauntly for hire a ful longe space; 5290  
And other necessarys that schulde nede  
Sche had ynough, heryed be Cristez grace;  
For wynd and water almighty God purchace,  
And bryng hir hom, I can no bettre say,  
But in the see sche dryveth forth hir way.

Alla the kyng comth hom soon after this  
Unto the castel, of the which I tolde,  
And asketh wher his wyf and his child ys.  
The constable gan aboute his herte colde,  
And playnly al the maner he him tolde 5300  
As ye han herd, I can telle it no better,  
And schewed the kynges seal and his letter;

And seyde, "Lord, as ye comaunded me  
Up peyne of deth, so have I do certayn."  
This messenger tormented was, til he  
Moste biknowe and telle it plat and playn,  
Fro nyght to night in what place he had layn;  
And thus by witt and subtil enqueryng  
Ymaged was by wham this gan to spryng.

The hand was known that the lettre wroot,  
And al the venym of this cursed dede; 5311  
But in what wyse, certeynly I noot.  
Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,  
His moder slough, as men may pleynly reede,  
For that sche traytour was to hir ligeance.  
Thus endeth olde Domegild with meschaunce.

The sorwe that this Alla night and day  
Makth for his wyf and for his child also,  
Ther is no tonge that it telle may.  
But now I wol unto Custaunce go, 5320

That fleeteth in the see in peyne and wo  
Fyve yeer and more, as liked Cristes sonde,  
Er that hir schip approched unto londe.

Under an hethen castel atte last,  
Of which the name in my text nought I fynde,  
Constaunce and eek hir child the see upcast.  
Almighty God, that saveth al mankynde,  
Have on Constaunce and on hir child som mynde!  
That fallen is in hethen hond eftsonde, 5329  
In poynt to spille, as I schal telle you soone.

Doun fro the castel cometh many a wight,  
To gawren on this schip, and on Constaunce;  
But shortly fro the castel on a night,  
The lordes styward, God give him meschaunce!  
A theef that had reneyed oure creaunce,  
Com into schip alone, and seyde he scholde  
Hir lemman be, whethir sche wold or nolde.

Wo was this wreeched womman tho bigoon,  
Hire childe crieth and sche pytously;  
But blisful Mary hilp hir right anon, 5340  
For with hir stroglyng wel and mightily  
The theef fel over-boord al sodeinly,  
And in the see he drenehed for vengauce,  
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Constaunce.

O foule lust, O luxurie, lo thin end!  
Nought only that thou feyntest mannes mynde,  
But verrayly thou wolt his body schende.  
The ende of thyn werk, or of thy lustes bynde,  
Is compleynyng; how many may men flynde, 5349  
That nought for werk som tyme, but for thentent  
To doon this synne, ben eyther slayn or schent!

How may this weyke womman han the strengthe  
Hir to defende agein this renegat?  
O Goliath, unmesurable of lengthe,  
How mighte David make the so mate?  
So yong, and of armure so desolate,  
How dorst he loken upon thyn drefdful face?  
Wel may men seyn, it nas but Goddes grace.

Who gaf Judith corage or hardynesse  
To slen him Olerfernes in his tent, 5360  
And to delyveren out of wrecchednes  
The peple of God? I say in this entent,  
That right as God spiryte and vigor sent  
To hem, and saved hem out of meschaunce,  
So sent he might and vigor to Constaunce.

Forth goth hir schip thurghout the narwe mouth  
Of Jubalter and Septé, dryvynng alway,  
Som tyme west, and som tyme north and south,  
And som tyme est, ful many a very day;  
Til Cristes mooder, blessed be sche ay! 5370  
Hath schapen thurgh hir endeles godnesse  
To make an ende of hir hevynesse.

Now let us stynt of Constaunce but a throwe,  
And speke we of the Romayn emperour,  
That out of Surrye hath by lettres knowe  
The slaughter of eristen folk, and deshonour  
Doon to his daughter by a fals traytour,  
I mene the cursed wikked soudnesse,  
That at the fest leet slee bothe more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anon 5380  
His senators, with real ordynaunce,  
And other lordes, God wot, many oon,  
On Surriens to take high vengauce. [chaunce  
They h'renne, sleen, and bringen hem to mes-  
ful many a day; but shortly this is thende,  
Hom-ward to Rome they schapen hem to wende.

This senatour repayreth with victorie  
To Rome-ward, saylyng ful really,

5341. *stroglyng*. The Ms. Harl reads *strengthe*.



And mette the schip dryvyng, as seth the story,  
In which Constance sitteth ful pitously. 5390

Nothing ne knew he what sche was, ne why  
Sche was in such aray, sche nolde seye  
Of hire astaat, although sche scholde deye.

He bryngeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf  
He gaf hir, and hir yonge sone also;  
And with the senatour lad sche hir lyf.  
Thus can our lady bryngen out of woo  
Woful Constance, and many another moo;  
And longe tyme dwelled sche in that place,  
In holy werkes, as ever was hir grace. 5400

The senatoures wif hir aunte was,  
But for al that sche knew hir never more:  
I wol no lenger taryen in this cas,  
But to kyng Alla, which I spak of yore,  
That for his wyf wepeth and siketh sore,  
I wol retorne, and lete I wol Constance  
Under the senatoures governaunce.

Kyng Alla, which that had his mooder slayn,  
Upon a day fel in such repentaunce,  
That if I schortly telle schal and playn, 5410  
To Rome he cometh to receyve his penaunce,  
And putte him in the popes ordynaunce  
In heigh and lowe, and Jhesu Crist bysought,  
Forgif his wikked werkes that he wrought.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born,  
How Alla kyng schal come in pilgrymage,  
By herberjourz that wenten him biforn,  
For which the senatour, as was usage,  
Rood him agein, and many of his lynage,  
As wel to schewen his magnificence, 5420  
As to doon eny kyng a reverence.

Gret cheere doth this noble senatour  
To kyng Alla, and he to him also;  
Everich of hem doth other gret honour.  
And so bifel, that in a day or two  
This senatour is to kyng Alla go  
To fest, and schortly, if I schal not lye,  
Constances sone went in his companye.

Som men wold seyn at request of Custaunce  
This senatour hath lad this child to feste; 5430  
I may not telle every circumstance,  
Be as be may, ther was he atte leste;  
But soth it is, right at his modres heste,  
Byforn hem alle, duryng the metes space,  
The child stood lokyng in the kynges face.

This Alla kyng hath of this child gret wonder,  
And to the senatour he seyde anon,  
"Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?"  
"I not," quod he, "by God and by seynt Jon!  
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non, 5440  
That I of woot;" and schortly in a stounde  
He told Alla how that this child was founde.

"But God woot," quod this senatour also,  
"So vertuous a lyver in my lyf  
Ne saugh I never, such as sche, nomo  
Of worldly womman, mayden, or of wyf;  
I dar wel say sche hadde lever a knyf  
Thurghout hir brest, than ben a womman wikke,  
Ther is no man can bryng hir to that prikke."

Now was this child as lik unto Custaunce 5450  
As possible is a creature to be.

This Alla hath the face in remembraunce  
Of dame Custance, and theron mused he,  
If that the childes mooder were ought sche  
That is his wyf; and pryvely he hight,  
And sped him fro the table that he might.

"Parfay!" thought he, "fantom is in myn heed;

I ought to deme, of rightful judgement,  
That in the salte see my wyf is deed."  
And after-ward he made this argument: 5460  
"What woot I, wher Crist hath hider sent  
My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sent  
To my contré, fro thennes that sche went?"

And after noon home with the senatour  
Goth Alla, for to see this wonder chaunce.  
This senatour doth Alla gret honour,  
And hastily he sent after Custaunce.  
But trusteth wel, hir luste nat to daunce,  
Whan that sche wiste wherfore was that sonde,  
Unnethes on hir feet sche mighte stonde. 5470

Whan Alla saugh his wyf, fayre he hir grette,  
And wepte, that it was rewthe to se;  
For at the firste look he on hir sette  
He knew wel verely that it was sche.  
And for sorwe, as domb sche stant as tre;  
So was hire herte schett in hir distresse,  
Whan sche remembered his unkyndesse.

Twies sche swowned in his owen sight;  
He wept and him excuseth pitously;  
"Now God," quod he, "and alle his halwes bright  
So wisly on my soule have mercy, 5481  
That of youre harm as gulteles am I  
As is Maurice my sone, so lyk youre face,  
Elles the feend me fecche out of this place."

Long was the sobbyng and the bitter peyne,  
Or that here woful herte mighte cesse;  
Gret was the white for to here hem pleyne,  
Thurgh which the playntz gan here wo encesse.  
I pray you alle my labour to relesse,  
I may not telle al here woo unto morwe, 5490  
I am so wery for to speke of the sorwe.

But fynally, whan that the soth is wist,  
That Alla gulteles was of hir woo,  
I trowe an hundred tymes they ben kist,  
And such a blys is ther bitwix hem tuo,  
That, save the joye that lasteth everemo,  
Ther is noon lyk, that eny creature  
Hath seyn or schal, whil that the world may dure.

The prayde sche hir housbond meekly  
In the reeles of hir pytous pyne, 5500  
That he wold preye hir fader specially,  
That of his majesté he wold enclyne  
To vouchesauf som tyme with him to dyne.  
Sche preyeth him eek, he schulde by no weye  
Unto hir fader no word of hir seye.

Som men wold seye, that hir child Maurice  
Doth his message unto the emperour;  
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce,  
To him that is so soverayn of honour,  
As he that is of Cristes folk the flour, 5510  
Sent eny child; but it is best to deeme  
He went himsilf, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly  
To come to dyner, as he him bysought;  
And wel rede I, he loked besily  
Upon the child, and on his doughter thought.  
Alla goth to his in, and as him ought  
Arrayed for this fest in every wyse,  
As forforth as his connyng may suffice.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse, 5520  
And eek his wyf, the emperour for to meete;  
And forth they ryde in joye and in gladnesse,

5506. *som men wold seye*. The version of the story here alluded to is that given in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, book ii., which appears to have been published before Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were compiled.

And whan sche saugh hir fader in the streete,  
Sche light adoun and falleth him to feete.  
"Fader," quod sche, "your yonge child Constance  
Is now ful elene out of your remembrance.  
"I am your daughter Custaunce," quod sche,  
"That whilom ye have sent unto Surrye;  
It am I, fader, that in the salte see  
Was put alloon, and dampned for to dye. 5530  
Now, goode fader, mercy I you crye,  
Send me no more unto noon hethenese,  
But thanke my lord her of his kyndenesse."

Who can the pytous joye telle al  
Bitwix hem thre, sith they be thus i-mette?  
But of my tale make an ende I schal;  
The day goth fast, I wol no lenger lette.  
This glade folk to dyner they ben sette;  
In joye and blys al mete I let hem dwelle,  
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle. 5540

This child Maurice was siththen emperour  
I-maad by the pope, and lyved cristenly,  
To Cristes chirche dede he gret honour.  
But I let al his story passen by,  
Of Custaunce is my tale specially;  
In olde Romayn gestes men may fynd  
Maurices lyf, I bere it nought in mynde.

This kyng Alla, whan he his tyme say,  
With his Constaunce, his holy wyf so swete,  
To Engelond they com the righte way, 5550  
Wher as they lyve in joye and in quyete.  
But litel whil it last, I you biheete,  
Joy of this world for tyme wol not abyde,  
Fro day to night it chaungeth as the tyde.

Who lyved ever in such delyt a day,  
That him ne meved eyther his conscience,  
Or ire, or talent, or som maner affray,  
Envy, or pride, or passoun, or offence?  
I ne say but for this ende this sentence,  
That litel whil in joye or in plessaunce 5560  
Lasteth the blis of Alla with Custaunce.

For deth, that takth of heigh and low his rent,  
Whan passed was a yeere, as I gesse,  
Out of this worlde kyng Alla he hent,  
For whom Custauns hath ful gret hevynesse.  
Now let us pray that God his soule blesse!  
And dame Custaunce, fynally to say,  
Toward the toun of Rome goth hir way.

To Rome is come this nobil creature,  
And fynt hir freendes ther bothe hool and sound;  
Now is sche skaped al hir aventure. 5571  
And whanne sche hir fader had i-founde,  
Doun on hir knees falleth sche to grounde,  
Wepynge for tendirnes in herte blithe  
Sche heried God an hundred thousand sith.

In vertu and in holy almes-dede  
They lyven alle, and never asondre wende;  
Til deth departe hem, this lyf they lede.  
And far now wel, my tale is at an ende.  
Now Jhesu Crist, that of his might may sende  
Joy after wo, governe us in his grace, 5581  
And keep us alle that ben in this place.

## THE PROLOGE OF THE WYF OF BATHIE.

"EXPERIENS, though noon auctorité  
Were in this world, it were ynough for me  
To speke of wo that is in mariage;

*Prologe of the Wyf of Bathie.* The Wife of Bath's prologue may be considered as a separate tale, and belongs to a class of which there are several examples among the literature of the middle ages. One of the latest is *The*

For, lordyngs, syns I twelf yer was of age,  
I thank it God that is eterne on lyve,  
Housbondes atte chirech dore I have had fyve,  
For I so ofte might have weddid be,  
And alle were worthy men in here degré. 5590  
But me was taught, nought longe tyme goon is,  
That synnes Crist went never but onys  
To weddyng, in the Cane of Galile,  
That by the same ensampul taught he me  
That I ne weddid schulde be but ones.  
Lo, herken such a scharp word for the nones!  
Beside a welle Jhesus, God and man,  
Spak in reproef of the Samaritan:  
'Thow hast y-had fyve housbondes,' quod he;  
'And that ilk man, which that now hath the, 5600  
Is nought thiū housbond;,' thus he sayd certayn;  
What that he ment therby, I can not sayn.  
But that I axe, why the fyfte man  
Was nought housbond to the Samaritan?  
How many might sche have in mariage?  
Yit herd I never tellen in myn age  
Uppon this nombre diffinioun;  
Men may divine and glosen up and doun.  
But wel I wot, withouten eny lye,  
God bad us for to wax and multiple; 5610  
That gentil tixt can I wel understande.  
Ek wel I wot, he sayd, myn housebonde  
Schuld lete fader and moder, and folwe me;  
But of no number mencion made he,  
Of bygamye or of octogamye;  
Why schuld men speken of that vilonye?  
Lo hier the wise kyng daun Salamon,  
I trow he hadde wifes mo than oon,  
As wold God it were leful unto me  
To be reffeisshed half so oft as he! 5620  
Which gift of God had he for alle his wyvys?  
No man hath such, that in the world on lyve is.  
God wot, this nobil king, as to my wit,  
The firste night had many a mery fit  
With ech of hem, so wel was him on lyve.  
I-blessid be God that I have weddid fyve!

*two mayrit women and the wedo of William Dunbar.* The popular literature of what is commonly looked upon as the age of chivalry shews us that the female character was then estimated at the lowest possible rate.

The Harl. Ms. erroneously places at the beginning of this prologue the prologue to the Shipman's Tale. Some of the mss. collated by Tyrwhitt, in which the Merchant's Tale follows the Man of Law, have the following introductory lines:

Oure oost gan tho to loken anon.  
"Gode men," quod he, "herkeneth everichone,  
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,  
This marchant hath i-told a mery tale,  
Howe Jauuarie hadde a lither jape,  
His wyf put in his hood an ape.  
But hereof I will leve off as now.  
Dame wyf of Bathie," quod he, "I pray you,  
Telle us a tale now nexte after this."  
"Sir oost," quod she, "so God my soule blis!  
As I fully thereto wil consente;  
And also it is myn hole entente  
To done yow alle disporte as that I can.  
But holde me excused; I am a woman,  
I can not reherse as these clerkes kunne."  
And right anon she hath hir tale bygonne.

In the Ms. Lansdowne there are four introductory lines:  
Then shortly ansewarde the wife of Bathie,  
And swore a wonder grete hathie.  
"Be Goddes bones, I wil tel next,  
I wille nouht glose, but saye the text.  
Experiment, though none auctorité," etc.

5626. The second Cambridge Ms. and some mss. quoted by Tyrwhitt add after this verse:  
Of which I have pyked out the beste  
Bothe of here nethur purs and of here cheste.



Welcome the sixte whan that ever he schal.  
 For sothe I nyl not kepe me chast in al;  
 Whan myn housbond is for the world i-gon,  
 Som cristine man schal wedde me anon, 5630  
 For than thapostil saith that I am fre  
 To wedde, a goddis haf, wher so it be.  
 He saith, that to be weddid is no synne;  
 Bet is to be weddid than to brynne.  
 What recchith me what folk sayn vilyone  
 Of schrewith Lameth, and of his bigamye?  
 I wol wel Abram was an holy man,  
 And Jacob eek, as ferforth as I can,  
 And ech of hem had wyves mo than tuo,  
 And many another holy man also. 5640  
 Whan sawe ye in eny maner age  
 That highe God defendid mariage  
 By expres word? I pray yow tellith me;  
 Or wher commaunded he virginite?  
 I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede,  
 Thapostil, whan he spekth of maydenhede,  
 He sayd, that precept therof had he noon;  
 Men may counseil a woman to be oon,  
 But counselyng nys no comaundement;  
 He put it in our owne juggement. 5650  
 For hadde God comaundid maydenhede,  
 Than had he dampnyd weddyng with the dede;  
 And certes, if ther were no seed i-sowe,  
 Virginite wheron schuld it growe?  
 Poul ne dorst not comaunde atte lest  
 A thing, of which his maister gaf non hest.  
 The dart is set upon virginite,  
 Cach who so may, who rennith best let se.  
 But this word is not taken of every wight,  
 But ther as God list give it of his might. 5660  
 I wot wel that thapostil was a mayde,  
 But natheles, though that he wrot or sayde,  
 He wolde that every wight were such as he,  
 Al nys but counseil unto virginite.  
 And for to ben a wyf he gaf me leve,  
 Of indulgence, so nys it to repreve  
 To wedde me, if that my make deye,  
 Withoute excepcioun of bigamye;  
 Al were it good no womman for to touche,  
 (He mente in his bed or in his couche) 5670  
 For peril is bothe fuyr and tow to assemble;  
 Ye knowe what this ensample wold resemble.  
 This is al and som, he holdith virginite  
 More parfit than weddyng in frelté  
 (Frelté clepe I, but if that he and sche  
 Wold leden al ther lif in chastité).  
 I graunt it wel, I have noon envye,  
 Though maidenhede preferre bygamye;  
 It liketh hem to be cleue in body and gost;  
 Of myn estate I nyl make no bost. 5680  
 For wel ye wot, a lord in his houshold  
 He hath not every vessel ful of gold;  
 Som ben of tre, and don her lord servise.  
 God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise,  
 And every hath of God a propre gifte,  
 Som this, som that, as him likith to schifte.  
 Virginite is gret perfeccioun,  
 And continens eek with gret devocioun;  
 But Christ, that of perfeccioun is welle,

Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,  
 And diverse practyk in many sondry werkes  
 Maken the werkman parfyt sekirly:  
 Of five husbondes scolerlyng am I,  
 Welcome the sixthe, etc.

6681. a lord in his houshold. See 2 Tim. ii. 20.

Bad nought every wight schuld go and selle 5690  
 Al that he had, and give it to the pore,  
 And in such wise folwe him and his fore.  
 He spak to hem that wolde lye parfytly,  
 And, lordyngs, by your leve, that am not I;  
 I wol bystowe the flour of myn age  
 In the actes and in the fruytes of mariage.  
 Tel me also, to what conclusioun  
 Were membres maad of generacioun,  
 And of so parfit wise a wight y-wrought? [nought.  
 Trustith right wel, thay were nought maad for  
 Glose who so wol, and say bothe up and down,  
 That thay were made for purgacioun, 5702  
 Oure bothe urn, and thinges smale,  
 Were eek to knowe a femel fro a male;  
 And for non other cause? say ye no?  
 Thexperiens wot wel it is not so.  
 So that these clerke ben not with me wrothe,  
 I say this, that thay makid ben for bothe,  
 This is to say, for office and for ease  
 Of engendrure, ther we God nought displease.  
 Why schuld men elles in her bokes sette, 5711  
 That man schal yelde to his wif his dette?  
 Now wherwith schuld he make his payement,  
 If he ne used his sely instrument?  
 Than were thay maad up a creature  
 To purge urn, and eek for engendrure.  
 But I say not that every wight is holde,  
 That hath such harneys as I to yow tolde,  
 To gon and usen hem in engendrure;  
 Than schuld men take of chastite no cure. 5720  
 Crist was a mayde, and schapen as a man,  
 And many a seynt, sin that the world bygan,  
 Yet lyved thay ever in parfyt chastite.  
 I nyl envye no virginite.  
 Let hem be bred of pured whete seed,  
 And let us wyves eten barly breed.  
 And yet with barly bred, men telle can,  
 Oure Lord Jhesu refschid many a man.  
 In such astaat as God hath cleped ous  
 I wil persevere, I am not precious; 5730  
 In wyfhode I wil use myn instrument  
 Als frely as my maker hath me it sent.  
 If I be dangerous, God give me sorwe,  
 Myn housbond schal han it at eve and morwe.  
 Whan that him list com forth and pay his dette.  
 An housbond wol I have, I wol not lette,  
 Which schal be bothe my dettour and my thral,  
 And have his tribulacioun withal  
 Upon his fleissch, whil that I am his wif.  
 I have the power duryng al my lif 5740  
 Upon his propre body, and not he;  
 Right thus thapostil told it unto me,  
 And bad oure husbondes for to love us wel;  
 Al this sentence me likith every del."

Up start the pardonere, and that anon; [Jon.  
 "Now, dame," quod he, "by God and by seint  
 Ye ben a noble prechour in this caas.  
 I was aboute to wedde a wif, allaa!  
 What? schal I buy it on my fleisch so deere?  
 Yit had I lever wedde no wyf to yere!" 5750  
 "Abyd," quod sche, "my tale is not bygonne.  
 Nay, thou schalt drinke of another tonne  
 Er that I go, schal savery vors than ale.  
 And whan that I have told the forth my tale  
 Of tribulacioun in mariage,  
 Of which I am expert in al myn age,

5699. And of so parfit wise. The Ms. Harl. reads, And  
 in what wise. Some mss. read and why, instead of a wight



This is to say, myself hath ben the whippe;  
Than might thou chese whether thou wilt sippe  
Of thilke toune, that I schal abroche.  
Be war of it, er thou to neigh approche. 5760  
For I schal telle ensamples mo than ten:  
Who so that nyl be war by other men  
By him schal other men corrected be.  
The same wordes writes Ptholomé,  
Kede in his Almagest, and tak it there."  
"Dame, I wold pray you, if that youre wille  
were."

Sayde this pardoner, "as ye bigan,  
Tel forth youre tale, and sparith for no man,  
Teche us yonge men of youre practike."  
"Gladly," quod sche, "syns it may yow like. 5770  
But that I pray to al this companye,  
If that I speke after my fantasie,  
As taketh nought agreef of that I say,  
For myn entente is nought but to play.

"Now, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.  
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,  
I schal say soth of housbondes that I hadde,  
As thre of hem were goode, and tuo were badde.  
Tuo of hem were goode, riche, and olde;  
Unnethe mighte thay the statute holde, 5780  
In which that thay were bounden unto me;  
Ye wot wel what I mene of this pardé!

As help me God, I laugh when that I thinke,  
How pitously on night I made hem swynke,  
But, by my fay! I told of it no stoor;  
They had me give her lond and her tresor,  
Me nedith not no lenger doon diligence  
To wyne her love or doon hem reverence.  
They loved me so wel, by God above!  
That I tolde no deynit of her love. 5790

A wys womman wol bysi hir ever in con  
To gete hir love, there sche hath noon.  
But synnes I had hem holly in myn hond,  
And synnes thay had me geven al her lond,  
What schuld I take keep hem for to please,  
But it were for my profyt, or myn ease?  
I sette hem so on werke, by my fay!

That may a night thay songen weylaway.  
The bacoun was nought fet for hem, I trowe,  
That som men fecche in Essex at Donmowe. 5800  
I governed hem so wel after my lawe,  
That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe  
To bringe me gaye thinges for the faire.  
They were ful glad when I spak to hem faire;  
For, God it woot, I chidde hem spytously.  
Now herkeneth how I bar me proprely.  
Ye wise wyves, that can understonde,  
Thus scholde ye speke, and bere hem wrong on  
For half so boldlye can ther no man [honde];

5764. *Ptholomé*. The wife of Bath's quotations from Ptolemy, here, and at l. 5906, are not, it appears, to be found in the *Almagest*. She seems to quote Ptolemy when she cannot father an opinion upon any body else.

5779. *Tuo of hem*. The more common reading of the mss. is, *The thre were*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

5799. *The bacoun*. The Dunmow bacon appears to have been in great reputation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The following notice of this curious custom is found among some poetry of the latter period, printed in the *Reliquie Antiq.* ii. p. 29:

I can fynd no man now that wille enquire  
The parfyte wais unto Dunmow!  
For they repent hem within a yere,  
And many within a weke, and sonner, men trow;  
That cawsith the wais to be rough and overgrow,  
That no man may fynd path or gap,  
The world is turnyd to another shap.

Swere and lye as a womman car. 5810  
(I say not by wyves that ben wise,  
But if it be when thay ben mysavise.)  
I-wis a wif, if that sche can hir good,  
Schal beren him on hond the cow is wood,  
And take witnes on hir oughne mayde  
Of hire assent; but herkenith how I sayde.  
See, olde caynard, is this thim array?  
Why is my neghebores wif so gay?

Sche is honoured over al ther sche goth;  
I sitte at hom, I have no thrifty cloth. 5820  
What dostow at my neighebores hors?  
Is sche so fair? what, artow amorous?  
What rounne ye with hir maydenes? *benedicite*,  
Sir olde leechour, let thi japes be.  
And if I have a gossib, or a frend  
Withouthen gilt, thou chidest as a fend,  
If that I walk or play unto his hous.

Thou comest hom as dronken as a mous,  
And prechist on thy bench, with evel preef,  
Thou saist to me, it is a gret meschief 5830  
To wedde a pover womman, for costage;  
And if that sche be riche and of parage,  
Thanne saist thou, that it is a tormentrie  
To suffre hir pride and hir malencolie.

And if that sche be fair, thou verray knave,  
Thou saist that every honour wol hir have;  
Sche may no while in chastité abyde,  
That is assayled thus on eche syde.

Thou saist that som folk desire us for riches,  
Som for our schap, and som for our fairnes, 5840  
And some, for that sche can synge and dance,  
And some for gentillesse or daliaunce,  
Som for hir handes and hir armes smale:  
Thus goth al to the devel by thi tale.

Thou saist, men may nought kepe a castel wal,  
It may so be biseged over al.  
And if sche be foul, thanne thou saist, that sche  
Coveitith every man that sche may se;

For, as a spaynel, sche wol on him lepe,  
Til that sche fynde som man hire to chepe. 5850  
Ne noon so gray a goos goth in the lake,  
As sayest thou, wol be withouten make.

And saist, it is an hard thing for to wolde  
Thing, that no man wol his willes holde,  
Thus seistow, lorel, when thou gost to bedde,  
And that no wys man nedith for to wedde,  
Ne no man that entendith unto hevене.  
With wilde thunder dynt and fury levене  
Mote thi wicked necke be to-broke!  
Thou saist, that droppying hous, and eek smoke,  
And chydyng wyves maken men to fle 5861

5810. *swere and lye*. A parallel passage is quoted by Tyrwhitt from the *Roman de la Rose*:

Car plus hardiment que nulz hoims  
Certainement jurent et mentent.

5817. "In the following speech, it would be endless to produce all Chaucer's imitations. The beginning is from the fragment of Theophrastus quoted by St. Jerome c. *Jovin.* l. i., and by John of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* lib. viii. c. xi.; see also *Rom. de la R.* v. 8967. et suiv." Tyrwhitt.

5828. *drunken as a mous*. This was a common phrase. In the satirical poem of Doctor Double-ale, we have the lines:

Then seke another house,  
This is not worth a louse;  
As drunken as a mous.

Among the letters relating to the suppression of monasteries (*Camd. Soc. Publ.*) p. 133, there is one from a monk of Pershore, who says that his brother monks of that house "drynk an bowll after collocyng tell ten or xii. of the cloek, and cum to mattens as dronck as mys."

Out of here oughne hous; a, *benedicite*,  
 What eylyth such an old man for to chyde?  
 Thou seist, we wyves woldn oure vices hide,  
 Til we ben weddid, and than we wil hem schewe.  
 Wel may that be a proverbe of a schrewe.  
 Thou saist, that assen, oxen, and houndes,  
 They ben assayed at divers stoundes,  
 Basyns, lavours eek, er men hem bye,  
 Spones, stooles, and al such housbondrie, 5870  
 Also pottes, clothes, and array,  
 But folk of wyves maken non assay,  
 Til thay ben weddid, olde dotard schrewe!  
 And thanne, saistow, we woldn oure vices schewe.  
 Thou saist also, that it displeith me  
 But if that thou wilt praysen my beauté,  
 And but thou pore alway in my face,  
 And clepe me faire dame in every place;  
 And but thou make a fest on thilke day  
 That I was born, and make me freisch and gay;  
 And but thou do my norice honour, 5881  
 And to my chamberer withinne my boure,  
 And to my fadres folk, and myn allies:  
 Thus saistow, olde barel ful of lies!  
 And yit of oure apprentys Jankyn,  
 For his crisp her, schynnyng as gold so fyn,  
 And for he squiereth me up and doun,  
 Yet hastow caught a fals suspeccioun; [we.  
 I nyl him nought, though thou were deed to mor-  
 But tel me wherfor hydestow with sorwe 5890  
 The keyes of thy chist away fro me?  
 It is my good as wel as thin, pardé. [dame?  
 "What! wenest thou make an ydiot of oure  
 Now by that lord that cleped is seint Jame,  
 Thou schalt not bothe, though thou were wood,  
 Be maister of my body and of my good;  
 That oon thou schalt forgo maugré thin yen!  
 What helpeth it on me tenqueren or espien?  
 I trowe thou woldest lokke me in thy chest.  
 Thou scholdist say, 'wif, go wher the lest; 5900  
 Take youre distort; I nyl lieve no talis;  
 I know yow for a trewe wif, dame Alis.'  
 We loveth no man, that takith keep or charge  
 Wher that we goon; we love to be at large.  
 "Of alle men i-blessed most he be  
 The wise astrologe dann Ptholomé,  
 That saith this proverbe in his Almagest:  
 Of alle men his wisdom is highest,  
 That rekkith not who hath the world in honde.  
 By this proverbe thou schalt understonde, 5910  
 Have thou ynough, what thar the reech or care  
 How merily that other folkes fare?  
 For certes, olde dotard, with your leve,  
 Ye schul have queynte right ynough at eve.  
 He is to gret a nygard that wol werne  
 A man to light a candel at his lanterne;  
 He schal have never the lasse light, pardé.  
 Have thou ynough, the thar not pleyne the.  
 "Thou saist also, that if we make us gay  
 With clothing and with precious array, 5920  
 That it is peril of our chastité.  
 And yit, with sorwe, thou most enforce the,  
 And say these wordes in thapostles name:  
 In abytt maad with chastité and schame  
 Ye wommen schuld apparayl yow, quod he,  
 And nought with tressed her, and gay perré,  
 As perles, ne with golden clothis riche.  
 After thy text, ne after thin rubriche,

5923. *thapostles name.* See 1 Tim. ii. 9.

I wol nought wirche as moche as a gnat.  
 Thou saist thus that I was lik a cat; 5930  
 For who so wolde senge the cattes skyn,  
 Than wold the catte duellen in his in;  
 And if the cattes skyn be slyk and gay,  
 Sche wol not duelle in house half a day,  
 But forth sche wil, er eny day be dawet,  
 To schewe hir skyn, and goon a caterwrawet.  
 This is to say, if I be gay, sir schrewe,  
 I wol renne aboute, my borel for to schewe.  
 Sir olde fool, what helpith the to asprien? [yen  
 Though thou praydest Argus with his hundrid  
 To be my wardecorps, as he can best, 5941  
 In faith he schuld not kepe me but if he lest;  
 Yit couthe I make his berd, though queynte he be.  
 Thou saydest eek, that ther ben thinges thre,  
 The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,  
 And that no wight may endure the fertehe.  
 O leve sire schrewe, Jhesu schorte thy lif!  
 Yit prechestow, and saist, an hateful wif  
 I-rekened is for oon of these meschaunces.  
 Ben ther noon other of thy resemblaunces 5950  
 That ye may liken youre parables unto,  
 But if a cely wyf be oon of tho?  
 Thou likenest wommannes love to helle,  
 To bareyn lond, ther water may not duelle.  
 Thou likenest it also to wilde fury;  
 The more it brenneth, the more it hath desir  
 To consume every thing, that brent wol be.  
 Thou saist, right as wormes schenden a tre,  
 Right so a wif schendith hir housebonde;  
 This knowen tho that ben to wyves bonde. 5960  
 Lordynges, right thus, as ye han understonde,  
 Bar I styf myn housebondes on honde,  
 That thus thay sayde in her dronkenesse;  
 And al was fals, but that I took wittnesse  
 On Jankyn, and upon my nece also.  
 O Lord, the peyne I dede hem, and the wo,  
 Ful gulteles, by Goddes swete pyne;  
 For as an hors, I couthe bothe bite and whyne;  
 I couthe pleyne, and yet I was in the gilt,  
 Or elles I hadde often tyme be spilt. 5970  
 Who so first cometh to the mylle, first grynt;  
 I pleyned first, so was oure werre stynt.  
 Thay were ful glad to excuse hem ful blyve  
 Of thing, that thay never agilt in her lyve.  
 And wenches wold I beren hem on honde,  
 When that for seek thay might unnetthes stonde,  
 Yit tykeled I his herte for that he  
 Wende I had of him so gret chiereté.  
 I swor that al my walking out a nyght  
 Was for to asprie wenches that he dight. 5980  
 Under that colour had I many a mirthe.  
 For al such witte is given us of birthe;  
 Deceit, wepyng, spynnyng, God hath give  
 To wymmen kyndely, whil thay may lyve.  
 And thus of o thing I avaute me,  
 At thende I had the bet in ech degré,  
 By sleight or fors, or of som maner thing,  
 As by continual murmur or chiding,  
 Namly on bedde, hadden thay meschaunce,

5971. *to the mylle.* This proverb is found also in French, in the fifteenth century: Qui premier vient au moulin premier doit mouldre.

5983. *deceit.* This appears to have been a popular saying; in the margin of the Lansdowne Ms. it is given in a Latin Leonine, thus:

Fallere, flere, nere, dedit Deus in muliere.

5988. *chiding.* Most of the mss. have, with Tyrwhitt, *grucchyng.*



Ther wold I chide, and do hem no plesaunce;  
 I wold no lenger in the bed abyde, 5991  
 If that I felt his arm over my syde,  
 Til he had maad his ransoun unto me,  
 Than wold I suffre him doon his nyctet.  
 And therfor every man this tale telle,  
 Wynne who so may, for al is for to selle;  
 With empty hond men may noon haukes lure,  
 For wynnyng wold I al his lust endure,  
 And make me a feyned appetyt,  
 And yit in bacoun had I never delyt; 6000  
 That made me that ever I wold hem chyde.  
 For though the pope had seten hem bisyde,  
 I nold not spare hem at her oughne bord.  
 For, by my trouthe, I quyt hem word for word.  
 Als help me verray God omnipotent,  
 Though I right now schuld make my testament,  
 I owe hem nought a word, that it nys quitte,  
 I brought it so aboute by my witte,  
 That thay most geve it up, as for the best,  
 Or ellis had we never ben in rest. 6010  
 For though he loked as a grym lyoun,  
 Yit schuld he fayle of his conclusioun.  
 Than wold I say, 'now, goode leef, tak keep,  
 How mekly lokith Wilkyn our sheep!  
 Com ner, my spouse, let me ba thy cheke.  
 Ye schulde be al pacient and meke,  
 And have a swete spiced consciens,  
 Siththen ye preche so of Jobes paciens.  
 Suffreth alway, syns ye so wel can preche.  
 And but ye do, certeyn we schul yow teche 6020  
 That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.  
 On of us tuo mot bowe douteles;  
 And, siththen man is more resonable  
 Than womman is, ye moste be sufrable.  
 What aylith yow thus for to grucche and grone?  
 Is it for ye wold have my queynt alone?  
 Why, tak it al; lo, have it every del.  
 Peter! I schrewe yow but ye love it wel.  
 For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,  
 I couthe walk as freisch as eny rose, 6030  
 But I wol kepe it for youre owne toth.  
 Ye ben to blame, by God, I say yow soth!  
 Such maner wordes hadde we on honde.  
 Now wol I speke of my fourth housbonde.  
 My fourth housbond was a revelour,  
 This is to say, he had a paramour,  
 And I was yong and ful of ragerie,  
 Stiborn and strong, and joly as a pye.  
 How couthe I daunce to an harpe smale,  
 And syng y-wys as eny nightyngale, 6040  
 Whan I had dronke a draught of swete wyn.  
 Metillus, the foule cherl, the swyn,  
 That with a staf byraft his wyf hir lyf  
 For sche drank wyn, though I had ben his wif,  
 Ne schuld nought have daunted me fro drink;  
 And after wyn on Venus most I think.  
 For al so siker as cold engendriht hayl,  
 A likorous mouth most have a licorous tail.  
 In wymmen violent is no defens,  
 This knowen leechours by experiens. 6050  
 But, lord Crist, whan that it remembrith me

Upon my youthe, and on my jolité,  
 It tikelith me about myn herte-roote.  
 Unto this day it doth inyn herte boote,  
 That I have had my world as in my tyme.  
 But age, alas! that al wol envenyme,  
 Hath me bireft my beaute and my pith;  
 Let go, farwel, the devyl go therwith.  
 The flour is goon, ther nis no more to telle,  
 The bran, as I best can, now mot I selle. 6060  
 But yit to be mery wol I fonde.  
 Now wol I telle of my fourt housbonde.  
 I say, I had in herte gret despyt,  
 That he of eny other had delit;  
 But he was quit, by God and by seint Joce;  
 I made him of the same woode a croce,  
 Nought of my body in no foul manere,  
 But certeynly I made folk such chere.  
 That in his owne grees I made him frie  
 For anger, and for verray jalousie. 6070  
 By God, in erthe I was his purgatory,  
 For which I hope his soule be in glory.  
 For, God it wot, he sat ful stille and song,  
 Whan that his scho ful bitterly him wrong.  
 Ther was no wight, sauf God and he, that wist  
 In many wyse how sore I him twist.  
 He dyed whan I cam fro Jerusalem,  
 And lith i-grave under the roode-bem;  
 Al is his tombe nought so curious  
 As was the sepulcre of him Darius, 6080  
 Which that Appellus wrought so subtly.  
 It nys but wast to burie him preciously.  
 Let him farwel, God give his soule rest,  
 He is now in his grave and in his chest.  
 "Now of my fifte housbond wol I telle;  
 God let his soule never come in helle!  
 And yet was he to me the moste schrewe,  
 That fele I on my ribbes alle on rewe,  
 And ever schal, unto myn endyng day.  
 But in oure bed he was so freisch and gay, 6090  
 And therwithal so wel he couthe me glose,  
 Whan that he wold have my *bele chose*,  
 That, though he had me bete on every boon,  
 He couthe wyne my love right anou.  
 I trowe, I loved him beste, for that he  
 Was of his love daungerous to me.  
 We wymmen han, if that I schal nought lye,  
 In this matier a queynte fantasie.  
 Wayte, what thyng we may not lightly have,  
 Therafter wol we sonnest crie and crave. 6100  
 Forbeed us thing, and that desire we;  
 Pres on us fast, and thanne wol we fle.  
 With daunger outen alle we oure ware;  
 Greet pres at market makith deer chaffare,  
 And to greet chep is holden at litel pris;  
 This knowith every womman that is wys.  
 My fyfth housbond, God his soule blesse,  
 Which that I took for love and no richesse,  
 He som tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,  
 And had left scole, and went at hoom to borde  
 With my gossib, duellyng in oure toun: 6111  
 God have hir soule, hir name was Alisoun.  
 Sche knew myn herte and my priveté  
 Bet than oure parisch prest, so mot I the.

6028. *Peter!* This is a very common exclamation, from St. Peter; as Marie! from the Virgin. St. Peter, as the reputed head of the papacy, stood high among the saints in the Romish Church.

6042. *Metillus.* This anecdote is taken from Valerius Maximus, lib. vi. c. 3, ex. 9. The same story is told by Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xiv. 13, but for Egnatius Metellus he substitutes the name of Mecenius.

6065. *seint Joce.* A French saint, known in Latin as St. Judocus.

6074. *his scho.* An allusion to the story of the Roman sage, who, when blamed for divorcing his wife, said that a shoe might appear outwardly to fit well, but no one but the wearer knew where it pinched.



To hir bywreyed I my counseil al;  
 For had myn housbond pissed on a wal,  
 Or don a thing that schuld have cost his lif,  
 To hir, and to another worthy wyf,  
 And to my neece, which I loved wel,  
 I wold have told his counseil every del. 6120  
 And so I did ful ofte, God it woot,  
 That made his face ofte reed and hoot  
 For very schaine, and blamyd himself, that he  
 had told to me so gret a priveté.  
 And so byfel that oones in a Lent,  
 (So ofte tyme to my gossib I went,  
 For ever yit I loved to be gay,  
 And for to walk in March, Avenir, and May  
 From hous to hous, to here sondry talis) 6129  
 That Jankyn clerk, and my gossib dame Alis,  
 And I myself, into the felde went.  
 Myn housbond was at Londone al that Lent;  
 I had the bettir leysir for to pleye,  
 And for to see, and eek for to be seye  
 Of lusty folk; what wist I wher my grace  
 Was schapen for to be, or in what place?  
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns  
 To vigiles, and to processions,  
 To prechings eek, and to this pilgrimages,  
 To pleyes of miracles, and mariages, 6140  
 And wered upon my gay scarlet gytes.  
 These wormes, thes moughtes, ne these mytes,  
 Upon my perel fretith hem never a deel,  
 And wostow why? for thay were used wel.  
 Now wol I telle forth what happid we:—  
 I say, that in the feldes walkid we,  
 Til trewely we had such daliaunce  
 This clerk and I, that of my purvyauce  
 I spak to him, and sayde how that he,  
 If I were wydow, schulde wedde me. 6150  
 For certeynly, I say for no bobauce,  
 Yit was I never withouten purveyaunce  
 Of mariage, ne of no thinges eek;  
 I hold a mouses hert not worth a leek,  
 That hath but oon hole to sterte to,  
 And if that faile, than is al i-do.  
 [I bare him on hond he had enchanted me;  
 (My dame taughte me that subtiltee)

6137. *visitaciouns*. This passage appears to be an imitation of one cited by Tyrwhitt from the *Roman de la Rose*:

Souvent voise à la mere eglise,  
 Et face visitacions  
 Aux nopces, aux processions,  
 Aux jeux, aux festes, aux caroles.

6140. *pleyes of miracles*. The miracle-plays were favourite occasions for people to assemble in great numbers. In a tale among my *Latin Stories*, p. 100, we are told that some pilgrims saw, in a very large meadow, "maximam multitudinem hominum congregatam, quos nunc silentes, nunc acclamantes, nunc cachinnantes audiebant. Admirantes igitur quare in loco tali tanta esset hominum adunatio, aestimabant ibi spectacula celebrare quæ nos miracula appellare consuevimus." This is a good description of the assemblage at a miracle-play.

6154. *a mouses hert*. This was a very common proverb. It is found in French: the following example is taken from a MS. of the thirteenth century:

Dolente le souris,  
 Qui ne set qu'un seul pertuis.

It also occurs in German:

Dass ist wol eine arme Maus,  
 Die nur weiss zu einem Loch' hinaus.

The same proverb is said of a fox in German. There was an ancient Latin proverb to the same effect.

6157. This and the nine following lines are omitted in the Harl. MS. and others. The second Cambridge MS. has them. They are here printed from Tyrwhitt.

And eke I sayd, I met of him all night,  
 He wold han slain me, as I lay upright, 6160  
 And all my bed was ful of veray blood;  
 But yet I hope that ye shuln do me good;  
 For blood betokeneth gold, as me was taught;  
 And al was false, I dredmed of him right naught,  
 But as I folwed ay my dames lore,  
 As wel of that as of other thinges more.]  
 But now, sir, let me se, what I schal sayn;  
 A ha! by God, I have my tale agayn.

"Whan that my fourthe housbond was on bere,  
 I wept algate and made a sory cheere, 6170  
 As wywes mooten, for it is usage;  
 And with my kerchief covered my visage;

But, for that I was purveyed of a make,  
 I wept but smal, and that I undertake.  
 To chirche was myn housbond brought on morwe  
 With neighebers that for him made sorwe,  
 And Jankyn oure clerk was oon of tho.  
 As help me God, whan that I saugh him go  
 After the beere, me thought he had a paire  
 Of legges and of feet so clene and faire, 6180  
 That al myn hert I gaf unto his hold.

He was, I trowe, twenty wynter old,  
 And I was fourty, if I schal say the sothe,  
 But yit I had alway a coltis tothe.  
 Gattothid I was, and that bycom me wel,  
 I had the prynte of seynt Venus sel.  
 [As helpe me God, I was a lusty oon,  
 And faire, and riche, and yonge, and wel begon;  
 And trewely, as myn housbonds tolde me,  
 I had the best queynt that might be. 6190  
 For certes I am all venerian

In fel yng, and my herte is marcian:  
 Venus me gave my lust and likerounesse,  
 And Mars gave me my sturdy hardinesse.]  
 Myn ascent was Taur, and Mars therinne;  
 Allas, alas, that ever love was synne!

I folwed ay myn inclinacioun  
 By vertu of my constillacioun:  
 That made me that I couthe nought withdrawe  
 My chambre of Venus from a good felawe. 6200  
 Yet have I Martes marke upon my face,  
 And also in another privé place.

For God so wisly be my salvacioun,  
 I loved never by no discretioun,  
 But ever folwed myn owne appetit,  
 All were he shorte, longe, blake, or whit;  
 I toke no kepe, so that he liked me,  
 How povre he was, ne eek of what degré.]  
 What schuld I say? but at the monthis ende  
 This joly clerk Jankyn, that was so heende, 6210  
 Hath weddid me with gret solemnitee,  
 And to him gaf I al the lond and fee  
 That ever was me give therifore.  
 But aftir-ward repented me ful sore.  
 He nolde suffre nothing of my list.

By God, he smot me oones with his fist,  
 For I rent oones out of his book a lef,  
 That of that strok myn eere wax al deef.  
 Styborn I was, as is a leones,  
 And of my tonge a verray jangleres, 6220  
 And walk I wold, as I had don biforn,  
 Fro hous to hous, although he had it sworn;

6187. The Harl. MS. omits ll. 6187—6194 and 6201—6208. The second Cambridge MS. is the only one I have collated which contains them all. The Lansd. and first Cambridge MSS. have only ll. 6187—6190. I have taken them from Tyrwhitt, collated with the MSS.

For which he ofte tymes wolde preche,  
 And me of olde Romayn gestes teche,  
 How he Simplicius Gallus left his wyf,  
 And hir forsok for terme of al his lyf,  
 Nought but for open heedid he hir say  
 Lokyng out at his dore upon a day.  
 Another Romayn told he me by name,  
 That, for his wyf was at a somer game 6230  
 Without his wityng, he forsok hir eeke.  
 And thanne wolde he upon his book seeke  
 That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,  
 Wher he comaundith, and forbedith faste,  
 Man schal not suffre his wyf go roule aboute.  
 Than wolde he say right thus withouten doute:

Who that buyldeth his hous al of salwe,  
 And priketh his blynde hors over the falwe,  
 And sufrith his wyf to go seken halwe,  
 Is worthy to be honged on the galwe.

But al for nought; I sette nought an hawe 6240  
 Of his proverbe, ne of his olde sawe;  
 Ne I wold not of him corretted be.  
 I hate him that my vices tellith me,  
 And so doon mo, God it wot, than I.  
 This made him with me wood al outerly;  
 I nolde not forbere him in no eas.  
 Now wol I say yow soth, by seint Thomas,  
 Why that I rent out of the book a leef,  
 For which he smot me, that I was al deaf. 6250  
 He had a book, that gladly night and day  
 For his desport he wolde rede alway;  
 He clepyd it Valerye and Theofrast,  
 At which book he lough alway ful fast.  
 And eek ther was som tyme a clerk at Rome,  
 A cardynal, that heet seint Jerome,  
 That made a book agens Jovnyan.  
 In which book eek ther was Tertulyan,  
 Crisippus, Tortula, and eek Helewys, 6260  
 That was abbas not fer fro Paris;  
 And eek the parablis of Salamon,  
 Ovydes Art, and bourdes many oon;  
 And alle these were bounde in oo volume.  
 And every night and day was his custume,  
 Whan he had leysir and vacacioun  
 From other worldes occupacioun,  
 To reden in this book of wikked wyves.  
 He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves,  
 Than ben of goode wyves in the Bible.  
 For trustith wel, it is an impossible, 6270  
 That any clerk schal speke good of wyves,  
 But if it be of holy seintes lyves,  
 Ne of noon other wyfes never the mo.  
 Who peyntid the leoun, tel me, who?  
 By God, if women hadde writen stories,  
 As clerkes have withinne her oratories,

6225. *Simplicius Gallus*. This story is taken from Val. Max. vi. 3.

6229. *Another Romayn*. Sempronius Soplus, of whom this story is told by Val. Max. loc. cit. Valerius Maximus was a favourite among the scholars of the middle ages.

6253. The tract of Walter Mapes against marriage, published under the title of *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum*, is common in manuscripts. Jerome, in his book *contra Jovinianum*, a bitter diatribe against matrimony, quotes a long extract from *liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis*. "As to the rest of the contents of the 'clerkes' volume, Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and Tertullian *de Pallio*, are sufficiently known; and so are the Letters of Eloisa and Abelard, the Parables of Solomon, and Ovid's *Art of Love*. I know of no *Trotula* but one, whose book *Curandarum agritudinum muliebrum ante, in, et post partum*, is printed int. *Medicos antiquos*, Ven. 1547. Who is meant by Crisippus I cannot guess."—*Tyrwhitt*.

They wold have write of men more wickidnes,  
 Than al the mark of Adam may redres,  
 These children of Mercury and of Venus 6280  
 Ben in her werkyng ful contrarious.  
 Mercury lovith wisdom and science,  
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispense.  
 And for her divers disposcioun,  
 Ech fallith in othere exaltacioun.  
 And thus, God wot, Mercury is desolate  
 In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltate,  
 And Venus faylich wher Mercury is reysed.  
 Therfor no woman of clerkes is preised.  
 The clerk whan he is old, and may nought do  
 Of Venus werkis, is not worth a scho; 6290  
 Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage,  
 That women can nought kepe here mariage.  
 But now to purpos, why I tolde the,  
 That I was beten for a leef, pardé.  
 Upon a night Jankyn, that was oure sire,  
 Rad on his book, as he sat by the fyre,  
 Of Eva first, that for hir wikkidnes  
 Was al mankynde brought to wreechednes,  
 [For which that Jhesu Crist himself was slayn,  
 That bought us with his herte-blood agayn. 6300  
 Lo here expresse of women may ye fynde,  
 That woman was the losse of al mankynde.]  
 Tho rad he me how Sampson left his heris  
 Slepyn, his lemman kut hem with hir scheris,  
 Thurgh which tresoun lost he bothe his yen.  
 Tho rad he me, if that I schal not lyen,  
 Of Ereules, and of his Dejanyre,  
 That caused him to sette himself on fuyre.  
 No thing forgat he the care and wo  
 That Socrates had with his wyves tuo; 6310  
 How Exantipa cast pisse upon his heed.  
 This seely man sat stille, as he were deed,  
 He wyped his heed, no more durst he sayn,  
 But, 'Er thunder stynte ther cometh rayn.'  
 Of Phasipha, that was the queen of Crecte,  
 For schwednes him thought the tale sweete.  
 Fy! spek no more, it is a grisly thing,  
 Of her horribil lust and her likyng.

6279. of *Mercury and of Venus*. An old astrological treatise of the sixteenth century informs us that "Venus . . . signifieth the white men or browne . . . joyfull, laughter, liberral, pleasers, dauncers, entertayners of women, players, perfumers, musitions, messengers of love." Mercury, according to the same authority, "signifieth . . . subtil men, ingenious, unconstant, rymers, poets, advocates, orators, phylsophers, soothsayers, arithmeticians, and busie fellows."

6284. *exaltacioun*. Tyrwhitt gives the following explanation of this term. "In the old astrology, a planet was said to be in its *exaltation*, when it was in that sign of the zodiac in which it was supposed to exert its strongest influence. The opposite sign was called its *dejection*, as in that it was supposed to be weakest. To take the instance in the text, the exaltation of Venus was in *Pisces* (see also ver. 10587), and her dejection of course in *Virgo*. But in *Virgo* was the exaltation of Mercury.

She is the welthe and the rysynge,  
 The lust, the joy, and the lykynge,  
 Unto Mercury.

Gower, *Conf. Am.* l. vii. fol 147. So in ver. 10098, Cancer is called *Joves exaltacioun*."

6299. This and the three following lines are omitted in most of the mss. I have consulted.

6303. *Tho rad he*. The following examples are mostly taken from the *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum*, and from the *Roman de la Rose*.

6311. *Exantipa*. Xantippe. In the other proper names in the following lines I have retained the corrupt orthography of the age, as given in the ms. *Phasipha* is, of course, *Pasiphae*; *Clydamystra*, *Clytemnestra*; *Amphiores*, *Amphiaraus*; *Exiphilem*, *Eriphyle*, etc.



Of Clydemystra for hir lecherie  
 That falsly made hir housbond for to dye, 6320  
 He rad it with ful good devocioun.  
 He told me eek, for what ocasion  
 Amphiores at Thebes left his lif;  
 Myn housbond had a legend of his wyf  
 Exiphilem, that for an ouche of gold  
 Hath prively unto the Grekes told  
 Wher that hir housbond hyd him in a place,  
 For which he had at Thebes sory grace.  
 Of Lyma told he me, and of Lucye;  
 Thay bothe made her housbondes for to dye, 6330  
 That on for love, that other was for hate.  
 Lyma hir housbond on an even late  
 Empoysnd hath, for that sche was his fo;  
 Lucia licorous loved hir housbond so,  
 For that he schuld alway upon hir think,  
 Sche gaf him such a maner love-drink,  
 That he was deed er it was by the morwe;  
 And thus algates housbondes had sorwe.  
 Than told he me, how on Latumys  
 Cempleigned unto his felaw Arrius, 6340  
 That in his gardyn growed such a tre,  
 On which he sayde how that his wyves thre  
 Honged hemselfe for herte despitous.  
 'O leve brother,' quod this Arrius,  
 'Gif me a plont of thilke blessid tre,  
 And in my gardyn schal it plantid be.'  
 Of latter date of wyves hath he red  
 That some han slayn her housbondes in her bed,  
 And let her lechour digthen al the night,  
 Whil that the corps lay in the flor upright; 6350  
 And some han dryven nayles in her brayn,  
 Whiles thay sleepe, and thus thay han hem slayn;  
 Som have hem give poysoun in her drink;  
 He spak more harm than herte may bythynk.  
 And therwithal he knew mo proverbes  
 Than in this world ther growen gres or herbes.  
 Better is, quod he, thyn habitacioun  
 Be with a leoun, or a foul dragoun,  
 Than with a womman usyng for to chyde.  
 Better is, quod he, hihe in the roof abyde, 6360  
 Than with an angry womman doun in a hous;  
 Thay ben so wicked and so contrarious,  
 Thay haten that her housbondes loven ay.  
 He sayd, a womman cast hir schame away,  
 Whan sche cast of hir smok; and forthermo,  
 A fair womman, but sche be chast also,  
 Is lik a gold ryng in a sowes nose.  
 Who wolde wene, or who wolde suppose  
 The wo that in myn herte was and pyne?  
 And whan I saugh he nolde never fyne 6370  
 To reden on this cursed book al night,  
 Al sodeinly thre leves have I plight  
 Out of this booke that he had, and eeke  
 I with my fist so took him on the cheeke,  
 That in oure fuyr he fel bak-ward adoun.  
 And he upstert, as doth a wood leoun,  
 And with his fist he smot me on the hed,  
 That in the floor I lay as I were deed.

6329. *Lyma*. In the Latin story (in the *Epist. Valer ad Rufin.*) the name is *Luna*, which appears first to have been mistaken for *Lima*, and then written *Lyma*. So the scribes in l. 6708, have read *Damit* for *Daunt*, and afterwards written it *Damy*, which is found in one of the Cambridge mss.

6355. *mo proverb s.* See Prov. xxi. 9, 19, and xl. 22. Tyrrhast observes that the observation in l. 6364 is found in Herodotus, lib. i. p. 5. It is, however, found in various medieval writers, from whom Chaucer might have taken it.

And whan he saugh so stille that I lay,  
 He was agast, and wold have fled away. 6380  
 Til atte last out of my swown I brayde.  
 'O, hastow slayn me, false thef?' I sayde,  
 'And for my lond thus hastow mourdrid me?  
 Er I be deed, yit wol I kisse the.'  
 And ner he cam, and knelith faire adoun,  
 And sayde, 'Deere suster Alisoun,  
 As help me God, I schal the never smyte;  
 That I have doon it is thysel to wite;  
 Forgive it me, and that I the biseke.'  
 And yet eftsones I hyt him on the cheke, 6390  
 And sayde, 'Thef, thus mekil I me wreke.  
 Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke.'  
 But atte last, with mochil care and wo,  
 We fyl accordid by oureselven tuo;  
 He gaf me al the bridil in myn hand  
 To have the governaunce of hous and land,  
 And of his tonge, and of his hond also,  
 And made him brenne his book anon right tho.  
 And whan I hadde geten unto me  
 By maistry al the sovereyneté, 6400  
 And that he sayde, 'Myn owne trewe wif,  
 Do as the list the term of al thy lif,  
 Kepe thyn honour, and kep eek myn estat;  
 And after that day we never had debat.  
 God help me so, I was to him as kynde  
 As eny wyf fro Denmark unto Inde,  
 And al so trewe was he unto me.  
 I pray to God that sitte in magesté  
 So blesse his soule, for his mercy deere.  
 Now wol I say my tale, if ye wol heere.' 6410  
 The Frere lough whan he had herd al this:  
 "Now, dame," quod he, "so have I joye and blis,  
 This is a long preambel of a tale."  
 And whan the Sompnour herd the Frere gale,  
 "Lo!" quod this Sompnour, "for Goddes armes  
 A frer wol entremet him evermo. [tuo,  
 Lo, goode men, a flie and eek a frere  
 Woln falle in every dissche and matiere.  
 What spekest thou of perambulacioun?  
 What? ambil, or trot; or pees, or go sit doun;  
 Thou letest oure disport in this matere." 6421  
 "Ye, woltow so, sir sompnour!" quod the Frere.  
 "Now, by my fay, I schal, er that I go,  
 Telle of a sompnour such a tale or tuo,  
 That alle the folk schuln laughen in this place."  
 "Now, ellis, frere, I byschrew thy face."  
 Quod this Sompnour. "And I byschrewe me,  
 But if I telle tales tuo or thre  
 Of freres, er I come to Sydingborne,  
 That I schal make thin herte for to morne; 6430  
 For wel I wot thi paciens is goon."  
 Oure hoste cride, "Pees, and that anon;"  
 And sayde, "Let the womman telle hir tale.  
 Ye fare as folkes that dronken ben of ale.  
 Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is best."  
 "Al redy, sir," quod sche, "right as you lest,  
 If I have licence of this worthy frere." [heere."  
 "Yis, dame," quod he, "tel forth, and I schal

## THE WYF OF BATHES TALE.

In olde dayes of the kyng Arthour, 6440  
 Of which that Britouns speken gret honour,  
 Al was this lond fulfilled of fayrie;

6429. *Sydingborne*. Sittingbourne, about half way between Rochester and Canterbury.

*The Wyf of Bathes Tale*. The source from which Chaucer took this story is somewhat uncertain, but it was very



The elf-queen, with hir joly compaignye,  
 Daunced ful oft in many a grene mede.  
 This was the old oppynyon, as I rede;  
 I speke of many hundrid yer ago;  
 But now can no man see noon elves mo.  
 For now the grete charité and prayeres  
 Of lymytours and other holy freres,  
 That sechen every lond and every stream,  
 As thik as motis in the sonne-beem, 6450  
 Blessyng halles, chambres, kichenes, and boures,  
 Citees and burghes, castels hihe and toures,  
 Thropes and bernes, shepnes and dayeries,  
 That makith that ther ben no fayeries,  
 For ther as wont was to walken an elf,  
 Ther walkith noon but the lymytour himself,  
 In undermeles and in morwenynges,  
 And saith his matyns and his holy thinges  
 As he goth in his lymytacioun.  
 Women may now go saultly up and down, 6460  
 In every bussel, and under every tre,  
 Ther is non other incubus but he,  
 And he ne wol doon hem no dishonour.

And so bifel it, that this king Arthour  
 Had in his hous a lusty bachelor,  
 That on a day com rydyng fro ryver;  
 And happed, al alone as sche was born,  
 He saugh a mayde walking him byforn,  
 Of which mayden anoon, maugré hir heed,  
 By verry fors byraft hir maydenhed. 6470  
 For which oppressioun was such clamour,  
 And such pursuyte unto kyng Arthour,  
 That dampned was the knight and schuld be ded  
 By cours of lawe, and schuld have lost hir heed,  
 (Paraventure such was the statut tho.)  
 But that the queen and other ladyes mo  
 So longe preyeden thay the kyng of grace,  
 Til he his lif hath graunted in the place,  
 And gaf him to the queen, al at hir wille  
 To chese wehkir sche wold him save or spille. 6480  
 The queen thanked the kyng with al hir might;  
 And after thus sche spak unto the knight,  
 Whan that sche saugh hir tyme upon a day:  
 "Thow stondest yet," quod sche, "in such array,  
 That of thy lyf hastow no sewerté;  
 I graunte thy lif, if thou canst telle me,  
 What thing is it that wommen most desiren;  
 Be war, and keep thy nek-bon fro the iren.  
 And if thou canst not tellen it anoon,  
 Yet wol I give the leve for to goon 6490  
 A twelfmonth and a day, it for to lere  
 An answer suffisaunt in this matiere.  
 And seurté wol I have, er that thou pace,  
 Thy body for to yelden in this place."  
 Wo was this knight, and sorrowfully he siked;  
 But what? he may not doon al as him liked.  
 And atte last he ches him for to wende,  
 And come agein right at the yeres ende

With swich answer as God him wolde purveye;  
 And takith his leve, and wendith forth his weye.  
 He sekith every hous and every place, 6501  
 Wher so he hopith for to fynde grace,  
 To lerne what thing wommen loven most;  
 But he ne couthe arryven in no cost,  
 Wher as he mighte fynde in this matiere  
 Two creatures accordyng in fere.  
 Some sayden, wommen loven best richesse,  
 Some sayde honour, and some sayde jolynesse,  
 Some riche array, some sayden lust on bedde,  
 And ofte tyme to be wydow and wedde. 6510  
 Some sayden owre herte is most i-eased  
 Whan we ben y-flaterid and y-preised;  
 He goth ful neigh the soth, I wil not lye;  
 A man schal wyne us best with flaterie;  
 And with attendaunce, and with busynesse  
 Ben we y-limed both more and lesse.  
 And some sayen, that we loven best  
 For to be fre, and to doon as us lest,  
 And that no man repreve us of oure vice,  
 But say that we ben wys, and no thing nyce. 6520  
 For trewely ther is noon of us alle,  
 If eny wight wold claw us on the galle,  
 That we nyl like, for he saith us soth;  
 Assay, and he schal fynd it, that so doth.  
 For be we never so vicious withinne,  
 We schuln be holde wys and clene of synne.  
 And some sayen, that gret delit han we  
 For to be holden stabil and secré,  
 And in oon purpos stedfastly to duelle,  
 And nought bywrewe thing that men us telle. 6530  
 But that tale is not worth a rakes stele.  
 Pardy, we wymmen can right no thing hele,  
 Witnes on Mida; wil ye here the tale?  
 Ovyd, among his other thinges smale,  
 Sayde, Mida had under hir lange heris  
 Growyng upon his heed tuo asses eeris;  
 The whiche vice he hid, as he best might,  
 Ful subtilly fro every mannes sight,  
 That, save his wyf, ther wist of that nomo;  
 He loved hir most, and trusted hir also; 6540  
 He prayed hir, that to no creature  
 Sche schulde tellen of his disfigure.  
 Sche swor him, nay, for al this world to wynne,  
 Sche nolde do that vilonye or synne  
 To make hir husband have so foul a name;  
 Sche wold not tel it for hir oughne schame.  
 But natheles hir thoughte that sche dyde,  
 That sche so long a conseil scholde hyde;  
 Hir thoughte it swal so sore about hir hert,  
 That needely som word hir most astert; 6550  
 And sins sche dorst not tel it unto man,  
 Doun to a marreys faste by sche ran,  
 Til sche cam ther, hir herte was on fuyre;  
 And as a bytoure bumblyth in the myre,  
 Sche layd hir mouth unto the water doun.  
 'Bywrewe me not, thou watir, with thi soun,'  
 Quod sche, 'to the I telle it, and nomo,  
 Myn housbond hath long asse eeris tuo.  
 Now is myn hert al hool, now is it oute,  
 I might no longer kepe it out of doute.' 6560  
 Her may ye se, theigh we a tyme abyde,

6506. *Two creatures.* The Harl. Ms. reads, *To these things accordyng in fere.*

6512. *y-preisid.* The Harl. Ms. reads *y-pleased*; but the reading I have adopted seems to give the best sense.

6523. *like.* Tyrwhitt reads *like*; but the mss. I have consulted agree in *like*, or *loke*, the former being the reading of Ms. Harl.

probably the subject of a French lay. Percy printed a ballad entitled *The Marrings of Sir Gwaine*, which is founded on the same plot. The story of Florent, in Gower, *Conf. Amant*, book 1., bears a close resemblance to it.

6463. The Ms. Harl. reads this line, evidently incorrectly, *And ne wol but doon hem dishonour*. In the previous line, the same manuscript reads erroneously *incubent*, instead of *incubus*.

6466. *fro ryver.* From hawking. *Conf.* l. 13665. Tyrwhitt has given several examples of the same phrase as used in French by Froissart—"Le Comte de Flandres estoit tousjours en riviere" (v. l. c. 140) . . . . King Edward "alloit chacun jour ou en chace ou en riviere." (ib. c. 210.)

Yet out it moot, we can no counsel hyde.

The remenaunt of the tale, if ye wil here,  
Redith Ovid, and ther ye mow it leere.

This knight, of which my tale is specially,  
Whan that he saugh he might nought come therby,  
This is to say, that women loven most,  
Withinne his brest ful sorful was the gost.

But hom he goth, he might not lenger sojourne,  
The day was come, that hom-ward most he torne.  
And in his way, it hapnyd him to ride 6571

In al his care, under a forest side,  
Wher as he saugh upon a daunce go  
Of ladys four and twenty, and yit mo.

Toward this ilke daunce he droughful yerne,  
In hope that he som wisdom schuld i-lerne;  
But certeynly, er he com fully there,

Vanysshid was this daunce, he nyste where;  
No creature saugh he that bar lif,  
Sauf on the greene he saugh sitting a wyf, 6580  
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.

Agens the knight this olde wyf gan ryse,  
And sayd, "Sir knight, heer forth lith no way;  
Tel me what ye seekyn, by your fay.

Paradventure it may the better be:  
Thise olde folk con mochil thing," quod sche.  
"My lieve modir," quod this knight, "certayn

I am but ded but if that I can sayn  
What thing is it that women most desire; 6589  
Conthe ye me wisse, I wold wel quyt your huire."

"Plight me thy trouth her in myn hond," quod  
"The nexte thing that I require the, [sche,  
Thou schalt it doo, if it be in thy might,

And I wol telle it the, er it be night." [graunte."  
"Have her my trouthe, "quod the knight, "I  
"Thanne," quod sche, "I dar me wel avaunte,

Thy lif is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,  
Upon my lif the queen wol say as I;  
Let se, which is the proudest of hem alle,

That werith on a coverchief or a calle, 6600  
That dar say nay of thing I schal the teche.  
Let us go forth withouten more speche."

Tho rowned sche a pistil in his cere,  
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.  
Whan thay ben comen to the court, this knight

Sayd, he had holde his day, that he light,  
Al redy was his answer, as he sayde.  
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,

And many a wydow, for that thay ben wyse.  
The queen herself sitting as a justise, 6610  
Assemblid ben, his answer for to hierie;

And after-ward this knight was bode appiere,  
To every wight comaundid was silence,  
And that the knight schuld telle in audience

What thing that worldly women loven best.  
This knight ne stood not stille, as doth a best,  
But to the question anoon answerde,

With manly voys, that al the court it herde:  
"My liege lady, generally," quod he,  
"Women desiren to have soveraynté 6620

As wel over hir housbond as over hir love,  
And for to be in maystry him above.  
This is your most desir, though ye me kille;

Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille."  
In al the court ne was ther wyf, ne mayde,  
Ne wydow, that contraried that he sayde;

But sayden, he was worthy have his lif.  
And with that word upstart that olde wif,  
Which that the knight saugh sitting on the grene.

"Mercy," quod sche, "my soveraign lady queene,

Er that your court departe, doth me right. 6631

I taughte this answer unto the knight;  
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,  
The firste thing that I wold him requere,

He wold it do, if it lay in his might.  
Before this court then pray I the, sir knight,"  
Quod sche, "that thou me take unto thy wif,

For wel thou wost, that I have kept thy lif;  
If I say fals, sey nay, upon thy fey."  
This knight answerd, "Allas and waylawey!

I wot right wel that such was my byhest. 6641  
For Goddes love, as chese a new request;  
Tak al my good, and let my body go."

"Nay," quod sche than, "I schrew us bothe tuo.  
For though that I be foule, old, and pore,  
I nolde for al the metal ne for the ore

That under erthe is grave, or lith above,  
But I thy wife were and eek thy love."  
"My love?" quod he, "nay, nay, my dampnacioun.

Allas! that any of my nacoun 6650  
Schuld ever so foule disparagid be!"  
But al for nought; the ende is this, that he

Constreigned was, he needes most hir wedde.  
And takith his wyf, and goth with hir to bedde.  
Now wolden som men say paradventure,

That for my negligence I do no cure  
To telle yow the joye and tharray  
That at that fest was maad that ilke day.

To which thing shortly answeren I schal,  
And say ther nas feste ne joy at al, 6660  
Ther nas but hevynes and mochil sorwe;

For prively he weddyd hir in a morwe,  
And alday hudde him as doth an oule,  
So wo was him, his wyf loked so foule.

Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought  
Whan he was with his wyf on bedde brought,  
He walwith, and he torneth to and fro.

His olde wyf lay smylyng ever mo,  
And sayd, "O deere housbond, *benedicite*,

Fareth every knight with his wyf as ye? 6670  
Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?  
Is every knight of bis thus daungerous?

I am your onghne love, and eek your wyf,  
I am sche that hath sayvd your lyf,  
And certes ne dede I yow never unright.

Why fare ye thus with me the firste night?  
Ye fare lik a man that had left his wit.  
What is my gult? for Godes love, tel me it,

And it schal be amendid, if that I may."  
"Amendid!" quod this knight, "allas! nay, nay,  
It wol nought ben amendid, never mo; 6681

Thow art so lothly, and so old also,  
And therto comen of so lowh a kynde,  
That litil wonder is though I walwe and wynde;

So wolde God, myn herte wolde brest!"  
"Is this," quod sche, "the cause of your unrest?"  
"Ye, certeynly," quod he, "no wonder is!"

"Now, sire," quod sche, "I couthe amende all  
If that me list, er it were dayes thre, [this,  
So wel ye mighte here yow to me. 6690

But for ye speken of such gentillesse  
As is descendent out of old richesse,  
Therfor schuld ye ben holden gentil men;

Such arrogaunce is not worth an hen.  
Lok who that is most vertuous alway,  
Privé and pert, and most entendith ay

To do the gentil dedes that he can,  
Tak him for the grettest gentil man.  
Crist, wol we clayme of himoure gentillesse,



Nought of oure eldres for her olde richesse. 6700  
 For though they give us al her heritage,  
 For which we clayme to be of high parage,  
 Yit may thay not biquethe, for no thing  
 To noon of us, so vertuous lyvynge,  
 That made hem gentil men y-callid be,  
 And bad us solve hem in such degra.  
 Wel can the wyse poet of Florence,  
 That hatte Daunt, speke of this sentence;  
 Lo, in such maner of rym is Dauntes tale:  
 Ful seeld uprisith by his braunchis smale 6710  
 Prowes of man, for God of his prowesse  
 Wol that we claime of him our gentillesse;  
 For of our auncestres we no thing clayme  
 But temporal thing, that men may hurt and  
 Ek every wight wol this as wel as I, [mayme.  
 If gentiles were plaunted naturelly  
 Unto a certayn lignage down the line,  
 Privé ne apert, thay wolde never fine  
 To don of gentillesse the fair office,  
 Thay might nought doon no vileny or vice. 6720  
 Tak fuyr and ber it in the derkest hous  
 Bitwixe this and the mount Caucasous,  
 And let men shit the dores, and go thenne,  
 Yit wol the fuyr as fair and lighte brenne  
 As twenty thousand men might it biholde;  
 His office naturel ay wol it holde,  
 Up peril on my lif, til that it dye.  
 Her may ye se wel, how that gentyere  
 Is nought annexid to possessioun,  
 Sithins folk ne doon her operacioun 6730  
 Always, as doth the fuyr, lo, in his kynde.  
 For God it wot, men may ful often fynde  
 A lordes sone do schame and vilonye.  
 And he that wol have pris of his gentrie,  
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,  
 And had his eldres noble and vertuous,  
 And nyl himselve doo no gentil dedes,  
 Ne folw his gentil aunceter, that deed is,  
 He is nought gentil, be he duk or erl;  
 For vileyn synful deedes maketh a cherl. 6740  
 For gentillesse nys but renomé  
 Of thin auncestres, for her heigh bounté,  
 Which is a straunge thing to thy persone;  
 Thy gentillesse cometh fro God alloone.  
 Than comth oure verray gentillesse of grace,  
 It was no thing biquethe us with oure place.  
 Thinketh how nobil, as saith Valerius,  
 Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,  
 That out of povert ros to high noblesse.  
 Redith Senek, and redith eek Boece, 6750  
 Ther schuln ye se expresse, that no dred is,  
 That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis.  
 And therfor, lieve housbond, I conclude,  
 Al were it that myn auncestres wer rude,  
 Yit may the highe God, and so hope I,  
 Graunte me grace to lyve vertuously;  
 Than am I gentil, whan that I bygygne  
 To lyve vertuously, and weyven synne.

6700. *her olde*. The Harl. Ms. reads, *for our gret richesse*.  
 6709. *Dauntes tale*. The words of Dante (*Purg.* vii. 121)

are,—

Rade volte risurge per li rami  
 L' humana probitate: et questo vuole  
 Quei che la da, perche da se si chiami.

6713. *auncestres*. Other mss., with Tyrwhitt, read *our elders may we*, which is perhaps the better reading.

6741. *For gentillesse*. Tyrwhitt refers to Boethius *de Consol.* iii. Pr. 6, for much of the reasoning here adopted by Chaucer.

And ther as ye of povert me repreve,  
 The heighe God, on whom that we believe, 6760  
 In wilful povert ches to lede his lif;  
 And certes, every man, mayden, or wif,  
 May understonde that Jhesus, heven king,  
 Ne wold not chese a vicious lyvynge.  
 Glad povert is an honest thing certayn;  
 This wol Senek and other clerkes sayn.  
 Who that holt him payd of his povert,  
 I hold him riche, al had he nought a schert.  
 He that covetith is a pore wight,  
 For he wold have that is not in his might. 6770  
 But he that nought hath, ne coveteth nought to  
 Is riche, although ye hold him but a knave, [have,  
 Verray povert is synne proprely.

"Juvenal saith of povert merily,  
 The pore man whan he goth by the way  
 Bifore the theves he may synge and play.  
 Povert is hateful good; and, as I gesse,  
 A ful gret brynger out of busynesse;  
 A gret amender eek of sapiens 6780  
 To him that takith it in paciens.

Povert is this, although it seme elenge,  
 Possessioun that no wight wil chalenge.  
 Povert ful often, whan a man is lowe,  
 Makith him his God and eek himself to knowe.  
 Povert a spectacle is, as thinkith me,  
 Thurgh which he may his verray frendes se;  
 And therfor, sir, syth that I yow nought greve,  
 Of my povert no more me repreve.

"Now, sir, of elde ye repreve me;  
 And certes, sir, though noon auctorité 6790  
 Were in no book, ye gentils of honour  
 Sayn that men schuld an old wight doon favour,  
 And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;  
 And auctours I schal fynden, as I gesse.

"Now ther that ye sayn I am foul and old,  
 Than drede yow nought to ben a cokewold.  
 For filthe and elde, al so mot I the,  
 Ben grete wardeyns upon chastité.  
 But natheles, sith I knowe your delyt,  
 I schal fulfille yowre worldly appetyt. 6800  
 Chese now," quod sche, "oon of these thinges  
 To have me foul and old til that I deye, [tweye,  
 And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,  
 And never yow displease in al my lyf;  
 Or elles ye wol have me yong and fair,  
 And take your aventure of the repair  
 That schal be to your hous because of me,  
 Or in som other place it may wel be.

Now chese yourselfen whether that yow liketh."  
 This knight avysith him, and sore sikith, 6810  
 But atte last he sayd in this manere:  
 "My lady and my love, and wif so deere,

6761. *ede*. The Ms. Harl. has *les*, which appears to have been a mere error of the scribe.

6774. *Juvenal saith*. Sat. x. l. 22,—

Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.

6777. *Povert is hateful good*. This is taken from a pretended dialogue between the emperor Adrian and the philosopher Secundus, which is given in Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. Hist.* lib. x. c. 71, and is not unfrequently found in a separate form in old manuscripts. To the question, "Quid est paupertas?" the philosopher replies, "*Odibile bonum; sanitatis mater; remotio curarum; sapientia repertrix; negotium sine damno; possessio alique calumnia; sine sollicitudine felicitas.*"

6797. *al sa, or*, as it is commonly written, *also*, is the Anglo-Saxon *calsa* or *eal swa*. Tyrwhitt, apparently not aware of this, has added another *sa*, not found in any of the mss., and reads the line,

For filthe, and elde also, so mot I the.



I putte me in your wyse governaunce,  
 Chesith yourself which may be most pleasaunce  
 And most honour to yow and me also,  
 I do no fors the whether of the tuo;  
 For as yow likith, it suffisith me." [sche,  
 "Than have I gete of yow the maystry," quod  
 "Sith I may govern and chese as me list?"  
 "Ye certis, wyf," quod he, "I hold it best." 6820  
 "Kys me," quod sche, "we ben no lenger wrothe,  
 For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,  
 This is to say, ye, bothe fair and good.  
 I pray to God that I mot sterve wood,  
 But I be to yow al so good and trewe  
 As ever was wyf, siththen the world was newe;  
 And but I be to morow as fair to seen  
 As eny lady, emperesse, or queen,  
 That is bitwixe thest and eek the west,  
 Doth by my lyf right even as yow lest. 6830  
 Cast up the cortyns, and look what this is."  
 And whan the knyght saugh verraylly al this,  
 That sche so fair was, and so yong therto,  
 For joye he hent hir in his armes tuo;  
 His herte bathid in a bath of blisse,  
 A thousand tyme on rowe he gan hir kisse.  
 And sche obeyed him in every thing  
 That mighte doon him pleisauns or likyng.  
 And thus thay lyve unto her lyves ende  
 In parfyt joye; and Jhesu Crist us sende 6840  
 Housbondes meke, yonge, and freissche on bedde,  
 And grace to overbyde hem that we wedde.  
 And eek I pray to Jhesus schort her lyves,  
 That wil nought be governed after her wyves.  
 And old and angry nygardes of despense,  
 God send hem some verray pestilence!

## THE PROLOGE OF THE FRERE.

THIS worthy lymytour, this noble Frere,  
 He made alway a maner lourynge cheere  
 Upon the Sompnour, but for honeste  
 No vileyns worde yit to him spak he. 6850  
 But atte last he sayd unto the wyf,  
 "Dame," quod he, "God give yow good lyf!  
 Ye han her touchid, al so mot I the,  
 In scole matier gret difficulte.  
 Ye han sayd mochel thing right wel, I say;  
 But, dame, right as we ryden by the way,  
 Us needeth nought but for to speke of game,  
 And lete auctorités, in Goddes name,  
 To preching and to scoles of clergie.  
 But if it like to this companye, 6860  
 I wil yow of a sompnour telle a game;  
 Pardé, ye may wel knowe by the name,  
 That of a sompnour may no good be sayd;  
 I pray that noon of yow be evel apayd;  
 A sompnour is a renner up and doun  
 With maundementz for fornicacioun,  
 And is y-bete at every tounes ende."  
 Our oste spak, "A! sir, ye schold been heende  
 And curteys, as a man of your estaat,  
 In company we wol have no debaat; 6870

6881. The second Cambridge ms. reads, instead of this line,

And so they slept tille the morwe gray;  
 And than she saide, when it was day,  
 "Caste up the crteyn, loke howe it is."

6858. *Auctorités*. "*Auctoritas* was the usual word for what we call a *text* of Scripture. Ms. Harl. 106, 10. *Expositio auctoritatis*, *Majus gaudium super uno peccatore*. *Ibid.* 21. *Expositio auctoritatis*, *Stetit populus de longe*," &c. Tyrwhitt.

Telleth your tale, and let the Sompnour be."  
 "Nay," quoth the Sompnour, "let him say to me  
 What so him list; when it cometh to my lot,  
 By God! I schal him quyten every grot.  
 I schal him telle which a gret honour  
 Is to ben a fals flaterynge lymytour,  
 And his offis I schal him telle i-wis." 6879  
 Oure host answerd, "Pees, no more of this."  
 And after this he sayd unto the Frere,  
 "Telleth forth your tale, my leve maister deere."

## THE FRERES TALE.

WHILOM there was dwellyng in my countré  
 An erchedeken, a man of gret degré,  
 That boldely did execucioun  
 In punyschyng of fornicacioun,  
 Of wichecraft, and eek of bauderye,  
 Of diffamacioun, and avoutrie,  
 Of chirche-reves, and of testametes,  
 Of contractes, and of lak of sacraments,  
 And eek of many another maner cryme,  
 Which needith not to reherse at this tyme; 6890  
 Of usur, and of symony also;  
 But certes leechours did he grettest woo;  
 Thay schulde synge, if they were hent;  
 And smale tythers thay were fouly schent,  
 If eny persoun wold upon hem pleyne,  
 Ther might astert him no pecunial peyne.  
 For smale tythes and for smal offrynge,  
 He made the people pitously to synge.  
 For er the bisschop caught hem in his hook,  
 They weren in the archedeknes book: 6900  
 And hadde thurgh his jurediccioun  
 Power to have of hem correccioun.  
 He had a sompnour redy to his hond,  
 A slyer boy was noon in Engeland;  
 Ful prively he had his espialle,  
 That taughte him wher he might avayle.  
 He couthe spare of leechours oon or tuo,  
 To techen him to four and twenty mo.  
 For though this sompnour wood were as an hare,  
 To telle his harlotry I wol not spare; 6910  
 For we ben out of here correccioun,  
 Thay have of us no jurediccioun,  
 Ne never schul to terme of alle her lyves.  
 "Peter! so been the women of the styves,"  
 Quod this Sompnour, "i-put out of oure cures,"  
 "Pees! with meschance and with mesaventures,"  
 Thus sayd our host, "and let him telle his tale.  
 Now telleth forth, although the Sompnour gale,  
 Ne spareth nought, myn owne maister deere."  
 This false theef, the sompnour, quoth the frere,  
 Had alway bawdes redy to his hond, 6921

6880. *Pees, no more of this*. The Harl. Ms. reads, and sayd the Sompnour this.

6882. *leve*. This word is omitted in the Ms. Harl., but seems necessary for the metre, and is adopted from the Lansdown Ms. Tyrwhitt has *owen maister*.

*The Freres Tale*. It is probable that Chaucer took this admirable story from an old fabliau, now lost, or at least unknown. It has, however, been preserved in an abridged form in a tale printed in my *Selection of Latin Stories*, p. 70, under the title of *De Advocato et Diabolo*, from the *Promptuarium Exemplorum*, a work compiled in the earlier part of the fifteenth century.

6897. *smale tythes and for smal offrynge*. The sermons of the friars in the fourteenth century were most frequently designed to impress the absolute duty of paying full tithes and offerings, which were enforced by a number of legends and stories.

6915. *quod this Sompnour*. The Ms. Harl. reads here, *They both i-put al out, &c.*

As eny hauk to lure in Engelond,  
That told him al the seeré that thay knewe,  
For here acqueintance was not come of newe;  
They were his approwours prively.  
He took himself a gret profyt therby;  
His maister knew nat alway what he wan.  
Withoute maundement, a lewed man  
He couthe sompne, up peyne of Cristes curs,  
And thay were glad to fille wel his purs, 6930  
And make him grete festis atte nale.  
And right as Judas hadde purses smale  
And was a thief, right such a thief was he,  
His maister had not half his dueté;  
He was (if I schal give him his laude)  
A thief, a sompnour, and eek a baude.  
And he had wenches at his retenue,  
That whether that sir Robert or sir Hughe,  
Or Jak, or Rauf, or who so that it were  
That lay by hem, thay told it in his cere. 6940  
Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.  
And he wold feeche a feyned maundement,  
And sompne hem to chapitre bothe tuo,  
And pyle the man, and let the wenche go.  
Than wold he sayn, "I schal, frend, for thy sake,  
Don strike the out of oure lettres blake;  
The thar no more as in this cas travayle;  
I am thy frend ther I the may avayle."  
Certeynly he knew of bribours mo  
Than possible is to telle in yeres tuo; 6950  
For in this world nys dogge for the bowe,  
That can an hurt deer from an hol y-knowe  
Bet than this sompnour knew a leccheour,  
Or avoutier, or ellis a paramour;  
And for that was the fruyt of al his rent,  
Therefore theron he set al his entent.

And so bifel, that oones on a day  
This sompnour, ever wayting on his pray,  
Rod forth to sompne a widew, an old ribibe,  
Feynung a cause, for he wolde han a bribe. 6960  
And happed that he say before him ryde  
A gay yeman under a forest syde;  
A bow he bar, and arwes bright and kene,  
He had upon a courtepy of grene,  
An hat upon his heed, with frenges blake. [take!"]  
"Sir," quod this sompnour, "heyl and wel over-  
"Welcome," quod he, "and every good felawe;  
Whider ridestow under this grene schawe?"  
Sayde this yiman, "Wiltow fer to day?"  
This sompnour answerd, and sayde, "Nay. 6970  
Her faste by," quod he, "is myn entent  
To ryden, for to reysen up a rent.  
That longith to my lordes dueté."  
"Artow than a bayely?" "Ye," quod he.

6932. *Judas.* According to the medieval legends, Judas was Christ's purse-bearer, and embezzled a part of the money which was given to him for his master. We are informed in the metrical life of Judas, in Ms. Harl. 2277 (fol. 228 v<sup>o</sup>), that

Siththe oure Loverd him makede apostle to fondi his mod,  
And siththe pursberer of his pans to spene al his god;  
For meni men gyve oure Loverd god that were of gode  
To susteyn his apostles, oure madde he noight. [thought,  
Ac the Judas withinne was and his mighte founde,  
Of oure Loverdes god that he wiste he stal al to grounde;  
When he mighte of eche thing, the teotinge he wolde stele:  
A schrewe he was al his lyl, y ne mai no leng hele.  
Wel wiste oure Loverd thus and al his lither dede,  
Ac natheles he moste fulfulle that the prophetes sede.

6960. *han a.* These words are omitted in the Harl. and Lansd. Mss.

6974. *Ye.* This word is omitted in the Harl. Ms., probably by an oversight.

He durste not for verray filth and schame  
Sayn that he was a sompnour, for the name.

"*De par dieux!*" quod the yeman, "lieve bro-  
Thou art a bayly, and I am another. [ther,  
I am unknowen, as in this contré;  
Of thin acquaintance I wol praye the, 6980  
And eek of brotherheed, if it yow lest.  
I have gold and silver in my chest;  
If that the happe come into oure schire,  
Al schal be thin, right as thou wolt desire."  
"*Graunt mercy,*" quod this sompnour, "by my  
Everich in otheres hond his trouthe laith, [faith!"  
For to be sworne bretheren til thay deyen.  
In daliaunce forth thay ride and pleyen.

This sompnour, which that was as ful of jangles,  
As ful of venym ben these veryangles, 6990  
And ever enquerung upon every thing,  
"Brother," quod he, "wher now is your dwellyng,  
Another day if that I schuld yow seeche?"  
This yiman him answerd in softe speche:  
"Brother," quod he, "fer in the north contré,  
Wheras I hope somtyme I schal the se.  
Er we depart I schal the so wel wisse,  
That of myn hous ne schaltow never misse."  
"Now, brother," quod this sompnour, "I yow  
pray,

Teche me, while that we ryden by the way, 7000  
Syn that ye ben a baily as am I,  
Som subtilté, as tel me faithfully  
In myn office how that I may wyne.  
And spare not for consiens or for synne,  
But, as my brother, tel me how do ye."

"Now, by my trouthe, brothir myn," said he,  
"As I schal telle the a faithful tale.  
My wages ben ful streyt and eek ful smale;  
My lord to me is hard and daungerous,  
And myn office is ful laborous; 7010  
And therfor by extorcious I lyve,  
Fosoth I take al that men wil me give,  
Algate by sleighte or by violence  
Fro yer to yer I wyne my despence;  
I can no better telle faithfully."

"Now certes," quod this sompnour, "so fare I;  
I spare not to take, God it woot,  
But if it be to hevry or to hoot.  
What I may gete in counseil prively,  
No more consiens of that have I. 7020  
Nere myn extorcions, I might not lyven,  
Ne of such japes I wil not be schriven.  
Stomak ne conscience know I noon;  
I schrew thes schrifte-fadres everychoon.  
Wel be we met, by God and seint Jame!  
But, leve brother, telle me thy name,"  
Quod this sompnour. In this mene while  
This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.  
"Brothir," quod he, "woltow that I the telle?  
I am a feend, my dwellyng is in helle, 7030  
And her I ryde about my purchasung,

6937. *sworne bretheren.* The custom of swearing fraternity has been already alluded to in a note on l. 1134.

6995. *north contré.* According to medieval legends, hell lay to the north (see my *Patrick's Purgatory*), so that there is irony in this reply.

7009. *hard.* The Harl. Ms. reads *streyt*, probably a mere error, arising from the occurrence of the same word in the preceding line.

7018. *to hevry or to hoot.* This was a common expression. Tyrrwhitt quotes an example from Froissart, v. i. c. 229, *ne laissez rien à prendre, s'il n'estoit trop chaud, trop froid, ou trop pesant.*



To wite wher men wol give me eny thing.  
 My purchas is theffet of al my rent.  
 Loke how thou ridest for the same entent  
 To wyne good, thou rekkist never how,  
 Right so fare I, for ryde I wolde now  
 Unto the worldis ende for a pray." [say?  
 "A!" quod the sompnour, "*benedicite*, what ye  
 I wende ye were a yeman twrely.  
 Ye han a mannes schap as wel as I. 7040  
 Have ye a figure than determinate  
 In helle, ther ye ben in your estate?"  
 "Nay, certeynly," quod he, "ther have we non,  
 But whan us likith we can take us on,  
 Or ellis make yow seme that we ben schape  
 Som tyme like a man, or like an ape;  
 Or lik an aungel can I ryde or go;  
 It is no wonder thing though it be so,  
 A lousy jogelour can deceyve the,  
 And, parfay, yit can I more craft than he." 7050  
 "Why," quod this sompnour, "ryde ye than  
 or goon  
 In sondry wyse, and nought alway in oon?"  
 "For," quod he, "we wol us in such forme make,  
 As most abil is oure pray to take."  
 "What makith yow to have al this labour?"  
 "Ful many a cause, lieve sir sompnour,"  
 Sayde this feend. "But al thing hath a tyme;  
 The day is schort, and it is passed prime,  
 And yit ne wan I nothing in this day;  
 I wol entent to wynnyng, if I may, 7060  
 And not entende oure thinges to declare;  
 For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare  
 To understand, although I told hem the.  
 For but thou axid whi labour we;  
 For som tyme we ben Goddis instrumentes,  
 And menes to don his comaundementes,  
 Whan that him list, upon his creatures,  
 In divers act and in divers figures.  
 Withouten him we have no might certeyn,  
 If that him liste stonde ther agayn. 7070  
 And som tyme at our prayer have we levee,  
 Only the body, and not the soule greve;  
 Witness on Jobe, whom we dide ful wo.  
 And som tyme have we might on bothe tuo,  
 This is to say of body and soule eeke.  
 And som tyme be we suffred for to seeke  
 Upon a man, and doon his soule unrest  
 And not his body, and al is for the best.  
 Whan he withstondith oure temptacioun,  
 It is a cause of his savacioun, 7080  
 Al be it so it was nought oure entent  
 He schuld be sauf, but that we wold him hent.  
 And som tyme we ben servaunt unto man,  
 As to therechibisschop seynt Dunstan,  
 And to thapostolis, servaunt was I."

7041 *figure than determinate*. In this and the following lines, Chaucer enters into the ordinary philosophical speculations of his time on the nature of spirits.

7044. *take*. The Harl. Ms. has *make*, but the reading of the Lansd. Ms., here adopted, seems best.

7045. *yow seme*, i.e. make it seem to you. Tyrwhitt reads *wene*, but the reading of the present text is supported by the best mss.

7049. *lousy jogelour*. The *jogelour* (*joculator*) was originally the minstrel, and at an earlier period was an important member of society. He always combined mimicry and mount-bank performances with poetry and music. In Chaucer's time he had so far degenerated as to have become a mere mount-bank, and, as it appears, to have merited the energetic epithet here applied to him.

7084. *seynt Dunstan*. This probably alludes to some popular story of Dunstan now lost.

"Yit tel me," quod the sompnour, "faithfully,  
 Make ye yow newe bodies alway  
 Of elementz?" The fend answerde, "Nay;  
 Som tyme we feyne, and som tyme we ryse  
 With dede bodies, in ful wonder wyse, 7090  
 And speke renably, and as fair and wel  
 As to the Phitonissa dede Samuel;  
 And yit wol somme say, it was not he.  
 I do no fors of your divinité.  
 But oon thing warne I the, I wol not jape,  
 Thou wilt algates wite how we ben schape:  
 Thou schalt hereafter-ward, my brother deere,  
 Com, wher the nedith nothing for to leere,  
 For thou schalt by thin oughn experience  
 Conne in a chayer reden of this sentence 7100  
 Bet than Virgile, whils he was on lyve,  
 Or Daunt also. Now let us ryde blyve,  
 For I wol holde company with the,  
 Til it be so that thou forsake me."  
 "Nay," quod the sompnour, "that schal nought  
 I am a yiman that knowen is ful wyde; [betyde.  
 My trouthe wol I hold, as in this caas.  
 For though thou be the devyl Sathanas,  
 My trouthe wol I holde to the, my brother,  
 As I am swore, and ech of us to other, 7110  
 For to be trewe bretheren in this caas;  
 For bothe we goon abouten oure purchas.  
 Tak thou thil part, and that men wil the gyven,  
 And I schal myn, thus may we bothe lyven.  
 And if eny of us have more than other,  
 Let him be trewe, and part it with his brother."  
 "I graunte," quod the devel, "by my fay!"  
 And with that word thay riden forth her way;  
 And right at thentryng of a townes ende, 7119  
 To which this sompnour schope him for to wende,  
 Thay seigh a cart, that chargid was with hay,  
 Which that a carter drof forth in his way.  
 Deep was the way, for which the carte stood;  
 This carter smoot, and cryde as he wer wood.  
 "Hayt, brok; hayt, stot; what spare ye for the  
 stoones?  
 The fend," quod he, "yow fech body and bones,  
 As ferforthly as ever wer ye folid!  
 So moche wo as I have with yow tholid!  
 The devyl have al, bothe cart and hors and hay!"  
 This sompnour sayde, "Her schal we se play."  
 And ner the feend he drough, as nought ne were,  
 Ful prively, and rouned in his eere, 7132  
 "Herke, my brother, harke, by thi faith!  
 Ne herest nought thou what the carter saith?  
 Hent it anoon, for he hath given it the,  
 Bothe hay and caples, and eek his cart, pardé!"  
 "Nay," quod the devyl, "God wot, never a del,  
 It is nought his entente, trustith wel,  
 Ask it thiself, if thou not trovist me,  
 Or ellis stint a while and thou schalt se." 7140  
 This carter thakketh his hors upon the crounc.  
 And thay by now, quod he, to drawn and to stowpe.  
 "Hayt now," quod he, "ther Jhesu Crist yow  
 blesse,  
 And al his hondwerk, bothe more and lesse!  
 That was wel-twight, myn oughne lyard, boy,  
 I pray God save thy body and seint Loy.

7090. *dede bodies*. The adoption of the bodies of the deceased by evil spirits in their wanderings upon earth, was an important part of the medieval superstitions of this country, and enters largely into a variety of legendary stories found in the old chroniclers.

7130. *se play*. The Lansd. Ms. reads, *have a pleie*. Tyrwhitt's reading is, *have a pray*.



Now is my cart out of the sloo pardé!"  
 "Lo! brother," quod the fend, "what told I the?  
 Her may ye seen, myn owne deere brother,  
 The carter spak oon thing, and thought another.  
 Let us go forth abouten our viage; 7151  
 Hler wyne I nothing upon cariage."

Whan that thay comen somewhat out of toune,  
 This sompnour to his brothir gan to rounde;  
 "Brothir," quod he, "her wonyth an olde rebekke,  
 That had almost as lief to leese hir necke,  
 As for to give a peny of hir good.

I wol han twelf pens though that sche go wood,  
 Or I wol somone hir to oure office;  
 And yit, God wot, I know of hir no vice. 7160  
 But for thou canst not, as in this contré,  
 Wynne thy cost, tak her ensample of me."

This sompnour clapped at the widowes gate;  
 "Com out," quod he, "thou olde virvirrate;  
 I trowe thou hast som frere or prest with the."  
 "Who clappith ther?" sayd this widow, "benedicite!  
 God save yow, sir! what is your swete wille?"

"I have," quod he, "a somonaunce of a bille,  
 Up payne of cursyng, loke that thou be  
 To morwe biforn our erchedeknes kne, 7170  
 To answer to the court of certeyn thinges."

"Now," quod sche, "Jhesu Crist, and king of  
 So wisly helpe me, as I ne may. [kinges,  
 I have ben seek, and that ful many a day.

I may not goon so fer," quod sche, "ne ryde,  
 But I be deed, so prikith it in my syde.  
 May I nat aske a lybel, sir sompnour,  
 And answer ther by my procuratur  
 To suche thing as men wol oppose me?"

"Yis," quod this sompnour, "pay anoon, let se,  
 Twelf pens to me, and I the wil acquite. 7181  
 I schal no profyt have therby but lite;  
 My mayster hath the profyt and not I.  
 Com of, and let me ryden hastily;

Gif me my twelf pens, I may no lenger tary."  
 "Twelf pens?" quod sche, "now lady scinte  
 Mary

So wisly help me out of care and synne,  
 This wyde world though that I schulde wyne,  
 Ne have I not twelf pens withinne myn hold. 7190  
 Ye knowen wel that I am pore and old;  
 Kithe your almes on me pore wrecche."

"Nay than," quod he, "the foule fend me fecche!  
 If I thexeuse, though thou schalt be spilt."

"Allas!" quod sche, "God wot, I have no gilt."  
 "Pay me," quod he, "or by the swet seint Anne!  
 As I wol bere away thy newe panne  
 For dette, which thou owest me of old,  
 Whan that thou madest thin housbond cokewold,  
 I payd at hom for thy correccioun."

"Thou lixt," quod sche, "by my savacioun, 7200  
 Ne was I never er now, wydow ne wyf,  
 Somound unto your court in al my lyf;  
 Ne never I was but of my body trewe.  
 Unto the devel rough and blak of hiewe  
 Give I thy body and the panne also!"

And whan the devyl herd hir curse so  
 Upon hir knees, he sayd in this manere:  
 "Now, Mabely, myn owne modir deere,  
 Is this your wil in earnest that ye seye?"

"The devel," quod sche, "fecche him er he deye,  
 And panne and al, but he wol him repente!" 7211

"Nay, olde stot, that is not myn entente,"  
 Quod this sompnour, "for to repente me  
 For any thing that I have had of the;  
 I wold I had thy smok and every cloth."

"Now brothir," quod the devyl, "be not wroth;  
 Thy body and this panne is myn by right.  
 Thou schalt with me to helle yit to night,  
 Wher thou schalt knowen of oure priveté  
 More than a maister of divinité." 7220

And with that word the foule fend him hente;  
 Body and soule, he with the devyl wente,  
 Wher as the sompnours han her heritage;  
 And God that maketh after his ymage  
 Mankynde, save and gyde us alle and some,  
 And levee this Sompnour good man to bycome.

"Lordyngs, I couth han told yow," quod the  
 "Had I had leysir for this Sompnour here, [frere,  
 After the text of Crist, and Powel, and Jon,  
 And of oure other doctours many oon, 7230  
 Such peynes that our herte might agrise,  
 Al be it so, no tonge may devyse,

Though that I might a thousand wynter telle,  
 The peyn of thilke cursed hous of helle.  
 But for to kepe us from that cursed place,  
 Wakith, and prayeth Jhesu for his grace,  
 So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.

Herknith this word, beth war as in this cas.  
 The lyoun syt in his awayt alway  
 To slen the innocent, if that he may. 7240  
 Disposith youre hertes to withstonde

The fend, that wolde make yow thral and bonde;  
 He may not tempte yow over your might,  
 For Crist wol be your champion and knight;  
 And prayeth, that oure Sompnour him repente  
 Of his mysdede, er that the fend him hente."

## THE SOMPNOURES PROLOGE.

This Sompnour in his styrop up he stood,  
 Upon the Frere his herte was so wood,  
 That lyk an aspen leef he quok for ire.  
 "Lordyngs," quod he, "but oon thing I desire;  
 I yow biseke, that of your curtesye, 7251  
 Syn ye han herd this false Frere lye,  
 As suffrih me I may my tale telle.

This Frere bosteth that he knowith helle,  
 And, God it wot, that is litil wonder,  
 Freres and feendes been but litel asonder.  
 For, pardy, ye han often tyme herd telle,  
 How that a frere ravyscht was to helle

In spirit ones by a visoun,  
 And as an angel lad him up and doun, 7260  
 To schewen him the peynes that ther were,  
 In al the place saugh he not a frere,  
 Of other folk he saugh y-nowe in wo.

Unto this angel spak this frere tho:  
 'Now, sire,' quod he, 'han freres such a grace,  
 That noon of hem schal comen in this place?'  
 'Yis,' quod this anngil, 'many a mylioun.'

And unto Sathanas he lad him doun.  
 'And now hath Sathanas,' saith he, 'a tayl  
 Broder than of a carrik is the sayl.' 7270  
 'Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas,' quod he,  
 'Schew forth thyn ers, and let the frere se

Wher is the nest of freres in this place.'  
 And er than half a forlong way of space,  
 Right so as bees swarmen out of an hyve,  
 Out of the develes ers thay gonne dryve,

7158. *wol han twelf.* By a curious error of the scribe these three words are contracted into *wol* in the Harl. Ms.  
 7186. *twelf pens.* The penny was at this time a coin of much greater relative value than the coin known under that name at the present day.

Twenty thousand freres on a route,  
 And thoroughout helle swarmed al aboute,  
 And comen agen, as fast as thay may goon,  
 And in his ers thay crepen everichoon. 7280  
 He clappid his tayl agayn, and lay ful stille.  
 This frere, whan he loked had his fille  
 Upon the torment of this sory place,  
 His spirit God restored of his grace  
 Unto his body agayn, and he awook;  
 But natheles for fere yit he quook,  
 So was the develes ers yit in his mynde,  
 That is his heritage of verray kynde.  
 God save yow alle, save this cursed Frere;  
 My prolong wol I ende in this manere." 7290

## THE SOMPNOURES TALE.

LORDYNGS, ther is in Engeland, I gesse,  
 A messchly lond called Holdernesse,  
 In which ther went a lymytour aboute  
 To preche, and eek to begge, it is no doubte.  
 And so bifel it on a day this frere  
 Had preched at a church in his manere,  
 And specially aboven every thing  
 Excited he the peopul in his preching  
 To trentals, and to give for Goddis sake,  
 Wherwith men mighten holy houses make, 7300  
 Ther as divine servys is honoured,  
 Nought ther as it is wasted and devoured;  
 Neither it needeth not for to be give  
 As to possessioneres, that mow lye,  
 Thanked be God, in wele and abundaunce.  
 "Trentals," said he, "delyvereth for penaunce  
 Her frendes soules, as wel eld as yonge,  
 Ye, whanne that thay hastily ben songe,  
 Nought for to hold a prest jolif and gay,  
 He syngith not but oon masse in a day. 7310  
 Deiyverth it," quod he, "anoon the soules.  
 Ful hard it is, with fleischhok or with oules  
 To ben y-clawed, or brend, or i-bake;  
 Now speed yow hastily for Cristes sake."  
 And whan this frere had sayd al his entent,  
 With *qui cum patre* forth his way he went.  
 Whan folk in church had give him what hem lest,  
 He went his way, no lenger wold he rest,  
 With scrip and pyked staf, y-touked yre;  
 In every hous he gan to pore and pryce, 7320  
 And beggyd mele or chese, or ellis corn.

*The Sompnours Tale.* I have not met with this story elsewhere. It is a bitter satire on the covetousness of the friars, who were eager and officious attendants on the death-beds of those who had any thing to give away. In this respect it may be compared with the satirical notices in *Piers Ploughmans Crede*.

7292. *Holdernesse.* This district lies on the coast of Yorkshire.

7300. *houses.* The Harl. Ms. reads *soules*.

7304. *possessioneres*—i.e. the regular orders of monks, who possessed landed property and enjoyed rich revenues. The friars were forbidden by their rule to possess property, which they only did under false pretences: they depended for support on voluntary offerings.

7306. *Trentals.* A service of thirty masses, for which of course the friars required a much greater sum than for a single mass.

7311. *anoon.* This word is omitted in the Harl. Ms.

7312. *fleischhok or with oules.* In the old paintings and illuminations representing the infernal regions, the fiends are pictured tearing and piercing the wicked with hooks and other similar instruments, while they are roasting in fires and boiling in pots, or tormented in other similar manners.

7316. *qui cum patre.* The conclusion of the formula of final benediction. Ms. Harl. omits the words *his way*, which seem necessary for the metre.

His felaw had a staf typped with horn,  
 A payr of tablis al of yvory,  
 And a poyntel y-polischit fetisly,  
 And wroot the names alway as he stood  
 Of alle folk that gaf him eny good,  
 Ascaunce that he wolde for hem preye.  
 "Gif us a busschel whet, or malt, or reye,  
 A Goddes kichil, or a trip of chese,  
 Or elles what yow list, we may not chese; 7330  
 A Goddes halpeny, or a masse peny;  
 Or gif us of youre braunne, if ye have eny,  
 A dagoun of your blanket, leeve dame,  
 Oure suster deer,—lo! her I write your name—  
 Bacoun or beef, or such thing as we fynde."  
 A stourdy harlot ay went hem byhynde,  
 That was her hostis man, and bar a sak,  
 And what men gaf hem, layd it on his bak.  
 And whan that he was out atte dore, anooun  
 He planed out the names everychoon, 7340  
 That he biforn had writen in his tablis;  
 He served hem with nyfles and with fablis.

"Nay, ther thou lixt, thou Sompnour," sayd the Frere.

"Pees," quod our host, "for Cristes moder deere,  
 Tel forth thy tale, and spare it not at al."

"So thrive I," quod the Sompnour, "so I schal!"

So long he wente hous by hous, til he  
 Cam til an hous, ther he was wont to be  
 Refresshid mor than in an hundrid placis.

Syk lay the housbond man, whos that the place is,  
 Bedred upon a couche lowe he lay. 7351

"*Deus hic*," quod he, "O Thomas, frend, good  
 Sayde this frere al curteysly and softe. [day!"]

"O Thomas, God yeld it yow, ful ofte  
 Have I upon this bench i-fare ful wel,  
 Her have I eten many a mery mel."

And fro the bench he drof away the eat,  
 And layd adoun his potent and his hat,  
 And eek his scrip, and set him soft adoun;

His felaw was go walkid in the toun 7360  
 Forth with his knave, into the ostelrye,  
 Wher as he schop him thilke night to lye.

"O deere maister," quod the seeke man,  
 "How have ye fare siththe Mareh bygan?"

I saygh yow nought this fourteenight or more."

"God wot," quod he, "labord have I ful sore;  
 And specially for thy salvacioun

Have I sayd many a precious orisoun,  
 And for myn other frendes, God hem blesse.

I have to day ben at your church at messe, 7370  
 And sayd a sermoun after my simple wit,  
 Nought al after the text of holy wryt.

For it is hard for yow, as I suppose,  
 And therfor wil I teche yow ay the glose.

Glosyng is a ful glorious thing certayn,  
 For letter sleth, so as we clerkes sayn.

Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,  
 And spend her good ther it is resonable;

And ther I seigh our dame, wher is she?"

"Yond in the yerd I trowe that sche be," 7380

7329. *A Goddes kichil.* Tyrwhitt explains this phrase by a note of M. De la Monnaie on the Contes de Bonaventure des Periers, t. ii. p. 107. *Belle serrure de Dieu* . . .

expression du petit peuple, qui rapporte pleusement tout à Dieu.—Rien n'est plus commun dans la bouche des bonnes vieilles, que ces espèces d'Hébraïsmes: *Il m'en coûte un bel écu de Dieu; Il ne me reste que ce pauvre enfant de Dieu; Donnez-moi une bénite amoné de Dieu.* So we have two lines below, a *Goddes halpeny*.

7332. *Deus hic!* God be here! the ordinary formula of benediction on entering a house.



Sayde this man, "and sche wil come anon."

"Ey, mayster, welcome be ye, by seint Johan!"  
Sayde this wyf, "how fare ye hertily?"

The frere ariseth up ful curteisly,  
And her embracith in his armes narwe,  
And kist hir swete, and chirkith as a sparwe  
With his lippes: "Dame," quod he, "right wel,  
As he that is your servaunt everydel,  
Thankyd be God, that yow gaf soule and lif,  
Yit saugh I not this day so fair a wyf 7390  
In al the chirche, God so save me."

"Ye, God amend defautes, sir," quod sche,  
"Algates welcome be ye, by my fay."

"Graunt mercy, dame; this have I found alway.  
But of your grete goodnes, by youre leve,  
I wolde pray yow that ye yow not greeve,  
I wil with Thomas speke a litel throwe;  
These crates ben ful negligent and slowe  
To grepe tendurly a conscience.

In schrifit and preching is my diligence, 7400  
And study in Petres wordes and in Poules,  
I walk and fische Cristen mennes soules,  
To yelde Jhesu Crist his propre rent;  
To spreden his word is al my entent."

"Now, by your leve, o deere sir," quod sche,  
"Chyd him right wel for seinte Trinite.  
He is as angry as a pissemyre,  
Though that he have al that he can desire,  
Though I him wrye on night, and make him warm,  
And over him lay my leg other myn arm, 7410  
He groneth lik our boor, that lith in sty.  
Othir disport of him right noon have I,  
I may please him in no maner caas."

"O Thomas, *jeo vous dy*, Thomas, Thomas,  
This makth the feend, this moste ben amendid.  
Ire is a thing that highe God defendid,  
And therof wold I speke a word or tuo."

"Now, maister," quod the wyf, "er that I go,  
What wil ye dine? I wil go therabout."

"Now, dame," quod he, "*jeo vous dy saunz doute*,  
Have I not of a capoun but the lyvere, 7421  
And of your softe brede but a schivere,  
And after that a rostydd pigges heed,  
(But that I wold for me no best were deed)  
Than had I with yow homly suffisaunce.  
I am a man of litel sustinaunce.

My spirit hath his fostryng on the Bible.  
The body is ay so redy and so penyble  
To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.  
I pray yow, dame, that ye be not anoyed, 7430  
For I so frendly yow my counsel schewe;  
By God! I nold not telle it but a feve."

"Now, sir," quod sche, "but o word er I go.  
My child is deed withinne this wykes tuo,  
Soon after that ye went out of this town."

"His deth saugh I by revelacioun."  
Sayde this frere, "at hoom inoure dourtour.  
I dar wel sayn, er that half an hour  
After his deth, I seigh him born to blisse  
In myn avyssioun, so God me wisse. 7440  
So did our sextein, and our fermerere,  
That han ben trewe freres fifty yere;  
They may now, God be thanked of his lone,  
Maken her jubilé, and walk alloone.

7444. *jubilé*. "See Ducange in v. *Sempecta*. Peculiar honours and immunities were granted by the Rule of St. Benedict to those monks, *qui quinquaginta annos in ordine ex gerant, quos annum jubilarium ex gisse vulgo dicimus*. It is probable that some similar regulation obtained in the other orders." *Tyrwhitt*. The Harl. Ms. has many in-

And up I roos, and al our covent eeke,  
With many a teere trilling on my cheeke,  
*Te Deum* was our song, and nothing ellis,  
Withouten noys or clatering of bellis,  
Save that to Crist I sayd an orisoun,  
Thankyng him of my revelacioun. 7450

For, sire and dame, trustith me right wel,  
Our orisouns ben more effectuel,  
And more we se of Goddis secré thinges,  
Than borel folk, although that thay ben kinges.  
We lyve in povert and in abstinence,  
And borel folk in riches and dispence  
Of mete and drink, and in her ful delyt.

We han al this worldes lust al in despyt.  
Lazar and Dives lyveden diversely,  
And divers gayerdoun hadde thay thereby. 7460  
Who so wol pray, he must faste, and be clene,  
And fatte his soule, and make his body lene.  
We faren, as saith thapostil; cloth and foode  
Sufficeth us, though thay ben not goode.

The clenness and the fastyng of us freres  
Makith that Crist acceptithoure prayers.  
Lo, Moyses forty dayes and forty night  
Fasted, er that the highe God of might  
Spak with him in the monnt of Synay;  
With empty wombe fastyng many a day, 7470

Receyved he the lawe, that was writen  
With Goddis fynger; and Eli, wel ye witen,  
In mount Oreb, er he had any speche  
With highe God, that is our lyves leche,  
He fastid, and was in contempacioun.

Aron, that had the temple in governacioun,  
And eek the other prestes everychoon,  
Into the temple whan thay schulden goon  
To preye for the poeple, and doon servise,  
Thay nolden drinken in no maner wise 7480

No drynke, which that dronke might hem make,  
But ther in abstinence prey and wake,  
Lest that thay dedin; tak heed what I say—  
But thay ben sobre that for the pepul pray—  
War that I say—no mor; for it suffisith.

Oure Lord Jhesu, as oure lore devysith,  
Gaf us ensampil of fastyng and prayres;  
Therefore we mendinaunt, we sely freres,  
Ben wedded to povert and to continence,  
To charité, humblesse, and abstinence, 7490  
To persecucioun for rightwisnesse,  
To wepyng, misericord, and clenness.

And therfor may ye seen that oure prayres  
(I speke of us, we mendeaunts, we freres)  
Ben to the hihe God mor acceptable  
Than youres, with your festis at your table.

Fro Paradis first, if I schal not lye,  
Was man out chaced for his glotonye,  
And chast was man in Paradis certeyn.  
But now herk, Thomas, what I schal the seyn,  
I ne have no tixt of it, as I suppose, 7501  
But I schal fynd it in a maner glose;

stead of *fifty*, which latter reading is given by Ms. Lansd., and would seem by the context to be the correct one.

7454. *borel folk*—laymen. The term appears to have arisen from the material of their clothing, which was not used by the clergy.

7458. *lust et.* I have adopted this reading from the Lansdowne Ms., as the reading of the Harl. Ms., *delt*, seems to have been an error of the scribe, who had in his ears the last word of the preceding line.

7461. *he must*. These words, omitted in the Harl. Ms., seem necessary to the sense.

7486. *oure lore*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *holy God*, and Tyrwhitt gives *holy writ*.



That specially our swete Lord Jhesus  
 Spak this by freres, whan he sayde thus,  
 Blessed be thay that pover in spirit ben.  
 And so forth in the gospel ye may seen,  
 Whether it be likir oure professionn,  
 Or heris that swymmen in possessionn.  
 Fy on her pomp, and on her glotenyne,  
 And on her lewydnesse! I hem defye. 7510  
 Me thinkith thay ben lik Jovynian,  
 Fat as a whal, and walken as a swan;  
 Al vinolent as botel in the spence.  
 Her prayer is of ful gret reverence;  
 Whan thay pray for soules sayn the Psalm of David,  
 Lo, boef thay say, *Cor meum eructavit*.  
 Who folwith Cristes gospel and his lore  
 But we, that humble ben, and chast, and pore,  
 Workers of Goddes word, not auditours?  
 Therfor right as an hauk upon a sours 7520  
 Upspringeth into thaer, right so prayeres  
 Of charitabil and chaste busy freres  
 Maken her sours to Goddis eres tuo.  
 Thomas, Thomas, so mote I ryde or go,  
 And by that Lord that elepid is seint Ive,  
 Ner thou oure brother, schuldestow never thrive.  
 In oure chapitre pray we day and night  
 To Crist, that he the sende hele and might  
 Thy body for to welden hastily."

"God wot," quod he, "therof nought feele I,  
 As help me Crist, as I in fewe yeeres 7531  
 Have spendid upon many divers freres  
 Ful many a pound, yit fare I never the bet;  
 Certeyn my good have I almost byset.  
 Farwel my gold, for it is almost ago."  
 The frere answerd, "O Thomas, dostow  
 What needith yow dyverse freres seche?  
 What needith him that hath a parfyt leche  
 To sechen othir leches in the toun?  
 Youre inconstance is youre confusoun. 7540  
 Holde ye than me, or elles oure covent,  
 To praye for yow insufficient?  
 Thomas, that jape is not worth a myte;  
 Youre malady is for we have to lite.  
 A! give that covent half a quarter otes;  
 A! give that covent four and twenty grotes;  
 A! giveth that frere a peny, and let him go;  
 Nay, nay, Thomas, it may nought be so.  
 What is a ferthing worth depart in tuelve?  
 Lo, eek thing that is ooned in himselve 7550  
 Is more strong than whan it is to-skatrid.  
 Thomas, of me thou schait not ben y-flatrid,  
 Thow woldist have our labour al for nought.  
 The bihe God, that al this world hath wrought,  
 Saith, that the werkman is worthy of his hyre.  
 Thomas, nought of your tresor I desire  
 As for myself, but for that oure covent  
 To pray for yow is ay so diligent;  
 And for to buylden Cristes holy chirche.  
 Thomas, if ye wil lerne for to wirche, 7560  
 Of buyldyng up on chirches may ye fynde  
 If it be good, in Thomas lyf of Ynde.

7511. *Jovynian*. Probably an allusion to an emperor Jovinian, celebrated in the *Gesta Romanorum* (c. lix.) and in other mediaeval legends for his pride and luxury. In the sixteenth century, the story was in France worked into a morality, under the title *Lorgueil et presumption de l'empereur Jovynien*. It is the same story as that of Robert king of Sicily, in the early English romance.

7562. In *Thomas lyf of Ynde*. I find nothing of the sort in the life of St. Thomas. Perhaps the friar is made to quote at random, reckoning upon the ignorance of his auditor.

Ye lye her ful of anger and of ire,  
 With which the devel set your hert on fuyre,  
 And chyden her the holy innocent  
 Your wyf, that is so meke and pacient.  
 And therfor trow me, Thomas, if thou list,  
 Ne stryve nought with thy wyf, as for thy best.  
 And ber this word away now by thy faith,  
 Toucheinge such thing, lo, the wise man saith,  
 Withinne thin hous be thou no lyoun; 7571  
 To thy subjects do noon oppression;  
 Ne make thyn acqueyntis fro the fle.  
 And yit, Thomas, eftsons I charge the,  
 Be war for ire that in thy bosom slepith,  
 War for the serpent, that so slyely crepith  
 Under the gras, and styngith prively;  
 Be war, my sone, and werk paciently,  
 For twenty thousand men han lost her lyves  
 For stryvyng with her lemmans and her wyves.  
 Now syns ye han so holy and meeke a wif, 7581  
 What nedith yow, Thomas, to make strif?  
 Ther nys i-wis no serpent so cruel,  
 Whan men trede on his tail, ne half so fel,  
 As womman is, whan seche hath caught an ire;  
 Vengeans is thanne al that thay desire.  
 Schortly may no man, by rym and vers,  
 Tellen her thoughtes, thay ben so dyvers.  
 Ire is a sinne, oon the grete of sevene,  
 Abhominable to the God of hevене,  
 And to himself it is destruccioun.  
 This every lewed vicory or parsoun 7590  
 Can say, how ire engendrih homicide;  
 Ire is in soth executour of pride.  
 I couthe of ire seyn so moche sorwe,  
 My tale schulde laste til to morwe.  
 Ire is the grate of synne, as saith the wise,  
 To fle therfro ech man schuld him devyse.  
 And therfor pray I God bothe day and night,  
 An irous man God send him litil might.  
 It is gret harm, and also gret pitē,  
 To set an irous man in high degrē.

"Whilom ther was an irous potestate,  
 As seith Senek, that duryng his estaat 7600  
 Upon a day out riden knyghtes tuo;  
 And, as fortune wolde right as it were so,  
 That oon of hem cam home, that other nought.  
 Anoon the knight before the juge is brought,  
 That sayde thus, Thou hast thy felaw slayn,  
 For which I deme the to deth certayn.  
 And to another knight comaudid he,  
 Go, lede him to the deth, I charge the.  
 And happed, as thay wente by the weye  
 Toward the place ther he schulde deye, 7610  
 The knight com, which men wend hadde be deed.  
 Than thoughten thay it were the beste reed  
 To lede hem bothe to the juge agayn.  
 Thay sayden, Lord, the knight hath not slayn  
 His felaw; lo, heer he stont hool on lyve.  
 Ye schal be deed, quod he, so mote I thrive!  
 That is to sayn, bothe oon, tuo, and thre.  
 And to the firste knyght right thus spak he,

7597. *Schortly, etc.* This and the following line are not in Tyrwhitt's text.

7595. *Ire, etc.* This line and the following are not in Tyrwhitt.

7600. *Senek*. This story is told of Cornelius Piso, by Seneca, *de Ira*, lib. i. c. xvi. It is also found in the *Gesta Romanorum*, where it is told of an emperor named Eraclius. 7612. *Than thoughten, etc.* I retain this and the following line, because they form part of the Harl. Ms., although they seem to be an unnecessary interruption of the sense. They are not in Tyrwhitt.

I deme the, thou most algate be deed.  
 Than thoughte thay it were the beste rede, 7620  
 To lede him forth into a fair mede.  
 And, quod the juge, also thou most lese thin heed,  
 For thou art cause why thy felaw deyth.  
 And to the thridde felaw thus he seith,  
 Thou hast thought doon that I comaundid the.  
 And thus he let don sle hem alle thre.  
 Irous Cambises was eek dronkelewe,  
 And ay delited him to ben a schrewe;  
 And so bifel, a lord of his meigné,  
 That loved vertues, and eek moralité,  
 Sayd on a day bitwix hem tuo right thus,  
 A lord is lost, if he be vicious; 7630  
 An irous man is lik a frentik best,  
 In which ther is of wisdom noon arrest;  
 And dronkenes is eek a foul record  
 Of any man, and namly of a lord.  
 Ther is ful many an eyghe and many an eere  
 Awaytand on a lord, and he not where.  
 For Goddes love, drynk more attemperly;  
 Wyn makith man to lese wrecchedly  
 His mynde, and eek his lymes everichoun.  
 The revers schaltow seen, quod he, anoon,  
 And prove it by thin owne experience,  
 That wyn ne doth to folk non such offen 7640  
 Ther is no wyn byreveth me my might  
 Of hond, of foot, ne of myn eyghe sight  
 And for despyt he dronke moche more  
 An hundrid part than he had doon byfore;  
 And right anoon, this irous cursid wrecche  
 Let this knyghtes sone anoon biforn him feeche,  
 Comaundyng hem thay schuld biforn him stonde;  
 And sodenly he took his bowe on honde,  
 And up the streng he pulled to his eere,  
 And with an arwe he slough the child right there.  
 Now whethir have I a sikur hond or noon? 7651  
 Quod he, Is al my mynde and might agoon?  
 Hath wyn byrevyd me myn eye sight?  
 What schuld I telle the answer of the knight?  
 His sone was slayn, ther is no more to say.  
 Be war therfor with lordes bow ye play,  
 Syngith *Placebo*, and I schal if I can.  
 But if it be unto a pore man;  
 To a pore man men schuld his vices telle,  
 But not to a lord, they he schuld go to helle. 7660  
 Lo, irous Cirus, thilke Percien,  
 How he destroyed the ryver of Gysen,  
 For that an hors of his was dreynt therinne,  
 Whan that he wente Babiloyne to wyne:  
 He made that the ryver was so smal,  
 That women mighte wade it over al.  
 Lo, what sayde he, that so wel teche can?  
 Ne be no felaw to an irous man,  
 Ne with no wood man walke by the way,  
 Lest the repent. I wol no lenger say.  
 Now, Thomas, leve brother, leve thin ire,  
 Thow schalt me fynde as just as a squire;  
 Thyn anger doth the al to sore smerte,

Hald not the develes knyf ay at thyn herte,  
 But schewe to me al thy confessioun."  
 "Nay," quod this syke man, "by seynt Symoun,  
 I have ben schreven this day of my curate;  
 I have him told holly al myn estate.  
 Nedith no more to speken of it, saith he,  
 But if me list of myn humilité." 7680  
 "Gif me than of thy good to make our cloyster,"  
 Quod he, "for many a muscle and many an oyster  
 Hath benoure foode, our cloyster to arreyse,  
 Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse;  
 And yit, God wot, unnethe the foundement  
 Performed is, ne of oure payment  
 Is gought a tyle yit withinne our wones;  
 By God, we owe yit forty pound for stones.  
 Now help, Thomas, for him that barewed helle,  
 Or elles moote we oure bookes selle; 7690  
 And gif yow lakke oure preclacioun,  
 Thanne goth the world al to destruccioun.  
 For who so wold us fro the world byreve,  
 So God me save, Thomas, by youre leve,  
 He wolde byreve out of this world the sonne.  
 For who can teche and werken as we conne?  
 And this is not of litel tyme," quod he,  
 "But siththen Elye was her, or Elisee,  
 Han freres ben, fynde I of record,  
 In charité, i-thanked be oure Lord. 7700  
 Now, Thomas, help for saynte Charité."  
 Adoun he sette him anoon on his kne.  
 This sike man wex welneigh wood for ire,  
 He wolde that the frere had ben on fyure  
 With his fals dissimulacioun.  
 "Such thing as is in my possessioun,"  
 Quod he, "that may I geve yow and noon other;  
 Ye sayn me thus, how that I am your brother."  
 "Ye certes," quod the frere, "trusteth wel;  
 I took our dame the letter, under oure sel." 7710  
 "Now wel," quod he, "and somewhat schal I give  
 Unto your holy covent whils that I lye;  
 And in thyn hond thou schalt it have anoon,  
 On this condicioun, and other noon,  
 That thou depart it so, my deere brother,  
 That every frere have as moche as other.  
 This schaltow swere on thy professioun,  
 Withouten fraude or cavillacioun."  
 "I swere it," quod this frere, "upon my faith."  
 And therwith his hond in his he laith; 7720  
 "Lo here myn hond, in me schal be no lak."  
 "Now thanne, put thyn hond down at my bak,"  
 Sayde this man, "and grope wel byhynde,  
 Bynethe my buttok, there schaltow fynde  
 A thing, that I have hud in priveté."  
 "A!" thought this frere, "that schal go with me."  
 And doun his hond he launcheth to the clifte,  
 In hope for to fynde ther a gifte.  
 And whan this syke man felte this frere  
 Aboute his tuel grope ther and heere, 7730  
 Amyd his hond he leet the freere a fart;  
 Ther is no capul drawingy in a cart,  
 That might have let a fart of such a soun.

7627. *Cambises*. See Seneca, *de Ira*, lib. iii. c. 14.  
 7631. *An irous man*. These two lines are also peculiar  
 to the Harl. Ms.

7641. *might*. The Harl. Ms. reads *wit*.

7657. *Placebo*. "The allusion is to an Anthem in the  
 Romish church, from Psalm cxvi. 9, which in the Vulgate  
 stands thus: *Placebo Dominis, in regione virorum*. Hence  
 the complacent brother in the Marchant's Tale is called  
*Placebo*," Tyrwhitt.

7662. *Gysen*. Seneca, *de Ira*, lib. iii. c. 31, from whom  
 the story is taken, calls the river Gyndes. Sir John  
 Maundeville tells this story of the Euphrates.

7674. *ay*. The Harl. Ms. reads *alway*, which seems to  
 destroy the metre.

7687. *a tyle*. The pavements were made of encaustic  
 tiles, and therefore must have been rather costly.

7698. *or Elisee*. The Harl. Ms. reads *or Ele*, an evident  
 corruption by the scribe.

7710. *the letter*. It was a common practice to grant  
 under the conventual seal to benefactors and others a  
 brotherly participation in the spiritual good works of the  
 convent, and in their expected reward after death.



The frere upstart, as doth a wood lyoune;  
 "Al false cherl," quod he, "for Goddes bones!  
 This hastow in despit don for the noones;  
 Thou schalt abyte this fart, if that I may."

His meyné, which that herd of this affray,  
 Com lepard in, and chased out the frere.  
 And forth he goth with a foul angry cheere, 7740  
 And fat his felaw, there lay his stoor;  
 He lokid as it were a wyld boor,  
 And grynte with his teeth, so was he wroth.  
 A stordy paas down to the court he goth,  
 Wher as ther wonyd a man of gret honour,  
 To whom that he was alway confessor;  
 This worthy man was lord of that village.  
 This frere com, as he were in a rage,  
 Wher that this lord sat etyng at his bord;  
 Unnethe might the frere speke a word, 7750  
 Til atte last he sayde, "God yow se!"  
 This lord gan loke, and sayde, *Benedicite!*  
 What, frere Johan! what maner world is this?  
 I se wel that som thing is amys;  
 Ye loke as though the woode were ful of thevys.  
 Sit down anon, and tel me what your gref is,  
 And it schal ben amendit, if that I may."

"I have," quod he, "had a despit to day,  
 God yelde yow, adoun in youre vilage,  
 That in this world is noon so pore a page, 7760  
 That he nold have abhominacioun  
 Of that I have receyved in youre toun;  
 And yet ne grevith me no thing so sore,  
 As that this elde cherl, with lokkes hore,  
 Blasphemed hath our holy covent eeke."  
 "Now, maister," quod this lord, "I yow biseke."  
 "No maister, sir," quod he, "but servitour,  
 Though I have had in scole such honour.  
 God likith not that Raby men us calle, 7769  
 Neither in market, neyther in your large halle."  
 "No fors," quod he, "telleth me al your greef."  
 This frere sayd, "Sire, an odious meschief  
 This day bytid is to myn ordre and to me,  
 And so *par consequens* to ech degré  
 Of holy chirche, God amend it soone!"  
 "Sir," quod the lord, "ye wot what is to doone;  
 Distempre yow nought, ye ben my confessor,  
 Ye ben the salt of therthe, and savour;  
 For Goddes love, youre pacience ye holde;  
 Tel me your greef." And he anon him tolde  
 As ye han herd bifore, ye wot wel what. 7781

The lady of that hous ay stille sat,  
 Til sche had herd what the frere sayde.  
 "Ey, Goddes moodir!" quod she, "blisfulmayde!  
 Is ther ought elles? tel me faithfully."  
 "Madame," quod he, "how thynke yow therby?"  
 "How that me thynkith?" quod sche; "so God  
 me speede!

I say, a cherl hath doon a cherles deede.  
 What schuld I say? God let him never the!

7740. "The remainder of this tale is omitted in mss. B. G. and Bod. B., and instead of it they give us the following *same and impotent conclusion*:

He ne had nocht ellis for his sermon  
 To part among his brethen when he cam home.  
 And thus is this tale idon:  
 For we were almost at the tonn.

I only mention this to shew what liberties some copyists have taken with our author.—*Tyrwhitt.*

7744. *the court.* The larger country-houses consisted generally of an enclosed court, from which circumstance this name was usually given to the manorial residence, and it has been preserved to modern times as a common term for gentlemen's seats.

His syke heed is ful of vanyté. 7790  
 I hold him in a maner frenesyne."  
 "Madame," quod he, "i-wis I schal not lye,  
 But I in othir wise may be wreke,  
 I schal defame him over al wher I speke;  
 The false blasphemour, that chargid me  
 To parten that wil not departed be,  
 To every man y-liche, with meschaunce!"

The lord sat stille, as he were in a trounce,  
 And in his hert he rollid up and down,  
 "How had this cherl ymaginacioun 7800  
 To schewe such a probleme to the frere?  
 Never eft er now herd I of such matiere;  
 I trowe the devel put it in his mynde.  
 In arsmetrik schal ther no man fynde  
 Bifrom this day of such a questioun.  
 Who schulde make a demonstracioun,  
 That every man schuld have alyk his part  
 As of a soun or savour of a fart?  
 O nyce proude cherl, I schrew his face!  
 Lo, sires," quod the lord, with harde grace, 7810  
 "Who ever herde of such a thing er now?  
 To every man y-like? tel me how.  
 It is impossible, it may not be.

Ey, nyce cherl, God let him never the!  
 The romblyng of a fart, and every soun,  
 Nis but of aier reverberacioun,  
 And ever it wastith lyte and lyte away;  
 Ther nys no man can deme, by my fay,  
 If that it were departed equally.  
 What, lo, my cherl, what, lo, how schrewedly 7820  
 Unto my confessor to day he spak!  
 I hold him certainly demoniak.  
 Now etith your mete, and let the cherl go play,  
 Let him go honge himself on devel way!"  
 Now stood the lordes squier at the bord,  
 That carf his mete, and herde word by word  
 Of al this thing, which that I of have sayd.  
 "My lord," quod he, "be ye nought evel payd,  
 I couthe telle for a gowne-cloth  
 To yow, sir frere, so that ye be not wroth, 7830  
 How that this fart even departed schuld be  
 Among your covent, if I comaunded be."  
 "Tel," quod the lord, "and thou schalt have anon  
 A gowne-cloth, by God, by seint Johan!"  
 "My lord," quod he, "whan that the wedir is fair,  
 Withoute wynd, or pertourbyng of ayr,  
 Let bring a large whel into this halle,  
 But loke that it have his spokes alle;  
 Twelf spokes hath a cart whel comunly;  
 And bring me twelve freres, wit ye why? 7840  
 For threttene is a covent as I gesse;

7802. *eft.* Some of the mss. read *erst*.

7829. *gowne-cloth.* In the middle ages, the most common rewards, and even those given by the feudal landholders to their dependants and retainers, were articles of apparel, especially the gown or outer robe. We meet with constant allusions to this custom in the romances and poetry of former days, and they sometimes occur in historical writers. Money was comparatively very scarce in the middle ages; and as the household retainers were lodged and fed, clothing was almost the only article they wanted.

7841. *threttene.* The regular number of monks or friars in a convent had been fixed at twelve, with their superior; in imitation, it is said, of the number of twelve apostles and their divine master. The larger religious houses were considered as consisting of a certain number of convents. Thus Thorn, speaking of the abbot of St. Augustine's at Canterbury, says, Anno Domini m.c.xlvi. iste Hugo reparavit antiquum numerum monachorum istius monasterii, et erant lx. monachi professi preter abbatem, hoc est, quinque conventus in univervo.—*Dicem Scriptores*, col. 1807.



Your noble confessour, her God him blesse,  
 Schal parfourn up the nombre of this covent.  
 Thanne schal thay knele doum by oon assent.  
 And to every spokes ende in this manere  
 Ful sadly lay his nose schal a frere;  
 Your noble confessour ther, God him save,  
 Schal hold his nose upright under the nave.  
 Than schal this churl, with bely stif and tought  
 As eny tabor, hider ben y-brought; 7850  
 And sette him on the whele of this cart  
 Upon the nave, and make him lete a fart,  
 And ye schul seen, up peril of my lif,  
 By verray proof that is demonstratif,  
 That equally the soun of it wol wende,  
 And eek the stynk, unto the spokes ende;  
 Save that this worthy man, your confessour,  
 (Bycause he is a man of gret honour)  
 Schal have the firste fruyt, as resonn is.  
 The noble usage of freres is this, 7860  
 The worthy men of hem first schal be served.  
 And certeynly he hath it wel deserved;  
 He hath to day taught us so moochil good,  
 With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,  
 That I may vouchesaut, I say for me,  
 He hadde the firste smel of fartes thre,  
 And so wold al his covent hardily,  
 He berith him so fair and hokily."

The lord, the lady, and ech man, sauf the frere,  
 Sayde that Jankyn spak in this matiere 7870  
 As wel as Euclide, or elles Phtolomé.  
 Touchand the cherl, thay sayd that subtilté  
 And high wyt made him speken as he spak;  
 He nas no fool, ne no demoniak.  
 And Jankyn hath i-wonne a new goune;  
 My tale is don, we ben almost at toune.

## THE CLERK OF OXENFORDES PROLOGE.

"Sir Clerk of Oxenford," our hoste sayde,  
 "Ye ryde as stille and coy as doth a mayde,  
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord;  
 This day ne herd I of your mouth a word. 7880  
 I trowe ye study aboute som sophime;  
 But Salomon saith, every thing hath tyme.  
 For Goddis sake! as both of better cheere,  
 It is no tyme for to study hiere.  
 Tel us som mery tale, by your fay;  
 For what man is entred unto play,  
 He moot nedes unto that play assent.  
 But prechith not, as freres doon in Lent,  
 To make us for our olde synnes wepe,  
 Ne that thy tale make us for to slepe. 7890  
 Tel us som mery thing of adventures.  
 Youre termes, your colours, and your figures,  
 Keep hem in stoor, til so be that ye endite  
 High style, as when that men to kynges write.  
 Spekith so playn at this tyme, I yow pray,  
 That we may understoude what ye say."

This worthy Clerk benignely answerde;  
 "Sir host," quod he, "I am under your yerde,  
 Ye have of us as now the governaunce,  
 And therfor wol I do yow obeissaunce, 7900  
 Als fer as resonn askith hardily.  
 I wil yow telle a tale, which that I  
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,  
 As proved by his wordes and his werk.  
 He is now deed, and nayled in his chest,  
 Now God give his soule wel good rest!  
 Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete,  
 Highte this clerk, whos rethorique swete

Enlumynd al Ytail of poetrie,  
 As Linian did of filosofopie, 7910  
 Or lawue, or other art particulare;  
 But deth, that wol not suffre us duellen heere,  
 But as it were a twyncling of an ye,  
 Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle we schul dyc.  
 But forth to telle of this worthy man,  
 That taughte me this tale, as I bigan,  
 I say that he first with heigh stile enditiith  
 (Er he the body of his tale writiith)  
 A proheme, in the which descrivith he  
 Piemounde, and of Saluces the contré, 7920  
 And spekith of Appenyn the hullles hbye,  
 That ben the boundes of al west Lombardye;  
 And of mount Vesulus in special,  
 Wher as the Poo out of a welle smal  
 Takith his firste springyng and his sours,  
 That est-ward ay encreseeth in his cours  
 To Emyl-ward, to Ferare, and to Venise,  
 To which a long tyme were to devyse.  
 And trewely, as to my juggement,  
 Me thinketh it a thing impertinent, 7930  
 Save that he wold conveyen his matiere;  
 But this is the tale which that ye schuln heere."

## THE CLERKES TALE.

Ther is at the west ende of Ytaile,  
 Doun at the root of Vesulus the colde,  
 A lusty playn, abundaunt of vitaile,  
 Wher many a tour and toun thou maist byholde,  
 That foundid were in tyme of fadres olde,  
 And many another delitable sight,  
 And Saluces this noble contray hight.

A marquys whilom duellid in that lond, 7940  
 As were his worthy eldris him bifore,  
 And obeisaunt ay redy to his hond,  
 Were alle his liegis, bothe lesse and more.  
 Thus in delyt he lyveth and hath don yore,  
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,  
 Bothe of his lordes and of his comune.

Therwith he was, as to speke of lynage,  
 The gentileste born of Lumbardye,  
 A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,  
 And ful of honour and of curtesie; 7950  
 Discret y-nough his contré for to gye,  
 Savynge in som thing he was to blame;  
 And Wautier was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considered nought  
 In tyme comyng what mighte bytde,  
 But on his lust present was al his thought,  
 As for to hanke and hunte on every syde;  
 Wel neigh al othir cures let he slyde,  
 And eek he nolde (that was the worst of al)  
 Wedde no wyf for no thing that might bifal.

7912. *But deth.* Petrarch died in 1374. Linian, who was celebrated as a lawyer and as a philosopher, died about 1378.

7927. *Emyl-ward.* "One of the regions of Italy was called Emilia, from the *Via Emilia*, which crossed it from Placentia to Rimini. Placentia stood upon the Po. Pitisc. *Lex. Ant. Rom.* in v. *VIA ÆMILIA*. Petrarch's description of this part of the Po is a little different. He speaks of it as dividing the Emilian and Flaminian regions from Venice—*Æmiliam atque Flaminiam Venetiamque discriminans*. But our author's *Emelie* is plainly taken from him."—*Tyrwhitt*.

*The Clerkes Tale.* The popular story of Griseldis, which has appeared in so great a variety of forms from the days of Petrarch almost to the present time, is so well known, that it is hardly necessary to say more than that Chaucer translates it closely from Petrarch's Latin romance *De obedientia et fide uxoria Mythologia*.

Only that poynt his poeple bar so sore,  
That floknel on a day to him thay went,  
And oon of hem, that wisest was of lore,  
(Or elles that the lord wolde best assent  
That he schuld telle him what his poeple ment,  
Or ellis couthe he schewe wel such matiere)  
Ile to the marquys sayd as ye schuln here.

"O noble marquys, youre humanité  
Assureth us and giveth us hardynesse,  
As ofte as tyme is of necessité, 7970  
That we to yow may telle oure hevynesse;  
Acceptith, lord, now of your gentillesse,  
That we with pitous hert unto yow playne,  
And let youre eeris my vois not disdeyne.

"And have I nought to doon in this matere  
More than another man hath in this place,  
Yit for as moche as ye, my lord so deere,  
Han alway schewed me favour and grace,  
I dar the better ask of yow a space  
Of audience, to schewen oure request, 7980  
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow lest.

"For certes, lord, so wel us likith yow  
And al your werk, and ever han doon, that we  
Ne couthen not ourselve deyven how  
We mighte lye more in felicité;  
Save oon thing, lord, if that your wille be,  
That for to be a weddid man yow list,  
Thar were your pepel in sovereign hertes rest.

"Bowith your neck undir that blisful yok  
Of sovereigneté, nought of servise, 7990  
Which that men clepe spousail or wedlok;  
And thenketh, lord, among your thoughtes wise,  
How that our dayes passe in sondry wyse;  
For though we slepe, or wake, or rome, or ryde,  
Ay fleth the tyme, it wil no man abyde.

"And though your grene youthe floure as yit,  
In erpeith age alway as stille as stoon,  
And deth manasith every age, and smyt  
In ech estat, for ther ascaphith noon.  
And as certeyn, as we knowe everychon 8000  
That we schuln deye, as uncerteyn we alle  
Ben of that day that deth schal on us falle.

"Acceptith thanne of us the trewe entent,  
That never yit refusid youre hest,  
And we wil, lord, if that ye wil assent.  
Chese yow a wyf, in sehort tyme atte lest,  
Born of the gentilest and the heighest  
Of al this lond, so that it oughte seme  
Honour to God and yow, as we can deme.

"Deliver us out of al this busy drede 8010  
And tak a wyf, for hihe Goddes sake.  
For if it so bifel, as God forbede,  
That thurgh your deth your lignage schuld aslake,  
And that a straunge successour schuld take  
Your heritage, O! we were us on lyve!  
Wherfor we pray yow hastily to wyve."

Her meeke prayer and her pitous chere  
Made the marquys for to han pité.  
"Ye wolde," quod he, "myn owne poeple deere,  
To that I never erst thought constraigne me. 8020  
I me rejoysid of my liberté,  
That selden tyme is founde in mariage;  
Ther I was fre, I mot be in servage.

"But natheles I se youre trewe entent,

7972. *gentillesse*. The Harl. Ms. reads *necessité*, a mere repetition of the conclusion of l. 7970.  
7980. The reading of the Harl. Ms. is *And audience to asken oure request*.

8024. *se youre trewe*. The Ms. Harl. reads *se of yow the trewe*.

And trust upon your witt, and have doon ay;  
Wherfor of my fre wil I wil assent  
To wedde me, as soon as ever I may.  
But ther as ye have profred me to day  
To chese me a wyf, I wol release 8029  
That choys, and pray yow of that profre cesse.

"For God it woot, that childer ofte been  
Unlik her worthy eldris hem bifore;  
Bounté cometh al of God, nought of the streen  
Of which thay ben engendrid and i-bore.  
I trust in Goddes bounté, and therefore  
My mariage, and myn estat and rest,  
I him bytake, he may doon as him lest.

"Let me alloon in chesying of my wif,  
That charge upon my bak I wil endure.  
But I yow pray, and charge upon your lyf, 8040  
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure  
To worship whil that hir lif may endure,  
In word and werk, bothe hear and every where,  
As sche an emperoures daughter were.

"And forthermor thus schul ye swer, that ye  
Ageins my chois schuln never gracche ne stryve.  
For sins I schal forgo my liberté  
At your request, as ever mot I thrive,  
Ther as myn hert is set, ther wil I wyve.  
And but ye wil assent in such manere, 8050  
I pray yow speke no more of this matiere."

With hertly wil thay sworn and assentyn  
To al this thing, ther sayde no wight nay,  
Bysehying him of grace, er that thay wentyn,  
That he wold graunten hem a certeyn day  
Of his spousail, as soone as ever he may;  
For yit alway the peple som what dredde  
Lest that the marquys wolde no wyf wedde.

He graunten hem a day, such as him lest,  
On which he wolde be weddid scurly; 8060  
And sayd he dede al this at her requeste.  
And thay with humble hert ful buxomly,  
Knelyng upon her knees ful reverently,  
Him thanken alle, and thus thay have an ende  
Of her entent, and hom agein they wende.

And herupon he to his officiris  
Comaundith for the feste to purveye.  
And to his privé knyghtes and squyeres  
Such charge gaf as him list on hem leye:  
And thay to his comaundement obeye, 8070  
And ech of hem doth his diligence  
To doon unto the feste reverence.

#### *Pars secunda.*

Nought fer fro thilke palyz honourable,  
Wher as this marquys schop his mariage,  
Ther stood a throp, of sighte delitable,  
In which that pore folk of that vilage  
Hadden her bestes and her herburgage,  
And after her labour took her sustenaunce,  
After the erthe gaf hem abundance.

Among this pore folk ther duelt a man, 8080  
Which that was holden porest of hem alle;  
But heighe God som tyme sende can  
His grace unto a litel oxe stalle.  
Janicula men of that throop him calle.  
A daughter had he, fair y-nough to sight,  
And Grisildes this yonge mayden hight.

But for to speke of hir vertuous beauté,  
Than was sche oon the fayrest under sonne;

8086. *mayden*. The Harl. Ms. reads *daughter*, which probably is only an accidental repetition of the word in the preceding line.

For porely i-fostred up was sche,  
No licorous lust was in hir body ronne; 8090  
Wel offer of the welle than of the tonne  
Sche dronk, and for sche wolde vertu please,  
Sche knew wel labour, but noon ydel ease.

But though this mayden tender were of age,  
Yet in the brest of hir virginité  
Ther was enclosed rype and sad courage;  
And in gret reverence and charité  
Hir olde pore fader fostred sche;  
A fewe scheep spyning on the feld sche kept,  
Sche nold not ben ydel til sche slept. 8100

And whan sche com hom sche wolde brynge  
Wortis and other herbis tymes ofte,  
The which sche sehred and seth for hir lyvyng,  
And made hir bed ful hard, and no thing softe.  
And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte,  
With every obeissance and diligence,  
That child may do to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisildes, the pore creature,  
Ful ofte sithes this marquys set his ye,  
As he on hunting rood peraventure. 8110  
And whan it fel he mighte hir espye,  
He not with wantoun lokyng of folye  
His eyghen cast upon hir, but in sad wyse  
Upon hir cheer he wold him oft avise,

Comendyng in his hert hir wommanhede.  
And eek hir vertu, passyng any other wight  
Of so yong age, as wel in cheer as dede.  
For though the peple have no gret insight  
In vertu, her considereth aright  
Hir bounté, and desposed that he wolde 8120  
Wedde hir oonly, if ever he wedde scholde.

The day of weddyng cam, but no wight can  
Telle what womman it schulde be;  
For which mervayle wondrith many a man,  
And sayden, whan thay were in priveté,  
“Wol nought our lord yit leve his vanité?  
Wol he not wedde? allas, allas the while!  
Why wol he thus himself and us bigyle?”

But natheles this marquys hath doon make  
Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure, 8130  
Broches and rynges, for Grisildes sake,  
And of hir clothing took he the mesure,  
By a mayde y-lik to hir of stature,  
And eek of other ornamentes alle  
That unto such a wedlyng schulde falle.

The tyme of ndern of the same day  
Approchith, that this weddyng schulde be,  
And al the palys put was in array,  
Bothe halle and chambur, y-lik here degré,  
Houses of office stuffid with plenté; 8140  
Ther maystow se of deyntevous vitayle,  
That may be founde, as fer as lastith Itaile.

This real marquys, richely arrayd,  
Lords and ladies in his compaignye,  
The which unto the feste were prayed,  
And of his retenu the bachelerie,  
With many a soun of sondry melodye,  
Unto the vilage, of which I tolde,  
In this array the right way han thay holde.

Grysild of this (God wot) ful innocent, 8150  
That for hir schapen was al this array,  
To fecche water at a welle is went,  
And cometh hom as soone as sche may,  
For wel sche had herd say, that ilke day

The marquys schulde wedde, and, if sche might,  
Sche wold have seyen somwhat of that sight.

Sche sayd, “I wol with other maydenes stonde,  
That ben my felawes, in oure dore, and see  
The marquyesses, and therefore wol I fonde  
To don at hom, as soone as it may be, 8160  
The labour which that longeth unto me,  
And thanne may I at leysir hir byholde,  
And sche the way into the castel holde.”

And as sche wold over the threishfold goon.  
The marquys cam and gan hir for to calle.  
And sche set don her water-pot anoon  
Bisides the threishfold of this oxe stalle,  
And don upon hir knees sche gan falle,  
And with sad countenance knelith stille,  
Til sche had herd what was the lordes wille. 8170

This thoughtful marquys spak unto this mayde  
Ful soberly, and sayd in this manere:  
“Wher is your fader, Grisildes?” he sayde.  
And sche with reverence in humble cheere  
Answerd, “Lord, he is al redy here.”  
And in sche goth withouten lenger let,  
And to the marquys sche hir fader fet.

He by the hond than takith this olde man,  
And sayde thus, whan he him had on syde:  
“Janicula, I neither may ne can 8180  
Lenger the plesauns of myn herte hyde;  
If that ye vouchesauf, what so bytde,  
Thy daughter wil I take er that I wende  
As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

“Thow lovest me, I wot it wel certeyn,  
And art my faithful leige-man i-bore,  
And al that likith me, I dar wel sayn,  
It likith the, and specially therefore  
Tel me that poynt, as ye have herd bifore,  
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe, 8190  
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe.”

The sodeyn eas the man astonewed tho,  
That reed he wax, abaischt, and al quakyng  
He stood, unnethe sayd he wordes mo,  
But only this: “Lord,” quod he, “my wilyng  
Is as ye wol, agenst youre likyng  
I wol no thing, ye be my lord so deere;  
Right as yow list, governith this matiere.”

“Yit wol I,” quod this markys softly,  
“That in thy chambre, I and thou and sche 8200  
Have a collacioun, and wostow why?  
For I wol aske if it hir wille be  
To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;  
And al this schal be doon in thy presence,  
I wol nought speke out of thyn audience.”

And in the chamber, whil thay were aboute  
The tretys, which as ye schul after hiere,  
The peple cam unto the hous withoute,  
And wondrid hem, in how honest manere  
And tendurly sche kept hir fader deere; 8210  
But outerly Grisildes wonder might,  
For never erst ne saugh sche such a sight.

No wonder is though that sche were astoned,  
To seen so gret a gest come into that place;  
Sche never was to suche gastes woned,  
For which sche loked with ful pale face.  
But schortly this matiere forth to chace,  
These arn the wordes that the marquys sayde  
To this benigne, verray, faithful mayde.

“Grisyld,” he sayde, “ye schul wel understonde,  
It liketh to your fader and to me, 8220  
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,  
As I suppose ye wil that it so be;

8139. *y-lik here degré.* Other mss. have *eche in his degré*, which is perhaps the better reading.

8143. *richely.* The reading of the Harl. Ms. is *reality*.



But these demaundes aske I first," quod he,  
 "That sith it schal be doon in hasty wyse,  
 Wol ye assent, or elles yow ayse?"

"I say this, be ye redy with good hert  
 To al my lust, and that I frely may  
 As me best liste do yow laughe or smert,  
 And never ye to gruch it, night ne day; 8230  
 And eek whan I say ye, ye say not nay,  
 Neyther by word, ne frowning contenance?  
 Swer this, and here swer I oure alliance."

Wondryng upon this word, quakyng for drede,  
 Sche sayde: "Lord, undigne and unworthy  
 I am, to thilk honour that ye me bede;  
 But as ye wil your self, right so wol I;  
 And here I swere, that never wityngly  
 In werk, ne thought, I nyl yow disobeye 8239  
 For to the deed, though me were loth to deye."

"This is y-nough, Grisilde myn," quod he.  
 And forth goth he with a ful borse chere,  
 Out at the dore, and after that cam sche,  
 And to the pepul he said in this manere:  
 "This is my wyf," quod he, "that stonndith heere.  
 Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I yow pray,  
 Who so me loveth; ther is no more to say."

And for that no thing of hir olde gere  
 Sche schulde brynge unto his hous, he bad  
 That wommen schuld despoilen hir right there,  
 Of which these ladyes were nought ful glad 8251  
 To handle hir clothes wherin sche was clad;  
 But natheles this mayde bright of hew  
 Fro foot to heed thay schredde han al newe.

Hir heeres han thay kempt, that lay untressed  
 Ful rudely, and with hir fyngres smale  
 A coroun on hir heed thay han i-dressed,  
 And set hir ful of nowches gret and smale.  
 Of hir array what schuld I make a tale? 8259  
 Unnethe the peopel hir knew for hir fairnesse,  
 Whan sche translated was in such richesse.

This marquis hath hir spoused with a ryng  
 Brought for the same cause, and than hir sette  
 Upon an hors snow-whyt, and wel amblyng,  
 And to his paly, er he lenger lette,  
 (With joyful peopel, that hir ladde and mette)  
 Conveyed hire, and thus the day thay spende  
 In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
 I say, that to this newe marquisesse 8270  
 God hath such favour sent hir of his grace,  
 That it ne semyd not by liklynesse  
 That sche was born and fed in rudenesse,  
 As in a cote, or in an oxe stalle,  
 But norischit in an emperoures halle.

To every wight sché waxen is so deere,  
 And worschipful, that folk ther sche was born,  
 And from hir burthe knew hir yer by yere,  
 Unneth trowed thay, but dorst han sworn,  
 That to Janicle, of which I spak biforn 8280  
 Sche daughter were, for as by conjecture  
 Hem thought sche was another creature.

For though that ever vertuous was sche,  
 Sche was encesed in such excellence  
 Of thewes goode, i-set in high bounté,  
 And so discret, and fair of eloquence,  
 So benigne, and so digne of reverence,  
 And couth hir so the peoples hert embrace,  
 That ech hir loveth that lokith in hir face.

Nought oonly of Saluce in the toun 8290  
 Publissched was the bounté of hir name,  
 But cek byside in many a regioun,

If oon sayd wel, another sayd the same.  
 So sprad of hire heigh bounté the fame,  
 That men and wommen, as wel yow as olde,  
 Gon to Saluce upon hir to byholde.

Thus Walter louly, nay but really,  
 Weddid with fortunat honesteté,  
 In Goddes pees lyveth ful esily  
 At home, and outward grace y-nough hath he;  
 And for he saugh that under low degré 8301  
 Was ofte vertu y-hid, the peopel him helde  
 A prudent man, and that is seen ful selde.

Nought oonly this Grisildes thurgh hir witte  
 Couthe al the feet of wifly homlynesse,  
 But eek whan that the tyme required it,  
 The comun profyt couthe sche redresse;  
 Ther was discord, rancour, ne hevynesse  
 In al that lond, that sche ne couthe appese,  
 And wily bryng hem alle in rest and ese. 8310

Though that hir husband absent were anon,  
 If gentilmen, or other of hir contré,  
 Were wroth, sche wolde bryng hem at oon,  
 So wyse and rype wordes hadde sche,  
 And juggement of so gret equité,  
 That sche from heven sent was, as men wende,  
 Peopel to save, and every wrong to amende.

Nought longe tyme after that this Grisilde  
 Was wedded, sche a daughter hath i-bore;  
 Al had hir lever han had a knave childe, 8320  
 Glad was this marquis and the folk therfore,  
 For though a mayden child come al byfore,  
 Sche may unto a knave child atteigne  
 By liklihed, sith sche nys not bareigne.

*Incipit tertia pars.*

Ther fel, as fallith many times mo,  
 Whan that this child hath souked but a throwe,  
 This marquis in his herte longith so  
 Tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,  
 That he ne might out of his herte throwe  
 This mervaylous desir his wyf tassaye; 8330  
 Nedeles, God wot, he thought hir to affraye.

He had assayed hir y-nough bifore,  
 And fond hir ever good, what needith it  
 Hire to tempte, and alway more and more?  
 Though som men prayse it for a subtil wit,  
 But as for me, I say that evel it sit  
 Tassay a wyf whan that it is no neede,  
 And putte hir in angnyseh and in dreede.

For which this marquis wrought in this manere;  
 He com aloone a-night ther as sche lay 8340  
 With sterne face, and with ful trouble cheere,  
 And sayde thus, "Grisild," quod he, "that day  
 That I yow took out of your pore abbesse,  
 And putte yow in estat of heigh noblesse,  
 Yet have not that forgeten, as I gesse.

"I say, Grisild, this present dignité  
 In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,  
 Makith yow not forgetful for to be  
 That I yow took in pore estat ful lowe,  
 For eny wele ye moot your selve knowe. 8350  
 Tak heed of every word that I yow say,

8305. *homlynesse*. The Harl. Ms. reads *humblese*; but the context shews that the reading adopted in the text is the right one. She not only knew how to attend to the domestic affairs of her lord's household (wifly homlynesse), but when time or occasion required it, she could redress the common profit of his subjects.

8331. *Nedeles*. The Harl. Ms. reads, *Now, God wot*; but the reading of the Lansdowne Ms., here adopted, seems preferable.

Ther is no wight that herith it but we tway.

"Ye wot your self how that ye comen heere  
Into this hous, it is nought long ago;  
And though to me that ye be leef and deere,  
Unto my gentils ye be no thing so.  
Thay seyn, to hem it is gret schame and wo  
For to ben subject and ben in servage  
To the, that born art of a smal village.

"And namely syn thy daughter was i-bore,  
These wordes han thay spoken douteles. 8361  
But I desire, as I have doon byfore,  
To lyve my lif with hem in rest and pees;  
I may not in this caas be reccheles;  
I moot do with thy daughter for the best,  
Not as I wolde, but as my pepul lest.

"And yit, God wot, this is ful loth to me.  
But natheles withoute youre witynge  
Wol I not doon; but this wol I," quod he,  
"That ye to me assent as in this thing. 8370  
Schew now your paciens in your wurching,  
That thou me bightest and swor in von village,  
That day that maket was oure mariage."

Whan sche had herd al this sche nougthameevyd  
Neyther in word, in cheer, or countenance,  
(For, as it semed, sche was nought agreeded);  
Sche sayde, "Lord, al lith in your plesance;  
My child and I, with hertly obeisaunce,  
Ben yours al, and ye may save or spille  
Your oughne thing; werkith after your wille. 8380

"Ther may no thing, so God my soule save,  
Liken to yow, that may displeen me;  
Ne I desire no thing for to have,  
Ne drede for to lese, save oonly ye.  
This wil is in myn hert, and ay schal be,  
No length of tyme or deth may this deface,  
Ne change my corrage to other place."

Glad was this marquis for hir answeriing,  
But yit he feyned as he were not so.  
Al dreery was his cheer and his loking, 8390  
Whan that he schold out of the chambre go.  
Soon after this, a forlong way or tuo,  
He prively hath told al his entent  
Unto a man, and unto his wyf him sent.

A maner sergeant was this privé man,  
The which that faithful oft he founden hadde  
In thinges grete, and eek such folk wel can  
Don execucioun in thinges badde;  
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde.  
And whan this sergeant wist his lordes wille, 8400  
Into the chamber he stalked him ful stille.

"Madame," he sayd, "ye most forgive it me,  
Though I do thing to which I am constreynit;  
Ye ben so wys, that ful wel knowe ye,  
That lordes hestes mow not ben i-feynit.  
They mowe wel be biwaylit or compleynit;  
But men moot neede nnto her lust obeye,  
And so wol I, there is no more to seye.

"This child I am comaundid for to take."  
And spak no more, but out the child he hent 8410  
Dispitously, and gan a chiere make,  
As though he wold han slayn it, er he went.  
Grisild moot al suffer and al consent;  
And as a lamb sche sitheth meeke and stille,  
And let this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the defame of this man,

8416. *Suspecious*. The words of Petrarch are: "Suspecta viri fama, suspecta facies, suspecta hora, suspecta erat oratio, quibus et si clare occisum iri dulce filiam intelligeret."

Suspect his face, suspect his word also,  
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.  
Allas! hir daughter, that sche loved so,  
Sche wend he wold han slayen it right tho, 8420  
But natheles sche neyther weep ne siked,  
Conformyng hir to that the marquis liked.

But at last speke sche bigan,  
And mekely sche to the sergeant preyde,  
So as he was a worthy gentilman,  
That sche most kisse hir child, er that it deyde.  
And on hir arm this litel child sche leyde,  
With ful sad face, and gan the child to blesse,  
And lullyd it, and after gan it kesse.

And thus sche sayd in hir benigne vois: 8430  
"Farwel, my child, I schal the never see,  
But sith I the have marked with the croys,  
Of thilke fader blessed mot thou be,  
That for us deyde upon a cros of tre;  
Thy soule, litel child, I him bytake,  
For this night schaltow deyen for my sake."

I trowe that to a norice in this caas  
It had ben hard this rewthe for to see;  
Wel might a moder than have cryed allas,  
But natheles so sad stedefast was sche, 8440  
That sche endured al adversité,  
And to the sergeant mekely sche sayde,  
"Have her agayn your litel yonge mayde.

"Goth now," quod sche, "and doth my lordes  
But to thing wil I pray yow of your grace, [heste.  
That but my lord forbede yow atte leste,  
Burieth this litel boye in som place,  
That bestes ne no briddes it to-race,"  
But he no word wil to the purpos say,  
But took the child and went upon his way. 8450

This sergeant com unto this lord agayn,  
And of Grisildes wordes and hir cheere  
He tolde poynt for poynt, in schort and playn,  
And him presentith with his daughter deere.  
Somwat this lord hath rewthe in his manere,  
But natheles his purpos huld he stille,  
As lordes doon, whan they wold have her wille;

And bad the sergeant that he prively  
Scholde this childe softe wynde and wrappe,  
With alle circumstaunces tendurly, 8460  
And cary it in a cofre, or in his lappe;  
Upon peyne his heed of for to swappe  
That no man schulde knowe of this entent,  
Ne whens he com, ne whider that he went;

But at Bologyne, to his suster deere,  
That thilke tyme of Panik was countesse,  
He schuld it take, and schewe hir this matiere,  
Byseching hir to doon hir busynesse  
This child to fostre in alle gentillesse,  
And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde 8470  
From every wight, for ought that mighto bytyde.

The sergeant goth, and hath fulfilled this thing.  
But to this marquis now retourne we;  
For now goth he ful fast ymaginyng,  
If by his wyves cher he mighte se,  
Or by hir word appareceyve, that sche  
Were chaunged, but he hir never couthe fynde,

8427. *arm*. Other mss. read *barme*, the bosom.

8466. *of Panik*. "Quieto omni quanta possit diligentia Bononiam deferret, ad sororem suam, quæ illic comiti de Panico nupta erat, eamque sibi traderet alendam materno studio charis moribus instruendam," &c. Tyrwhitt, rather hastily, changed the name to Pavie in his text; and, although he corrected himself in the notes which were printed after the text, the error has been retained in subsequent editions.



But ever in oon y-like sad and kynde.

As glad, as humble, as busy in servise  
And eek in love, as sche was wont to be, 8480  
Was sche to him, in every maner wyse;  
Ne of hir daughter nought o word spak sche;  
Non accident for noon adversité  
Was seyn in hir, ne never hir daughter name  
Ne nempnyd sche, in earnest ne in game.

*Incipit quarta pars.*

In this estaat ther passed ben foure yer  
Er sche with childe was, but, as God wolde,  
A knave child sche bar by this Waltier,  
Ful gracious, and fair for to biholde;  
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde, 8490  
Nought onoly he, but al his contré, merye  
Was for this child, and God thay thank and herie.

Whan it was tuo yer old, and fro the brest  
Departed fro his noris, upon a day  
This markys caught yit another lest  
To tempt his wif yit after, if he may.  
O! needles was sche tempted in assay.  
But weddid men ne known no mesure,  
Whan that thay fynde a pacient creature.

“Wif,” quod this marquys, “ye han herd er this  
My peple sekly berith oure mariage, 8501  
And namly syn my sone y-boren is,  
Now is it wors than ever in al our age;  
The murmur sleth myn hert and my corrage,  
For to myn eeris cometh the vois so smerte,  
That it wel neigh destroyed hath myn herte.

“Now say thay thus, Whan Wauter is agoon,  
Than schal the blood of Janicle succede,  
And ben our lord, for other have we noon.  
Scheche wordes saith my peopel, out of drede. 8510  
Wel ought I of such murmur taken heede,  
For certeynly I drede such sentence,  
Though thay not pleynly speke in my audience.

“I wolde lyve in pees, if that I might;  
Wherfor I am disposid outrely,  
As I his suster servede by night,  
Right so think I to serve him prively.  
This warn I you, that ye not sodeynly  
Out of your self for no thing schuld outraye,  
Beth pacient, and therof I yow pray.” 8520

“I have,” quod sche, “said thus and ever schal,  
I wol no thing, ne nil no thing certayn,  
But as yow list; nought greveth me at al,  
Though that my daughter and my sone be slayn  
At your comaundement; this is to sayne,  
I have not had no part of children twayne,  
But first syknes, and after wo and payne.

“Ye ben oure lord, doth with your owne thing  
Right as yow list, axith no red of me;  
For as I left at hom al my clothing, 8530  
Whan I first com to yow, right so,” quod sche,  
“Left I my wille and my liberté,  
And took your clothing; wherfor I yow preyce,  
Doth youre plesaunce, I wil youre lust obeye.

“And certes, if I hadde prescience  
Your wil to knowe, er ye youre lust me tolde,  
I wold it doon withoute negligence.  
But now I wot your lust, and what ye wolde,  
Al your plesaunce ferm and stable I holde,  
For wist I that my deth wold doon yow ease,  
Right gladly wold I deye, yow to please. 8541

“Deth may make no comparisoun  
Unto your love.” And whan this marquys say  
The constance of his wyf, he cast adoun

His eyghen tuo, and wondrith that sche may  
In pacience suffre as this array;  
And forth he goth with drery countenance,  
But to his hert it was ful gret plesaunce.

This ugly sergeaunt in the same wise  
That he hir daughter fette, right so he, 8550  
Or worse, if men worse can devyse,  
Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of beauté.  
And ever in oon so pacient was sche,  
That sche no cheere made of hevynesse,  
But kist hir sone, and after gan him blesse.

Save this sche prayed him, if that he mighte,  
Hir litel sone he wold in eorthe grave,  
His tendre lymes, delicate to sight,  
From foules and from bestes him to save.  
But sche noon answer of him mighte have. 8560  
He went his way, as him no thing ne rought,  
But to Boloyne he tenderly it brought.

This marquys wondreth ever the lenger the more  
Upon hir pacience, and if that he  
Ne hadde sothly knownen therbifore,  
That parfytly hir children loved sche,  
He wold have wend that of som subtilté  
And of malice, or of cruel corrage,  
That sche had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew, that, next himself, certayn  
Sche loved hir children best in every wise. 8571  
But now of women wold I aske fayn,  
If these assayes mighten not suffice?  
What couthe a stourdy housebonde more devyse  
To prove hir wyf hode and hir stedefastnesse,  
And he contynuyng ever in stourdynesse?

But ther ben folk of such condicioun,  
That, whan thay have a certeyn purpos take,  
They can nought stynt of her entencion,  
But, right as thay were bounden to a stake, 8580  
They wil not of her firste purpos slake;  
Right so this marquys fullich hath purposed  
To tempt his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He wayteth, if by word or countenance  
That sche to him was changed of corage.  
But never couthe he fynde variance,  
Sche was ay oon in hert and in visage;  
And ay the fether that sche was in age,  
The more trewe, if that were possible, 8590  
Sche was to him, and more penyble.

For which it semyd this, that of hem tuo  
Ther nas but oo wil; for as Walter lest,  
The same plesaunce was hir lust also;  
And, God be thanked, al fel for the best.  
Sche schewed wel, for no worldly unrest  
A wyf, as of hir self, no thing ne scholde  
Wylne in effect, but as hir housbond wolde.

The sclauder of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,  
That of a cruel hert he wikkedly,  
For he a pore woman weddid hadde, 8600  
Hath morthrid bothe his children prively;  
Such murmur was among hem comunly.  
No wonder is; for to the peples ere  
Ther com no word, but that thay morthrid were.

For which, wher as his peple therbyfore  
Had loved him wel, the sclauder of his diffame  
Made hem that thay him hatede therfore;  
To ben a morderer is an hateful name.  
But natheles, for earnest or for game,  
He of his cruel purpos nolde stente, 8610  
To tempt his wyf was set al his entente.

Whan that his daughter twelf yer was of age,  
He to the court of Rome, in suche wise



Enformed of his wille, sent his message,  
Comaundyng hem, such bulles to devyse,  
As to his cruel purpos may suffice,  
How that the pope, as for his peples reste,  
Bad him to wedde another, if him leste.

I say, he bad, thay schulde countrefete  
The popes bulles, makyng menciuon 8620  
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,  
As by the popes dispensacioun,  
To stynte rancour and discencioun  
Bitwix his peple and him; thus sayd the bulle,  
The which thay han publisshid atte fulle.

The rude poepel, as it no wonder is,  
Wende ful wel that it had be right so.  
But whan these tydynges come to Grisildis,  
I deeme that hir herte was ful wo;  
But sche y-like sad for evermo 8630  
Disposid was, this humble creature,  
Thadversité of fortun al tendure;

Abydyng ever his lust and his plesaunce,  
To whom that sche was give, hert and al,  
As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce.  
But schortly if I this story telle schal,  
This marquys writen hath in special  
A letter, in which he schewith his entent,  
And secrely he to Boloyne it sent.

To therl of Panyk, which that hadde tho 8640  
Weddid his suster, prayd he specially  
To brynge hom agein his children tuo  
In honourable estaat al openly.  
But oon thing he him prayde outerly,  
That he to no wight, though men wold enquere,  
Schuld not tellen whos children thay were,

But say the mayde schuld i-weddid be  
Unto the markys of Saluce anon.  
And as this eorl was prayd, so dede he,  
For at day set he on his way is goon 8650  
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon  
In riche array, this mayden for to guyde,  
Her yonge brother rydyng by hir syde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage  
This freishe may al ful of gemmes clere;  
Hir brother, which that seven yer was of age,  
Arrayed eek ful freissh in his manere;  
And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere  
Toward Saluces schapyng her journey,  
Fro day to day thay ryden in her way. 8660

*Incipit pars quinta.*

Among al this, after his wikked usage,  
This marquys yit his wif to tempte more  
To the uttrest proof of hir corrage,  
Fully to han experiens and lore,  
If that sche were as stedefast as byfore,  
He on a day in open audieuce  
Ful boystrouly hath sayd hir this sentence:

"Certes, Grisildes, I had y-nough plesaunce  
To have yow to my wif, for your goodnesse, 8669  
And for youre trouthe, and for your obeissaunce,  
Nought for your lignage, ne for your richesse;  
But now know I in verray sothfastnesse,  
That in gret lordschip, if I wel avyse,  
Ther is gret servitude in sondry wyse;

I may not do, as every ploughman may;  
My poeple me constreignith for to take

8674. *servitude*. "Nunc quoniam, ut video, magna omnis fortuna servitus magna est, non mihi licet quod cullibet liceret agnoscere," &c. The Harl. Ms. reads *servise*, which is inconsistent with the metre.

Another wyf, and eryen day by day;  
And eek the popes rancour for to slake  
Consentith it, that dar I undertake;  
And trewely, thus moche I wol yow say, 8680  
My newe wif is comyng by the way.

"Be strong of hert, and voyde anon hir place,  
And thilke dower that ye broughten me  
Tak it agayn, I graunt it of my grace.  
Retourneth to your fadres hous," quod he,  
"No man may always have prosperité.  
With even hert I rede yow endure  
The strok of fortune or of adventure."

And sche agayn answerd in pacieuce:  
"My lord," quod sche, "I wot, and wist alway,  
How that betwixe your magnificence 8691  
And my poverte no wight can ne may  
Make comparisoun, it is no nay;  
I ne held me never digne in no manere  
To ben your wyf, ne yit your chamberere.

"And in this hous, ther ye me lady made,  
(The highe God take I for my witnessse,  
And al so wisly he my soule glade)  
I never huld me lady ne maistresse,  
But humble servaunt to your worthinesse, 8700  
And ever schal, wil that my lyf may dure,  
Aboven every worldly creature.

"That ye so longe of your benignité  
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,  
Wher as I was not worthy for to be,  
That thank I God and yow to whom I preyre  
For-yeld it yow, ther is no more to seye.  
Unto my fader gladly wil I wende,  
And with him duelle unto my lyves ende.

"Ther I was fostred as a child ful smal, 8710  
Til I be deed my lyf ther wil I lede,  
A widow clene in body, hert, and al;  
For sith I gaf to yow my maydenhede,  
And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,  
God schilde such a lordes wyf to take  
Another man to housbond or to make.

"And of your newe wif, God of his grace  
So graunte yow wele and prosperité;  
For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,  
In which that I was blisful wont to be. 8720  
For sith it liketh yow, my lord," quod sche,  
"That whilom were al myn hertes reste.  
That I schal gon, I wil go whan yow leste.

"But ther as ye profre me such dowayre  
As I ferst brought, it is wel in my mynde,  
It were my wrecchid clothes, no thing faire,  
The whiche to me were hard now for to fynde.  
O goode God! how gentil and how kynde  
Ye semed by your speche and your visage,  
That day that maked was our mariage! 8730

"But soth is sayd, algate I fynd it trewe,  
For in effect it proved is on me,  
Love is nought old as whan that it is newe.  
But certes, lord, for noon adversité  
To deyen in the caas, it schal not be  
That ever in word or werk I schal repente  
That I yow gaf myn hert in hol entente.

"My lord, ye wot that in my fadres place  
Ye dede me strippe out of my pore wedde,  
And richely me cladden of your grace; 8740  
To yow brought I nought elles out of drede,  
But faith, and nakednesse, and maydenhede;

8742. *nakednesse*. The Harl. Ms. reads, erroneously, *mekenes*. The words of Petrarch are, "neque omnino alia mihi dos fuit, quam fides et nuditas."

And her agayn my clothyng I restore,  
And eek my weddyng ryng for evermore.

"The remenant of your jewels redy be  
Within your chambur dore dar I sauily sayn.  
Naked out of my fadres hous," quod sche,  
"I com, and naked moot I torne agayn.  
Al your pleisauns wold I fulfille fayn;  
But yit I hope it be not youre entent, 8750  
That I smocles out of your paleys went.

Ye couthe not doon so dishonest a thing,  
That thilke wombe, in which your children leye,  
Schulde byforn the poeple, in my walkyng,  
Be seye al bare: wherfore I yow pray  
Let me not lik a worm go by the way;  
Remembre yow, myn oughne lord so deere,  
I was your wyf, though I unworthy were.

"Wherfor, in guerdoun of my maydenhede,  
Which that I brought and nought agayn I bere,  
As vouchethsauf to geve me to my meede 8761  
But such a smok as I was wont to were,  
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here  
That was your wif; and here take I my leve  
Of yow, myn oughne lord, lest I yow greve."

"The smok," quod he, "that thou hast on thy  
Let it be stille, and ber it forth with the." [bak,  
But wel unnetthes thilke word he spak,  
But went his way for routhe and for pité.  
Byforn the folk hirselves strippith sche, 8770  
And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,  
Toward hir fader house forth is sche fare.

The folk hir folwen wepyng in hir weye,  
And fortune ay thay cursen as thay goon;  
But sche fro wepyng kept hir eyen dreye,  
Ne in this tyme word ne spak sche noon.  
Hir fader, that this tyding herd anon,  
Cursed the day and tyme, that nature  
Schoop him to ben a lyves creature.

For out of doute this olde pore man 8780  
Was ever in suspect of hir mariage;  
For ever he deemed, sith that it bigan,  
That whan the lord fulfilled had his corrage,  
Him wolde think that it were disparage  
To his estate, so lowe for to light,  
And voyden hire as sone as ever he might.

Agayns his daughter hastily goth he;  
For he by noyse of folk knew hir comyng;  
And with hir olde cote, as it might be,  
He covered hir ful sorwfully wepyng; 8790  
But on hir body might he it nought bringe,  
For rude was the cloth, and mor of age  
By dayes fele than at hir mariage.

Thus with hir fader for a certeyn space  
Dwellith this flour of wifly pacience,  
That neyther by her wordes ne by hir face,  
Byforn the folk, nor eek in her absence,  
Ne schewed sche that hir was doon offence,  
Ne of hir highe astaat no remembraunce  
Ne hadde sche, as by hir countenance. 8800

No wonder is, for in hir gret estate  
Hir gost was ever in playn humilité;  
Ne tender mouth, noon herte delicate,  
Ne pompe, ne semblant of réalité;  
But ful of patient benignité,  
Discrete, and prides, ay honorable,  
And to hir housbond ever meke and stable.

Men speke of Job, and most for his humblesse,  
As clerkes, whan hem lust, can wel endite,  
Namely of men, but as in sothfastnesse, 8810  
Though clerkes prayse women but a lite,

Ther can no man in humblesse him acquyte  
As women can, ne can be half so trewe  
As women ben, but it be falle of mewe.

*Pars sexta.*

Fro Bolyne is this erl of Panik y-come,  
Of which the fame up-sprong to more and lasse,  
And to the peoples eeres alle and some  
Was couth eek, that a newe marquisesse  
He with him brought, in such pomp and richesse,  
That never was ther seyn with mannes ye 8820  
So noble array in al West Lombardye.

The marquys, which that schoop and knew al this,  
Er that this erl was come, sent his message  
For thilke cely pore Grisildis;

And sche with humble hert and glad visage,  
Not with no swollen hert in hir corrage,  
Cam at his hest, and on hir knees hir sette,  
And reverently and wyfly sche him grette.

"Grisild," quod he, "my wil is outrely,  
This mayden, that schal wedded be to me, 8830  
Receyved be to morwe as really

As it possible is in myn hous to be;  
And eek that every wight in his degré  
Have his estaat in sittyng and servyse,  
In high plesance, as I can devyse.

"I have no womman suffisant certeyne  
The chambres for tarray in ordinaunce  
After my lust, and therfor wold I feyne,  
That thin were al such maner gownaunce;  
Thow knowest eek of al my plesance; 8840  
Though thyn array be badde, and ille byseye,  
Do thou thy dever atte leste weye."

"Nought oonly, lord, that I am glad," quod sche,  
"To don your lust, but I desire also  
Yow for to serve and plesse in my degré,  
Withoute feyntyng, and schal evermo;  
Ne never for no wele, ne for no wo,  
Ne schal the gost withinne myn herte stente  
To love yow best with al my treve entent."

And with that word sche gan the hous to dight,  
And tables for to sette, and beddes make, 8851  
And peyned hir to doon al that sche might,  
Preying the chamberers for Goddes sake  
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and schake,  
And sche the moste servisable of alle  
Hath every chamber arrayed, and his halle.

Abouten undern gan this erl alight,  
That with him brought these noble children tweye;  
For which the peple ran to se that sight  
Of her array, so richely biseye. 8860

And than at erst amonges hem thay seye,  
That Walter was no fool, though that him lest  
To chaunge his wyf; for it was for the best.

For sche is fairer, as thay demen alle,  
Than is Grisild, and more tender of age,  
And fairer fruyt bitwen hem schulde falle,  
And more plesaunt for hir high lynage.  
Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,

*Pars sexta.* In the Harl. Ms. this title of division is omitted, the Clerkes Tale being arranged in five parts only.

8825. *glad.* Ms. Harl. reads *good.*

8846. *feyntyng.* The Harl. Ms. reads *feynnyng*, the *t* having been probably omitted by accident. The Latin text has, "neque in hoc unquam *fatigabar*."

8857. *erl.* The Harl. Ms. reads *lord*; but the reading here adopted from other mss. is supported by the words of Petrarch: "Proximæ lucis hora tertia, comes supervenerat."



That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesaunce,  
Comending now the marquys governaunce. 8870

O stormy poeple, unsad and ever untrewre,  
And undiscret, and chaungyng as a fane,  
Delytyng ever in rombel that is newe,  
For lik the moone ay wax ye and wane;  
Ay ful of clappyng, dere y-nough a jane,  
Youre doom is fals, your constaunce yvel previth,  
A ful gret fool is he that on yow leevith.

Thus sayde saad folk in that citee,  
Whan that the poeple gased up and down;  
For thay were glad right for the novelte, 8880  
To have a newe lady of her toun.

No more of this now make I mencion,  
But to Grisildes agayn wol I me dresse,  
And telle hir constance, and her busynesse.

Ful busy was Grisild in every thing,  
That to the feste was appertinent;  
Right nought was sche abaisht of hir clothing,  
Though it were ruyde, and som del eek to-rent,  
But with glad cheer to the gate is sche went,  
With other folk, to griete the marquisesse, 8890  
And after that doth forth her busynesse.

With so glad chier his gastes sche receyvethe,  
And so connyngly everich in his degre,  
That no defaute no man aparcyeveth,  
But ay thay wondren what sche mighte be.  
That in so pover array was for to se,  
And couthe such honour and reverence,  
And worthily thay prayse hir prudence.

In all this mene while sche ne stent  
Thi's mayde and eek hir brother to comende 8900

With al hir hert in ful benigne entent,  
So wel, that no man couthe hir pris amende;  
But atte last whan that these lordes wende  
To sitte down to mete, he gan to calle  
Grisild, as sche was busy in his halle.

"Grisyld," quod he, as it were in his play,  
"How likith the my wif and hir beauté?"  
"Right wel, my lord," quod sche, "for in good fay,  
A fairer saugh I never noon than sche. 8910

I pray to God give hir prosperité;  
And so hope I, that he wol to yow sende  
Plesaunce y-nough unto your lyves ende.

"On thing warn I yow and biseke also,  
That ye ne prike with no tormentyng  
This tendre mayden, as ye have do mo;  
For sche is fostrid in hir norischinge  
More tendrely, and to my supposyng  
Sche couthe not adversité endure,  
As couthe a pore fostrid creature."

And whan this Walter saugh hir pacience, 8920  
Hir glade cheer, and no malice at al,  
And he so oft had doon to hir offence,  
And sche ay sad and constant as a wal,  
Continuyng ever hir innocence over al,  
This sturdy marquys gan his herte dresse  
To rewen upon hir wyfly stedefastnesse.

"This is y-nough, Grisilde myn," quod he,  
"Be now no more agast, ne yvel payed.  
I have thy faith and thy benignité,  
As wel as ever woman man, assayed 8930  
In gret estate, and propeliche arrayed;

8873. *delytyng*. The reading of Ms. Harl. is *desyngyng*, which does not seem to afford so good a sense.

8901. *benigne*. The reading of Ms. Harl. is *duxom*.

8915. *mo*. For *me*, to suit the rhyme. Tyrwhitt has pointed this out as one of the most remarkable licenses that Chancer has taken in altering the orthography of a word for this purpose.

Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedefastnesse;"  
And hir in armes took, and gan hir kesse.

And sche for wonder took of it no keepe;  
Sche herde not what thing he to hir sayde;  
Sche ferd as sche had stert out of a sleepe,  
Til sche out of hir masidnesse abrayde.  
"Grisild," quod he, "by God that for us deyde,  
Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,  
Ne never had, as God my soule save. 8940

"This is my daughter, which thou hast supposed  
To be my wif; that other faithfully  
Schal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;  
Thow bar hem in thy body trewely.

At Boloyne have I kept hem prively;  
Tak hem agayn, for now maistow not seye,  
That thou hast lorn noon of thy children tweye.

"And folk, that other weyes han seyde of me,  
I warn hem wel, that I have doon this deede  
For no malice, ne for no cruelté, 8950  
But for tassaie in the thy wommanhede;  
And not to slen my children, (God forbede!)  
But for to kepe hem prively and stille,  
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy will."

Whan sche this herd, aswoned down sche fallith  
For pitous joy, and after hir swonyng  
Sche bothe hir yonge children to hir callith,  
And in hir armes pitously wepyng  
Embraseth hem, and tenderly kissyng,  
Ful lik a moder with hir salte teris 8960  
Sche bathis bothe hir visage and hir eeris.

O, such a pitous thing it was to see  
Her swonyng, and hir humble vois to heere!

"*Graunt mercy*, lord, God thank it yow," quod sche,  
"That ye han saved me my children deere.

Now rek I never to be deed right heere,  
Sith I stond in your love and in your grace,  
No fors of deth, ne whan my spirit pace.

"O tender deere yonge children myne,  
Youre woful moder wende stedefastly, 8970  
That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne  
Had eten yow; but God of his mercy,  
And your benigne fader tenderly

Hath doon yow kepe." And in that same stounde  
Al sodeinly sche swapped down to grounde.

And in hir swough so sadly holdith sche  
Hir children tuo, whan sche gan hem tembrace,  
That with gret sleight and gret difficulté  
The children from her arm they gonne arace.  
O! many a teer on many a pitous face 8980  
Down ran of hem that stouden hir bisyde,  
Unnethe aboute hir mighte thay abyde.

Waltier hir gladith, and hir sorwe slakith,  
Sche rysith up abaisshed from hir traunce,  
And every wight hir joy and feste makith,  
Til sche hath caught agayn hir continaunce.  
Wauter hir doth so faithfully plesaunce,  
That it was daynté for to see the cheere  
Bitwix hem tuo, now thay be met in feere.

These ladys, whan that thay her tyme say,  
Han taken hir, and into chambre goon, 8991  
And strippe hir out of hir rude array,  
And in a cloth of gold that brighte schon,  
With a coroun of many a riche stoon  
Upon hir heed, thay into halle hir brought;  
And ther sche was honoured as hir ough.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende;

8965. In the Harl. Ms. this line stands, *That ye han kept my children so deere*; but the reading given in the text and adopted by Tyrwhitt seems to me preferable.



For every man and womman doth his might  
This day in mirth and revel to despense,  
Til on the welken schon the sterres bright; 9000  
For more solempne in every mannes sight  
This feste was, and gretter of costage,  
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yer in heigh prosperité  
Lyven these tuo in concord and in rest,  
And richeliche his daughter married he  
Unto a lord, on of the worthiest  
Of al Ytaile, and thanne in pees and rest  
His wyves fader in his court he kepith,  
Til that the soule out of his body crepith. 9010

His sone succedith in his heritage,  
In rest and pees, after his fader day;  
And fortunat was eek in mariage,  
Al put he not his wyf in gret assaye.  
This world is not so strong, it is no nay,  
As it hath ben in olde tymes yore,  
And herknith, what this auctor saith therefore.

This story is sayd, not for that wyves scholde  
Folwe Grisild, as in humilité,

For it were importable, though thay wolde; 9020  
But for that every wight in his degré  
Schulde be constant in adversité,  
As was Grisild, therefore Petrark writeth  
This story, which with high stile he enditeth.

For swich a womman was so pacient  
Unto a mortal man, wel more us oughte  
Receyven al in gré that God us sent.

For gret skil is he prove that he wroughte,  
But he ne temptith no man that he boughte,  
As saith seint Jame, if ye his pistil rede; 9030  
He provith folk al day, it is no drede;

And suffriþ us, as for our exercise,  
With scharpe scourges of adversité  
Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise;  
Nought for to knowe oure wille, for certes he,  
Er we were born, knew al our frelté;  
And for our best is al his governaunce;  
Leet us thanne lyve in vertuous suffraunce.

But oo word, lordes, herkneth er I go:  
It were ful hard to fynde now a dayes 9040  
As Grisildes in al a toun thre or tuo;  
For if that thay were put to such assayes,  
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes  
With bras, that though the coyn be fair at ye,  
It wolde rather brest in tuo than plye.

For which heer, for the wyves love of Bathe,—  
Whos lyf and alle of hir secte God meyntene  
In high maistry, and elles were it seathe,—  
I wil with lusty herte freisch and grene,  
Say yow a song to glade yow, I wene; 9050  
And lat us stynt of earnestful matiere.  
Herknith my song, that saith in this manere.

*L'envoye de Chaucer.*

Grisild is deed, and eek hir pacience,  
And bothe at oones buried in Itayle;  
For whiche I crye in open audience,  
No weddid man so hardy be to assaile  
His wyves pacience, in hope to fynde  
Grisildes, for in certeyn he schal fayle.

9018. This and the next stanza are translated almost literally from Petrarch's Latin.

9025. For swich a woman, &c.—i. e. Because such a woman was so patient, we ought the more, &c. The Lansd. Ms. and others have *For sith a woman*, which may possibly be the correct reading.

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,  
Let noon humilité your tonges nayle; 9060  
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence  
To write of yow a story of such mervayle,  
As of Grisildes pacient and kynde,  
Lest Chichivache yow swolve in hir entraile.

Folwith ecco, that holdith no silence,  
But ever answereth at the countretable;  
Beth nought bydaffed for your innocence,  
But sharply tak on yow the governaile;  
Emprynth wel this lessoun on your mynde.  
For comyn profyt, sith it may avayle. 9070

Ye archewyves, stondith at defens,  
Syn ye ben strong, as is a greet chamayle,  
Ne suffre not, that men yow don offens.  
And scendre wyves, felle as in batayle,  
Beth egre as is a tyger yond in Inde;  
Ay clappith as a mylle, I yow counsaile.

Ne drede hem not, do hem no reverence,  
For though thin housbond armed be in mayle,  
The 'arwes of thy crabbid eloquence 9079  
Schal perse his brest, and eek his adventayle;  
In gelousy I rede eek thou him bynde,  
And thou schalt make him couche as doth a quayle.

If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence  
Schew thou thy visage and thin appaile;  
If thou be foul, be fre of thy despense,  
To gete the frendes do ay thy travayle;  
Be ay of chier as light as lef on lynde,  
And let hem care and wepe, and wryng and wayle.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE MARCHAUNDES TALE.

"WEPYNG and wailyng, care and other sorwe  
I knowe y-nough, bothe on even and on morwe,"  
Quod the marchaund, "and so doon other mo,  
That weddid ben; I trowe that it be so, 9092

9064. *Chichivache*. According to a popular fable, which seems to have had its origin in France, the *chichevache* or *chicheface*, was a monster which lived only on good women, and which was said to be always thin and meagre on account of the extreme rarity of this article of food. M. Achille Jubinal, in the notes to his *Mystères inédits du xv siècle*, tom. i. p. 390, has printed a French poetical description of this animal from a manuscript of the fourteenth century. In the French miracle of St. Geneviève, of the fifteenth century (Jubinal, ib. p. 281), a man says satirically to the saint,

Gardez-vous de la *chicheface*,  
El vous mordra s'el vous encontre,  
Vous n'amendez point sa besoigne.

I am not aware of any allusion to this fable in England before Chaucer; but our countrymen carried the satire still further, and added another beast named Bycorn, who lived upon good and patient husbands, and who was as fat as the other was lean, on account of the abundance of his favourite food. A poem by Lydgate on "Bycorme and Chichevache" is printed in Mr. Halliwell's *Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate*, p. 129. A large woodcut, printed in a broadside of the time of Elizabeth, and preserved in the collection of broadsides, &c. in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, gives a representation of these two monsters.

9074. *wyves*. The reading of the Harl. Ms. is *wydwewes*. The *Prologue*. This prologue is omitted in some MSS., and in others a different prologue is given, and the Clerkes Tale is in some followed by the Frankleyn's Tale. The prologue and arrangement of the Harl. Ms. are, however, evidently the genuine ones. Tyrwhitt quotes from other MSS. the following concluding stanza to the *envoye*:

This worthy clerk whan ended was his tale,  
Our hoste saide and swore by cockes bones,  
Me were lever than a barrel of ale  
My wif at home had herd this legend ones;  
This is a gentill tale for the nones,  
As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille,  
But thing that wol not be, let it be stille.

For wel I woot it fareth so with me.  
 I have a wyf, the worste that may be,  
 For though the feend to hir y-coupled were,  
 Sche wold him overmacche I dar wel swere.  
 What schuld I yow reherse in special  
 Hir high malice? sche is a schewe at al.  
 Ther is a long and a large difference  
 Betwix Grisildes grete pacience, 9100  
 And of my wyf the passyng cruelté.  
 Were I unbounden, al so mot I the,  
 I wolde never eft come in the snare.  
 We weddid men lyve in sorwe and care,  
 Assay it who so wil, and he schal fynde  
 That I say soth, by seint Thomas of Inde,  
 As for the more part, I say not alle;  
 God schilde that it scholde so byfalle.  
 A! good sir host, I have y-weddid be  
 These monethes tuo, and more not, parde; 9110  
 And yit I trowe that he, that al his lyve  
 Wyfes hath ben, though that men wold him rive  
 Unto the hert, ne couthe in no manere  
 Tellen so moche sorwe, as I now here  
 Couthe telle of my wyfes courdesnesse.”  
 “Now,” quod our ost, “Marchaunt, so God yow  
 Sin ye so moche knowen of that art, [blesse!  
 Ful hertily tellith us a part.”  
 “Gladly,” quod he, “but of myn oughne sore  
 For sory hert I telle may na more.” 9120

## THE MARCHAUNDES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwellyng in Lombardy  
 A worthy knight, that born was of Pavy,  
 In which he lyved in gret prosperité;  
 And fourty yer a wifes man was he,  
 And folwed ay his bodily delyt  
 On wommen, ther as was his appetyt,  
 As doon these fooles that ben seculere.  
 And whan that he was passed sixty yer,  
 Were it for holyness or for dotage,  
 I can not say, but such a gret corrage 9130  
 Hadde this knight to ben a weddid man,  
 That day and night he doth al that he can  
 Taspie wher that he mighte weddid be;  
 Praying our lord to graunte him, that he  
 Might oones knowen of that blisful lif  
 That is bitwix an housbond and his wyf,  
 And for to lyve under that holy bond  
 With which God first man to womman bond.  
 “Noon other lif,” sayd he, “is worth a bene;  
 For wedlok is so holy and so clene, 9140  
 That in this world it is a paradys.”  
 Thus sayd this olde knight, that was so wys.  
 And certainly, as soth as God is king,

*The Marchaundes Tale.* The French fabliau, from which this tale was no doubt translated, is not now known to exist; but the subject has been preserved in Latin in the metrical tales of Adolus, printed in my *Latin Stories*, p. 174, of which collection it forms the first tale. It is told also in a Latin prose tale given in my *Latin Stories*, p. 78, from the Appendix to the editions of Æsop's Fables printed in the fifteenth century.

9128. *sizty.* The Harl. Ms. reads here, as in l. 9124, forty. Tyrwhitt reads in both places sixty. The Lansdowne Ms. has *xl* in the first place, and *lx* in the second, which numbers I have thought it safest to adopt: the transposition of *l* and *x* easily gave rise to different readings. I suppose that Chaucer meant to reckon the period during which his hero remained “wifes” from the ordinary period of marriage, or about his twentieth year. The reading of Ms. Harl., in l. 9128, is totally incompatible with the old age and impotency under which January is described as labouring.

To take a wyf is a glorious thing,  
 And namely whan a man is old and hoor,  
 Than is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor;  
 Than schuld he take a yong wif and a fair,  
 On which he might engendre him an hair,  
 And lede his lyf in mirthe and solace,  
 Wheras these bachileres synge allas, 9150  
 Whan that thay fynde eny aduersité  
 In love, which is but childes vanité.  
 And trewely it sit wel to be so,  
 That bachilers have ofte peyne and wo;  
 On brutil ground thay bulde, and brutelnesse  
 Thay fynde, whan thay wene sikernesse;  
 Thay lyve but as a brid other as a best,  
 In liberté and under noon arrest;  
 Ther as a weddid man, in his estate,  
 Lyvith his lif busily and ordinate, 9160  
 Under the yok of mariage i-bounde;  
 Wel may his herte in joye and blisse abounde.  
 For who can be so buxom as a wyf?  
 Who is so trewe and eek so ententyf  
 To kepe him, seek and hool, as is his make?  
 For wele or woo sche wol him not forsake.  
 Sche is not very him to love and serve,  
 Theigh that he lay bedred til that he sterve.  
 And yet som clerkes seyn it is not so,  
 Of whiche Theofrast is oon of tho. 9170  
 What fors though Theofrast liste lye?  
 Ne take no wif, quod he, for housbondrye,  
 As for to spare in household thy dispense;  
 A trewe servaunt doth more diligençe  
 Thy good to kepe, than thin oughne wif,  
 For sche wol clayme half part in al hir lif.  
 And if that thou be seek, so God me save,  
 Thyne verray frendes or a trewe knave  
 Wol kepe the bet than sche that waytith ay  
 After thy good, and hathi doon many a day. 9180  
 And if that thou take a wif, be war  
 Of oon peril, which declare I ne dar.  
 This entent, and an hundrid sithe wors,

9160. *busily.* The Ms. Lansdowne has *blisful*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.

9172. *No take no wif.* “What follows to ver. 9180 incl. is taken from the *Liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis*, as quoted by Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and from thence by John of Salisbury, Polycrat. l. viii. c. xi. *Quod si propter dispensationem domus, et languoris solatia, et fugam solitudinis, ducuntur uxores, multo melius dispensat servus fidelis, &c. Assidere autem egrotanti magis possunt amici et vernula beneficiis obligati quam illa quæ nobis imputet lachrymas suas,* &c.—Tyrwhitt.

9181. *And if that.* This and the following line are not in the text of Tyrwhitt, who observes on this passage,—“After this verse in the common edit. are these two:

And if thou take to the a wife untrwe,  
 Ful oftetime it shall the sore wer.”

In Mss. A. C. and B. a. they stand thus:

And if thou take a wif, be wel ywar  
 Of on peril which I declare ne dare.

In Mss. C. 1. H. A. D. thus:

And if thou take a wif of heye lyaage,  
 She shal be hauteyn of gret costage.

In Ms. B. 3. thus:

And if thou take a wif in thin age olde,  
 Ful lightly mayst thou be a coke olde.

In Mss. Ask. 1. 2. E. H. B. 9. N. c. and both Caxton's edit. they are entirely omitted, and so I believe they should be. If any one of these couplets should be allowed to be from the hand of Chaucer, it can only be considered as the opening of a new argument, which the author, for some reason or other, immediately abandoned, and consequently would have cancelled, if he had lived to publish his work.”



Writith this man, ther God his bones curs.  
 But take no keep of al such vanité;  
 Deffy Theofrast, and herke me.  
 A wyf is Goddes gifte verrayly;  
 Al other maner giftes hardily,  
 As landes, rentes, pasture, or comune,  
 Or other moebilis, ben giftes of fortune,  
 That passen as a schadow on a wal.  
 But dred not, if I playnly telle schal, 9190  
 A wyf wil last and in thin hous endure,  
 Wel lenger than the lust peradventure.  
 Mariage is a ful gret sacrament;  
 He which hath no wif I hold him schent;  
 He lyveth helples, and is al desolate  
 (I speke of folk in secular estate).  
 And herken why, I say not this for nought,  
 That womman is for mannes help i-wrought.  
 The heighe God, when he had Adam made,  
 And saugh him al aloone body naked, 9200  
 God of his grete goodnes sayde thanne,  
 Let us now make an helpe to this manne  
 Lyk to himself; and than he made Eve.  
 Her may ye see, and here may ye preve,  
 That wyf is mannes help and his comfort,  
 His paradis terrestre and his desport.  
 So buxom and so vertuous is sche,  
 Thay mosten neede lyve in unité;  
 O fleisch thay ben, and on blood, as I gesse,  
 Have but oon hert in wele and in distresse. 9210  
 A wyf? a! seinte Mary, *benedicite*,  
 How might a man have eny adversité  
 That hath a wyf? certes I can not say.  
 The joye that is betwixen hem tway  
 Ther may no tonge telle or herte think.  
 If he be pore, sche helpith him to swynk;  
 Sche kepith his good, and wastith never a def,  
 And al that her housbond list, sche likith it wel;  
 Sche saith nought oones nay, when he saith ye;  
 Do this, saith he, al redy, sir, saith sche. 9220  
 O blisful ordre, o wedlok precious!  
 Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,  
 And so comendid, and approved eek,  
 That every man that holt him worth a leek,  
 Upon his bare knees ought al his lyf  
 Thanken his God, that him hath sent a wif,  
 Or pray to God oon him for to sende  
 To be with him unto his lyves ende.  
 For than his lyf is set in sikernesse;  
 He may not be deceyved, as I gesse, 9230  
 So that he worche after his wyfes red;  
 Than may he boldly bere up his head,  
 Thay ben so trewe, and also so wyse.  
 For whiche, if thou wolt do as the wyse,  
 Do alway so, as womman wol the rede.  
 Lo how that Jacob, as the clerkes rede,  
 By good counsel of his moder Rebecke,  
 Band the kydes skyn about his nekke;  
 For which his fader benesoun he wan.  
 Lo Judith, as the story telle can, 9240  
 By wys counseil sche Goddes poepel kept,  
 And slough him Oliphernus whil he slept.  
 Lo Abygaille, by good counsel how sche  
 Savyd hir housbond Nabal, when that he

Schold han ben slayn. And loke, Hester also  
 By good counseil delivered out of wo  
 The poeple of God, and made him Mardoché  
 Of Assuere enhanced for to be.  
 Ther nys no thing in gré superlatif  
 (As saith Senec) above an humble wyf. 9250  
 Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Catoun byt,  
 Sche schal comaunde, and thou schalt suffre it,  
 And yit sche wil obeye of curtesye.  
 A wif is keper of thin housbondrye:  
 Wel may the sike man wayle and wepe,  
 Ther as ther is no wyf the hous to kepe.  
 I warne the, if wisly thou wilt wirche,  
 Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirehe;  
 If thou lovest thiself, thou lovest thy wyf.  
 No man hatith his fleissch, but in his lif 9260  
 He forstith it, and therefore warne I the  
 Cherish thy wyf, or thou schalt never the.  
 Housbond and wif, what so men jape or pleye,  
 Of worldly folk holden the righte weye;  
 Thay ben so knyht, ther may noon harm bytyde,  
 And nameliche upon the wyves syde.  
 For which this January, of which I tolde,  
 Considered hath inwith his dayes olde  
 The lusty lif, the vertuous quiete,  
 That is in mariage honey-swete. 9270  
 And for his frendes on a day he sent  
 To tellen hem theffet of his entent.  
 With face sad, he hath hem this tale told;  
 He sayde, "Frendes, I am hoor and old,  
 And almost (God woot) at my pittes brinke,  
 Upon my soule som what most I thyнке.  
 I have my body folly dispendid,  
 Blessed be God that it schal be amendid;  
 For I wil be certeyn a weddid man,  
 And that anon in al the hast I can, 9280  
 Unto som mayde, fair and tender of age.  
 I pray you helpith for my mariage  
 Al sodeynly, for I wil not abyde;  
 And I wil fonde tesprien on my syde,  
 To whom I may be weddid hastily.  
 But for als moche as ye ben mo than I,  
 Ye schul rather such a thing asprien  
 Than I, and wher me Just beste to allien.  
 But oo thing warne I yow, my frendes deere,  
 I wol noon old wyf have in no manere; 9290  
 Sche schal not passe sixtene yer certayn.  
 Old fishch and yong fleisch, that wold I have ful  
 fayn.  
 Bet is," quod he, "a pyk than a pikerell,  
 And bet than olde boof is the tendre vel.  
 I wil no womman twenty yer of age,  
 It nys but bene-straw and gret forage.  
 And eek these olde wydewes (God it woot)

9245. *Hester*. The Harl. Ms. and some others read *after also*, an evident error of the scribes. In l. 9247 the Harl. Ms. reads corruptly *Mardoche*. The proper names are often corrupted in this manner by the ignorance or carelessness of scribes, in manuscripts of early English poetry.

9250. *As seith Senec*. The passage of Seneca alluded to was written in the margin of one of the mss. consulted by Tyrwhitt: "Sicut nihil est superius benigna conjuge, ita nihil est crudelius infesta muliere."

9251. *as Catoun byt*. The allusion is to the popular treatise entitled *Cato de Moribus*, lib. iii. distich 25:

"Uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento."  
 9258. *Love wel, &c.* The allusion is to Paul's *Epist. to the Ephesians*, vv. 25, 28, 29: *virū diligite uxores vestras, sicut et Christus dilexit ecclesiam . . . Qui suam uxorem diligit, seipsum diligit. Nemo enim unquam carneri suam odio habuit: sed nutrit et fovet eam.*

9200. *body naked*. Tyrwhitt reads from other mss. *belly naked*, which is the ordinary phrase for entirely naked. Ms. Lausd. has *bly naked*, which is probably a mere error for *belly naked*.

9244. *Nabal*. The Harl. Ms. reads *Nacab*, which appears to be a mere error of the scribe.



They can so moche craft of Wades boot,  
 So moche broken harm when that hem list,  
 That with hem schuld I never lyven in rest. 9300  
 For sondry scolis maken subtil clerkes;  
 Womman of many a scole half a clerk is.  
 But certeyn, a yong thing may men gye,  
 Right as men may warm wax with hondes plye.  
 Werfor I say yow plenerly in a clause,  
 I wil noon old wyf han right for that cause.  
 For if so were I hadde so meschaunce,  
 That I in hir ne couthe have no plessaunce,  
 Than schuld I lede my lyf in advoutrie,  
 And go streight to the devel when I dye. 9310  
 Ne children schuld I noon upon hir geten;  
 Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,  
 Than that myn heritage schulde falle  
 In straunge hond; and thus I telle yow alle.  
 I doute not, I wot the cause why  
 Men scholde wedde; and forthermor woot I,  
 Ther spekith many man of mariage,  
 That wot nomore of it than wot my page  
 For whiche causes man schuld take a wyf.  
 If he ne may not chast be by his lif, 9320  
 Take him a wif with gret devocioun,  
 Bycause of lawful procreacioun  
 Of children, to thonour of God above,  
 And not only for paramour and for love;  
 And for thay schulde leccherye eschiewe,  
 And yeld oure dettes when that it is due;  
 Or for that ilk man schulde helpen other  
 In meschief, as a suster schal the brother,  
 And lyve in chastite ful holly.  
 But, sires, by your leve, that am not I, 9330  
 For God be thanked, I dar make avaunt,  
 I fele my lemys stark and suffisaunt  
 To doon al that a man bilongeth unto;  
 I wot my selve best what I may do.

“ Though I be hoor, I fare as doth a tree,  
 That blossemith er that the fruyt i-waxe be;  
 A blossemy tre is neither drye ne deed;  
 I fele me no wher hoor but on myn heed.  
 Myn herte and al my lymes ben as greene,  
 As laurer thurgh the yer is for to seene. 9340  
 And synnes ye han herd al myn entent,  
 I pray yow to my wille ye assent.”

Diverse men diversly him tolde  
 Of mariage many ensamples olde;  
 Some blamed it, some praised it certayn;  
 But atte laste, shortly for to sayn,  
 (As alday fallith alteracioun,  
 Bitwixe frendes in dispitesoun)  
 Ther fel a strif bitwen his bretheren tuo,  
 Of which that oon was clepid Placebo, 9350

9298. of *Wades boot*. The popular legend of Wades' boat, though well known in the sixteenth century, is now unfortunately lost, so that we cannot fully understand the force of Chaucer's allusion. Wade was one of the heroes of the northern mythology, and like so many of the same class, became subsequently the hero of a medieval romance of the same school as the romances of Horn and Havelok. M. Fr. Michel has collected together nearly all the passages of old writers that can now be found, in which he is mentioned, in an essay in French, *sur Wade*. The medieval romance appears to have related a long series of wild adventures which Wade encountered in his boat, named Gungelot; and these adventures seem to be cited in the text as examples of craft and cunning: in another passage of Chaucer, *Troilus*, lib. iii. l. 615, they are spoken of as examples of romantic or idle tales.—

“ He songe, she pleyede, he tolde a tale of Wade.”

9302. *scole*. The Harl. Ms. reads *skile*.

Justinus sothly cleped was that other.  
 Placebo sayde: “ O January, brother,  
 Ful litel need had ye, my lord so deere,  
 Counsel to axe of eny that is heere;  
 But that ye ben so ful of sapience,  
 That yow ne likith for your heigh prudence  
 To wayve fro the word of Salamon.  
 This word, said he, unto us everychoon:  
 Werk al thing by counsaill, thus sayd he,  
 And thanne schaltow nought repente the. 9360  
 But though that Salamon speke such a word,  
 Myn owne deere brother and my lord,  
 So wisly God bring my soule at rest,  
 I holde your oughne counsel is the best.  
 For, brother myn, of me tak this motif,  
 I have now ben a court-man al my lyf,  
 And God wot, though that I unworthy be,  
 I have standen in ful gret degré  
 Abouten lordes in ful high estat;  
 Yit had I never with noon of hem debaat, 9370  
 I never hem contraried trewely.  
 I wot wel that my lord can more than I;  
 What that he saith, I hold it ferm and stable,  
 I say the same, or elles thing semblable.  
 A ful gret fool is eny counselour,  
 That servith any lord of high honour,  
 That dar presume, or oones thenken it,  
 That his counsel schuld passe his lordes wit.  
 Nay, lordes ben no fooles by my fay.  
 Ye have your self y-spoken heer to day 9380  
 So heigh sentens, so holly, and so wel,  
 That I consente, and conferme every del  
 Your wordes alle, and youre oppinioun.  
 By God, ther is no man in al this toun  
 Ne in Ytaile, cuthe better have sayd;  
 Crist holdith him of this ful wel apayd.  
 And trewely it is an heigh corrage  
 Of any man that stopen is in age,  
 To take a yong wyf, by my fader kyn;  
 Your herte hongith on a joly pyn. 9390  
 Doth now in this matier right as yow lest,  
 For fynally I hold it for the best.”

Justinus, that ay stille sat and herde,  
 Right in this wise he to Placebo answerde.  
 “ Now, brother myn, be pacient I yow pray,  
 Syns ye have sayd, and herknith what I say:  
 Senek amonges other wordes wyse  
 Saith, that a man aught him wel avyse,  
 To whom he giveth his lond or his catel. 9400  
 And syns I aught avyse me right wel,  
 To whom I give my good away fro me,  
 Wel more I aught avised for to be  
 To whom I give my body; for alway  
 I warn yow wel it is no childes pley  
 To take a wyf withoute avisement.  
 Men most enquere (this is myn assent)  
 Wher sche be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,  
 Or proud, or eny other way a schrewe,  
 A chyder, or a wastour of thy good,  
 Or riche or pore, or elles man is wood. 9410  
 Al be it so, that no man fynde schal  
 Noon in this world, that trottith hool in al,  
 Neyther man, ne best, such as men can devyse,  
 But natheles it aught y-nough suffice  
 With any wyf, if so were that sche hadde  
 Mo goode thewes than hir vices badde;

9363. *at rest*. The Harl. Ms. reads *at ese and rest*, which makes the line too long. The word *ese* has probably crept in as a gloss upon *rest*, or as a various reading.

And al this askith leyser to enquire.  
 For God woot, I have weped many a tere  
 Ful prively, syns I have had a wyf.  
 Prayse who so wil a weddid mannes lif, 9420  
 Certes I fynd in it bot cost and care,  
 And observance of alle blisses bare.  
 And yit, God woot, myn neighbours aboute,  
 And namely of women many a route,  
 Sayn that I have the moste stedefast wyf,  
 And eek the meekest oon that berith lyf.  
 But I woot best, wher wryngith me my scho.  
 Ye may for me right as yow liste do.  
 Avysith yow, ye ben a man of age,  
 How that ye entren into mariage; 9430  
 And namly with a yong wif and a fair.  
 By him that made water, eorthe, and air,  
 The yongest man, that is in al this route,  
 Is busy y-nough to bring it wel aboute  
 To have his wif allooone, trustith me;  
 Ye schul not please hir fully yeres thre,  
 This is to say, to doon hir ful plesance.  
 A wyf axith ful many an observance.  
 I pray yow that ye be not evel apayd." 9439  
 "Wel," quod this January, "and hastow sayd?  
 Straw for thy Senec, and for thy proverbis!  
 I counte nought a panyer ful of herbes  
 Of scole termes; wiser men than thou,  
 As I have sayd, assenten her right now  
 Unto my purpose: Placebo, what say ye?"  
 "I say it is a cursed man," quod he,  
 "That lettith matrimoigne securely."  
 And with that word thay rysen up sodeinly,  
 And ben assented fully, that he scholde 9449  
 Be weddid whan him lust, and wher he wolde.

The fantasy and the curious busynesse  
 Fro day to day gan in the soule impresso  
 Of January aboute his mariage.  
 Many a fair schap, and many a fair visage,  
 Ther passith thorough his herte night by night.  
 As who so took a mirrour polissched bright,  
 And set it in a comun market place,  
 Than schuld he se many a figure pace  
 By his mirroure; and in the same wise  
 Gan January in his thought devyse 9460  
 Of maydens, which that dwellid him bisyde;  
 He wist not where that he might abyde.  
 For though that oon have beauté in hir face,  
 Another stant so in the peoples grace  
 For hir sadnes and hir benignité,  
 That of the poeple grettest vois hath sche;  
 And som were riche and hadde badde name.  
 But natheles, bitwix earnest and game,  
 He atte last appoynted him an oon,  
 And let al other fro his herte goon, 9470  
 And ches hir of his oughne auctorité,  
 For love is blynd al day, and may not se.  
 And whan he was into bedde brought,  
 He purtrayd in his hert and in his thought  
 Hir freische beauté, and hir age tendre,  
 Hir myddel smal, hir armes long and sclendre,  
 Hir wise governaunce, hir gentillesse,  
 Hir wommanly beryng, and hir sadnesse.

And whan that he on hir was condescendid,  
 Him thought his chois mighte nought be amendid;  
 For whan that he himself concludid hadde, 9481  
 Him thought ech other mannes witte so badde,

That impossible it were to repplie  
 Agayn his choys; this was his fantasie.  
 His frendes sent he to, at his instance,  
 And prayed hem to doon him that plesance,  
 That hastily thay wolde to him come;  
 He wold abrigge her labour alle and soone.  
 Nedith no more for him to gon ne ryde,  
 He was appoynted ther he wold abyde. 9490  
 Placebo cam, and eek his frendes soone,  
 And althirfirst he bad hem alle a boone,  
 That noon of hem noon argumentis make  
 Agayn the purpos which that he had take;  
 Which purpos was plesant to God, sayd he,  
 And verray ground of his prosperité.

He sayd, ther was a mayden in that toun,  
 Which that of beaute hadde gret renown,  
 Al were it so, sche were of smal degré,  
 Suffisith him hir youthe and hir beauté; 9500  
 Which mayde, he sayd, he wold have to his wyf,  
 To lede in ease and holinesse his lyf;  
 And thanked God, that he might have hir al,  
 That no wight with his blisse parten schal;  
 And prayed hem to laboure in this neede,  
 And schapen that he faille not to speede.  
 For than, he sayd, his spirit was at ease;  
 "Than is," quod he, "no thing may me displese,  
 Save oon thing prikkith in my conscience,  
 The which I wil reherse in your presence. 9510  
 I have herd sayd," quod he, "ful yore ago,  
 Ther may no man have parfyt blisses tuo,  
 This is to say, in erthe and eek in hevene.  
 For though he kepe him fro the synnes sevene,  
 And eek from ylk a branche of thilke tre,  
 Yit is ther so parfyt felicité  
 And so gret ease and lust in mariage,  
 That ever I am agast now in myn age,  
 That I schal lede now so mery a lyf,  
 So delicat, withoute wo and stryf, 9520  
 That I schal have myn heven in erthe heere.  
 For sith that verrey heven is bought so deere  
 With tribulacioun and gret penaunce,  
 How schuld I thanne, that live in such plesance  
 As alle weddid men doon with her wyves,  
 Come to blisse ther Crist eterne on lyve is?  
 This is my drede, and ye, my bretheren tweye,  
 Assoilith me this questioun, I yow preyre."

Justinus, which that hated his folye,  
 Answerd anon right in his japerie; 9530  
 And for he wold his longe tale abrigge,  
 He wolde noon auctorité alegge,  
 But sayde, "Sir, so ther be noon obstacle  
 Other than this, God of his high miracle  
 And of his mercy may so for yow wirche,  
 That er ye have your rightes of holy chirche,  
 Ye may repente of weddid mannes lyf,  
 In which ye sayn ther is no wo ne stryf;  
 And ellis God forbede, but he sente  
 A weddid man grace him to repente 9540  
 Wel ofte, rather than a sengle man.  
 And therfor, sire, the beste reed I can,  
 Dispaire yow nought, but have in youre memorie,  
 Peradventure sche may be your purgatorie;  
 Sche may be Goddes mene and Goddes whippe;

9500. *youthe*. This reading also is adopted from the Lansdowne Ms., as being apparently better than that of the Harl. Ms., which has *trouth*.

9515. *braunche*. The popular medieval treatises on the seven sins arrange the minor transgressions connected with each as *branches* of the primary tree.

9427. *my scho*. See before the note on l. 6074.

9482. *witte*. This is the reading of Lansd. Ms. The Harl. Ms. reads *wyf*, which appears to be incorrect.



Than schal your soule up to heven skippe  
 Swyfter than doth an arwe out of a bowe.  
 I hope to God hereafter ye shuln knowe,  
 That ther nys noon so gret felicité  
 In mariage, ne nevermor schal be, 9550  
 That yow schal lette of your savacioun,  
 So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,  
 The lustes of your wyf attemperly,  
 And that ye please hir not to amorously;  
 And that ye kepe yow cek from other synne.  
 My tale is doon, for my witt is thynne.  
 Beth not agast herof, my brother deere,  
 But let us waden out of this matiere.  
 The wif of Bathe, if ye han understande,  
 Of mariage, which ye han now in honde, 9560  
 Declared hath ful wel in lital space;  
 Fareth now well, God have yow in his grace."

And with that word this Justinus and his brother  
 Han take her leve, and ech of hem of other.  
 And whan they saugh that it most needis be,  
 Thay wroughten so by sleight and wys treté,  
 That sche this mayden, which that Mayhus hight,  
 As hastily as ever that sche might,  
 Schal weddid be unto this Januarie.

I trow it wote to longe yow to tarie, 9570  
 If I yow tolde of every writ and bond,  
 By which that sche was feoffed in his lond;  
 Or for to herken of hir riche array.  
 But finally y-comen is that day,

That to the chirche bothe ben thay went,  
 For to receive the holy sacrament. [necke,  
 Forth comth the preost, with stoole about his  
 And bad hir be lik Sarra and Rebecke  
 In wisdom and in trouth of mariage;  
 And sayd his orisouns, as is usage, 9580  
 And crouched hem, and bad God schuld hem  
 blesse,

And made al secur y-nowh with holinesse.  
 Thus ben thay weddid with solempnité;  
 And atte fest sittith he and sche  
 With othir worthy folk upon the deys.  
 Al ful of joy and blis is the paleys,  
 And ful of instrumentz, and of vitaille,  
 The moste deintevous of al Ytaile.  
 Biforn hem stood such instruments of soun,  
 That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphiouan, 9590  
 Ne maden never such a melodye.

At every cours ther cam loud menstralceye,  
 That never tromped Joab for to heere,  
 Ne he Theodomas yit half so cleere  
 At Thebes, whan the cité was in doute.  
 Bachus the wyn hem schenichth al aboute,  
 And Venus laughith upon every wight,  
 (For January was bycome hir knight,  
 And wolde bothe assayen his corrage  
 In liberté and cek in mariage) 9600

And with hir fuyrbroind in hir hond aboute  
 Daunceth bifore the bryde and al the route.  
 And certeynly I dar right wel say this,  
 Ymeneus, that god of weddingy is,  
 Seigh never his lif so mery a weddid man.

9573. *herk-n.* Other mss., with Tyrwhitt, have *pleken*.  
 9594. *Ne he Theodomas.* "This person is mentioned  
 again as a famous trumpeter in the H. of F. iii. 156, but  
 upon what authority I really do not know. I should  
 suspect that our author met with him, and the anecdote  
 alluded to, in some Romantic History of Thebes. He is  
 prefixed to proper names emphatically, according to the  
 Saxon usage. See before ver. 9242, *him* Holofernes; ver.  
 9247, *him* Mardochee; and below ver. 9608. Of *hire* Phi-  
 lologie and *him* Mercury."—Tyrwhitt.

Holde thy pees, thow poete Marcian,  
 That writest us that ilke weddingy merye  
 Of hir Philologie and he Mercurie,  
 And of the songes that the Muses songe;  
 To smal is bothe thy penne and eek thy tonge  
 For to describe of this mariage. 9611  
 Whan tender youthe hath weddid stoupyng age,  
 Ther is such mirthe that it may not be write;  
 Assaieith it your self, than may ye wyte  
 If that I lye or noon in this matere.  
 Mayus, that sit with so benigne a cheere,  
 Hir to bihold it semed fayerye;  
 Queen Ester loked never with such an ye  
 On Assuere, so meke a look hath sche;  
 I may not yow devyse al hir beauté; 9620  
 But thus moche of hir beauté telle I may,  
 That sche was lyk the brighte mow of May,  
 Fulfid of alle beauté and plesaunce.

This January is ravyscht in a traunce,  
 At every tyme he lokith in hir face,  
 But in his hert he gan hir to manace,  
 That he that night in armes wold hir streyne  
 Harder than ever Paris did Eleyne.  
 But natheles yit had he gret pité

That thilke night offenden hir most he, 9630  
 And thought: "Alas! O tendre creature,  
 Now wolde God ye mighte wel endure  
 Al my corrage, it is so scharp and keene;  
 I am agast ye schul it not susteene.  
 For God forbode, that I dede al my might.  
 Now wolde God that it were woxe night,  
 And that the night wold stonden evermo.  
 I wold that al this people were ago."  
 And fynally he doth al his labour,  
 As he best mighte, savyng his honour, 9640  
 To hast hem from the mete in subtil wise.

The tyme cam that resoun was to ryse,  
 And after that men daunce, and drynke fast,  
 And spices al about the hous thay cast,  
 And ful of joy and blis is every man,  
 Al but a squier, that hight Damyan,  
 Which karf to-for the knight ful many a day;  
 He was so ravysst on his lady May,  
 That for the verray peyne he was nigh wood;  
 Almost he swelt and swowned ther he stood; 9650  
 So sore hath Venus hurt him with hir broind,  
 As that sche bare it daunsyng in hir hond.  
 And to his bed he went him hastily;  
 No more of him as at this tyme telle I;  
 But ther I lete him now his wo compleyne,  
 Til freisshe May wol rewen on his peyne.  
 O perilous fuyr, that in the bed-straw bredith!  
 O famuler fo, that his service bedith!  
 O servaunt traitour, false homly hewe,

9606. *Marcian.* Marcianus Capella, the well-known  
 author of a kind of philosophical romance, *De Nuptiis*  
*Mercurii et Philologiae.*

9608. *he Mercurie.* Tyrwhitt reads *him*. See his ob-  
 servations in the note on l. 9594. I have not ventured to  
 alter the reading of the Harl. Ms. where it involves a  
 question of grammatical construction.

9637. *stonden.* Other mss. read *lasten*.

9655. *now his wo compleyne.* Ms. Lansd., with others,  
 reads *let him wepe y-nowe and pleine*.

9659. *homly.* *Homly* of course means domestic: *hewe*  
 is the Anglo-Saxon *hwa*, a household servant. O false  
 domestic servant! This reading of our ms. is undoubt-  
 edly the right one. Other mss. have *holy* instead of *homly*,  
 an error perhaps arising from the omission of the mark  
 of abbreviation by some scribe who copied the word when  
 it was written *holy*. Tyrwhitt, however, adopts this read-  
 ing, mistakes the meaning of the word *hewe*, and, to make  
 sense of the passage, adds *of*, which is found in none of



Lyk to the nedder in bosom sleighe untrew, 9660  
 God schild us alle from your acquaintance!  
 O January, dronken in plesance  
 Of marriage, se how thy Danyan,  
 Thyn oughne squier and thy borne man,  
 Entendith for to do the vibonye;  
 God graunte the thin homly fo espye.  
 For in this world nys worse pestilence  
 Than homly foo, alday in thy presence.

Parfourmed hath the sonne his ark diourne,  
 No lenger may the body of him sojourne 9670  
 On thorisonte, as in that latitude;  
 Night with his mantel, that is derk and rude,  
 Gan oversprede themesperie aboute;  
 For which departed is the lusti ronte  
 Fro January, with thank on every side.  
 Hoom to her houses lustily thay ryde,  
 Wher as thay doon her thinges, as hem leste,  
 And whan thay seigh her tyme thay goon to reste.

Soone after that this hasty Januarie  
 Wold go to bed, he wold no lenger tarie. 9680  
 He drinkith ypcoras, clarré, and vernage  
 Of spices hote, to encrease his corrage;  
 And many a letuary had he ful fyn,  
 Such as the cursed monk daun Constantin  
 Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*;  
 To ete hem alle he wold no thing eschieu.

And to his privé frendes thus sayd he:  
 "For Goddes love, as soone as it may be, 9690  
 Let voyden al this hous in curteys wise."  
 And thay han doon right as he wold devyse.

Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;  
 The bruyd was brought abedde as stille as stoon;  
 And whan the bed was with the prest y-blessid,  
 Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed,  
 And January hath fast in armes take  
 His freisshe May, his paradys, his make.  
 He lullith hir, he kissith hir ful ofte;  
 With thikke bristlis in his berd unsofte,  
 Lik to the skyn of houndfisch, scharp as brere,  
 (For he was schave al newe in his manere) 9700

He rubbith hir about hir tendre face,  
 And sayde thus: "Allas! I mot trespass  
 To yow, my spouse, and yow gretly offende,  
 Or tyme come that I wold daun descende;  
 But natheles considerith this," quod he,  
 "Ther nys no werkman, whatsoever he be,  
 That may bothe werke wel and hastily;  
 This wol be doon at leysir parfitylly.

the mss.; and in his text it stands, *false of holy hewe*, which he supposes to signify false of holy colour. Conjectural emendations are always dangerous.

9660. *sleighe*. I have added this word from the Ms. Lansdowne, as the line seems imperfect without it.

9681. *vernage*. "*Vernaccia*, Ital. 'Credo sic dictum (says Skinner) quasi *Veronacia*, ab agro *Veronensi*, in quo optimum ex hoc genere vinum crescit.' But the Vernage, whatever may have been the reason of its name, was probably a wine of Crete, or of the neighbouring continent. Froiss. v. iv. c. 13. De l'isle de Candie il leur venoit tres bonnes *malvoisies* et grenaches (r. *geraches*) dont ils estoient largement servis et confortez. Our author in another place, ver. 13000, l. joins together the wines of *Malvesie* and *Vernage*. Malvasia was a town upon the eastern coast of the Morea, near the site of the ancient Epidaurus Limeria, within a small distance from Crete."—*Tyrwhitt*.

9684. *Constantin*. This medical writer lived about the year 1080, according to Fabricius, *Bibl. Med. Æt.* His works, including the treatise mentioned in the text, were printed at Basil, fol. 1536.

9686. *wold*. The Ms. Harl. reads *nas*, which seems not to furnish so good a grammatical construction.

It is no fors how longe that we pleye;  
 In trewe wedlok coupled be we tweye; 9710  
 And blessed be the yok that we ben inne,  
 For in our actes we mow do no synne.  
 A man may do no synne with his wif,  
 Ne hurt himselfen with his oughne knyf:  
 For we han leve to play us by the lawe."

Thus laborith he, til that the day gan dawe,  
 And than he takith a sop in fyn clarré,  
 And upright in his bed than sittith he.  
 And after that he song ful lowd and clere,  
 And kissed his wif, and made wantoun cheere.  
 He was al coltissch, ful of ragerye, 9721  
 And ful of jargoun, as a flekked pye.

The slakke skin about his nekke schakith,  
 Whil that he song, so chaunteth he and craketh.  
 But God wot what that May thought in hir hert,  
 Whan sche him saugh up sittyn in his schert,  
 In his night-cappe, and with his nekke lene;  
 Sche praysith nought his pleying worth a bene.

Than sayd he thus: "My reste wol I take  
 Now day is come, I may no lenger wake." 9730  
 And doon he layd his heed and sleep til prime.

And afterward, whan that he saugh his tyme,  
 Up riseth January, but freissche May  
 Holdith hir chamber unto the fourthe day,  
 As usage is of wyves for the best.  
 For every labour som tyme moot have rest,  
 Or elles longe may he not endure;  
 This is to say, no lycs creature,  
 Be it of fisch, or brid, or best, or man.

Now wol I speke of wolful Danyan, 9740  
 That languyssheth for love, as ye schuln here;  
 Therefore I speke to him in this manere.

I say, "O sely Danyan, allas!  
 Answer to my demaunde, as in this caas,  
 How schaltow to thy lady, freissche May,  
 Telle thy woo? Sche wol alway say nay;  
 Eek if thou speke, sche wol thy woo bywreye;  
 God be thy helpe, I can no better seye."

This seke Danyan in Venus fuyr  
 So brennith, that he deyeth for desir; 9750  
 For which he put his lyf in aventure,  
 No lenger might he in this wo endure,  
 But prively a penner gan he borwe,  
 And in a letter wrot he al his sorwe,  
 In maner of a compleynt or of a lay,  
 Unto his faire freissche lady May.  
 And in a purs of silk, heng on his schert,  
 He hath it put, and layd it at his hert.

The moone that a-noon was thilke day  
 That January hath weddid freische May 9760  
 In tuo of Taure, was into Cancere gliden;

9723. *schaketh*. I have adopted this reading from the Lansd. Ms., as being preferable to that of the Ms. Harl. *slaketh*, which is a repetition of the idea conveyed by the previous word *slakke*, and seems to create a redundancy in the meaning.

9741. *languyssheth*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *longurith*, i. e. falls into languor.

9759. *a penner*. The penner was a case containing the pens, ink, and other apparatus of writing, which the clerk carried about with him, as the Eastern students do at the present day. As such articles belonged only to clergy and scholars, we understand why the "squire" Danyan was obliged to borrow one for his use. An early vocabulary entitled "Nominale" mentions, among the *nomina rerum pertinentium clericis*, "*pennare, a pener*."

9755. *compleynt...lay*. These were the technical names of two forms of metrical composition.

9761. *In tuo of Taure*. Tyrwhitt alters this reading (which is that of nearly all the mss.) into *ten*, and ob-

So long hath Mayus in hir chambre abiden,  
 As custom is unto these nobles alle.  
 A bryde schal not eten in the halle,  
 Til dayes foure or thre dayes atte lest  
 I-passed ben, than let hir go to the fest.  
 The fourthe day complet ro noon to noon,  
 When that the heighe masse was i-doon,  
 In halle sitte this January and May,  
 As freissch as is the brighte someres day. 9770  
 And so bifelle, that this goode man  
 Remembrid him upon this Damyan,  
 And sayde, "Seinte Mary! how may this be,  
 That Damyan entendieth not to me?  
 Is he ay seek? or how may this bityde?"  
 His squiers, which that stoothe ther bisyde,  
 Excusid him, bycause of his syknesse,  
 Which letted him to doon his busynesse;  
 Noon other cause mighte make him tarie.  
 "That me for-thinketh," quod this Januarie;  
 "He is a gentil squyer, by my trouthe, 9781  
 If that he deyde, it were harm and routhe.  
 He is as wys, discret, and eek seeré,  
 As any man I wot of his degré,  
 And therto manerly and servysable,  
 And for to be a thrifty man right able.  
 But after mete, as soon as ever I may  
 I wol myself visit him, and eek May,  
 To doon him al the confort that I can."  
 And for that word him blessed every man, 9790  
 That of his bounté and his gentillesse  
 He wolde so comfort in seeknesse  
 His squyer, for it was a gentil deede.  
 "Dame," quod this January, "tak good heeue,  
 At after mete, ye with your women alle,  
 (When ye han ben in chambre out of this halle)  
 That alle ye goo to se this Damyan;  
 Doth him desport, he is a gentil man,  
 And tellith him that I wil him visite,  
 Have I no thing but rested me a lyte; 9800  
 And spedith yow faste, for I wol abyde  
 Til that ye slepe faste by my syde."  
 And with that word he gan unto him calle  
 A squier, that was marchal of his halle,  
 And told him certeyn thinges that he wolde.  
 This freisshe May hath streight hir wey i-holde  
 With alle hir women unto Damyan.  
 Doun by his beddes syde sat sche than,  
 Comfortyng him as goodly as sche may.

This Damyan, when that his tyme he say, 9810  
 In secré wise, his purs, and eek his bille,  
 In which that he i-written had his wille,  
 Hath put into hir hond withouten more,  
 Save that he siketh wonder deepe and sore,  
 And softly to hir right thus say he;  
 "Mercy, and that ye not discover me;  
 For I am deed, if that this thing be kidde."

serves: "The greatest number of mss. read, *two, two, too, or to*. But the time given (*fourte dayes complete*, ver. 9767) is not sufficient for the moon to pass from the 2d degree of Taurus into Cancer. The mean daily motion of the moon being =  $13^{\circ} 10' 35''$ , her motion in 4 days is =  $1^{\circ} 22^{\circ} 42'$ , or not quite 53 degrees; so that supposing her to set out from the 2d of Taurus, she would not in that time be advanced beyond the 25th degree of Gemini. If she set out from the 10th degree of Taurus, as I have corrected the text, she might properly enough be said, in four days, to be *gliden into Cancer*."—*Tyrwhitt*.

9817. *be kidde*. The Harl. Ms. reads here and in the following line,

..... if that this thing discovered be,  
 This purs in hir bosom hud hath sche.

This purs hath sche inwith hir bosom hud,  
 And went hir way; ye gete no more of me;  
 But unto January comen is sche, 9820  
 That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.  
 He takith hir, and kissith hir ful ofte;  
 And layd him doun to slepe, and that anoon.  
 Sche feyned hir as that sche moste goon  
 Ther as ye woot that every wight moot neede;  
 And whan sche of this bille hath taken heede,  
 Sche rent it al to cloutes atte laste,  
 And into the privy softly it cast.

Who studieth now but faire freissche May?  
 Adoun by olde January sche lay, 9830  
 That slepith, til that the coughe hath him awaked;  
 Anoon he prayde stripen hir al naked,  
 He wold of hir, he sayd, have some plesauce;  
 Hir clothis dede him, he sayde, som grevance.  
 And sche obeieith, be hir lief or loth.  
 But lest that precious folk be with me wroth,  
 How that he wroughte I dar not telle,  
 Or whethir it semed him paradys or helle;  
 But here I lete hem werken in her wise  
 Til evensong rong, and than thay most arise. 9840

Whethir it be by desteny or adventure,  
 Were it by influence, or by nature,  
 Or by constellacioun, that in such estate  
 The heven stood that tyme fortunate,  
 As for to putte a bille of Venus werkis  
 (For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn these clerkis)  
 To any womman for to gete hir love,  
 I can not say, but grete God above,  
 That knowith that noon acte is causeles,  
 He deme of al, for I wil holde my pees. 9850  
 But soth is this, how that this freisshe May  
 Hath take such impressioun that day,  
 Of pité on this sike Damyan,  
 That from hir herte sche ne dryve can  
 The remembrance for to doon him ease.  
 "Certeyn," thought sche, "whom that this thing  
 I rekke not, for her I him assure, [displease  
 To love him best of any creature,  
 Though he no more hadde than his scherte."  
 Lo, pité renneith soone in gentil herte. 9860  
 Heer may ye see, how excellent franchise  
 In womman is whan thay narow hem avyse.  
 Som tyraunt is, as ther ben many oon,  
 That hath an hert as hard as is a stoon,  
 Which wold han lete sterven in the place  
 Wel rather than han graunted him her grace;  
 And hem rejoysen in her cruel pride,  
 And rekken nought to ben an homicide.

This gentil May, fulfillid of pité,  
 Right of hir hond a letter maked sche, 9870  
 In which sche grauntith him hir verray grace;  
 Ther lakkid nought but only day and place,  
 Wher that sche might unto his lust suffice;  
 For it schal be, right as he wol devyse.  
 And whan sche saugh hir tyme upon a day  
 To visite this Damyan goth May,  
 And subtilly this lettre doun sche thruste  
 Under his pylow, rede it if him luste.  
 Sche takith him by the hond, and hard him twiste  
 So secrely, that no wight of it wiste, 9880  
 And bad him be al hool, and forth sche wente  
 To January, whan that he for hir sente.  
 Up ryseth Damyan the nexte morwe,

But I prefer the reading here adopted from the Lansd. Ms., on account of the repetition of rhymes in the other reading.



Al passed was his siknes and his sorwe,  
 He kembith him, he pruneth him and pyketh,  
 He doth al that unto his lady likith;  
 And eek to January he goth as lowe  
 As ever did a dogge for the bowe.  
 He is so pleasant unto every man,  
 (For craft is al, who so that do it can) 9890  
 'That every wight is fayn to speke him good;  
 And fully in his lady's grace he stood.  
 Thus lete I Damyan about his neede,  
 And in my tale forth I wol procede.

Some clerkes holden that felicité  
 Stant in delit, and therfor certeyn he  
 This noble January, with al his might  
 In honest wise as longith to a knight,  
 Schop him to lyve ful deliciously.  
 His housyng, his array, as honestly 9900  
 To his degré was makid as a kynges.  
 Amonges other of his honest thinges  
 He had a gardyn walled al with stoon,  
 So fair a gardyn wot I no wher noon.  
 For out of doute I verely suppose,  
 That he that wroot the Romauns of the Rose,  
 Ne couthe of it the beauté wel devyse;  
 Ne Priapus ne might not wel suffice,  
 Though he be god of gardyns, for to telle  
 The beauté of the gardyn, and the welle, 9910  
 That stood under a laurer alway greene.  
 Ful ofte tyme he Pluto and his queene  
 Preserpina, and al the fayerie,  
 Desporten hem and maken melodye  
 Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men tolde.  
 This noble knight, this January the olde,  
 Such deynté hath in it to walk and pleye,  
 That he wold no wight suffre here the keye,  
 Save he himself, for of the smale wyket  
 He bar alway of silver a smal eliket, 9920  
 With which whan that him list he it unschette.  
 And whan he wolde pay his wyf hir dette  
 In somer sesoun, thider wold he go.  
 And May his wyf, and no wight but thay tuo;  
 And thinges which that weren not doon in bedde,  
 He in the gardyn parfomed hem and spedde.  
 And in this wise many a mery day  
 Lyved this January and freische May;  
 But worldly joye may not alway endure  
 To January, ne to no creature. 9930

O sodeyn hap! o thou fortune unstable!  
 Lyk to the scorpion so deceyvable, [styngge;  
 That flatereth with thin heed whan thou wilt  
 Thy tayl is deth, thurgh thin envenyngne.  
 O britel joye! o sweete venym queynte!  
 O monster, that so subtilly canst paynte  
 Thyn giftes, under hew of stedfastnesse,  
 That thou desceyvest bothe more and lesse!  
 Why hastow January thus deceyved, 9939  
 That haddist him for thy fulle frend receyved?  
 And now thou hast byrefit him bothe his yen,  
 For sorw of which desireth he to dyen.  
 Allas! this noble January fre,  
 Amyd his lust and his prosperité  
 Is woxe blynd, and that al sodeynly.  
 He wepith and he weyleth pitously;

And therwithal, the fuyr of jalousye  
 (Lest that his wif schuld falle in some folye)  
 So brent his herte that he wolde fayn 9949  
 That som man bothe hir and him had slayn;  
 For neyther after his deth, nor in his lyf,  
 Ne wold he that sche were love ne wyf,  
 But ever lyve as wydow in clothes blake,  
 Soul as the turtill that lost hath hir make.  
 But atte last, after a moneth or tweye,  
 His sorwe gan aswage, soth to seye.  
 For whan he wist it may noon other be,  
 He patiently took his adversité;  
 Save out of doute he may not forgoon,  
 That he nas jalous evermore in oon; 996C  
 Which jalousie it was so outrageous,  
 That neyther in halle, ne in noon other hous,  
 Ne in noon other place never the mo  
 He nolde suffre hir to ryde or go,  
 But if that he had hond on hir alway.  
 For which ful ofte wepeth freische May,  
 That loveth Damyan so benignely,  
 That sche moot outhir deyen sodeynly,  
 Or elles sche moot han him as hir lest;  
 She waytith whan hir herte wolde brest. 9970  
 Upon that other syde Damyan  
 Bicomen is the sorwfulleste man  
 That ever was, for neyther night ne day  
 Ne might he speke a word to freische May,  
 As to his purpos, of no such matiere,  
 But if that January most it heere,  
 That had an hond upon hir evermo.  
 But natheles, by writyng to and fro,  
 And privé signes, wist he what sche ment,  
 And sche knew eek the fyn of his entent. 9980

O January, what might it thee avail,  
 If thou might see as fer as schippes saile?  
 For as good is blynd deceyved be,  
 As to be deceyved whan a man may see.  
 Lo, Argus, which that had an hundred eyen,  
 For al that ever he couthe poure or prien,  
 Yet was he blent, as, God wot, so ben moo,  
 That weneth wisly that it be nought so;  
 Passe over is an ease, I say no more.  
 This freische May, that I spak of so yore, 9990  
 In warm wex hath emprynted the eliket,  
 That January bar of the smale wiket,  
 By which into his gardyn ofte he went,  
 And Damyan that knew al hir entent  
 The eliket counterfeted prively;  
 Ther nys no more to say, but hastily  
 Som wonder by this eliket schal betyde,  
 Which ye schal heeren, if ye wol abyde.

O noble Ovyde, wel soth saistow, God woot,  
 What sleight is it though it be long and hoot,  
 That he nyl fynd it out in some manere? 10001  
 By Pirus and Thesbe may men leere;  
 Though they were kept ful longe streyt over al,  
 They ben accorded, rownyng thurgh a wal,  
 Ther no wight couthe han found out swich a  
 For now to purpos; er that dayes eyght [sleight.  
 Were passed of the moneth of Julyl, bifille  
 That January hath caught so gret a wille,  
 Thorough eggyn of his wyf, him for to pleye  
 In his gardyn, and no wight but they tweye, 10010  
 That in a morwe unto this May saith he:  
 "Rys up, my wif, my love, my lady fre;  
 The turtill's vois is herd, my douve swete;

10000, though it. Tyrwhitt reads *if love*, against the authority of the best MSS.

9888. *a dogge for the bowe*. A dog used in shooting. Conf. l. 6851.

9906. *Romauns of the Rose*. The *Romance of the Rose* opens with the description of a magnificent garden, which was looked upon by subsequent writers as the highest perfection of such descriptions.



The wynter is goon, with his raynes wete.  
 Come forth now with thin eyghen columbine.  
 How fairer ben thy brestes than is the wyne.  
 The gardyn is enclosed al aboute;  
 Com forth, my swete spouse, out of doute,  
 Thow hast me wounded in myn hert, o wyf;  
 No spot in the knew I in al my lif. 10020  
 Com forth, and let us take oure desport,  
 I ches the for my wyf and my comfort."  
 Such olde lewed wordes used he.  
 On Damyan a signe made sche,  
 That he schuld go biforn with his kliket.  
 This Damyan than hath opened the wiket,  
 And in he stert, and that in such manere,  
 That no wight it mighte see nor heere,  
 And stille he seet under a bussch. Anoon  
 This January, as blynd as is a stoon, 10030  
 With Mayus in his hond, and no wight mo,  
 Into this freische gardyn is ago,  
 And clappid to the wiket sodeinly.  
 "Now, wyf," quod he, "her nys but ye and I,  
 Thou art the creature that I best love;  
 For by that lord that sit in heaven above,  
 Lever ich had to dyen on a knyf,  
 Than the offende, deere trewe wyf.  
 For Goddes sake, thenk how I the chees,  
 Nought for no covейtise douteles, 10040  
 But only for the love I had to the.  
 And though that I be old and may not se,  
 Beeth trewe to me, and I wol telle you why;  
 Three things, certes, schul ye wyne therby;  
 First, love of Crist, and to your self honour,  
 And al myn heritage, toun and tour.  
 I give it yow, makith chartres as yow leste;  
 This schal ben doon to morw er sonne reste,  
 So wisly God my soule bringe to blisse!  
 I pray yow first in covenant ye me kisse. 10050  
 And though that I be jalous, wyt me nought;  
 Ye ben so deep emprinted in my thought,  
 That than that I considre your beauté,  
 And therwithal the unlikely eelde of me,  
 I may nought, certes, though I schulde dye,  
 Forbere to ben out of your companye  
 For verray love; this is withouten doute:  
 Now kisse me, wyf, and let us rome aboute."  
 This freische May, whan sche his wordes herde,  
 Benignely to January answerde, 10060  
 But first and forward sche bigan to wepe:  
 "I have," quod sche, "a soule for to kepe  
 As wel as ye, and also myn honour,  
 And of my wifhod thilke tendre flour,  
 Which that I have ensured in your hond,  
 Whan that the prest to yow my body bond;  
 Werfor I wil answer in this manere,  
 With the leve of yow, myn owen lod so deere.  
 I pray to God that never dawe the day,  
 That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may, 10070  
 If ever I do unto my kyn that schame,  
 Or elles I empaire so my name,  
 That I be fals; and if I do that lak,  
 Doth strepe me, and put me in a sak,  
 And in the nexte ryver do me drenche;  
 I am a gentil womman, and no enchever.  
 Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewed,  
 And wommen han reproef of yow ever newe.  
 Ye have noon other contenaunce, I leve,  
 But speke to us as of untrust and repreve." 10080  
 And with that word sche saugh wher Damyan  
 Sat in the buissch, and coughten sche bigan;

And with hir fyngres signes made sche,  
 That Damyan schuld clymb upon a tre,  
 That charged was with fruyt, and up he went;  
 For verrayly he knew al hir entent,  
 And every signe that sche couthe make,  
 Wel bet than January hir oughne make.  
 For in a letter sche had told him al  
 Of this matter, how he worche schal. 10090  
 And thus I lete him sitte in the pirie,  
 And January and May romynge mirye.  
 Bright was the day, and bliwed the firmament;  
 Phebus bath of gold his stremes down i-sent  
 To gladen every flour with his warmnesse;  
 He was that tyme in Gemines, as I gesse,  
 But litel fro his declinacioun  
 Of Canker, Joves exaltacioun.  
 And so bifel that brighte morwen tyde,  
 That in that gardyn, in the ferther syde, 10100  
 Pluto, that is the kyng of fayerye,  
 And many a lady in his compaignie  
 Folwyng his wif, the queene Preserpina,  
 Whiche that he ravesched out of Ethna,  
 Whil that sche gadred floures in the mede,  
 (In Claudian ye may the story rede,  
 How in his grisly carte he hir fette);  
 This king of fayry than adoun him sette  
 Upon a bench of turves freissch and greene, 10109  
 And right anoon thus sayd he to his queene:  
 "My wyf," quod he, "ther may no wight say  
 Thexperiens so preveth every day, [nay,  
 The tresoun which that womman doth to man.  
 Ten hundrid thousand stories tellen I can  
 Notable of your untrouth and brutelnesse.  
 O Salamon, wys and richest of richesse,  
 Fulfild of sapiens, and of worldly glorie,  
 Ful worthy ben thy wordes to memorie  
 To every wight, that wit and resoun can.  
 Thus praysith he yit the bounté of man; 10120  
 Among a thousand men yit fond I oon,  
 But of alle women found I never noon.  
 Thus saith the king, that knoweth your wikked-  
 That Jhesus, *filius* Sirac, as I gesse, [nesse;  
 Ne spekhith of yow but selde reverence.  
 A wild fuyr and corrupt pestilence  
 So falle upon your bodies yit to night!  
 Ne see ye not this honourable knight?  
 Bycause, allas! that he is blynd and old,  
 His owne man schal make him cokewold. 10130  
 Loo, wher he sitt, the leechour, in the tre.  
 Now wol I graunten, of my majesté,  
 Unto this olde blinde worthy knight,  
 That he schal have agein his eyghen sight,  
 Whan that his wyf wol do him vilonye;  
 Than schal he knowe al her harlotrye,  
 Bothe in reproef of her and other mo."  
 "Ye schal?" quod Preserpine, "and wol ye so?  
 Now by my modres Ceres soule I swere,  
 That I schal give hir suffisaunt answer, 10140  
 And alle wommen after for hir sake;  
 That though thay be in any gult i-take,  
 With face bold thay schul hemself excuse,  
 And bere hem donn that wolde hem accuse.  
 For lak of answer, noon of hem schal dyen.

10103. *Preserpina*. The Harl. Ms. reads, by some error of the scribe,—

..... Preserpine,

Ech after other as right as a lyne.

10121. *Among a thousand*. See *Ecclesiastes* vii. 28.

10139. *Ceres*. The Harl. Ms. reads *Sires*; the Lansd. *Sire*. *Ceres* is of course the word intended.

Al had ye seyn a thing with bothe your yen,  
 Yit schul we wymmen visage it hardily,  
 And wepe and swere and chide subtilly,  
 That ye schul ben as lewed as ben gees,  
 What relikth me of your auctoritees? 10150  
 I wot wel that this Jew, this Salamon,  
 Fond of us wommen fooles many oon;  
 But though he ne fond no good womman,  
 Yit hath ther founde many another man  
 Wommen ful trewe, ful good, and vertuous;  
 Witnesse on hem that dwelle in Cristes hous,  
 With martirdom thay proved hir constauce,  
 The Romayn gestes eek make remembraunce  
 Of many a verray trewe wyf also.  
 But, sire, be nought wrath, al be it so, 10160  
 Though that he sayd he fond no good womman,  
 I pray yow tak the sentens of the man;  
 He mente thus, that in sovereign bounte  
 His noon but God, that sit in Trinite.  
 Ey, for verrey God that nys but oon,  
 What make ye so moche of Salamon?  
 What though he made a temple, Goddes hous?  
 What though he were riche and glorious?  
 So made he eek a temple of fals godis, 10169  
 How might he do a thing that more forbod is?  
 Pardé, als fair as ye his name emplastre,  
 He was a lechour and an ydolastre,  
 And in his eelde he verray God forsook;  
 And if that God ne hadde (as saith the book)  
 I-spared him for his fadres sake, he scholde  
 Have lost his regne rather than he wolde.  
 I sette right nought of the vilonye,  
 That ye of wommen write, a boterflie;  
 I am a womman, needes most I speke,  
 Or elles swelle tyl myn herte breke. 10180  
 For syn he sayd that we ben jangleresses,  
 As ever hool I moote brouke my tresses,  
 I schal not spare for no curtesye  
 "To speke him harm, that wold us vilonye."  
 "Dame," quod this Pluto, "be no lenger wrath,  
 I give it up: but sith I swore myn oth,  
 That I wil graunte him his sight agein,  
 My word schal stonde, I warne yow certeyn;  
 I am a kyng, it sit me nought to lye."  
 "And I," quod sche, "am queen of fairerie. 10190  
 Hir answer schal sche have, I undertake;  
 Let us no mo wordes herof make.  
 Forsoth I wol no lenger yow contrarie."  
 Now let us turne agayn to Januarye,  
 That in this gardyn with this faire May  
 Syngeth, ful merier than the papinjay,  
 "Yow love I best, and schal, and other noon."  
 So long about the aleys is he goon,  
 Til he was come agaynes thilke pirie,  
 Wher as this Damyan sittith ful mirye 10200  
 On heigh, among the freische leyves greene,  
 This freissche May, that is so bright and scheene,  
 Gan for to syke, and sayd, "Allas my syde!  
 Now, sir," quod sche, "for aught that may bityde,  
 I most han of the peres that I see,  
 Or I moot dye, so sore longith me  
 To eten of the smale peris greene;

10146. The Harl. Ms. reads this line,—

Al had a man seyn a thing with bothe his yen.

10158. *The Romayn gestes.* Tyrwhitt says that the allusion is to the popular book known as the *Gesta Romanorum*. I am inclined, however, to think it more probable that the poet had in his eye the examples of Lucretia, Portia, and other ladies celebrated in Roman history.

Help for hir love that is of heven queene!  
 I telle yow wel a womman in my plyt  
 May have to fruyt so gret an appetyt, 10210  
 "That sche may deyen, but sche it have."  
 "Allas!" quod he, "that I nad heer a knave  
 That couthe climbe, allas! allas!" quod he,  
 "For I am blynd." "Ye, sire, no fors," quod sche;  
 "But wolde ye vouchesauf, for Goddes sake,  
 The piry inwith your armes for to take,  
 (For wel I woot that ye mystruste me,  
 Than schold I clymbe wel y-nough," quod sche,  
 "So I my foot might set upon your bak." 10219  
 "Certes," quod he, "theron schal be no lak,  
 Might I yow helpe with myn herte blood."  
 He stoupith down, and on his bak sche stood,  
 And caught hir by a twist, and up sche goth.  
 (Ladys, I pray yow that ye be not wroth,  
 I can not glose, I am a rude man.)  
 And sodeinly anon this Damyan  
 Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng.  
 And whan that Pluto saugh this grete wrong,  
 To January he gaf agayn his sight, 10229  
 [And made him see as wel as ever he might.  
 And whan he thus had caught his sight again,]  
 Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn;  
 But on his wyf his thought was evermo.  
 Up to the tree he kest his eyghen tuo,  
 And seigh that Damyan his wyf had dresid  
 In which maner it may not ben expressid,  
 But if I wolde speke uncurteisly.  
 And up he gaf a roryng and a cry,  
 As doth the moder whan the child schal dye;  
 "Out! help! allas! harrow!" he gan to erie;  
 "O stronge lady stoure, what dos thou?" 10241  
 And sche answerith: "Sire, what eylyth yow?  
 Have paciens and resoun in your mynde,  
 I have yow holpen on bothe your eyen blynde.  
 Up peril of my soule, I schal not lyen,  
 As me was taugt to hele with your yen,  
 Was nothing bet for to make yow see,  
 Than stroggle with a man upon a tree;  
 God woot, I dede it in ful good entent."  
 "Stroggle!" quod he, "ye, algat in it went. 10250  
 God give yow bothe on schames deth to dyen!  
 He swyved the; I saugh it with myn yen;  
 And elles be I honged by the hals."  
 "Than is," quod sche, "my medicine fals.  
 For certeynly, if that ye mighten see,  
 Ye wold not say the wordes unto me,  
 Ye han som glymsyng, and no parfyt sight."  
 "I se," quod he, "as wel as ever I might,  
 (Thankid be God) with bothe myn yen tuo,  
 And by my troum he thought he did the so."  
 "Ye, mase, mase, goode sir," quod sche; 10261  
 "This thank have I for I have maad yow see;  
 Allas!" quod sche, "that ever I was so kynde."  
 "Now, dame," quod he, "let al passe out of mynde;  
 Com down, my leef, and if I have myssayd,  
 God help me so, as I am evel appayd.  
 But by my faders soule, I wende have seyn,  
 How that this Damyan had by the leyn,

10227. In some late mss., and in the printed editions, several lines of obscene ribaldry are added here and in the subsequent parts of the tale; but, as they are not found in mss. of any authority, Tyrwhitt very properly omitted them. It may be observed that there are several other variations in parts of this tale in some mss. which it has not been thought necessary to point out.

10230 This and the following line, given here from Tyrwhitt, are not found in the Harl. Ms.

And that thy smok had layn upon thy brest."  
 "Ye, sire," quod sche, "ye may wene as yow lest;  
 But, sire, a man that wakith out of his slep,  
 He may not sodeynly wel take keep 10272  
 Upon a thing, ne seen it parfytly,  
 Til that he be adawed verrayly.  
 Right so a man, that long hath blynd i-be,  
 He may not sodeynly so wel i-se,  
 First whan the sight is newe comen agayn,  
 As he that hath a day or tuo i-sayn.  
 Til that your sight y-stablid be a while,  
 Thet may ful many a sighte yow bigile. 10280  
 Beth war, I pray yow, for, by heven king,  
 Ful many man wenith for to se a thing,  
 And it is al another than it semeth;  
 He that mysconceyvethe he mysdemeth."  
 And with that word sche leep down fro the tre.  
 This January who is glad but he?  
 He kissith hir, and clippith hir ful ofte,  
 And on hir wombe he strokith hir ful softe;  
 And to his paleys hom he hath hir lad.  
 Now, goode men, I pray yow to be glad. 10290  
 Thus endith her my tale of Januarye,  
 God blesse us, and his moder seinte Marie!

## THE SQUIYERES PROLOGE.

"Er! Goddes mercy!" sayd our Hoste tho,  
 "Now such a wyf I pray God keep me fro.  
 Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilites  
 In wommen ben; for ay as busy as bees  
 Ben thay us seely men for to desceyve,  
 And from a soth ever wol thay weyve.  
 By this Marchaundes tale it proveth wel.  
 But douteles, as trewe as eny steel 1300  
 I have a wyf, though that sche pore be;  
 But of hir tonge a labbyng schrewe is sche;  
 And yit sche hath an heap of vices mo.  
 Therof no fors; let alle such thinges go.  
 But wite ye what? in counseil be it seyde,  
 Me rewith sore I am unto hir teyde;  
 And if I scholde reken every vice,  
 Which that sche hath, i-wis I were to nyce;  
 And cause why, it schuld reported be  
 And told to hir of som of this meyne, 10310  
 (Of whom it needith not for to declare,  
 Syn wommen connen oute such chaffare);  
 And eek my witte suffisith nought therto  
 To tellen al; wherfor my tale is do."  
 "Sir Squier, com forth, if that your wille be,  
 And say us a tale of love, for certes ye  
 Connen theron as moche as ony man."  
 "Nay, sire," quod he; "but I wil say as I can  
 With herty wil, for I wil not rebelle  
 Against your wille; a tale wil I telle, 10320  
 Have me excused if that I speke amys;  
 My wil is good; and thereto my tale is this."

## THE SQUIYERES TALE.

At Sarray, in the lond of Tartary,  
 Ther dwelled a kyng that werryed Russy,  
 Thurgh which ther deyed many a doughty man;

10316. *of love.* These two words are omitted in Ms. Harl., but they seem necessary for the sense and metre. *The Squyeres Tale.* It is unknown at present from what source Chaucer derived this tale, which is not found (as far as I am aware) in any other form in the literature of the Middle Ages. It is to be regretted that Chaucer left it unfinished. It may be observed that throughout the tale the name of the Tartar king is Cambynskan, in the

This nobil kyng was cleped Cambynskan,  
 Which in his tyme was of so greit renoun,  
 That ther nas nowher in no regioun  
 So excellent a lord in alle thing;  
 Him lakked nought that longed to a kyng, 10330  
 As of the secte of which that he was boru.  
 He kept his lawe to which he was sworn,  
 And therto he was hardy, wys, and riche,  
 And pitous and just, and alway y-liche,  
 Soth of his word, benign and honourable;  
 Of his corage as eny centre stable;  
 Yong, freisch, and strong, in armes desirous,  
 As eny bachiler of al his hous.  
 A fair person he was, and fortunat,  
 And kepte so wel his real estat, 10340  
 That ther was nowher such a ryal man.  
 This noble kyng, this Tartre, this Cambynskan,  
 Hadde tuo sones by Eltheta his wyf,  
 Of which the eldest highte Algarsyf,  
 That other was i-cleped Camballo.  
 A daughter had this worthi king also,  
 That yongest was, and highte Canace;  
 But for to telle yow al hir beauté,  
 It lith not on my tonge, ne my connyng,  
 I dar nought undertake so heigh a thing; 10350  
 Myn Englishsh eek is insufficient,  
 It moste be a rethor excellent  
 That couth his colours longyng for that art,  
 If he schold hir discryve in eny part;  
 I am non such, I mot speke as I can.

And so bifel it, that this Cambynskan  
 Hath twenty wynter born his dyademe;  
 As he was wont fro yer to yer, I deme,  
 He leet the fest of his nativité  
 Don cryen, thurghout Sarray his cité, 10360  
 The last Idus of March, after the yer.  
 Phebus the sonne was joly and cleer,  
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun  
 In Martes face, and in his mansioun  
 In Aries, the colerik, the hote signe.  
 Ful lusty was the wedir and benigne,  
 For which the foules agein the sonne scheene,  
 What for the sesoun and for the yonge greene,  
 Ful lowde song in here affeccious;  
 Hem semed have geten hem protecciouns 10370  
 Agens the swerd of wynter kene and cold.  
 This Cambynskan, of which I have told,  
 In royal vesture, sitting on his deys  
 With dyadem, ful heigh in his paleys;  
 And held his fest solempne and so riche,  
 That in this worlde was there noon it liche.  
 Of which if I schal tellen al tharray,  
 Than wold it occupie a someres day;  
 And eek it needith nought for to devyse

Ms. Harl. as well as in the Lansdowne and other mss. It is almost with regret that we give up the form of the name rendered classic by Milton,—

Or call up him that left half told  
 The story of Cambuscan bold,  
 Of Camball, and of Algarsife,  
 And who had Canace to wife,  
 That own'd the virtuons ring of glas;  
 And of the wond'rous horse of bras  
 On which the Tartar king did ride.

(*Il Penseroso.*)

10324. *Russy.* The Tartars and Russians were constantly engaged in hostilities with each other from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

10344. *Algarsyf.* The Harl. Ms. reads *Algarsyf*, and in the next line *Samballo* for *Camballo*, which are probably mere errors of the scribe.



At every cours the ordre and the seryyse. 10380  
 I wol nat tellen of her straunge sewes,  
 Ne of her swannes, ne here heroun-sewes.  
 Ek in that lond, as tellen knyghtes olde,  
 Ther is som mete that is ful deynté holde,  
 That in this lond men reech of it but smal;  
 Ther is no man it may reporten al.  
 I wol not tarien you, for it is pryme,  
 And for it is no fruyt, but los of tyme,  
 Unto my purpos I wol have my recours.  
 That so bifelle after the thridde cours, 10390  
 Whil that this kyng sit thus in his nobleye,  
 Herkyng his mynstrales her thinges pleye  
 Byforne him atte boord deliciously,  
 In atte halle dore al sodeynly  
 Ther com a knight upon a steed of bras,  
 And in his hond a brod myroure of glas;  
 Upon his thomb he had of gold a ryng,  
 And by his side a naked swerd hangyng:  
 And up he rideth to the heyghe bord.  
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word, 10400  
 For mervayl of this knight; him to byholde  
 Ful besily they wayten yong and olde.

This straunge knight that cam thus sodeynly,  
 Al armed sauf his heed ful richely,  
 Salued the kyng and queen, and lordes alle  
 By ordre, as they seten into halle,  
 With so heigh reverens and observaunce,  
 As wel in speche as in contynauce,  
 That Gaweyn with his olde curtesye,  
 They he were come agein out of fayrre, 10410  
 Ne couthe him nought amende with no word.  
 And after this, biforn the highe bord  
 He with a manly vois sayd this message,  
 After the forme used in his langage,  
 Withouten vice of sillabil or letter.  
 And for his tale schulde seme the better,  
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,  
 As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.  
 Al be it that I can nat sowne his style,  
 Ne can nat clymben over so heigh a style, 10420  
 Yit say I this, as to comun entent,  
 Thus moche amounteth al that ever he ment,  
 If it so be that I have it in mynde.

He sayd: "The kyng of Arraby and of Ynde,  
 My liege lord, on this solempne day  
 Saluteth you as he best can or may,  
 And sendeth you, in honour of your feste,  
 By me, that am redy at al his heste,  
 This steede of bras, that esily and wel  
 Can in the space of o day naturel, 10430  
 (This is to say, in four and twenty houres)  
 Wher so yow lust, in droughthe or in schoures,  
 Beren your body into every place,  
 To which your herte wilneth for to pace,  
 Withouten wem of you, thurgh foul and fair.  
 Or if you lust to flee as heigh in thair  
 As doth an egle, whan him list to soore,  
 This same steede schal bere you evermore  
 Withouten harm, til ye be ther yow leste,

10382. *swannes ... heroun-sewes*. It is hardly necessary to observe that *swans* were formerly eaten at table, and considered among the choicest ornaments of the festive board. Tyrwhitt informs us that at the enthronization of Archbp. Nevil, 6 Edward IV., there were "*heronshawes* iii. c." (*Leland, Collect.* vol. vi. 2), and that at another feast in 1530, we read of "16 *hearonsewes*, every one 12*l.*" (*Peeck's Des. Cur.* vol. ii. 12.)

10400. *Gaweyn*. The Harl. Ms. reads *Ewen*. Gaweyn was celebrated in mediæval romance as the most courteous of Arthur's knights.

(Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste), 10440  
 And torne agein, with wrything of a pyn.  
 He that it wrought, he cowthe many a gyn;  
 He wayted many a constellacioun,  
 Er he had do this operacioun,  
 And knew ful many a seal and many a bond.

"This mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,  
 Hath such a mighte, that men may in it see  
 When ther schal falle eny adversité  
 Unto your regne, or to your self also,  
 And openly, who is your frend or fo. 10450  
 And over al this, if eny lady bright  
 Hath set hir hert on eny maner wight,  
 If he be fals, sche schal his tresoun see,  
 His newe love, and his subtilité,  
 So openly, that ther schal nothing hyde.  
 Wherfor ageins this lusty somer tyde  
 This mirour and this ryng, that ye may see,  
 He hath send to my lady Canacee,  
 Your excellent daughter that is heere.

"The vertu of this ryng, if ye wol heere, 10460  
 Is this, that who so lust it for to were  
 Upon hir thomb, or in hir purs to bere,  
 Ther is no foul that fleeth under the heven,  
 That sche ne schal understonden his steven,  
 And know his menyng openly and pleyne,  
 And answer him in his langage ageyn;  
 And every gras that groweth upon roote  
 Sche schal eek know, to whom it wol do boote,  
 Al be his woundes never so deep and wyde. 10469

"This naked swerd, that hangeth by my syde,  
 Such vertu hath, that what man that it smyte,  
 Thurghout his armur it wol kerve and byte,  
 Were it as thikke as a branched ook;  
 And what man is i-wounded with the strook  
 Schal never be hool, til that you lust of grace  
 To strok him with the plat in thilke place  
 Ther he is hurt; this is as moche to seyn,  
 Ye moote with the platte swerd agein  
 Stroke him in the wound, and it wol close.  
 This is the verray soth withouten glose, 10480  
 It failleth nought, whil it is in your hold."

And whan this knight thus had his tale told,  
 He rit out of the halle, and doun he light.  
 His steede, which that schon as sonne bright,  
 Stant in the court as stille as eny stoon.  
 This knight is to his chambre lad anon,  
 And is unarmed, and to mete i-sett.  
 This presentz ben ful richely i-fett,  
 This is to sayn, the swerd and the myrrour,  
 And born anon unto the highe tour, 10490  
 With certain officers ordeynd therfore;  
 And unto Canacee the ryng is bore  
 Solempnely, ther sche syt atte table;  
 But sikerly, withouten eny fable,  
 The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,  
 It stant, as it were to the ground i-glewed;  
 Ther may no man out of the place it dryve  
 For noon engyn of wyndas or polyve;  
 And cause why, for they can nought the craft,  
 And therfor in the place thei have it left, 105.0

10445. *seal*. The making and arrangement of seals was one of the important operations of mediæval magic, and treatises on this subject are found in manuscripts. One of these was believed to have been compiled by the children of Israel in the desert. A copy of this is found in Ms. Arundel, No. 295, fol. 285, which commences with the statement: "In nomine Domini. Incipit liber preciosus et secretus sigillorum quem fecerunt filii Israel in deserto secundum motus et cursus siderum," &c.

10498. *wyndas*. The Harl. Ms. reads *wyndyng*.

Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere  
To voyden him, as ye schul after heere.

Greet was the pres that swarmed to and fro  
To gauren on this hors that stondeth so;  
For it so high was, and so brod and long,  
So wel proporcioned to be strong,  
Right as it were a steed of Lombardy;  
Therto so horsly, and so quyk of ye,  
As if a gentil Poyleys courser were;  
For certes, fro his tayl unto his cere 10510  
Nature ne art ne couthe him nought amende  
In no degré, as al the poeple wende.  
But evermore her moste wonder was,  
How that it couthe goon, and was of bras;  
It was of fayry, as the poeple semed.  
Diverse peple diversly they demed;  
As many hedes, as many wittes been.  
They murmured, as doth a swarm of been,  
And made skiles after her fantasies,  
Rehersyng of the olde poetries, 10520  
And seyden it was i-like the Pagasé,  
The hors that hadde wynges for to fle,  
Or elles it was the Grekissch hors Synon,  
That brougte Troye to destruccioun,  
As men may in the olde gestes rede,  
"Myn hert," quod oon, "is evermore in drede,  
I trow som men of armes ben therinne,  
That schapen hem this cité for to wyne;  
It were good that such thing were knowe."  
Another rowned to his felaw lowe, 10530  
And sayde: "It lyth, for it is rather lik  
An apparence maad by som magik,  
As jodelours pleyen at this festes grete."  
Of sondry thoughtes thus they jangle and trete,  
As lewed peple demeth comunly  
Of thinges that ben maad more subtilly  
Than they can in her lewednes comprehende.  
They deemen gladly to the badder ende.  
And som of hem wondred on the mirroure,  
That born was up into the maister tour, 10540  
How men might in it suche thinges se.  
Another answerd, and sayd, it might wel be  
Naturally by composiciouns  
Of angels, and of heigh reflexiouns;  
And sayde that in Rome was such oon.  
They speke of Alhazen and Vitilyon,  
And Aristotle, that writen in her lvyes

10505. *high*. The Harl. Ms. reads *wyd*.

10509. *a gentil Poyleys courser*. "A horse of Apulia, which in old French was usually called *Poille*. The horses of that country were much esteemed. Ms. Bod. James VI. 142. Richard, Archbp. of Armagh, in the fourteenth century, says, in praise of our St. Thomas, 'quod nec mulus Hispania, nec dextrarius Apulia, nec repedo Æthiopia, nec elephantus Asia, nec camelus Syria hoc asino nostro Angliæ aptior sive audentior invenitur ad prælia.' He had before informed his audience, that Thomas, Anglice, idem est quod *Thom Asinus*. There is a patent in Rymer, 2 E. II. *De Dextrariis in Lombardiâ emendis*."—*Tyrwhitt*.

10521. *the Pagasé, i. e. Pegasus*. In the margin of the Harl. Ms. it is explained in Latin, *i. equus pegaseus*.

10523. *Synon*. Sinon, according to Grecian story, was the maker of the wooden horse by means of which Troy was finally taken.

10544. *heigh*. Other mss., with Tyrwhitt, read *style* or *sleigh*, sly.

10545. *in Rome*. The erection of this mirror was one of the feats of the legendary Virgil, and will be found described in the early English poem of the *Seven Sages*.

10546. *Alhazen and Vitilyon*. The Harl. Ms. reads *Alceyt* for *Alhazen*, and the Lansd. Ms. *Alocen*. "Alhazeni et Vitellonis Opticæ are extant, printed at Basil, 1572. The first is supposed by his editor to have lived about A.D. 1100, and the second in A.D. 1270."—*Tyrwhitt*.

Of queynte myrroures and prospectyves,  
As knowne they that han her bokes herd.  
And other folk have wondred on the swerd, 10550  
That wolde passe thoroughout every thing;  
And fel in speche of Telophus the kyng,  
And of Achilles for his queynte spere,  
For he couthe with it bothe hele and dere,  
Right in such wise as men may with the swerd,  
Of which right now ye have your selven herd.  
They speken of sondry hardyng of metal,  
And speken of medicines therwithal,  
And how and whan it schulde harded be,  
Which is unknowe algat unto me. 10560  
Tho speeken they of Canacees ryng,  
And seyden alle, that such a wonder thing  
Of craft of rynges herd they never noon,  
Sauf that he Moyses and kyng Salamon  
Hadden a name of connyng in such art.  
Thus seyen the peple, and drawn hem apart.  
But natheles som seiden that it was  
Wonder thing to make of ferne aisschen glas,  
And yit is glas nought like aisschen of ferne,  
But for they han i-knownen it so ferne; 10570  
Therfor ceseeth her janglyng and her wonder.  
As sore wondred som of cause of thonder,  
On ebbe and flood, on gossomer, and on myst,  
And on alle thing, til that the cause is wist.  
Thus janglen they, and demen and devyse,  
Til that the kyng gan fro his bord arise.

Phebus hath left the angel merydyonal,  
And yit ascendyng was a best roial,  
The gentil Lyoun, with his Aldryan,  
Whan that this gentil kyng, this Cambynskan,  
Ros fro his bord, ther as he sat ful hye; 10581  
Biforn him goth ful lowde menstralcey,  
Til he cam to his chambre of parentez,  
Ther as ther were divers instrumentz,  
That is y-like an heven for to heere.

Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere;  
For in the fischch her lady sat ful heyghe,

10552. *Telophus*. Telephus, king of Mysia, in attempting to hinder the Greeks from marching through his country against Troy, was wounded by Achilles, and was informed by the oracle that his wound could only be cured by being touched by the spear which had made it. Whence Propertius says,—

Mysus et Hæmonii juvenis qui cuspidè vulnus  
Senserat, hoc ipsa cuspidè sensit opem.

And Ovid,—

Telephus æterna consumptus tæbe perisset,  
Si non quæ nocuit dextra tulisset opem.

10564. *Moyses and kyng Salamon*. These personages, especially the latter, had a high reputation (derived apparently from the Arabs) in the Middle Ages for their skill in magic.

10568. *And drawn hem apart*. The Harl. Ms. reads, *the peple on every part*.

10577. *left*. The Harl. Ms. reads *lost*. This Ms. has in several instances *lost* for *left*, and *vice versa*.

10578. *Aldryan*. The Harl. Ms. reads *Adryan*.

10583. *chambre of parentez*. "Chambre de parentez is translated by Cotgrave, the presence-chamber; and *Lit de parentez*, a bed of state. *Parentez* originally signified all sorts of ornamental furniture, or clothes, from *par*, Fr. to adorn. See ver 2303, and Leg. of G. W. Dido, ver. 181.

To dauncing chambres ful of parentezes,  
Of riche beddes and of pavementes,  
This Eneas is ledde after the mete.

The Italians have the same expression. Ist. d. Conc. Trident. l. iiii. Il Pontefice—ritornato alla camera de' parentez co' Cardinali."—*Tyrwhitt*.

10587. *in the fischch, i. e. in the zodiacal sign pisces*. See before, the note on l. 6284.



And loketh on hem with a frendly eyghe.  
 This noble kyng is set upon his throne;  
 This straunge knight is fet to him ful sone, 10590  
 And in the daunce he gan with Canace.  
 Her is the revel and the jolyté,  
 That is not able a dul man to devyse;  
 He most have knowe love and his servise,  
 And ben a festly man, as freisch as May,  
 That schulde you devyse such array.  
 Who couthe telle you the forme of daunce  
 So uncouth, and so freische countinaunce,  
 Such subtil lokyng of dissimilynges,  
 For drede of jalous folk appareeyvnges? 10600  
 No man but Launcolet, and he is deed.  
 Therefore I passe over al this lustyheed,  
 I say no more, but in this jolynesse  
 I lete hem, til men to soper hem dresse.  
 The styward byt the spices for to hye  
 And eek the wyn, in al this melodye;  
 Thes usschers and thes squyers ben agon,  
 The spices and the wyn is come anon;  
 They eet and drank, and whan this had an ende,  
 Unto the temple, as resoun was, they wende;  
 The servise doon, they soupen al by day. 10611  
 What needeth you to rehersen her array?  
 Ech man wot wel, that a kynges feste  
 Hath plenté, to the lest and to the meste,  
 And deyntees mo than ben in my knowyng.  
 At after souper goth this noble kyng  
 To see this hors of bras, with al his route  
 Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.  
 Swich wondryng was ther on this hors of bras,  
 That seth this grete siege of Troye was, 10620  
 Ther as men wondrid on an hors also,  
 Ne was ther such a wondryng as was tho.  
 But fynally the kyng asked the knight  
 The vertu of this courser, and the might,  
 And prayd him tellen of his governaunce.  
 The hors anon gan for to trippe and daunce,  
 Whan that the knight leyd hand upon his rayne,  
 And sayde, "Sir, ther is nomore to sayne,  
 But whan you lust to ryde any where,  
 Ye moote trille a pyn, stant in his ere, 10630  
 Which I schal telle you betwen us two,  
 Ye mooste nempne him to what place also,  
 Or what countré you luste for to ryde.  
 And whan ye come ther you lust abyde,  
 Bid him descende, and trille another pynne,  
 (For therin lith theffet of al the gynne)  
 And he wol down descende and do your wille,  
 And in that place he wol abyde stille;  
 Though al the world had the contrary swore,  
 He schal nat thennes be i-throwe ne bore. 10640  
 Or if you lust to bid him thennes goon,  
 Trille this pyn, and he wol vanyssh anon  
 Out of the sight of every maner wight,  
 And come agein, be it by day or night,  
 Whan that you lust to clepen him agayn  
 In such a gyse, as I schal yow sayn  
 Betwixe you and me, and therfor soone,  
 Byd whan you lust, ther nys nomor to doone."  
 Enformed whan the kyng was of the knight,  
 And had conceyved in his wit aright 10650  
 The maner and the forme of al this thing,  
 Ful glad and blith, this noble doughty kyng  
 Pepeyryng to his revel, as biforn,  
 The bridel is unto the tour i-born,  
 And kept among his jewels leef and deere;  
 The hors vanyscht, I not in what manere,

Out of her sight, ye get nomore of me;  
 But thus I lete him in his jolité  
 This Cambinskan his lordes festeyng,  
 Til wel neigh the day bigan to spryng. 10660

*Incipit secunda pars.*

The norice of digestioun, the sleep,  
 Gan to him wynk, and bad of him take keep,  
 That moche mete and labour wot have his rest;  
 And with a galpyng mouth hem alle he keste,  
 And said, that it was tyme to lye down,  
 For blood was in his dominacioun:  
 "Cherischeth blood, natures frend," quod he.  
 They thankyn him galpyng, by two and thre;  
 And every wight gan drawe him to his rest,  
 As sleep hem bad, they took it for the best. 10670  
 Here dremes schul not now be told for me;  
 Ful were here heedes of fumosité,  
 That causeth drem, of which ther is no charge.  
 They sleepen til it was prime large,  
 The mooste part, but it were Canace;  
 Sche was ful mesurable, as wommen be.  
 For of hir fader had sche take hir leve  
 To go to reste, soon after it was eve;  
 Hir luste not appalled for to be,  
 Ne on the morwe unfastly for to se; 10680  
 And kept hir firste sleep, and then awook.  
 For such a joye sche in hir herte took,  
 Bothe of hir queynte ryng, and hir myrroure,  
 That twenty tyme changed hire colour;  
 And in hire sleep, right for the impressioun  
 Of hir myrroure, sche had a visioun.  
 Wherfor, or that the sonne up gan glyde,  
 Sche cleped upon hir maistresse beside,  
 And sayde, that hire luste for to ryse.  
 These olde wommen, that ben gladly wyse, 10690  
 As is here maystresse, answered her anon,  
 And said, "Madame, whider wold ye goon  
 Thus erly? for folk ben alle in reste."  
 "I wil," quod sche, "aryse, for me leste  
 No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute."  
 Hir maistres clepeth wommen a gret route,  
 And up they risen, a ten oter a twelve.  
 Up ryseth fresshe Canace hir selve,  
 As rody and bright, as is the yonge sonne  
 That in the ram is ten degrees i-ronne; 10' 00  
 No heiber was he, whan sche redy was;  
 And forth sche walked esouly a pas,  
 Arayed after the lusty sesoun soote  
 Lightly for to play, and walke on foote,  
 Nought but with fyve or six of hir meyné;  
 And in a trench fer in the park goth sche.  
 The vapour, which that of the erthe glod,  
 Maketh the sonne seme rody and brod;  
 But natheles, it was so fair a sight,  
 That it made alle here hertes for to light, 10710

10663. *moche mete.* This reading is taken from the Lansd. Ms. The Harl. Ms. has *that mirthe and labour*, the word *mirthe* being perhaps a misreading for *mete*. Tyrwhitt reads *moche drinke*, and observes,—"So Mss. C. 1. HA. In Ms. A. it is, *That mirthe and labour*. In Ask. 1. 2. *Thog after moche labour*. In several other mss. and edit. C. 1. 2. *That moche mete and labour*. We must search further, I apprehend, for the true meaning."

10666. *blood.* According to the old physicians, blood was in domination during the latter part of the night and the earlier part of the day. Tyrwhitt quotes from the lib. Galeno adscr. de natura, &c. tom. v. p. 327: *Sanguis dominatur horis septem ab hora noctis nona ad horam diei tertiam.*

10700. *ten.* This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. Tyrwhitt reads, *four degrees*.



What for the sesoun, what for the mornynge  
And for the foules that sche herde syng.  
For right anon sche wiste what they ment  
Right by here song, and knew al here entent.

The knotte, why that every tale is told,  
If that it be taryed til lust be cold  
Of hem that han it after herked yore,  
The savour passeth ever lenger the more,  
For fulsomnes of the prolixité;  
And by this same resoun thinketh me 10720  
I schulde to the knotte condescende,  
And make of hir walkynge sone an ende.

Amyddes a tree for-druye, as whit as chalk,  
As Canace was pleyng in hir walk,  
There sat a faukoun over hir heed ful hie,  
That with a pitous vois bigan to crye,  
That al the woode resownd of hire cry,  
And beten hadde sche hir self so pitously  
With bothe hir wynges, to the reede blood  
Ran endelong the tree, ther as sche stood. 10730

And ever in oon sche cried and sche schryght,  
And with hir bek hir selve so sche pight,  
That ther nys tigre non ne cruel beste,  
That dwelleth eyther in wood, or in foreste,  
That nold han wept, if that he wopen cowde,  
For sorw of hir, sche schright alwey so lowde.  
For ther nas never yit no man on lyve,  
If that he couthe a faukoun wel discrive,  
That herd of such another of fairnesse 10740

As wel of plumage, as of gentillesse  
Of schap, of al that might i-reenked be.  
A faukoun peregryn than semed sche  
Of fremde lond; and ever as sche stood,  
Sche swowned now and now for lak of bloou,  
Til wel neigh is sche fallen fro the tre.

This faire kynges daughter, Canace,  
That on hir fynger bar the queynte ryng,  
Thurgh which sche understood wel every thing  
That eny foul may in his lydne sayn,  
And couthe answer him in his lydne agayn, 10750  
Hath understonde what this faukoun seyde,  
And wel neigh almost for the rewthe sche deyde.

And to the tree sche goth ful hastily,  
And on this faukoun loketh pitously,  
And held hir lappe abrod, for wel sche wist  
The faukoun moste falle fro the twist,  
Whan that she swowned next, for lak of blood.  
A long while to wayten hir sche stood,  
Til atte last sche spak in this manere 10760  
Unto the hawk, as ye schul after heere.

“What is the cause, if it be for to telle,  
That ye ben in that furyalle peyne of helle?”  
Quod Canace unto this hawk above;  
“Is this for sorwe of deth, or elles love?”

For as I trowe, this ben causes tuo  
That causen most a gentil herte wo.  
Of other harm it needeth nought to speke,  
For ye your self upon your self awreke;  
Which preveth wel, that either ire or drede  
Mote ben enchesoun of your cruel dede, 10770  
Sith that I set noon other wight you chace.  
For love of God, so doth your selve grace.

10742. a *faukoun peregryn*. “This species of falcon is thus described in the *Tresor de Brunet Latin*, p. i. ch. *Des Faucons*, Ms. Reg. 19, C. x. ‘La seconde lignie est *faucous*, que hom apele *pelerins*, par ce que nus ne trouve son ni. ains est pris atresi come en *pelerinage*, et est mult legiers a norrir, et mult cortois, et vaillans, et de bone maniere.’ Chaucer adds, that this falcon was of *fremde*, or *fremed*, *lond*, from a *foreign country*.”—*Tyrwhitt*.

Or what may ben your helpe? for west ner est  
Ne saugh I never er now no bryd ne beste,  
That ferde with him self so pitously.  
Ye sle me with your sorwe so verrily,  
I have of you so gret compassioun.  
For Goddes love, come fro the tree adoun;  
And as I am a kynges daughter trewe,  
If that I verrayly the cause knewe 10780  
Of your disese, if it lay in my might,  
I wold amenden it, or that it wer night,  
Als wisly help me grete God of kynde.  
And herbes schal I right y-nowe fynde,  
To helen with your hurtes hastily.”  
Tho schright this faukoun more pitously  
Than ever sche did, and fil to ground anon,  
And lay aswowne, deed as eny stoon,  
Til Canace hath in hir lap y-take,  
Unto that tyme sche gan of swowne slake; 10790  
And after that sche gan of swowne abreyde,  
Right in hir haukes lydne thus sche sayde.

“That pité renneth sone in gentil hert  
(Felyng his similitude in peynes smerte)  
Is proved alday, as men may see,  
As wel by werk as by auctorité;  
For gentil herte kepeth gentillesse.  
I see wel, that ye have on my distresse  
Compassioun, my faire Canace,  
Of verray wommanly benignité,  
That nature in your principles hath set. 10800

But for noon hope for to fare the bet,  
But for to obeye unto your herte fre,  
And for to make othere war by me,  
As by the whelp chastised is the youn;  
And for that cause and that conclusioun,  
Whiles that I have a leysur and a space,  
Myn harm I wil confessen er I pace.”  
And whil sche ever of hir sorwe tolde,  
That other wept, as sche to water wolde,  
Til that the faukoun bad hir to be stille, 10810  
And with a sighe thus sche sayd hir tille.

“Ther I was bred, (allas that ilke day!)  
And fostred in a roch of marble gray  
So tendrely, that nothing eyed me,  
I ne wiste not what was adversité,  
Til I couthe flee ful heigh under the sky.  
Tho dwelled a tercelet me faste by,  
That semed welle of alle gentillesse;  
Al were he ful of tresoun and falsnesse, 10820  
It was i-wrapped under humble cheere,  
And under heewe of trouthe in such manere,

Under plesaunce, and under besy peyne,  
That no wight wende that he couthe feyne,  
So deep in greyn he deyed his colours.  
Right as a serpent hut him under floures  
Til he may see his tyme for to byte;  
Right so this god of loves ypcorite  
Doth so his sermonys and his observaunce,  
Under subtil colour and aqneyntaunce,  
That sowneth unto gentillesse of love. 10830

10782. or that it wer night. The Harl. Ms. reads, *if that I might*; which appears to be too nearly a repetition of the conclusion of the preceding line.

10827. *god of loves ypcorite*. This is Tyrwhitt's reading. The Harl. Ms. has, *this god of love, this ypcorite*, which appears not to give so good a meaning. The Lansd. Ms. reads, *this god of love ypcorite*.

10828. In the Lansd. Ms., with which Tyrwhitt agrees, these two lines stand thus,—

Dothe so his ceremonis and obeiceances,  
And keped in semblant al his observaances.

As in a tombe is al the faire above,  
 And under is the corps, whiche that ye wot;  
 Such was this ipocrite, bothe cold and hot,  
 And in this wise he served his entent,  
 That, sauf the feend, noon wiste what he ment.  
 Til he so long had weped and compleyned,  
 And many a yeer his service to me feyned,  
 Til that myn hert, to pitous and to nyce,  
 Al innocent of his crowned malice,  
 For-fered of his deth, as thoughte me, 10840  
 Upon his othes and his sewerté,  
 Graunted him love, on this condicioun,  
 That evermo myn honour and my renoun  
 Were saved, both pryvy and apert;  
 That is to sayn, that, after his desert,  
 I gaf him al myn hert and al my thought,  
 (God woot, and he, that other weye nought)  
 And took his hert in change of myn for ay.  
 But soth is sayd, go sithens many a day, 10849  
 A trew wight and a thief tenketh nought oon.  
 And when he saugh the thyng so fer i-goon,  
 That I had graunted him fully my love,  
 In such a wyse as I have sayd above,  
 And geven him my trewe hert as fré  
 As he swor that he gaf his herte to me,  
 Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse,  
 Fil on his knees with so gret devoutnesse,  
 With so high reverence, as by his chere,  
 So lyk a gentil lover of manere,  
 So ravysched, as it semede, for joye, 10860  
 That never Jason, ne Parys of Troye,  
 Jason? certes, ne noon other man,  
 Sith Lameth was, that altherfirst bygan  
 To loven two, as writen folk biforn,  
 Ne never sith the firste man was born,  
 Ne couthe man by twenty thousand part  
 Contrefete the sophemes of his art;  
 Ne were worthy to unbokel his galoche,  
 Ther doublenes of feynynng schold approche,  
 Ne so couthe thankyn a wight, as he did me.  
 His maner was an heven for to see 10871  
 To eny woman, were sche never so wys;  
 So peynteth he and kembeth poynt devys,  
 As wel his wordes, as his continaunce.  
 And I so loved him for his obeisaunce,  
 And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,  
 That if so were that any thing him smerte,  
 Al were it never so litel, and I it wist,  
 Me thought I felte deth at myn hert twist.  
 And schortly, so ferforth this thing is went, 10880  
 That my wil was his willes instrument;  
 This is to say, my wille obeied his wille  
 In alle thing, as fer as resoun fille,  
 Kepingy the boundes of my worship ever;  
 Ne never had I thing so leef, ne lever,  
 As him, God woot, ne never schal nomo.  
 This laste lenger than a yeer or two,  
 That I supposed of him nought but good.  
 But fynally, atte laste thus it stood,  
 That fortune wolde that he moste twynne 10890  
 Out of the place which that I was inne.  
 When me was wo, it is no questioun;  
 I can nat make of it descripcioun.  
 For o thing dar I telle boldely,  
 I know what is the peyne of deth, therby,  
 Which harm I felt, for he ne mighte byleve.  
 So on a day of me he took his love,  
 So sorwful eek, that I went verrayly,  
 That he had feled als moche harm as I, 10900

When that I herd him speke, and saugh his hewe.  
 But natheles, I thought he was so trewe,  
 And eek that he schulde reipeire ageyn  
 Withinne a litel while, soth to seyn,  
 And resoun wold eek that he moste go  
 For his honour, as oft happeth so.  
 Than I made vertu of necessité,  
 And took it wel, sethens it moste be.  
 As I best might, I had fro him my sorwe,  
 And took him by the hand, seint Johan to borwe,  
 And sayde thus: 'Lo, I am youres al, 10911  
 Beth such as I have be to you and schal.'  
 What he answerd, it needeth nat to reherse;  
 Who can say bet than he, who can do werse?  
 When he hath al wel sayd, than hath be doon.  
 Therfor bihoveth him a ful long spoon,  
 That schal ete with a feend; thus herd I say.  
 So atte last he moste forth his way,  
 And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him leste.  
 When it cam him to purpos for to reste, 10920  
 I trow he hadde thilke text in mynde,  
 That alle thing repyryng to his kynde  
 Gladeth himself; thus seyn men, as I gesse;  
 Men loven of kynde newefangilnesse,  
 As briddes doon, that men in cage feede.  
 For feigh thou night and day take of hem heede,  
 And straw her cage faire and soft as silk,  
 And geve hem sugre, hony, breed, and mylk,  
 Yet right anon as that his dore is uppe,  
 He with his feet wil sporne doun his cuppe, 10930  
 And to the wode he wil, and wormes ete;  
 So newefangel be thei of her mete,  
 And loven non leveris of propre kinde;  
 No gentiles of blood ne may hem binde.  
 So ferde this terecelet, alas the day!  
 Though he were gentil born, and fresh, and gay,  
 And goodly for to see, and humble, and free,  
 He saw upon a time a kite fle,  
 And sodeynly he loved this kite soo,  
 That al his love is clene fro me goo; 10940  
 And bath his trouthe falsed in this wise.  
 Thus hath the kite my love in hir servise,  
 And I am lorne withoute remedy."  
 And with that worde this faukon gan to cry,  
 And swowneth eft in Canacees barme.  
 Gret was the sorwe for that haukes harme,  
 That Canace and alle hire wommen made;  
 They nysten howe they myght the faukon glade.  
 But Canace hom bereth hir in hir lappe,  
 And softly in plastres gan hir wrappe, 10950

10906. *as oft happeth so.* In the Harl. Ms. these words have been omitted by a blunder of the scribe. The lacune is supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

10916. *a ful long spoon.* This singular proverb appears to be of considerable antiquity. It occurs more frequently in the sixteenth century; among a few proverbs of this date printed in the *Reliq. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 208, one is, "He hath need of a long spoon that eateth with the devill." So in Shakespeare, *Com. of Errors*, iv. 3, "Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with the devil;" and *Tempest*, ii. 2, Stephano says, "Mercy! mercy! this is a devil, and no monster: I will leave him; I have no long spoon."

10920. *thilke text.* "Boethius, l. iiii. met. 2:

Repetunt proprios queque recursum,  
 Reditique suo singula gaudent."

10930. A leaf or two have unfortunately been lost from the Harleian Ms. after this line, and I am obliged to take the remainder of the tale from Tyrwhitt, collated with the Lansd. Ms.

10933. *non leveris*—no rations. Tyrwhitt has, *loven no veltes.*



Ther as sche with hir bek hadde hurt hir selve.  
 Now can nought Canace bot herbes delve  
 Out of the grounde, and maken salves newe  
 Of herbes precious and fyne of hewe,  
 To helen with this hauk; fro day to night  
 Sche doth hir besines, and al hir might.  
 And by hir beddes heed sche made a mewe,  
 And covered it with veluettes blewe, 10958  
 In signe of trewthe that is in womman seene;  
 And al withoute the mewe is peynted greene,  
 In which were peynted alle this false foules,  
 As ben this tideves, tereceltes, and owles;  
 And pies, on hem for to crye and chide,  
 Right for despite were peynted hem byside.

Thus lete I Canace hir hauk kepyng.  
 I wil nomore now speken of hir ryng,  
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn,  
 How that this faukon gat hir love ageyn  
 Repentaunt, as the story telleth us,  
 By mediacioun of Camballus 10970  
 The kinges sone, of which that I yow tolde;  
 But hengesforth I wil my proces holde  
 To speken of adventures, and of batailles,  
 That yit was never herd so grete meruailes.  
 First wil I telle yow of Cambynskan,  
 That in his time many a cité wan;  
 And after wil I speke of Algarsif,  
 How that he wan Theodora to his wif.  
 For whom ful ofte in grete peril he was,  
 Ne had he ben holpen by the hors of bras. 10980  
 And after wil I speke of Camballo,  
 That fought in listes with the bretheren tuo  
 For Canace, er that he might hir wyne,  
 And ther I left I wol ageyn beginne.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE FRANKELEYNES PROLOGE.

“In faith, Squier, thou hast the wel y-quit  
 And gently, I preise wel thy wit,”

1095S. *blewe*. Blue was the colour of truth.  
 10963-4. I have followed Tyrwhitt in transposing these  
 two lines, which stand in the Lansd. and other mss.—

Right for despite were peynted hem byside,  
 And pies, on hem for to crye and chide.

10977-8 “are also transposed. According to the com-  
 mon arrangement, old Cambuscan is to win *Theodora to  
 his wif*, and we are not told what is to be the object of  
 Algarsif’s adventures.”—*Tyrwhitt*.

10981. of *Camballo*. “Ms. A. reads *Caballo*. But that  
 is not my only reason for suspecting a mistake in this  
 name. It seems clear from the context, that the person  
 here intended is not a *brother*, but a *lover*, of Canace,

Who fought in listes with the *brethren tuo*  
 For Canace, or that he might hire *winne*.”

The *brethren tuo* are obviously the two brethren of Canace,  
 who have been mentioned above, Algarsif and Camballo.  
 In Ms. Ask. 1. 2, it is, *hir brethren tuo*; which would put  
 the matter out of all doubt. Camballo could not fight  
 with himself. Again, if this Camballo be supposed to  
 be the brother of Canace, and to fight in defence of her  
 with some two brethren, who might be suitors to her,  
 according to Spencer’s fiction, he could not properly be  
 said to *winne* his sister, when he only prevented others  
 from winning her. The outline therefore of the unfinished  
 part of this tale, according to my idea, is nearly this; the  
 conclusion of the story of the *Faucon*,

By mediation of *Camballus*,

with the help of the *ring*; the conquests of *Cambuscan*;  
 the winning of Theodora by *Algarsif*, with the assistance  
 of the *horse of brass*; and the marriage of Canace to *some  
 knight*, who was first obliged to fight for her with her two  
 brethren; a method of courtship very consonant to the  
 spirit of ancient chivalry.”—*Tyrwhitt*.

10984. In the Lansd. Ms., in which the Squyres Tale

Quod the Frankeleyn, “considering thin youthe,  
 So felingly thou spekest, sire, I aloue the,  
 As to my dome, ther is non that is here,  
 Of eloquence that schal be thy pere, 10990  
 If that thou live; God geve thee goode chance,  
 And in vertue send the continuance,  
 For of thy speking I have gret deinté.  
 I have a sone, and by the Trinité  
 It were me lever than twenty pound worth lond,  
 Though it right now were fallen in my hond,  
 He were a man of swiche discretion,  
 As that ye ben; fie on possession,  
 But if a man be vertuous withal.  
 I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal, 11000  
 For he to vertue listeth not to entend,  
 But for to play at dis, and to dispend,  
 And lesse all that he hath, is his usage;  
 And he had lever talke with a page.  
 Than to commune with any gentil wight,  
 Ther he might leren gentillesse aright.”

“Straw for your gentillesse!” quod our hoste.  
 “What? Frankeleyn, pardé, sire, wel thou wost,  
 That eche of you mote tellen at the lest  
 A tale or two, or breken his behest.” 11010  
 “That know I wel, sire,” quod the Frankeleyn,  
 “I pray you haveth me not in disdein,  
 Though I to this man speke a word or two.”  
 “Tell on thy tale, withouten wordes mo.”  
 “Gladly, sire hoste,” quod he, “I wol obeye  
 Unto your will; now herkeneth what I seye;  
 I wol you not contrarien in no wise,  
 As fer as that my wittes may suffice.  
 I pray to God that it may plesen you,  
 That wot I wel that it is good y-now. 11020

“This olde gentil Bretons in here daies  
 Of divers adventures maden laies,  
 Rimyden in her firste Breton tonge;  
 Whiche laies with here instruments thei songe.  
 Where elles reddden hem for her plesance,  
 And one of hem have I in remembrance,  
 Which I schal seie with goode wil as I can.  
 But, sires, because I am a burel man,  
 At my begynnyng first I you besече  
 Haveth me excused of my rude speche. 11030  
 I lerned never rethorik certeine:  
 Things that I speke, it most be bare and pleine;  
 I slept never on the mount of Parnaso,  
 Ne lerned Marcus, Tullius, ne Cithero.  
 Colours ne know I non, withouten drede,  
 But suche colours as grown in the mede,  
 Or elles suche as men deye with or peinte;

is followed by the tale of the Wyf of Bathe, the following  
 lines are added as a sort of conclusion to the former:—

Bot I wil here now maake a knotte  
 To the time it come next to my lotte;  
 For here be felawes behind an hepe trenlye,  
 That wolde talke ful besyde,  
 And have her sporte as welle as I,  
 And the daie passeth fast certaily.  
 Therefore, oste, taketh now goode heede  
 Who schalle next telle, and late him speede.

10985. All from this line to L. 11020 is omitted in the  
 Lansdowne and other mss., and I have given it chiefly  
 from Tyrwhitt.

11021. *gentil Bretons*. The Breton “laies” here alluded  
 to were very famous in the middle ages; but they involve  
 a question in literary history of considerable difficulty,  
 into which we cannot enter on the present occasion.

11034. *Marcus, Tullius, ne Cithero*. This is the reading  
 of the Lansdowne Ms., and I am inclined to think it may  
 be the right one, Chaucer’s intention being to exhibit the  
 Frankeleyn’s ignorance of classical literature.



Colours of rethorik ben to me queynte;  
My spirit feleth nought of sचेche matiere.  
But if you luste my tale schal ye here." 11040

## THE FRANKELEYNES TALE.

In Armorik, that clepid is Bretaine,  
Ther was a knyght, that loved and dede his peyne  
To serven a lady in his beste wise;  
And many a labour, many a grete emprise  
He for his lady wrouht, or sche were wonne;  
For sche was on the fairest under sonne,  
And eke therto com of so hihe kinrede,  
That wele unnetthes dorst this knyht for drede  
Tel hir his woo, his peine, and his distresse.  
But at the last, sche for his worthinesse, 11050  
And namely for his meke obeissance,  
Hath suche a pitc caught of his penance,  
That prively sche fel of his accorde  
To take him for hir husbode and hir lorde,  
(Of suche lordschip as men han over hire wyves);  
And, for to lede the more in blisse her lyves,  
Of his fre wil he swore hire as a knyht,  
That never in his wil be day ne nyht  
Ne scholde he upon him take no maistrice  
Ageins hir wille, ne kythe hire jelousye. 11060  
But hire obeie, and folowe hire wille in al.  
As any lover to his lady schal;  
Save that the name of soveraigneté  
That nolde he have for schame of his degré.  
Sche thonketh him, and with ful grete humblesse  
Sche seide; "Sir, seththe ye of youre gentillesse  
Ye profer me to have als large a reyne,  
Ne wold nevere God betwix us tweyne,  
As in my gulte, were eyther werre or strif.  
Sir, I wil be youre humble trewe wif, 11070  
Have here my trouthe, til that myn herte bruste."  
Thus ben they bothe in quiete and in ruste.  
For o thinge, sires, sauflly dar I seie,  
That frendes everyche other motte obeie,  
If thei wil longe holde compaigné.  
Love wil nouht buen constrayned by maistré.  
Whan maistré commeth, the god of love anon  
Beteth his wings, and fare wel, he is gon.  
Love is a thinge, as any spirit, fre.  
Women of kinde desiren liberté, 11080  
And nouht to be constrained as a thral;  
And so doth men, if I the sothe saie schal.  
Loke who that is most pacient in love,  
He is at his avantage al above.  
Paciens is an hihe vertue certain,  
For it venquisheth, as this clerkes sein,  
Thinges that rigour never sholde atteine.  
For every worde men may nouht chide ne pleine.  
Lerneth to suffer, or elles, so most I gon,  
Ye schal it lerne whether ye wol or non. 11090  
For in this world certain no wight ther is,  
That he ne doth or seyth som time amis.  
Ire, or sikennesse, or constellacioun,  
Wyn, wo, or chaunginge of complexioun,  
Causeth ful oft to don amys or spoken.  
On every wronge men maye nouht be wroken;  
After the time most be temperance  
To every wight that can of governance.

*The Frankeleynes Tale.* The lay, from which Chaucer informs us that he took this tale, appears to be entirely lost; but Boccaccio, who made up his *Decamerone* from the popular fabliaux and tales of the time, has preserved a version of this story in that work, *Day x. num. 5*, as well as in the fifth book of his *Philopopo*.

And therfor bath this worthy wise knight  
To liven in ese suffrance hir behight; 11100  
And sche to him ful wisely gan to swere,  
That nevere schold ther be defaute in hire.  
Here may men seen an humble wise accorde;  
Thus hath sche take hire servant and hir lorde,  
Servant in love, and lorde in mariage.  
Than was he bothe in lordeschip and servage?  
Servage? nay, but in lordeschip al above,  
Sethen he hath bothe his lady and his love;  
His lady certes, and his wif also,  
The which that law of love accordeth to. 11110  
And whan he was in this prosperité,  
Home with his wif he goth to his contré,  
Nouht fer fro Penmarke, ther his dwellinge was,  
Wher as he leveh in blisse and in solas.

Who couthe telle, but he had wedded be,  
The joye, the ese, and the prosperité,  
That is betwix an housbond and his wif?  
A yere and more lasteth this blisful lif,  
Til that this knight, of which I spak of thus,  
That of Cairrud was cleped Arviragus, 11120  
Schope him to gon and dwelle a yere or tweyne  
In Engelond, that cleped eke was Bretaine,  
To seke in armes worscheip and honour,  
(For al his lust he set in suche labour);  
And dwelleth there tuo yere; the boke seith thus.

Now wil I stint of this Arviragus,  
And speken I wil of Dorigen his wif,  
That loveth hire husbond as hire hertes lif.  
For his absence wepeth sche and siketh,  
As don this noble wives whan hem liketh; 11130  
Sche morneth, waketh, wailleth, fasteth, pleyneith;  
Desire of his presence hir so distreineith,  
That al this wide world sche set at nouht.  
Hire frendes, which that knewe hir hevuy thought,  
Comforten hire in al that ever thei may;  
Thei prechen hire, thei tellen hire nyht and day,  
That causeles sche sleth hir self, alas!  
And every comfort possible in this cas  
They don to hire, with al here businesse,  
And al to make hire leve hire hevynesse. 11140  
By proces, as ye knowen everychone,  
Men mowe so longe graven in a stone,  
Til som figure therinne emprinted be;  
So longe have thei comforted hire, that sche  
Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,  
The empringe of hire consolacioun,  
Thorugh which hire grete sorwe gan assnage;  
Sche may not alway duren in suche rage.  
And eke Arviragus, in al this care,  
Hath sent his lettres home of his welfare, 11150  
And that he wolde come hastily ageyn.  
Or elles had this sorwe hire herte sleyn.  
Hire frendes sauh hire sorwe gan to slake,  
And preiden hire on knees, for Goddes sake,  
To come and romen in here companye,  
Away to driven hire derke fantasie;  
And finally sche graunted that request,  
For wel sche sauh that it was for the best.

Now stode hir castel faste by the see,  
And often with hire frendes walked sche, 11160  
Hir to disporten on the bank an hihe,  
Wher as sche many a schip and barge sihe,

1113. *Penmarke.* Penmark is on the western coast of Britany, between Brest and L'Orient.

11120. *Cairrud.* So Tyrwhitt gives the name, but he does not inform us where the place is situated. In the *Lansd. Ms.* it is called *Kynred*.

Sailinge her cours, wher as hem liste to go.  
But yit was that a parcel of hir wo,  
For to hir selve ful oft, "alas!" seid sche,  
"Is ther no schip, of so many as I se,  
Wil bringen home my lorde? than were myn herte  
Al warished of this bitter peine smerte."

Another time wold sche sitte and thinke,  
And kast hir eye downward fro the brinke; 11170  
But whan sche sawe the grisly rokkes blake,  
For verray fere so wolde hire herte qwake,  
That on hir feet sche myhte nought hir sustene.  
Than wolde sche sit adoun upon the grene,  
And pitously into the see biholde,  
And seyn riht thus, with careful sikkes colde.  
"Eterne God, that thorough thy purveance  
Ledest this world by certein governance,  
In idel, as men sein, ye nothinge make.  
But, lord, this grisly fendely rokkes blake, 11180  
That semen rather a foule confusioun  
Of werke, than any faire creaçioun  
Of suche a parfit wise God and stable,  
Why han ye wrouht this werk unresonable?  
For by this werke, southe, northe, este, ne west,  
Ther nis i fostred man, ne brid, ne best;  
It doth no good, to my wit, but anyoeth.  
See ye nouht, lord, how mankind it destroyeth?  
An hundred thousand bodies of mankind 11189  
Han rokkes slein, al be they nouht in mynde;  
Which mankind is so faire parte of thy werke,  
Thou madest it like to thyn owen merke.  
Than, semeth it, ye had a gret cherté  
Toward mankind; but how than may it be,  
That ye suche menes make it to destroyen?  
Which menes doth no good, but ever anyoen.  
I woot wel, clerkes wold sein as hem lest  
By argumentz, that al is for the best,  
Though I ne can the causes nought y-knowe;  
But thilke God that maad the wind to blowe, 11200  
As kepe my lord, this is my conclusioun;  
To clerkes lete I al disputioun;  
But wolde God, that al this rokkes blake  
Were sonken into helle for his sake!  
This rokkes sleepe myn herte for the fere."  
Thus wold sche say with many a pitous tere.

Hire frendes sawe that it nas no disport  
To romen by the see, but discomfort,  
And schope hem for to pleien somwhere elles.  
They leden hire by rivers and by welles, 11210  
And eke in other places delitablez;  
They dauncen and they play at ches and tables.  
So on a day, riht in the morwe tide,  
Unto a gardeyn that was ther beside,  
In which that they had made her ordinance  
Of vitaile, and of other purveance,  
They gon and plaie hem al the longe day;  
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,  
Which May had painted with his softe schoures  
This gardeyn ful of leves and floures: 11220  
And craft of mannes hond so curiously  
Arrayed had this gardeyn trewely,  
That never was ther gardeyn of suche pris,  
But if it were the verray paradis.  
The odour of floures and the fresshe siht,  
Wold han y-maked any herte light  
That ever was born, but if to gret sikensse  
Or to gret sorwe held it in distresse,  
So ful it was of beaute and plesaunce.  
And after dinner gan thay to daunce 11230  
And singe also, sauf Dorigen alone,

Which made alway hire compleynt and hire  
For sche ne sawh him on the daunce go, [none,  
That was hir housbond, and hire love also;  
But natheles sche moste hir time abide,  
And with good hope lete hire sorwe slide.

Upon this daunce, amonges other men,  
Daunced a squier before Dorigen,  
That fresscher was and jolier of array,  
As to my dome, than is the moneth of May. 11240  
He singeth and daunseth passing any man,  
That is or was siththe that the world began;  
Therwith he was, if men schuld him describe,  
On of the beste faringe men on live,  
Yonge, strong, riht virtuous, and riche, and wise,  
And wel beloved, and holden in gret prise.  
And schortly, if the soth I tellen schal,  
Unweting of this Dorigen at al,  
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,  
Which that y-cleped was Aurilius, 11250  
Had loved hire best of any creature  
Two yere and more, as was his adventure;  
But never dorst he tellen hire his grevance,  
Withouten cuppe he drank al his penaunce.  
He was dispeired, nothing dorst he seye,  
Sauf in his songes somewhat wolde he wreye  
His woo, as in a general compleyning;  
He said, he loved, and was beloved nothing.  
Of suche matier made he many layes,  
Songes, compleyntes, roundeleys, virelayes; 11260  
How that he dorste not his sorwe telle,  
But languissheth as doth a fuyr in helle;  
And deie he must, he seid, as did Ekko  
For Narcisus, that dorst nought telle hir wo.  
In other maner than ye here me seye,  
Ne dorst he nouht to hire his wo bewroye,  
Sauf that paraventure som time at daunces,  
Ther yonge folk kepen her observances,  
It may wel be he loked on hir face  
In suche a wise, as man that axeth grace, 11270  
But nothing wiste sche of his entent.  
Natheles it happed, er they thenncs went,  
Because that he was hire neighebour,  
And was a man of worschipe and honour,  
And had y-knownen him oft times yere,  
Thei felle in speche, and forth ay more and more  
Unto his purpos drowh Aurilius;  
And whan he sawh his time, he seide thus.  
"Madame," quod he, "by God, that this world  
made,  
So that I wist it might your herte glade, 11280  
I wolde that day, that your Arviragus  
Went over see, that I Aurilius  
Had went ther I schold never come agein;  
For wel I wot my servise is in vein,  
My guerdon nys but bresting of myn herte.  
Madame, reweth upon my peines smerte,  
For with a word ye may me sle or save.  
Here at youre feet God wold that I were grave!  
I ne have as now no leiser more to seye;  
Have mercy, swete, or ye wol do me deye." 11290  
Sche gan to loke upon Aurilius;  
"Is this your wil," quod sche, "and say ye thus?  
Never erst," quod sche, "ne wist I what ye ment;  
But now, Aurilie, I know your entent.  
But thilke God, that gave me soule and lif,

11264. *Narcisus*. This classic personage was known popularly in the middle ages, from the circumstance of his having been made the subject of a French fabliau or metrical story.

Ne schal I never ben untrewē wif  
 In word ne werk, as fer as I have witte,  
 I wil ben his to whom that I am knitte.  
 Take this for final answer as of me."  
 But after that in play thus seide sche; 11300  
 "Aurilie," quod sche, "by hihe God above,  
 Yit wil I graunte yon to be your love,  
 (Sin I yow see so pitously compleyne),  
 Loke, what day that endelong Breteigne  
 Ye remewe al the rokkes, ston by ston,  
 That they ne letten schip ne bote to gon,  
 I say, whan ye have maad this cost so clene  
 Of rokkes, that ther nys no ston y-sene,  
 Than wol I love yow best of any man,  
 Have here my trouthe, in al that ever I can; 11310  
 For wel I wot that that schal never betide.  
 Let suche folie of youre herte glide.  
 What deynté scholde a man have in his lif,  
 For to go love another mannes wif,  
 That hath hir body whan that ever him liketh?"  
 Aurilius ful often sore siketh;  
 "Is ther non other grace in you?" quod he.  
 "No, by that lord," quod sche, "that maketh me."  
 Wo was Aurilie whan that he this herde,  
 And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde. 11320  
 "Madame," quod he, "this were an impossible.  
 Than moste I deie of sodeyn deth horrible."  
 And with that word he turned him anon.  
 Tho come hir other frendes many on,  
 And in the alleyes romed up and down,  
 And nothing wist of this concloucion,  
 But sodeynly began to revel newe,  
 Til that the brighte sonne had lost his hewe,  
 For the orizont had reft the sonne his liht,  
 (This is as much to sayn as it was nyht); 11330  
 And home thei gon in joye and solas;  
 Sauf only wrecche Aurilius, alas!  
 He to his hous is gon with sorweful herte.  
 He saith, he may not from his deth asterte.  
 Him semeth, that he felt his herte colde.  
 Up to the heven his handes gan he holde,  
 And on his knees bare he set him down,  
 And in his raving seid his orisoun.  
 For verray wo out of his witte he braide, 11339  
 He nyst nouht what he spak, but thus he seide;  
 With pitous herte his pleynth hath he begonne  
 Unto the goddes, and first unto the sonne.  
 He seid, "Apollo, God and governour  
 Of every plante, herbe, tre, and flour,  
 That givest after thy declinacioun  
 To eche of hem his tyme and sesoun,  
 As that thin herbergh chaungeth low and hihe;  
 Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable eye  
 On wrecche Aurilie, which that am for-lorne.  
 Lo, lord, my lady hath my deth y-sworne 11350  
 Withouten gilt, but thy benignité  
 Upon my dedly herte have some pité.  
 For wel I wot, lord Phebus, if you lest,  
 Ye may me helpen, sauf my lady, best.  
 Now voucheth sauf, that I may you devise  
 How that I may be holpe and in what wise.  
 Your blisful suster, Lucina the schene,  
 That of the see is chief goddes and qwene;—  
 Though Neptunus have deité in the see,  
 Yit emperes aboven him is sche; 11360  
 Ye knowe wel, lord, that right as hir desire  
 Is to be quiked and lihted of your fire,  
 For which sche folwith yow ful besily,  
 Right so the see desireth naturelly

To folwen hir, as sche that is goddesse  
 Both in the see and rivers more and lesse.  
 Wherfor, lord Phebus, this is my request,  
 Do this miracle, or do myn herte brest;  
 That now next at this opposioun,  
 Which in the signe schal be of the Lyoun, 11370  
 As preyeth hire so grete a flood to bringe,  
 That five fathome at the lest it overspringe  
 The hihest rokke in Armorik Bretaine,  
 And let this flod enduren yeres twaine;  
 Than certes to my lady may I say,  
 Holdeth your hest, the rokkes ben away.  
 Lord Phebus, this miracle doth for me,  
 Prey hire sche go no faster cours than ye;  
 I sey this, preyeth your suster that sche go  
 No faster cours than ye this yeres tuo; 11380  
 Than schal sche even be at ful alway,  
 And spring-flood lasten bothe night and day.  
 And but sche vouchesauf in suche manere  
 To graunten me my soveraigne lady dere,  
 Prey hir to sinken every rok adoun  
 Into hir owen darke regioun  
 Under the grounde, ther Pluto duelleth inne,  
 Or nevermo schal I my lady wyne.  
 Thy temple in Delphos wil I barfote seke;  
 Lord Phebus, se the teres on my cheke, 11390  
 And on my peyne have some compassioun."  
 And with that word in sorwe he fel adoun,  
 And longe time he lay forth in a trauce.  
 His brother, which that knew of his penance,  
 Up cauth him, and to bed he hath him brouht.  
 Dispeired in this turment and this thouht,  
 Let I this woful creature lye,  
 Chese he for me whether he wol leve or deye.  
 Arviragus with hele and grete honour  
 (As he that was of chevalrie the flour) 11400  
 Is comen home, and other worthy men.  
 O, blisful art thou now, thou Dorigen,  
 That hast thy lusty housbond in thin armes.  
 The fresche knight, the worthy man of armes,  
 That loveth the, as his owen hertes lif;  
 Nothing list him to be imaginatif,  
 If any wight had spoke, while he was oute,  
 To hire of love; he had of that no doute;  
 He nouht entendeth to no suche matere, 11409  
 But daunceth, justeth, and maketh mery chere.  
 And thus in joye and blisse I let hem dwelle,  
 And of the sike Aurilius wol I telle.  
 In langour and in turment furius  
 Two yere and more lay wrecche Aurilius,  
 Er any foot on erthe he mighte gon;  
 Ne comfort in this time had he non,  
 Sauf of his brother, which that was a clerk.  
 He knew of al this wo and al this werk;  
 For to non other creature certain  
 Of this matere he dorste no word seyn; 11420  
 Under his brest he bar it more secré  
 Than ever dede Pamphilus for Galathé.  
 His brest was hole withouten for to sene,  
 But in his herte ay was the arwe kene;

11422. *Pamphilus for Galathé.* The allusion is to a popular medieval poem commonly known by the name of *Pamphilus*, in which a person of this name gives the history of his amour with Galatea, and which commences with the following lines (conveying the idea alluded to by Chaucer).—

Vulneror et clausum porto sub pectore telum,  
 Crescit et assidue plaga dolorique mihi;  
 Et ferientis adine non audeo dicere nomen  
 Nec sinit aspectus plaga videre suos.



And wel ye wote that of a sursanure  
 In surgerie ful perilous is the cure,  
 But men myght touche the arwe or come therby.  
 His brother wepeth and weyleth prively,  
 Til at the last him fel in remembrance,  
 That whiles he was in Orleance in Fraunce,  
 As yonge clerkes, that ben likerous 11431  
 To reden artes that ben curious,  
 Seken in every halke and every herne  
 Particulere sciences for to lerne,  
 He him remembreth, that upon a day  
 At Orleance in studie a boke he seye  
 Of magik naturel, which his felaw,  
 That was that time a bachelor of law,  
 Al were he ther to lerne another craft,  
 Had prively upon his desk y-laft; 11440  
 Which book spak moche of operaciouns  
 Touchinge the eight and twenty mansiouns  
 That longen to the mone, and suche folie  
 As in oure dayes nys not woth a flye;  
 For holy cherches feith, in onre byleve,  
 Ne suffreth non illusioun us to greve.  
 And whan this boke was in his remembrance,  
 Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce,  
 And to him self he seide prively;  
 "My brother schal be warished hastily; 11450  
 For I am siker that ther be sciences,  
 By which men maken divers apparences  
 Such as this subtil tregetours pleyn.  
 For oft at festes have I wel herd seyn,  
 That tregetours, within an halle large,  
 Have made come in a water and a barge,  
 And in the halle rowen up and down.  
 Som time hath semed come a grim lyoun;  
 And som time floures springe as in a mede;  
 Som time a vine, and grapes white and rede; 11460  
 Som time a castel al of lime and ston,  
 And whan hem liketh voideth it anon;  
 Thus semeth it to every mannes sight.  
 Now than conclude I thus, if that I might  
 At Orleance som olde felaw finde,  
 That hath this mones mansions in mynde,  
 Or other magik naturel above,  
 He scholde wel make my brother have his love.  
 For with an apparence a clerk may make  
 To mannes sight, that alle the rokkes blake 11470  
 Of Breteigne were y-voided everichon,  
 And schippes by the brinke comen and gon,  
 And in suche forme endure a day or tuo;  
 Than were my brother warished of his wo,  
 Than most sche nedes holden hire behest.  
 Or elles he schal schame hire at the lest."  
 What schold I make a lenger tale of this?  
 Unto his brothers bedde comen he is,  
 And suche comfort he gaf him, for to gon  
 To Orleance, that he up stert anon, 11480  
 And on his way forth-ward than is he fare,  
 In hope for to ben lissed of his care.  
 Whan they were come almost to that cité,  
 But if it were a tuo furlong or thre,  
 A yonge clerke roming by himself they mette,  
 Which that in Latine thriftily hem grette.  
 And after that he seyde a wonder thinge;  
 "I know," quod he, "the cause of your comynge."

11430. *Orleance in Fraunce.* There was a celebrated and very ancient university at Orleans, which fell into disrepute as the university of Paris became famous; and the rivalry probably led to the imputation that the occult sciences were cultivated at Orleans.

And er they forther any foote went,  
 He told hem al that was in her entent. 11490  
 This Breton clerk him asked of felawes,  
 The which he had y-knownen in olde dawes;  
 And he answerd him that they dede were,  
 For which he wept ful often many a tere.  
 Doun of his hors Aurilius light anon,  
 And forth with this magicien is he gon  
 Home to his hous, and made him wel at ese;  
 Hem lacked no vitale that might hem plese.  
 So wel arraied hous as ther was on,  
 Aurilius in his lif saw never non. 11500  
 He schewed him, er they went to souper,  
 Forestes, parkes ful of wilde dere,  
 Ther saw he hartes with her hornes hee,  
 The gretest that were ever seen with eye.  
 He saw of hem an hundred slain with houndes,  
 And som with arwes blede of bitter woundes.  
 He saw, whan voided were the wilde dere,  
 These faukoners upon a faire river,  
 That with hir haukes han the heron slein.  
 Tho saw he knyhtes justen in a pleyn. 11510  
 And after this he dede him suche plesance,  
 That he him schewed his lady in a daunce,  
 On which him selven daunced, as him thought.  
 And whan this maister, that this magik wrouht,  
 Saw it was time, he clapped his hondes tuo,  
 And fare wel, al the revel is ago.  
 And yet remued they never out of the hous,  
 Whiles they sawe alle this sightes mervelous;  
 But in his stodie, ther his bokes be, 11519  
 They saten stille, and no wight but they thre.  
 To him this maister called than his squyere,  
 And sayde him thus, "May we go to souper?  
 Almost an houre it is, I undertake,  
 Sin I yow bad our soper for to make,  
 Whan that this worthy men wenten with me  
 Into my stodie, ther as my bokes be."  
 "Sire," quod this squyere, "whan it lyketh you,  
 It is al redy, though ye wolde righte now."  
 "Go we than soupe," quod he, "as for the best,  
 This amorous folk som time moste have rest."  
 At after soper fel they in treté 11531  
 What somme schold his maisters guerdon be,  
 To remue alle the rokkes of Breteigne,  
 And eke fro Gerounde to the mouth of Seine.  
 He made it strange, and swore, so God him save,  
 Lesse than a thousand pound he wolde nought  
 have,  
 Ne gladly for that somme he wolde not goon.  
 Aurilius with blisful hert anon  
 Answerde thus; "Fy on a thousand pound!  
 This wyde world, which that men say is round,  
 I wold it give, if I were lord of it. 11541  
 This bargeyn is ful dryve, for we ben knyht;  
 Ye schal be payed trewly by my trouthe.  
 But loketh now, for negligence or slouthe,  
 Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to morwe."  
 "Nay," quod this clerk, "have her my faith to  
 borwe."  
 To bed is goon Aurilius whan him leste,  
 And wel neigh al night he had his reste,  
 What for his labour, and his hope of blisse.  
 His woful hert of penaunce had a lisse. 11550  
 Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,  
 To Breteign take thei the righte way,  
 Aurilius, and this magicien bisyde,

11535. The lacuna in the Harl. Ms. ends with this line.

And ben descendid ther thay wol abyde;  
 And this was, as these bookes me remembre,  
 The colde frosty seison of Decembre.  
 Phebus wax old, and hewed lyk latoun,  
 That in his hooete declinacioun  
 Schon as the burned gold, with stremes bright;  
 But now in Capricorn adoun he light, 11560  
 Wher as he schon ful pale, I dar wel sayn.  
 The bitter frostes with the sleet and rayn  
 Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.  
 Janus sit by the fuyr with double berd,  
 And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn;  
 Biforn him stont the braun of toskid swyn,  
 And *novel* crieth every lusty man.  
 Aurilius, in al that ever he can,  
 Doth to his maister chier and reverence,  
 And peyneth him to doon his diligence 11570  
 To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,  
 Or with a swerd that he wold slythe his herte.

This subtil clerk such routhe had of this man,  
 That night and day he spedeth him, that he can,  
 To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun;  
 This is to say, to make illusioun,  
 By such an apparence of jogelrie,  
 (I can no termes of astrologie)  
 That sche and every wight schold wene and saye,  
 That of Breteygn the rokkes were awaye, 11580  
 Or elles they sonken were under the grounde.  
 So atte last he hath a tyme i-founde  
 To make his japes and his wretchednesse  
 Of such a superstitious cursednesse.  
 His tables Tollitanes forth he brought  
 Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked nought,  
 Neither his collect, ne his expans yeeres,  
 Neither his rootes, ne his other geeres,  
 As ben his centris, and his argumentis,  
 And his proporcionels convenientis 11590  
 For her equaciouns in every thing.  
 And by his thre speeres in his worching,  
 He knew ful wel how for Allnath was schove  
 Fro the heed of thilk fixe Arias above,  
 That in the fourthe speere considred is.  
 Ful subtilly he calked al this.  
 Whan he had founde his firste mancioun,  
 He knew the remenaunt by proporcioun;  
 And knew the arisyng of this moone wel,  
 And in whos face, and terme, and every del;  
 And knew ful wel the moones mancioun 11601  
 Acordaunt to his operacioun;  
 And knew also his other observaunces,  
 For suche illusiouns and suche meschaunces,  
 As hethen folk used in thilke dayes.  
 For which no lenger maketh he delays,  
 But thurgh his magik, for a wike or tweye,  
 It semed that the rokkes were aweye.  
 Aurilius, which yet dispayred is

11585. *His tables Tollitanes*. "The Astronomical Tables, composed by order of Alphonso X., king of Castile, about the middle of the thirteenth century, were called sometimes *Tabula Toletana*, from their being adapted to the city of Toledo. There is a very elegant copy of them in Ms. Harl. 3647. I am not sufficiently skilled in ancient astronomy to add any thing to the explanation of the following technical terms, drawn chiefly from those tables, which has been given in the Addit. to Gloss. Urr."—*Tyrwhitt*.

11592. *thre*. Tyrwhitt, with the Ms. Lansd., reads *eighte*.

11593. *Allnath*. The first star in the horns of Arias, whence the first mansion of the moon is named.

11595. *fourthe*. Tyrwhitt, with Ms. Lansd., reads *ninthe*.

Wher he schal han his love or fare amys, 11610  
 Awayteth night and day on this miracle;  
 And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle,  
 That voyded were these rokkes everichoon,  
 Doun to his maistres feet he fel anoon,  
 And sayd; "I wreeched woful Aurilius,  
 Thanke you, lord, and my lady Venus,  
 That me han holpe for my cares colde."  
 And to the temple his way forth he hath holde,  
 Wher as he knew he schold his lady se. 11619  
 And whan he saugh his tyme, anoon right he  
 With dredful hert and with ful humble cheere  
 Salued hath his owne lady deere.  
 "My sovereign lady," quod this woful man,  
 "Whom I most drede, and love, as I can,  
 And lothest were of al this world displese,  
 Nere it that I for you have such desese,  
 That I most deye her at youre foot anoon,  
 But certes outhur most I dye or pleyne;  
 Ye sleen me gulteles for verrey peyne. 11630  
 But of my deth though that ye have no rounthe,  
 Avyseth yow, or that ye breke your trouthe;  
 Repenteth yow for thilke God above.  
 Or ye me sleen, bycause that I you love.  
 For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight;  
 Nat that I chalenge eny thing of right  
 Of yow, my sovereign lady, but youre grace;  
 But in a gardyn yonde, at such a place,  
 Ye wot right wel what ye byhighte me,  
 And in myn hond your trouthe plighte ye, 11640  
 To love me best; God woot ye sayde so,  
 Al be that I unworthy am therto;  
 Madame, I speke it for thourour of yow,  
 More than to save myn hertes lif right now;  
 I have do so as ye comaunded me,  
 And if ye vouchesauf, ye may go se.  
 Doth as you list, have youre byheste in mynde,  
 For quyk or deed, right ther ye schul me fynde;  
 In yow lith al to do me lyve or deye;  
 But wel I wot the rokkes ben aweye." 11650  
 He taketh his leve, and sche astoned stood;  
 In alle hir face nas oon drop of blood;  
 Sche wende never have be in such a trappe.  
 "Allas!" quod sche, "that ever this schulde happe!  
 For wend I never by possibilité,  
 That such a monstre or merveyl mighte be;  
 It is agayns the proces of nature."  
 And hom sche goth a sorwful creature,  
 For verray fere unethe may sche go.  
 Sche wepeth, wayleth al a day or tuo, 11660  
 And swowneth, that in rounthe was to see;  
 But why it was, to no wight tolde sche,  
 For out of toune was goon Arviragus.  
 But to hir self sche spak, and sayde thus,  
 With face pale, and with ful sorwful chiere,  
 In hir complaint, as ye schul after hiere.

"Allas!" quod sche, "on the, fortune, I pleyne,  
 That unwar wrapped me hast in thy cheyne,  
 Fro which tescap, woot I no socour,  
 Save only deth, or elles dishonour; 11670  
 Oon of these tuo bihoveth me to chese.  
 But natheles, yet have I lever leese  
 My lif, than of my body to have schame,  
 Or knowe my selve fals, or lese my name;  
 And with my deth I may be quyt i-wys.  
 Hath ther not many a noble wyf, er this,  
 And many a mayden, slayn hir self, allas!  
 Rather than with her body doon trespas?"

Yis certeynly; lo, stories beren wites.  
 Whan thritty tirauntz ful of cursednes 11680  
 Hadde slayn Phidon in Athenes atte fest,  
 Thy comaunded his doughtres to arest,  
 And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit  
 Al naked, to fulfill her foule delyt;  
 And in her fadres blood they made hem daunce  
 Upon the payment, God geve hem meschaunce.  
 For which these woful maydens, ful of drede,  
 Rather than they wolde lese her maydenhede,  
 They prively hen stert into a welle, 11689  
 And drenched hem selfen, as the bookes telle.

“They of Mecene leet enquire and seeke  
 Of Lacidomye fifty maydenes eeke,  
 On which thay wolden doon her lecherie;  
 But was ther noon of al that companye  
 That sche nas slayn, and with a good entente  
 Ches rather for to deye, than to assente  
 To ben oppressed of hir maydenhede.  
 Why schuld I than to deyen ben in drede?  
 “Lo eek the tyraunt Aristocledes,

That loved a mayden heet Stimphalides, 11700  
 Whan that hir father slayn was on a night,  
 Unto Dyanes temple goth sche right,  
 And hent the ymage in hir hondes tuo.  
 Fro which ymage wold sche never go,  
 No wight might of it hir hondes race,  
 Til sche was slayn right in the selve place.  
 Now sith that maydens hadde such despit  
 To ben defouled with mannes foul delit,  
 Wel aught a wyf rather hir self to sle,  
 Than be defouled, as it thinketh me. 11710

“What schal I seyn of Hasdrubaldes wyf,  
 That at Cartage byraft hir self the lyf?  
 For whan sche saugh that Romayn was the toun,  
 Sche took hir children alle, and skipte adoun  
 Into the fuyr, and ches rather to deye,  
 Than eny Romayn dide hir vilonye.

“Hath nought Lucesse slayn hir self, allas!  
 At Rome, whanne sche oppressid was  
 Of Tarquyn? for hir thought it was a schame  
 To lyven, whan sche hadde lost hir name. 11720  
 “The seven maydens of Milesie also  
 Han slayn hem self for verray drede and wo,  
 Rather than folk of Gawle hem schulde oppresse.  
 Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,  
 Couthe I now telle as touching this matiere.

“Whan Habradace was slayn, his wif so deere  
 Hir selven slough, and leet hir blood to glyde  
 In Habradaces woundes, deepe and wyde;  
 And seyde, my body atte leste way  
 Ther schal no wight defoulen, if I may. 11730  
 What schold I mo ensamples herof sayn?  
 Seththen so many han hem selven slayn  
 Wel rather than they wolde defouled be,  
 I wol conclude that it is best for me  
 To slen my self than be defouled thus.

I wol be trewe unto Arviragus,  
 Or rather sle my self in som manere,  
 As dede Democionis doughter deere,  
 Bycause sche wolde nougt defouled be. 11740  
 O Cedasus, it is ful gret pité  
 To reden how thy doughteren dyed, allas!  
 That slowe hem self for suche maner caas.  
 As gret a pité was it or wel more,  
 The Theban mayden, that for Nichonore  
 Hir selven slough, right for such maner wo.

11679. *stories beren wites.* They are all taken from  
*Hieronymus contra Iovinianum*, l. i. e. 39.

Another Theban mayden dede right so,  
 For oon of Macidone had hir oppressed,  
 Sche with hire deth hire maydenhede redressed.  
 What schal I sayn of Niceratis wif,  
 That for such caas biraft hir self hir lyf? 11750  
 How trewe eek was to Alcebiades  
 His love, that for to dyen rather ches,  
 Than for to suffere his bodye unburied be?  
 Lo, which a wif was Alceste?” quod sche,  
 “What saith Omer of good Penolope?  
 Al Grece knoweth of hir chastité.  
 Pardi, of Laodomya is writen thus,  
 That whan at Troye was slayn Prothesilaus,  
 No lenger wol sche lyve after his day.  
 The same of noble Porcia telle I may; 11760  
 Withoute Brutus coude sche not lyve,  
 To whom sche had al hool hir herte gyve.  
 The parfyt wyfhod of Artemesyne  
 Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarie.  
 O Teuta queen, thy wifly chastité  
 To alle wywes may a mirour be.”

Thus playned Dorigen a day or tweye,  
 Purposyng ever that sche wolde deye;  
 But natheles upon the thridde night  
 Hom cam Arviragus, the worthy knight, 11770  
 And asked hir why that sche wept so sore;  
 And sche gan wepe ever lenger the more.  
 “Allas!” quod sche, “that ever was I born!  
 Thus have I sayd,” quod sche, “thus have I  
 And told him al, as ye han herd biforn; [sworn;”  
 It nedeth nougt reherse it you no more.

This housbond with glad chiere in good wise  
 Answerd and sayde, as I schal you devyse.  
 “Is ther aught elles, Dorigen, but this?” 11779  
 “Nay, nay,” quod sche, “God me so rede and wis,  
 This is to moche, and it were Goddes wille.”  
 “Ye, wyf,” quod he, “let slepe that may be stille,  
 It may be wel prauunter yet to day,  
 Ye schal your trouthe holden, by my fay.  
 For God so wisly have mercy on me,  
 I hadde wel lever i-stekid for to be,  
 For verray love which that I to you have,  
 But if ye scholde your trouthe kepe and save.  
 Trouthe is the heighest thing that men may kepe.”  
 But with that word he gan anon to wepe, 11790  
 And sayde, “I yow forbede up peyne of deth,  
 That never whil ye lasteth lyf or breth,  
 To no wight telle you of this aventure.  
 As I may best I wil my woo endure.  
 Ne make no contenance of hevynesse,  
 That folk of you may deme harm or gesse.”  
 And forth he cleped a squyer and a mayde.  
 “Go forth anon with Dorigen,” he sayde,  
 “And bryngeth hir to such a place anon.”  
 They take her leve, and on her way they gon;  
 But thay ne wiste why sche thider went, 11801  
 He nolde no wight tellen his entent.

11761. The Harl. Ms. reads this line, apparently incor-  
 rectly, *withoute Brutes kynde sche myght not lyve.*

11765. *Teuta.* The Harl. Ms. reads *O Thena.*

11766. *To alle wywes.* “After this verse the two fol-  
 lowing are found in several mss.—

The same thing I say of Bilia,  
 Of Rhodogone and of Valeria,

But as they are wanting in Mss. A. C. 1 Ask. 1, 2, HA., I  
 was not unwilling to leave them out.—*Tyrrehit.*

11802. *He nolde.* “After this verse ed. Ca. 2 has the  
 six following:

Peraventure an hepe of you, I wis,  
 Will holden him a lewed man in this,



This squyer, which that hight Aurilius,  
 On Dorigen that was so amorous,  
 Of aventure happed hire to mete  
 Amyd the toun, right in the quyke strete;  
 As sche was boun to goon the wey forth-right  
 Toward the gardyn, ther as sche had hight.  
 And he was to the gardyn-ward also;  
 For wel he spyed whan sche wolde go 11810  
 Out of hir hous, to eny maner place.  
 But thus thay mette of adventure or grace,  
 And he salueth hir with glad entent,  
 And askith hire whider-ward sche went.  
 And sche answered, half as sche were mad,  
 "Unto the gardyn, as myn housbond bad,  
 My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!"  
 Aurilius gan wonden on this caas,  
 And in his hert had gret compassioun  
 Of hire, and of hir lamentacioun, 11820  
 And of Arviragus the worthy knight,  
 That bad hir hold al that sche hadde hight,  
 So loth him was his wif schuld breke hir trouthe.  
 And in his hert he caught of this gret routhe,  
 Consideryng the best on every syde,  
 That fro his lust yet were him levere abyde,  
 Than doon so high a cheerlich wrecchednesse  
 Agayns franchis of alle gentillesce;  
 For which in fewe wordes sayd he thus.  
 "Madame, saith to your lord Arviragus, 11830  
 That sith I se his grete gentillesce  
 To you, and eek I se wel your distresse,  
 That him were levere have schame (and t'at were  
 routhe)  
 Than ye to me schulde breke youre trouthe,  
 I have wel levere ever to suffre woo,  
 Than I departe the love bytwix yow tuo,  
 I yow relesse, madame, into your hond  
 Quyt every seurement and every bond  
 That ye han maad to me as herbiforn,  
 Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born. 11840  
 My trouthe I plight, I schal yow never repreve  
 Of no byhest, and her I take my leve,  
 As of the trewest and the beste wif  
 That ever yit I knew in al my lyf.  
 But every wyf be war of hir byhest;  
 On Dorigen remembreth atte lest.  
 Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,  
 As wel as can a knyght, withouten drede."  
 Sche thanketh him upon hir knees al bare,  
 And hoom unto hir housbond is sche fare, 11850  
 And told him al, as ye han herd me sayd;  
 And, be ye siker, he was so wel apayd,  
 That it were impossible me to write.  
 What schuld I lenger of this caas endite?  
 Arviragus and Dorigen his wif  
 In sovereyn blisse leden forth here lyf,  
 Never eft ne was ther anger hem bytwn;  
 He cherisscheth hir as though sche were a queen,  
 And sche was to him trewe for evermore;  
 Of these tuo folk ye gete of me nomore. 11860

That he woll put his wife in jeopardie.  
 Herkneeth the tale, or ye upon him erie.  
 Sche may have better fortune than you semeth;  
 And whan that ye han herde the tale demeth.

These lines are more in the style and manner of Chaucer than interpolations generally are; but as I do not remember to have found them in any MS., I could not receive them into the text. I think, too, that if they were written by him, he would probably, upon more mature consideration, have suppressed them, as unnecessarily anticipating the catastrophe of the tale.—*Tyrwhitt.*

Aurilius, that his cost hath al for-lorn,  
 Curseth the tyme that ever he was born.  
 "Allas!" quod he, "allas, that I byhight  
 Of pured gold a thousand pound of wight  
 Unto this philosopre! how schal I doo?  
 I se no more, but that I am for-doo.  
 Myn heritage moot I needes selle,  
 And ben a begger, her may I not duelle,  
 And schamen al my kynrede in this place,  
 But I of him may gete better grace. 11870  
 But natheles I wol of him assay  
 At certeyn dayes yeer by yer to pay,  
 And thanke him of his grete curtesye.  
 My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol not lye."  
 With herte soor he goth unto his cofre,  
 And broughte gold unto this philosopre,  
 The value of fyf hundred pound, I gesse,  
 And him bysecheth of his gentillesce  
 To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt,  
 And sayde, "Maister, I dar wel make avaunt,  
 I fayled never of my trouthe as yit. 11881  
 For sikerly my dettes schal be quyt  
 Towardes yow, how so that ever I fare  
 To goon and begge in my kurtill bare;  
 But wolde ye vouchesauf unto seurté  
 Tuo yer or thre for to respite me,  
 Than were I wel, for elles most I selle  
 Myn heritage, ther is nomore to telle."  
 This philosopre sobrelly answerde, 11889  
 And seyde thus, whan he these wordes herde;  
 "Have I not holden covenant unto the?"  
 "Yis certes, wel and trouwly," quod he,  
 "Hastow nought had thy lady as the liketh?"  
 "No, no," quod he, and sorwfully he siketh.  
 "What was the cause? tel me, if thou can."  
 Aurilius his tale anon bygan,  
 And told him al as ye han herd bifore,  
 It needeth nat to you reherse it more.  
 He sayde, Arviragus of gentillesce  
 Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse, 11900  
 Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals.  
 The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als,  
 How loth hir was to ben a wikked wyf,  
 And that sche lever had han lost hir lyf;  
 And that hir trouthe sche swor thurgh innocence;  
 Sche never erst hadde herd speke of apparence;  
 "That made me han of hir so gret pyté.  
 And right as frely as he sente hir to me,  
 As frely sent I hir to him agayn. 11909  
 This is al and som, ther is no more to sayn."  
 The philosopre answerde, "Leve brother,  
 Everich of yow dede gentilly to other;  
 Thow art a squyer, and he is knight,  
 But God forbede, for his blisful might,  
 But if a clerk couthe doon as gentil dede  
 As wel as eny of yon, it is no drede.  
 Sire, I relesse the thy thousand pound,  
 As thow right now were crope out of the ground,  
 Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me. 11920  
 For, sire, I wil not take a peny of the  
 For al my craft, ne nought for al my travayle;  
 Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitayle.  
 It is y-nough, and far wel, have good day."  
 And took his hors, and forth he goth his way.  
 Lordynges, this questioun wolde I axe now,

11908. *And right as.* Ms. Harl. reads this and the next line,—

Byeance hir housbond sente hir to me,  
 And right as frely sent I hir to him agayn.

Which was the moste free, as thinketh yow?  
Now telleth me, er that I ferther wende.  
I can no more, my tale is at an ende.

## THE SECOUNDE NONNES TALE.

THE minister and the norice unto vices,  
Which that men clepe in English ydelnesse,  
The porter at the gates is of delicis; 11931  
To eschiewe, and by her contrary hire oppresse,  
That is to say, by leful besynesse,  
Wel oughte we to do al oure entente,  
Lest that the fend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.

For he that with his thousand cordes slye  
Continuently us wayteth to byclappe,  
Whan he may man in ydelnes espye,  
He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe,  
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe, 11940  
He is nought ware the fend hath him in honde;  
Wel oughte we wirche, and ydelnes withstonde.

And though men dredde never for to deye,  
Yet seen men wel by resoun douteles,  
That ydelnes is rote of sloggardy, e,  
Of which ther cometh never good eneres;  
And sin that slouth he holdeth in a leas,  
Oonly to sleep, and for to ete and drynke,  
And to devoure al that other swynke.

And for to put us from such ydelnes, 11950  
That cause is of so gret confusioun,  
I have her doon my faithful busynes  
After the legende in translacioun  
Right of this glorious lif and passioun, 11955  
Thou with thi garlund, wrought with rose and  
The mene I, mayde and martir Cecilie;

And thou, that flour of virgines art alle,  
Of whom that Bernard lust so wel to write,  
To the at my bygynnyng first I calle;  
Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endite 11960  
Thy maydenes deth, that wan thurgh hire merite  
Theternal lif, and of the feend victorie,  
As man may after reden in hir storie.

Thou mayde and moder, daughter of thi sone,  
Thow welle of mercy, synful soules cure,  
In whom that God of bountés chees to wone;  
Thou humble and heyh over every creature,  
Thow noblest so ferforth oure nature,  
That no disleyn the maker had of kynde 11969  
His sone in blood and fleissch to clothe and wynde.

Withinne the cloyster of thi blisful sydes,  
Took mannes schap the eternal love and pees,  
That of the trine compas lord and guye is,  
Whom erthe, and see, and heven out of relees

11926. *Which was the moste free.* Tyrwhitt remarks that, "The same question is stated in the conclusion of Boccace's tale. *Philoc.* l. v. Dubitasti ora qual di costoro fusse maggior liberalità, &c. The queen determines in favour of the husband." It may be further observed that this conclusion of the story gives it the character of those questions which were usually debated in the medieval courts of love.

*The Secounde Nonnes Tale.* This is almost a literal translation from the life of St. Cecilia in the *Legenda Aurea*. It appears to have been first composed by Chaucer as a separate work, and is enumerated as such in the *Legende of Good Women*, l. 426. In two manuscripts quoted by Tyrwhitt, some lines, evidently not by Chaucer, are prefixed as an introduction. It may be added that here the Harleian Ms. differs from Tyrwhitt's edition in the arrangement of the tales, which renders it impossible to continue my original intention of preserving Tyrwhitt's numbering of the lines.

11958. *Bernard.* Some of the most eloquent of the sermons of St. Bernard are on the nativity and assumption of the Virgin.

Ay herien; and thou, virgine wemmeles,  
Bar of thy body, and dwellest mayden pure,  
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in the magnificence  
With mercy, goodnes, and with such pitee,  
That thou, that art the sounne of excellence, 11980  
Not oonly helpist hem that prayen the,  
But often tyme of thy benignité  
Ful frely, er that men thin help biseche,  
Thou gost biforn, and art her lyses leche.

Now help, thou meke and blisful faire mayde,  
Me flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle;  
Think on the womman Cananee, that sayde  
That whelpes ete some of the crommes alle  
That from her lordes table ben i-falle;  
And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve, 11990  
Be synful, yet accepte my bileve.

And for that faith is deth withouten werkis,  
So for to werken give me witt and space,  
That I be quit for thennes that most derk is;  
O thou, that art so fair and ful of grace,  
Be myn advocat in that hihe place,  
Ther as withouten ende is songe Osanne,  
Thou Cristes moder, daughter deere of Anne.

And of thi light my soule in prisoun light,  
That troubled is by the contagioun 12000  
Of my body, and also by the wight  
Of everich lust and fals affeccioun;  
O heven of refuyt, o salvacioun  
Of hem that ben in sorwe and in destresse,  
Now help, for to my werk I will me dresse.

Yet pray I you that reden that I write,  
Forgeve me, that I doo no diligence  
This ilke story subtilly to endite.  
For bothe have I the wordes and sentence  
Of him, that at the seintes reverence 12010  
The story wroot, and folwen hir legende,  
And pray yow that ye wol my werk amende.

First wol I yow the name of seint Cecilie  
Expoun, as men may in hir story se;  
It is to say on English, hevenes lylie,  
For pure chastenesse of virginité,  
Or for sche witnessse hadde of honesté  
And grene of conscience, and of good fame  
The soote savour, lylie was her name.

Or Cecile is to say, the way of blynde, 12020  
For sche ensample was by way of techynge;  
Or elles Cecily, as I writen fynde,  
Is joyned by a maner conjoynynge  
Of heven and *lya*, and here in figuryng  
The heven is sette for thought of holynesse,  
And *lya*, for hir lastyng besynesse.

Cecili may eek be seyð in this manere,  
Wantyng of blyndnes, for hir grete light  
Of sapience, and of thilke thewes cleere.  
Or elles lo, this maydenes name bright 12030  
Of heven and *los* comes, for which by right  
Men might hir wel the heven of peple calle,  
Ensamble of goode and wise werkes alle.

For *leos* peple in English is to say;  
And right as men may in the heven see  
The sounne and moone, and sterres every way,  
Right so men gostly in this mayden free  
Seen of faith the magnanimité,

11987. *the womman Cananee.* The Harl. Ms. reads erroneously *the womman Canace*.

12013. *the name.* These punning explanations of proper names were very fashionable in the middle ages. In the present instance, they are translated directly from the prologue to the Latin legend.

And eek the clernes hool of sapience,  
 And sondry werkes, bright of excellence. 12040  
 And right so as these filosofres wryte,  
 That heven is swyft and round, and eek brennyng,  
 Right so was faire Cecily the whyte  
 Ful swyft and besy ever in good werkyng,  
 And round and hool in good perseveryng,  
 And brennyng ever in charité ful bright;  
 Now have I yow declared what sche hight.

This mayden bright Cecilie, as hir lyf saith,  
 Was comen of Romayns and of noble kynde,  
 And from hir cradel fostred in the faith 12050  
 Of Crist, and bar his Gospel in hir mynde;  
 Sche never cessed, as I writen fynde,  
 Of hire prayer, and God to love and drede,  
 Byseching him to kepe hir maydenhede.

And whan this mayde schuld unto a man  
 Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,  
 Which that i-cleped was Valirian,  
 And day was comen of hir mariage,  
 Sche ful devout and humble in hir currage,  
 Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful faire, 12060  
 Hadde next hir fleissch i-clad hir in an heire.

And whil the organs made melodie,  
 To God alloon in herte thus sang sche;  
 "O Lord, my soule and eek my body gye  
 Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be."  
 And for his love that deyde upon a tre,  
 Every second or thriddre day sche faste,  
 Ay biddyng in hire orisouns ful faste.

The nyght cam, and to bedde most sche goon  
 With hir housbond, as oft is the manere, 12070  
 And prively to him sche sayde anon;  
 "O swete and wel beloved spouse deere,  
 Ther is a counseil, and ye wold it heere,  
 Which that right fayn I wold nnto you saye,  
 So that ye swere ye schul it not bywraye."

Valirian gan fast unto hir swere,  
 That for no caas ne thing that mighte be,  
 He scholde never mo bywreye hire;  
 And thanne at erst thus to him sayde sche;  
 "I have an aungel which that loveth me, 12080  
 That with gret love, wher so I wake or slepe,  
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe;

"And if that he may felen, out of drede,  
 That ye me touche or love in vilonye,  
 He right anon wil sle you with the dede,  
 And in youre youthe thus schulde ye dye.  
 And if that ye in clene love me gye,  
 He wol yow love as me, for your clenesse,  
 And schewe to you his joye and his brightnesse."

Valirian, corrected as God wolde, 12090  
 Answerde agayn: "If I schal truste the,  
 Let me that aungel se, and him biholde;  
 And if that it a verray aungel be,  
 Than wol I doon as thou hast prayed me;  
 And if thou love another man, forsothe  
 Right with this swerd than wol I slee you bothe."

Cecilie answered anon right in this wise;  
 "If that yow list, the aungel schul ye see,  
 So that ye trowe on Crist, and you baptise;  
 Goth forth to Via Apia," quod sche, 12100  
 "That fro this toun ne stant but myles thre,  
 And to the pore folkes that ther duelle  
 Saith hem right thus, as that I schal you telle.

"Tell hem, I Cecilie yow unto hem sent,

12053. This line has been omitted by the scribe of the  
 Harl. Ms., the next line there commencing, *If ye me  
 wouche.*

To schewen yow the good Urban the olde,  
 For secré needes, and for good entente;  
 And whan that ye seint Urban han byholde,  
 Tel him the wordes which that I to yow tolde;  
 And whan that he hath purged you fro synne,  
 Than schul ye se that aungel er ye twynne."  
 Valirian is to the place y-goon, 12111  
 And right as him was taught by his lernyng,  
 He fond this holy old Urban anon  
 Among the seyntes buriels lotyng;  
 And he anon withoute taryng  
 Did his message, and whan that he it tolde,  
 Urban for joye his handes gan upholde.

The teres from his eyghen let he falle;  
 "Almyghty Lord, O Jhesu Crist," quod he,  
 "Sower of chaste counsil, herde of us alle, 12120  
 The fruyt of thilke seed of chastité  
 That thou hast sowe in Cecilie, tak to the;  
 Loo, like a busy bee withouten gyle  
 The serveth ay thin owne thral Cecile.

"For thilke spouse, that sche took right now  
 Ful lyk a fers lyoun, sche sendeth here  
 As meek as ever was eny lamb to yow."  
 And with that word anon ther gan appere  
 An old man, clad in white clothes clere,  
 That had a book with lettres of gold in honde,  
 And gan to-forn Valirian to stonde. 12131

Valirian, as deed, fyl down for drede,  
 Whan he him say; and he him up hente tho,  
 And on his book right thus he gan to rede;  
 "On Lord, o feith, oon God withouten mo,  
 On Cristendom, and oon fader of alle also,  
 Aboven alle, and over alle every where;"  
 This wordes al with golde writen were.

Whan this was red, than seide this olde man,  
 "Levest thou this thing or no? say ye or naye."  
 "I leve al this thing," quod Valirian, 12141  
 "For sother thing than this, I dare wel saye,  
 Under the heven no wight thenken maye."  
 Tho vanyshed the old man, he nyste where,  
 And pope Urban him cristenid right there.

Valirian goth home, and fint Cecilie  
 Withinne his chambre with an aungel stonde.  
 This aungel had of roses and of lillie  
 Corounes tuo, the which he bar in honde.  
 And first to Cecilie, as I understonde, 12150  
 He gaf that oon, and after can he take  
 That other to Valirian hir make.

"With body clene, and with unwemmed  
 thought,  
 Kepeth ay wel these corouns tuo," quod he,  
 "Fro paradys to you I have hem brought,  
 Ne never moo ne schul they roten be,  
 Ne leese here swoote savour, trusteth me,  
 Ne never wight schal sen hem with his ye,  
 But he be chast, and hate vilonye.

"And thou Valirian, for thou so soome 12160  
 Assentidist to good counsil, also  
 Say what the list, and thou schalt have thi boone."  
 "I have a brother," quod Valirian tho,  
 "That in this world I love no man so,  
 I pray yow that my brother may have grace  
 To knowe the trouthe, as I doo in this place."

The aungel sayde, "God liketh thy request,  
 And bothe with the palme of martirdom

12114. *lotyng*. The Latin legend has, *inter sepulchra  
 martyrum latitantem invenit.*

12138-12144. These lines are omitted in Ms. Harl. by  
 the inadvertence of the scribe.



Ye schullen come unto his blisful feste." 12169  
 And with that word, Tiburce his brother com.  
 And whan that he the savour undernom,  
 Which that the roses and the lilies cast,  
 Withinne his hert he gan to wondre fast.

And sayde, "I wondre this tyme of the yer,  
 Whennes this soote savour cometh so  
 Of rose and lilies, that I smelle her;  
 For though I had hem in myn hondes tuo,  
 The savour might in me no depper go.  
 The swete smel, that in myn hert I fynde,  
 Hath chANGED me al in another kynde." 12180

Valirian sayd, "Tuo corouns have we,  
 Snow-whyt and rose-reed, that schinen cleere,  
 Whiche that thine eyghen han no might to see;  
 And as thou smellst hem thurgh my prayere,  
 So schalt thou seen hem, lieve brothere deere,  
 If it so be thou wilt withouten slouthe  
 Bileven aright, and knowen verray trouthe."

Tyburce answerde, "Says thou thns to me  
 In sothenes, or in drem I herke this?"  
 "In dremes," quod Valirian, "han we be 12190  
 Unto this tyme, brother myn, i-wys;  
 But now at erst in trouthe oure duellyng is."  
 "How wost thou this," quod Tyburce, "and in  
 what wise?"

Quod Valirian, "That schal I the devyse.  
 "The aungel of God hath me trouthe y-taught,  
 Which thou schalt seen, if that thou wilt reneye  
 The ydols, and be clene, and elles nought."  
 And of the miracles of these corones tweye  
 Seynt Ambrose in his prefas list to seye;  
 Solempnely this noble doctour deere 12200  
 Comendeth it, and saith in this maneere.

"The palme of martirdom for to receivee,  
 Seynt Cecilie, fulfilled of Goddes gifte,  
 The world and eek hir chamber gan sche weyve;  
 Witnes Tyburces and Cecilies shrifte,  
 To whiche God of his bounte wolde schifte  
 Corones tuo, of floures wel smellynge,  
 And made his aungel home the croune brynge."

The mayde hath brought this men to blisse  
 above;

The world hath wist what it is worth certeyn,  
 Devocioun of chastite to love. 12211  
 Tho schewed him Cecilie al open and pleyn,  
 That alle ydoles nys but thing in veyn;  
 For thay ben doumbe, and therto they ben deve,  
 And chargeth him his ydoles for to leve.

"Who so that troweth not this, a best he is,"  
 Quod this Tyburce, "if that I schal not lye."  
 And sche gan kisse his brest that herde this,  
 And was ful glad he couthe trouthe espye;  
 "This day I take the for myn allye," 12220  
 Sayde this blisful faire mayde deere;  
 And after that sche sayde as ye may heere.

"Lo, right so as the love of Crist," quod sche,  
 "Made me thy brotheser wyf, right in that wyse  
 Anoon for myn allye heer take I the,  
 Sin that thou wilt thyne ydoles despise.  
 Go with thi brother now and the baptise,

And make the clene, so that thou mowe biholde  
 The angeles face, of which thy brother tolde."

Tyburce answerde, and sayde, "Brother dere,  
 First tel me whider I schal, and to what man."  
 "To whom?" quod he, "com forth with good  
 cheere, 12232

I wol the lede unto the pope Urban."  
 "Til Urban? brother myn Valirian,"  
 Quod Tyburce, "wilt thou me thider lede?  
 Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.  
 "Ne menist thou nat Urban," quod he tho,  
 "That is so ofte dampned to the deed,  
 And woneth in halkes alway to and fro,  
 And dar nought oones putte forth his heed? 12240  
 Men schold him brenne in a fyur so reed,  
 If he were founde, or if men might him spye,  
 And we also to bere him companye.

"And whil we seken thilke divinite,  
 That is i-hyd in heven prively,  
 Algate i-brent in this world schuld we be."  
 To whom Cecilie answerde boldly,  
 Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully  
 This lyf to lese, myn oughne dere brother,  
 If this were lyyng oonly and noon other. 12250

"But ther is better lif in other place,  
 That never schal be lost, ne drede the nought;  
 Which Goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace,  
 That fadres sone that alle thing hath wrought;  
 And al that wrought is with a skilful thought,  
 The gost, that from the fader gan procede,  
 Hath sowled hem withouten eny drede.

"By word and miracle hihe Goddes sone,  
 Whan he was in this world, declared heere, 12259  
 That ther was other lyf ther men may wone."  
 To whom answerde Tyburce, "O suster deere,  
 Ne seydest thou right now in this maneere,  
 Ther nys but oon God, o Lord, in sothfastnesse,  
 And now of thre how maystow bere witness?"

"That schal I telle," quod sche, "er that I go.  
 Right as a man hath sapiences thre,  
 Memorie, engin, and intellect also,  
 So in oo being in divinite  
 Thre persones may ther right wel be." 12270

Tho gan sche him ful besily to preche  
 Of Cristes come, and of his peynes teche,  
 And many pointes of his passiou;  
 How Goddes sone in this world was withholde  
 To doon mankynde pleyn remissioun,  
 That was i-bounde in synne and cares colde.

Al this thing sche unto Tyburce tolde,  
 And after this Tiburce in good entente,  
 With Valirian to pope Urban he wente,  
 That thanked God, and with glad hert and light  
 He cristened him, and made him in that place  
 Parfyt in his lernynge, Goddes knyght. 12281

And after this Tyburce gat such grace,  
 That every day he say in tyme and space  
 The aungel of God, and every maner boone  
 That he God asked, it was sped ful soone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to sayne

12237. *Ne menist.* De illo Urbano dicit, qui totiens damnatus est, et adhuc in lateribus commoratur?—*Lat. Leg.*

12247. *boldely.* The Harl. Ms. reads *boldly*.

12266. *sapiences thre.* In the original Latin it is, Respondit Cecilia, sicut in una hominis sapientia sunt tria, scilicet ingenium, memoria, et intellectus, sic in una divinitatis essentia tres personae esse possent. In l. 15507, the Harl. Ms. reads erroneously *engin* for *engin*.

12271. *come.* So the Harl. Ms., correctly. In the Lat. legend it is, Tunc cepit ei de adventu filii Dei et passione praedicare. Tyrwhitt reads *sonde*.

12169. *Blisful feste.* This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. The words of the Latin legend are,—Cui angelus, Placet Domino petitio tua, et ambo cum palma martyrii ad Dominum venietis. Tyrwhitt reads *rest*.

12198. The lines which follow, and which interrupt the narration very awkwardly, are translated almost literally from the Latin legend, in which Tyrwhitt supposes them to have been originally an interpolation.

How many wondres Jesus for hem wroughte;  
But atte last, to tellen schort and playne,  
The sergeantz of the toun of Rome hem soughte,  
And hem byforn Almache the prefect broughte,  
Which hem apposed, and knew alle here entente,  
And to the ymage of Jubiter hem sente; 12292

And saide, "Who so wil not sacrifice,  
Swope of his hered, this my sentence heere."

Anoon these martires, that I you devyse,  
Oon Maximus, that was an officere  
Of the prefectes, and his cornicelere,  
Hem hent, and whan he forth the seyntes ladde,  
Him self he wept for pité that he hadde.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,  
He gat him of his tormentoures leve, 12301  
And bad hem to his hous withouten more;  
And with her preching, er that it were eve  
They gonne fro the tormentoures to reve,  
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echoone,  
The false faith, to trowe in God alloone.

Cecilie cam, whan it was waxen night;  
With prestis, that hem cristenid alle in techte;  
And afterward, whan day was waxen light,  
Cecilie hem sayde with a fulstedefast chere; 12310  
"Now, Cristes owne knyghtes leef and deere,  
Cast al away the werkles of derknes,  
And armith you in armur of brightnes.

"Ye han forsothe y-doon a greet batayle;  
Youre cours is doon, youre faith han ye conserved;  
Goth to the coroun of lyf that may not fayle;  
The rightful juggle, which that ye han served,  
Schal geve it yow, as ye han it deserved."  
And whan this thing was sayd, as I devyse,  
Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacrifice. 12320

But whan they were to the place y-brought,  
To telle schortly the conclusioun,  
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right nought,  
But on her knees they setten hem adoun,  
With humble hert and sad devocioun,  
And leften bothe her heedes in that place;  
Here soules wenten to the king of grace.

This Maximus, that say this thing betyde,  
With pitous teeres tolde it anoon right,  
That he here soules saugh to heven glyde 12330  
With aungels, ful of clernes and of light;  
And with his word converted many a wight.  
For which Almachius dede him so bete  
With whippes of leed, til he his lif gan lete.

Cecilie him took, and buried him anoon  
By Tiburce and Valirian softly,  
Withinne hire berieng place, under the stoon.  
And after this Almachius hastily  
Bad his ministres fecchen openly  
Cecilie, so that sche might in his presence 12340  
Doon sacrifice, and Jubiter encense.

But they, converted at hir wise lore,  
Wepten ful sore, and gaven ful credence  
Unto hir word, and cryden more and more;  
"Crist, Goddes sone, withouten difference,  
Is verray God, this is al oure sentence,  
That hath so good a servaunt him to serve;  
Thus with oon vois we trowen, though we sterve."

Almachius, that herd of this doynge,  
12297. *cornicelere.* The Harl. Ms. has *councillere.*  
12302. *bad.* Tyrwhitt reads *lad*; and the Lansd. Ms.  
has *hadde.*  
12333. *so bete.* The Lansd. Ms. has *so to-bete*; and Tyr-  
whitt adopts *dede him to-bete.*  
12334. *whippes of leed.* Eum *plumbatis tamdiu caedi fecit*  
*quousque spiritum excussit.*—*Lat. Leg.*

Bad fecchen Cecilie, that he might hir se; 12350  
And alther-first, lo, this was his axinge;  
"What maner womman art thou?" quod he.  
"I am a gentil-womman born," quod sche.  
"I axe the," quod he, "though the it greve,  
Of thi religioun and of thi byleve."

"Ye han bygonne your questioun folily,"  
Quod sche, "that wolden thou answers conclude  
In oo demaunde; ye axen lewedly."  
Almache answerde to that similitude,  
"Of whens cometh thin answering so rude?" 12360  
"Of whens?" quod sche, whan she was i-freynded,  
"Of conscience, and of good faith unfeyned."  
Almachius sayde, "Takest thou noon heede  
Of my power?" and sche answerde him this;  
"Youre might," quod sche, "ful litel is to drede;  
For every mortal mannes power nys  
But lyk a bladder ful of wynd i-wis;  
For with a nedele poynt, whan it is blowe,  
May al the best of it be layd ful lowe."

"Ful wrongfully bygonnest thou," quod he.  
"And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce. 12371  
Wostow nought how oure mighty princes fre  
Han thus comaunded and maad ordinaunce,  
That every cristen wight schal han penaunce,  
But if that he his Cristendom withseye,  
And goon al quyt, if he wil it reneye?"

"Youre princes erre, as youre nobleye doth,"  
Quod tho Cecilie; "and with a wood sentence  
Ye make us gulty, and it is nought soth;  
For ye that knowen wel oure innocence, 12380  
Forasmoche as we doon ay reverence  
To Crist, and for we bere a Cristen name,  
Ye putten on us a crim and eek a blame.

"But we that knowen thilke name so  
For vertuons, we may it not withseye."  
Almache sayde, "Cheese oon of these tuo,  
Do sacrifice or Cristendom reneye,  
That thou now now eschape by that weye."  
At which the holy blisful faire mayde  
Gan for to laughe, and to the juggle sayde; 12390

"O juggle confus in this nycte,  
Wilt thou that I refuse innocence?  
To make me a wikked wight," quod sche.  
"Lo, he dissimuleth heer in audience,  
He starith and woodith in his advertence."  
To whom Almachius sayde, "Unsely wrecche,  
Ne wostow nought how fer my might may  
strecche?

Han nought our mighty princes to me y-given,  
Ye bothe power and eek auctorité  
To maken folk to deyen or to lyven? 12400  
Why spekestow so proudly than to me?"  
"I speke not but stedefastly," quod sche,  
"Nought proudly, for I say, as for my syde,  
We haten deedly thilke vice of pryde.

And if thou drede nought a soth to heere,  
Than wol I schewe al openly by right,  
That thou hast maad a ful greet lesyng heere.  
Thou saist, thy princes han i-give the might  
Bothe for to sleen and eek to quike a wight,  
Thou that ne maist but oonly lif byreve, 12410  
Thou hast noon other power ne no leve.

"But thou maist sayn, thi princes han the maked  
Minister of deth: for if thou speke of moo,  
Thow liest: for thy power is ful naked."  
"Do way thy lewednes," sayd Almachius tho,  
"And sacrifice to oure goddes, er thou go.

12415. *lewednes.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *boldenes.*

I recche nought what wrong that thou me profre,  
For I can suffre it as a philosopre.

"But thilke wronges may I not endure,  
That thou spelkis of oure goddis her," quod he.  
Cecilie answered, "O nice creature, 12421  
Thou saydest no word sins thou spak to me,  
That I ne knew therwith thy niceté,  
And that thou were in every maner wise  
A lewed officer, a vein justise.

"Ther lakketh no thing to thin outer eyen  
That thou art blynde; for thing that we see allen  
That it is stoon, that men may wel asprien,  
That ilke stoon a god thou wilt it calle.  
I rede the, let thin hond upon it falle, 12430  
And tast it wel, and stoon thou schalt it fynde;  
Sith that thou seest not with thin eyghen blynde.

"It is a schame that the poeple schal  
So scorne the, and lauge at thi zolye;  
For comunly men woof it wel over al,  
That mighty God is in his heven hye;  
And these ymages, wel thou mayst espie,  
To the ne to hein self may nought profyete,  
For in effect they ben nought worth a myte."

These wordes and such other sayde sche; 12440  
And he wax wroth, and bad men schold hir lede  
Hom to hir hous; "And in hir hous," quod he,  
"Brenne hir right in a bath of flammes rede."  
And as he bad, right so was doon the dede;  
For in a bath thay goune hir faste schetten,  
And nyght and day greet fuyr they under betten.

The longe night, and eek a day also,  
For al the fuyr, and eek the bathes hete,  
Sche sat al cold, and felte of it no woo,  
It made hir not oon drope for to swete. 12450  
But in that bath hir lif sche moste lete;  
For he Almachins, with ful wikke entente,  
To sleen hir in the bath his sondes sente.

Thre strokes in the nek he smot hir tho  
The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce  
He might nought smyte hir faire necke a-tuo.  
And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce  
That no man scholde do manuch penaunce  
The ferthe strok to smyten, softe or sore,  
This tormentour ne dorste do no more; 12460

But half deed, with hir nekke corven there  
He laft hir lye, and on his way he went.  
The cristen folk, which that about hir were,  
With scheetes han the blood ful faire y-bent;  
Thre dayes lyved sche in this torment,  
And never cessed hem the faith to teche,  
That sche had fostred hem, sche gan to preche.

And hem sche gaf hir moebles and hir thing,  
And to the pope Urban bytook hem tho,  
And sayd, "I axe this of heven kyng, 12470  
To have respit thre dayes and no mo,  
To recomede to yow, er that I go,  
These soules lo, and that I mighte do wirche  
Heer of myn hous perpetuelly a chirche."

Seynt Urban, with his dekenes prively  
The body fette, and buried it by nighte  
Among his other seyntes honestely.  
Hir hous the church of seynt Cecily yit highte;  
Seynt Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte;  
In which into this day in noble wyse 12480  
Men doon to Crist and to his seint servise.

## THE PROLOGE OF THE CHANOUNS YEMAN.

WHAN ended was the lif of seynt Cecile,  
Er we fully had riden fyve myle,  
At Boughtoun under Blec us gan atake  
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,  
And under that he had a whit surplice,  
His hakeney, that was a pomely grice,  
So swete, that it wonder was to se,  
It semed he hadde priked myles thre.  
The hors eek that his yyman rood upon, 12490  
So swette, that nunnettes might he goon.  
Aboute the pytrel stood the foom ful hie,  
He was of foom as flekked as a pye.  
A male tweyfold on his croper lay,  
It semed that he caried litel array.

Al light for somer rood this worthy man.  
And in myn herte wondren I bigan  
What that he was, til that I understood,  
How that his cloke was sowed unto his hood;  
For which when I long had avysed me, 12500  
I demed him som chanoun for to be.

His hat heng at his bak donn by a laas,  
For he had riden more than trot or paas,  
He had i-pryked lik as he were wood.  
A cloote-leef he had under his hood  
For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from hete.  
But it was joye for to se him swete;  
His forned dropped as a stillatorie

Were ful of plantayn and of peritorie. 12509  
And whanne that he was com, he gan to crie,  
"God save," quod he, "this joly compaignye!  
Fast have I priked," quod he, "for your sake,  
Bycause that I wolde you atake,  
To ryden in this mery compaignye."

His yeman eek was ful of curtesye,  
And seid, "Sires, now in the morwe tyde  
Out of your ostely I saugh you ryde,  
And warned heer my lord and soverayn,  
Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,  
For his desport; he loveth daliaunce." 12520  
"Frend, for thy warnyng God geve the good  
chaunce,"

Sayde oure host, "for certes it wolde seme  
Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme;  
He is ful jocound also dar I leye;  
Can he ought telle a mery tale or tweye,  
With which he glade may this compaignye?"

"Who, sire? my lord? Ye, ye, withoute lye,  
He can of merthe and eek of jolite  
Not but y-nough; also, sir, trusteth me,  
And ye him knewe as wel as do I, 12530  
Ye wolde wonder how wel and thriftily  
He couthe werke, and that in sondry wise.  
He hath take on him many sondry emprise,  
Which were ful hard for eny that is heere  
To bringe aboute, but thay of him it leere.

As homely as he ryt amonges yow,  
If ye him knewe, it wolde be your prow;  
Ye nolde nought for-gon his acquyntaunce  
For moche good, I dar lay in baluaunce  
Al that I have in my possessioun. 12540  
He is a man of heigh discreisioun,  
I warne yow wel, he is a passyng man."

"Wel," quod our oost, "I pray the, tel me than,  
Is he a clerk, or noon? tell what he is."  
"Nay, he is gretter than a clerk i-wis,"  
Sayde this yyman, "and in wordes fewe,



Ost, of his craft somewhat I wil you schewe.  
I say, my lord can such a subtilite,  
(But al his craft ye may nought wite of me,  
And somewhat helpe I yit to his worchyng),  
That al this ground on which we ben ridyng  
Til that we comen to Caunterbury toun, 12552  
He couthe al clene turnen up so doun,  
And pave it al of silver and of gold."

And whan this yeman hadde thus i-told  
Unto oure oost, he seyde, "*Benedicite!*  
This thing is wonder merveylous to me,  
Syn that this lord is of so heigh prudence,  
Bycause of which men schuld him reverence,  
That of his worschip rekketh he so lite; 12560  
His over slop it is not worth a myte  
As in effect to him, so mot I go;  
It is al bawdy and to-tore also.

Why is thi lord so slottisch, I the preye,  
And is of power better clothis to beye.  
If that his dede accorde with thy speche?  
Telle me that, and that I the biseche."

"Why?" quod this yiman, "wherto axe ye-me?  
God help me so, for he schal never thee,  
(But I wol nought avowe what I say, 12570  
And therfor kep it secre I vow pray)  
He is to wys in faith, as I bieve.

Thing that is over-don, it wil nought preve  
Aright, as clerkes sein, it is a vice:  
Wherfore in that I holde him lewed and nyce.  
For whan a man hath over-greet a witte,  
Ful ofte him happeth to mysusen itte;  
So doth my lord, and that me greveth sore.  
God it amende, I can say now nomore." 12579

"Therof no fors, good yeman," quod oure ost,  
"Syn of the conyng of thi lord thou wost,  
Tel how he doth, I pray the hertily,  
Sin that he is so crafty and so sly.  
Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?"

"In the subarbes of a toun," quod he,  
"Lurking in hernes and in lanes blynde.  
Wher as these robbouris and these theves by kynde  
Holden here prive ferful residence,  
As thay that dor nought schewen her presence;  
So faren we, if I schal say the sothe." 12590

"Now," quod oure ost, "yit let me talke to the;  
Why artow so discoloured on thy face?"

"Peter!" quod he, "God give it harde grace,  
I am so used the fuyr to blowe,  
That it hath chaunged my colour I trowe;  
I am not wont in no mirour to prie,  
But swynke sore, and lerne to multiplie.

We blondren ever, and pouren in the fuyr,  
And for al that we faile of oure desir,  
For ever we lacken oure conclusioun. 12600  
To moche folk we ben illusioun,  
And borwe gold, be it a pound or tuo,  
Or ten or twelve, or many sommes mo,  
And make hem wenen atte leste weye,  
That of a pound we conne make tweye.  
Yit it is fals; and ay we han good hope.  
It for to doon, and after it we grope.  
But that science is so fer us biorn,  
We mowen nought, although we had it sworn,  
It overtake, it slyt away so fast; 12610  
It wol us make beggers atte last."

Whil this yeman was thus in his talkyng,  
This chanoun drough him ner and herd al thing  
Which that this yiman spak, for suscepcioun  
Of mennes speche ever hadde this chanoun;

For Catoun saith, that he that gulty is,  
Demeth al thing be spoke of him, i-wis;  
By cause of that he gan so neigh to drawe  
His yeman, that he herde al his sawe;  
And thus he sayd unto his yeman tho; 12620

"Hold now thi pees, and speke no wordes mo;  
For if thou do, thou schalt it deere abyen.  
Thow schalrest me here in this companye,  
And eek discoverest that thou schuldest hide."  
"Ye," quod ourc ost, "tel on, what so bytyde;  
Of alle this thretyng recche the nought a myte."  
"In faith," quod he, "no more do I but lite."

And whan this Chanoun seið it wold not be,  
But his yeman wold telle his priveté, 12629  
He fledde away for verray sorwe and schame.

"A!" quod the yeman, "her schal arise game;  
Al that I can anoon now wol I telle,  
Sin he is goon; the foule feend him quelle!  
For never herafter wol I with him meete  
For peny ne for wold, I wol byheete.  
He that me broughte first unto that game,  
Er that he deye, sorwe have he and schame!

For it is earnest to me, by my faith;  
That fele I wel, what so eny man saith;  
And yet for al my smert, and al my greef, 12640  
For al my sorwe, and labour, and mescheef,  
I couthe never leve it in no wise.

Now wolde God my wyt mighte suffice  
To tellen al that longeth to that art;  
But natheles, yet wil I telle yow part;  
Sin that my lord is goon, I wol nought spare,  
Such thing as that I knowe, I wol declare.

"With this chanoun I duelled have seven yer,  
And of his science am I never the ner;  
Al that I hadde, I have lost therby, 12650  
And God wot, so hath many mo than I.

Ther I was wont to be right freisch and gay  
Of clothing, and of other good array,  
Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;  
And where my colour was bothe freissch and reed,  
Now it is wan, and of a leden hewe,  
(Who so it useth, sore schal he rewe);  
And of my swynk yet blended is myn ye;

Lo! such avauntage it is to multiplie!  
That slydyng science had me made so bare, 12660  
That I have no good, wher that ever I fare;  
And yit I am endetted so therby  
Of gold, that I have borwed trewely,  
That whil I lyve schal I quite never;

Lat every man be war by me for ever.  
What maner man that casteth him therto,  
If he continue, I holde his thrift i-do;  
So help me God, therby schal he not wyne,  
But empte his purs, and make his wittes thynne.

And whan he, thurgh his madnes and folye, 12670  
Hath lost his owne good in jeupardie,  
Than he exciteth other men therto,  
To lesse her good, as he himself hath do.

For unto schrewes joy it is and ese  
To have here felawes in peyne and desese.  
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk;  
Of that no charge; I wol speke of oure werk.  
Whan we ben ther as we schul exercise  
Oure elyssh craft, we seme wonder wyse,  
Oure termes ben so clergeal and queynte. 12680

12616. *Catoun saith.* The allusion is to *Cato de Morib.*  
lib. i. distich 17,—

Ne cures si quis tacito sermone loquatur;  
Conscius ipse sibi de se putat omnia dici.

I blowe the fuyr til that myn herte feynte.  
 What schulde I telle ech porporcioun  
 Of thinges which that we werke up and douu,  
 As on fyve or six ounces, may wel be,  
 Of silver, or som other quantité?  
 And besy me to telle yow the names,  
 As orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,  
 That into poudre grounden ben ful smal?  
 And in an erthen pot how put is al,  
 And salt y-put in, and also paupere, 12690  
 Bifrom these poudres that I speke of heere,  
 And wel i-covered with a lamp of glas?  
 And of moche other thing what that ther was?  
 And of the pot and glas enlutyng,  
 That of the aier mighte passe no thing?  
 And of the esy fuyr, and smert also,  
 Which that was maad? and of the care and wo,  
 That we hadde in oure matiers sublymyng,  
 And in amalgamyng, and calcenyng  
 Of quyksilver, y-clept mercury crude? 12700  
 For alle oure sleightes we can nought conclude.  
 Oure orpiment, and sublyment mercurie,  
 Oure grounde litarge eek on the porfurye  
 Of ech of these of ounces a certayn  
 Nat helpeth us, oure labour is in vayn.  
 Ne eek oure spiritres ascencioun,  
 Ne eek oure matiers that lyn al fix adoun.  
 Mowe in oure werkynge us no thing awayle;  
 For lost is al oure labour and travayle,  
 And al the cost on twenty deval way 12710  
 Is lost also, which we upon it lay.  
 Ther is also ful many another thing,  
 That is to oure craft appertenyng,  
 Though I by ordre hem here reherse ne can,  
 Bycause that I am a lewed man,  
 Yet wil I telle hem, as they come to mynde,  
 Though I ne conne nought sette hem in her  
 As bol armoniak, verdegres, boras; [kynde];  
 And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas,  
 Oure urinals and oure descensories, 12720  
 Viols, croslets, and sublimatories,  
 Concurbites, and alembikes eeke,  
 And other suche, deere y-nough a leeke,  
 Nat needith it to rehersen hem alle;  
 Watres rubifyng, and boles galle,  
 Arsnek, sal armoniak, and brimstoon.  
 And herbes couthe I telle eek many oon,  
 As egrimoigne, valirian, and lunarie,  
 And other suche, if that me list to tarie;  
 Oure lampes brennyng bothe night and day, 12730  
 To bringe aboute oure craft if that we may;  
 Oure fourneys cek of calciniacioun,  
 And of watres albificacioun,  
 Unslekked lym, salt, and glayre of an ey.  
 Poudres dyvers, aissches, dong, pisse, and cley,  
 Cered poketts, sal petre, vitriole;  
 And dyvers fuyres maad of woode and cole;  
 Salt tartre, alcaley, and salt preparat,  
 And combust matieres, and coagulat;

12694. *pot and glas*. This is the reading of the Harleian and Lansdowne Mss. Tyrwhitt reads *pottes and glasses engluting*, which seems to improve the metre.

12702. *sublyment*. The Lansd. Ms., with Tyrwhitt, reads *sublimed*.

12725. *rubifyng*. Ms. Harl. reads *rubisyng*.

12732. *fourneys*. The Ms. Harl. appears to read *fourmes*; but Ms. Lansd. reads *fourneys*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt, and seems to be correct.

12734. *salt*. The Lansd. Ms., with Tyrwhitt, reads *chalk*.

Cley maad with hors or mannes her, and oyle 12740  
 Of tartre, alym, glas, berm, wort, and argoyle,  
 Resalgar, and oure matiers enbibing;  
 And eek of oure matiers encorporing,  
 And of oure silver citriniacioun,  
 Oure cemyntynge and fermentacioun,  
 Oure yngottes, testes, and many thinges mo.  
 I wol you telle as was me taught also;  
 The foure spiritz, and the bodies seven  
 By ordre, as ofte herd I my lord noven.  
 The firste spirit quyksilver called is; 12750  
 The second orpiment; the thridde i-wis  
 Sal armoniac, and the ferthe bremstoon.  
 The bodies seven, eek, lo hem heer anon.  
 Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe;  
 Mars yren, Mercurie quyksilver we clepe;  
 Saturnus leed, and Jubitur is tyn,  
 And Venus copper, by my fader kyn.

"This cursed craft who so wol exercise,  
 He schal no good han that may him suffice;  
 For al the good he spendeth therabout 12760  
 He lese schal, therof have I no doute.

Who so that list outhen his folye,  
 Let him come forth and lerne multiplie;  
 And every man that hath ought in his cofre,  
 Let him appiere, and wexe a filosofre,  
 Aseausn that craft is so light to lere.  
 Nay, nay, God wot, al be he monk or frere,  
 Prest or chanoun, or eny other wight,  
 Though he sit at his book bothe day and night  
 In lernyng of this elyysch nice lore, 12770  
 Al is in vayn, and pardé moche more  
 Is to lerne a lewed man this subtilité;  
 Fy, spek not therof, for it wil not be.  
 Al couthe he letture, or couthe he noon,  
 As in effect, he schal fynd it al oon;  
 For bothe tuo by my salvacioun  
 Concluden in multiplicacioun

I-liche wel, whan thay han al y-do;  
 This is to sayn, thay fayle bothe tuo  
 Yet forgat I to make rehersayle 12780  
 Of watres corosif, and of lymayle,  
 And of bodyes mollificacioun,  
 And also of here enduracioun,  
 Oyles ablucioun, and metal fusible,  
 To tellen al, wold passen eny bible  
 That o wher is; wherfore, as for the best,  
 Of alle these names now wil I me rest;  
 For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe  
 To reyse a feend, al loke he never so rowe.  
 A, nay, let be; the filosofre stoon, 12790  
 Elixir clept, we sechen fast echoon,  
 For had we him, than were we syker y-nough;  
 But unto God of heven I make avow,  
 For al oure craft, whan we han al y-do,  
 And al oure sleight, he wol not come us to.  
 He hath i-made us spende moche good,  
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood,  
 But that good hope crepeth in oure herte,  
 Supposing ever, though we sore smerte,  
 To ben relieved by him after-ward. 12800

Such supposing and hope is scharp and hard.  
 I warne you wel it is to seken ever.  
 That future temps hath made men dissevere,  
 In trust therof, from al that ever they hadde.  
 Yet of that art thay conne nought wexe sadde,  
 For unto hem it is a bitter swete;  
 So semeth it; for nad thay but a schecte  
 Which thay mighte wrappe hem in a-night,

And a bak to walke inne by day-light, 12809  
 They wolde hem selle, and spenden on this craft;  
 They can nought stinte, til no thing be laft.  
 And evermore, wher that ever they goon,  
 Men may hem knowe by smel of bremstoon;  
 For at the world thay stynken as a goot;  
 Her savour is so rammysch and so hoot,  
 That though a man fro hem a myle be,  
 The savour wol infecte him, trusteth me.  
 Lo, thus by smellyng and by thred-bare array,  
 If that men list, this folk they knowe may.  
 And if a man wol aske hem prively, 12820  
 Why thay ben clothed so unthriffully,  
 Right anon thay wol ronnen in his eere,  
 And say, if that thay espied were,  
 Men wold hem slee, bycause of here science;  
 Lo, thus this folk bytrayen innocence.  
 Passe over this, I go my tale unto.  
 Er than the pot be on the fuyr y-do  
 Of metals with a certeyn quantité,  
 My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he;  
 (Now he is goon, I dar say boldly) 12830  
 For as men sayn, he can doon craftily;  
 Algate I wot wel he hath such a name,  
 And yet ful ofte he renneth in blame;  
 "And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth so,  
 The pot to-breketh, and farwel al is goo.  
 These metals been of so gret violence,  
 Oure walles may not make hem resistence,  
 But if thay were wrought of lym and stoon;  
 Thay percen so, that thurgh the wal thay goon;  
 And some of hem synken into the grounde, 12840  
 (Thus have we lost by tymes many a pounce),  
 And some are skatered al the floor aboute;  
 Some lepe into the roof, withouten doute.  
 Though that the feend nought in oure sight him  
 schewe,  
 I trowe that he with us be, that schrewe;  
 In helle, wher that he is lord and sire,  
 Nis ther no more woo, ne anger, ne ire.  
 Whan that oure pot is broke, as I have sayd,  
 Every man chyt, and halt him evel apayde.  
 Som sayd it was long on the fuyr-makyng; 12850  
 Some sayde nay, it was on the blowyng;  
 (Than was I ferd, for that was myn office).  
 'Straw' quod the thriddle, 'ye ben lewed and  
 It was nought tempred as it oughte be.' [nyce,  
 'Nay,' quod the ferthe, 'stynt and herkne me;  
 Bycause oure fuyr was nought y-maad of beech,  
 That is the cause, and other noon, so theech.'  
 I can not telle wheron it was long,  
 But wel I woot gret stryf is us among. 12859  
 'What?' quod my lord, 'ther is no more to doone,  
 Of these periles I wol be war eftsoone.  
 I am right siker, that the pot was erased.  
 Be as be may, be ye no thing amased.  
 As usage is, let swoope the floor as swithe;  
 Pluk up your hertes and beth glad and blithe.'  
 The mullok on an heep i-swoped was,  
 And on the floor y-cast a canevas,  
 And al this mullok in a syve i-throwe,  
 And sifted, and y-plukked many a throwe.  
 'Pardé,' quod oon, 'somwhat of oure metal 12870  
 Yet is ther heer, though that we have nought al.  
 And though this thing myshapped hath as now,  
 Another tyme it may be wel y-now.

12809. *bak*. This is the reading of the Harl. and Lensd. Mss. Tyrwhitt reads *bratt*, which he interprets a *coarse mantle*.

Us moste putte oure good in adventure.  
 A marchaunt, pardé, may not ay endure,  
 Trusteth me wel, in his prosperité;  
 Som tyme his good is drowned in the see,  
 And som tyme cometh it sauf unto the londe.'  
 'Pees!' quod my lord, 'the nexste tyme I wol fonde  
 To bringe oure craft al in another plyte, 12880  
 And but I do, sires, let me have the wyte;  
 Ther was defante in som what, wel I woot.'  
 Another sayde, the fuyr was over hoot.  
 But be it hoot or cold, I dar say this,  
 That we concluden evermor amys;  
 We faile of that which that we wolden have,  
 And in oure madnesse evermore we rave.  
 And whan we ben togideres everichon,  
 Everiche man semeth a Salamon.  
 But al thing which that schineth as the gold, 12890  
 Is nought gold, as that I have herd told;  
 Ne every appel that is fair at ye,  
 Ne is not good, what so men clappe or crye.  
 Right so, lo, fareth it amonges us.  
 He that semeth the wisest, by Jesus!  
 Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef;  
 And he that semeth trewest is a theef.  
 That schul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,  
 By that I of my tale have maad an ende.  
 "Ther is a chanoun of religioun 12900  
 Amonges us, wold infecte al a tonn,  
 Though it as gret were as was Ninive,  
 Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, or other thre.  
 His sleight and his infinite falsnesse  
 Ther couthe no man wrien, as I gesse,  
 Though that he mighte lyven a thousand yeer;  
 Of al this world of falsheed nys his peer,  
 For in his termes he wil him so wynde,  
 And speke his wordes in so sleygh a kynde,  
 Whan he comune schal with eny wight, 12910  
 That he wil make him dote anon right,  
 But it a feend be, as him selven is.  
 Ful many a man hath he bygiled er this,  
 And wol, if that he lyve may a while;  
 And yet men ryde and goon ful many a myle  
 Him for to seeke, and have his aqueintaunce,  
 Nought knowyng of his false gouvinaunce.  
 And if yow list to geve me audience,  
 I wol it telle here in youre presence.  
 But, worschiful chanouns religious, 12920  
 Ne demeth not that I slaundre youre hous,  
 Although my tale of a chanoun be.  
 Of every ordre som schrewe is, pardee;  
 And God forbede that al a companye  
 Schulde rewe a singular mannes folye.  
 To slaundre yow is no thing myn entent,  
 But to correcten that is mys i-ment.  
 This tale was not oonly told for y, w,  
 But eek for other moo; ye woot wel how  
 That among Cristes apostles twelve 12930  
 Ther was no traytour but Judas him selve;  
 Than why schulde the remenaunt have a blame,  
 That gulteles were? by yow I say the same.  
 Save oonly this, if ye wol herkene me,  
 If any Judas in youre covent be,  
 Remewe him by tyme, I yow rede,  
 If schame or los may causen eny drede.

12890. *as the gold*. This proverb is taken directly from the *Parables* of Alanus de Insulis, who expresses it thus in two *Leonines*.—

Non teneas aurum totum quod splendet ut aurum,  
 Nec pulchrum pomum quodlibet esse bonum.



And beth no thing displeed, I you pray,  
But in this caas herkeneth what I say."

## THE CHANOUNES YEMANNES TALE.

In Londoun was a prest, an annucler, 12940  
That therin dwelled hadde many a yer,  
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable  
Unto the wyf, wher as he was at table,  
That sche wolde suffre him no thing for to pay  
For bord ne clothing, went he never so gay;  
And spending silver had he right y-nough;  
Therof no force; I wol procede as now,  
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,  
That brought this prest to confusioun.

This false chanoun cam upon a day 12950  
Unto the prestes chambre, wher he lay,  
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn  
Of gold, and he wolde quyit it him ageyn.  
"Lene me a mark," quod he, "but dayes thre,  
And at my day I wil it quyte the.  
And if so be, that thou fynde me fals,  
Another day hong me up by the hals."  
This prest him took a mark, and that as swithe,  
And this chanoun him thankid ofte sithe,  
And took his leve, and wente forth his wey; 12960  
And atte thridde day brought his money,  
And to the prest he took his gold agayn,  
Wherof this prest was wonder glad and fayn.

"Certes," quod he, "no thing annoyeth me  
To lene a man a noble, or tuo, or thre,  
Or what thing were in my possessioun,  
When he so trewe is of condicioun,  
That in no wise he breke wol his day;  
To such a man I can never say nay." 12969  
"What?" quod this chanoun, "schold I be un-  
Nay, that were thing i-fallen of the newe. [trewe?  
Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe,  
Unto that day in which that I schal crepe  
Into my grave, and elles God forbede!  
Bilieveth that as siker as your crede.  
God thank I, and in good tyme be it sayd,  
That ther was never man yet evel apayd  
For gold ne silver that he to me lent,  
Ne never falsed in myn hert I ment.  
And, sire," quod he, "now of my priveté, 12980  
Syn ye so goodlich have be unto me,  
And kythed to me so gret gentilesce,  
Som what, to quyte with youre kyndenesse,

*The Chanounes Yemannes Tale.* In a precoding tale, Chaucer has touched upon the astrologers and practisers of "magike nature;" this, and perhaps some temporary occurrences, led him now to satirise bitterly another class who infested society at this period, the alchemists. The Chanounes Yemannes tale may describe an occurrence in Chaucer's time, for the "multipliers" seem to have been very busy deceiving people at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries; and Tyrwhitt has pointed out as a curious coincidence, that an act was passed soon after the poet's death, 5 H. IV. c. iv., making it felony "to multiplie gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication."

12940. an annucler. "They were called *annucleres*, not from their receiving a yearly stipend, as the gloss explains it, but from their being employed solely in singing *annucls*, or *anniversary masses*, for the dead, without any cure of souls. See the stat. 36 Edw. III. c. viii., where the *chapelleins parochiels* are distinguished from others *chantans annuels, et à cure des âmes niens entendantz*. They were both to receive yearly stipends, but the former was allowed to take six marks, and the latter only five. Compare stat. 2 H. V., st. 2 c. ii., where the stipend of the *chapellein parochiel* is raised to eight marks, and that of the *chapellein annucler* (he is so named in the statute) to seven."—Tyrwhitt.

I wil yow schewe, and if yow lust to lere  
I wil yow teche pleyntly the manere,  
How I kan werken in philosophie.  
Takith good heed, ye schul seen wel at ye,  
That I wol doon a maystry ei I go."  
"Ye?" quod the prest, "ye, sire, and wol ye so?  
Mary! therof I pray yow hertily." 12990  
"At youre comaundement, sire, trewely,"  
Quod the chanoun, "and elles God forbede!"  
Lo, how this thief couthe his servise beede.  
Ful soth it is that such profred servise  
Stynketh, as witnessen these olde wise;  
And that ful soone I wol it vereyfe  
In this chanoun, roote of al trecherie,  
That evermor delit hath and gladnesse  
(Such feendly thoughtes in his hert emprise)  
How Cristes poeple he may to meschief bringe.  
God kepe us from his fals dissimylunge. 13001  
What wiste this prest with whom that he delte?  
Ne of his harm comyng he no thing felte.  
O seely prest, o seely innocent,  
With covetytise anon thou schalt be blent;  
O graceles, ful blynd is thy conceyt,  
No thing art thou war of the deceyt,  
Which that this fox i-schapien hath to the;  
His wily wrenches y-wis thou maist not fle.  
Wherfor to go to the conclusioun, 13016  
That referreth to thy confusioun,  
Unhappy man, anon I wil me hie  
To tellen thin unwitte and thy folye,  
And eek the falsnesse of that other wrecche,  
Als ferforth as my conyng wol streche.  
This chanoun was my lord, ye wolde weene;  
Sire ost, in faith, and by the heven queene,  
It was another chanoun, and not he,  
That can an hundred fold more subtilté.  
He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme; 13026  
Of his falsnes it dullith me to ryme.  
Ever when I speke of his falschede,  
For schame of him my cheekes wexen reede;  
Algates thay bygygne for to glowe,  
For reednes have I noon, right wel I knowe,  
In my visage, for fumes diverse  
Of metals, which ye han me herd reherse,  
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.  
Now tak heed of this chanouns cursedesnesse.

"Sire," quod he to the prest, "let your man  
goon 13036  
For quyksilver, that we it hadde anon;  
And let him bringe ounces tuo or thre;  
And when he cometh, as faste schul ye see  
A wonder thing, which ye saugh never er this."  
"Sire," quod the prest, "it schal be doon, i-wis."  
He had his servaunt fecche him his thinges,  
And he al rody was at his biddynges,  
And went him forth, and com anon agayn  
With this quyksilver, shortly for to sayn,  
And took these ounces thre to the chanoun;  
And he it layde faire and wel adoun, 13041  
And bad the servaunt coles for to bringe,  
That he anon might go to his werkynge.  
The coles right anon weren i-fett,  
And this chanoun took out a croselett  
Of his bosom, and schewed it the prest. [sest,  
"This instrument," quod he, "which that thou  
Tak in thin hond, and put thiself therinne  
Of this quyksilver an unce, and her bygygne  
In the name of Crist to wax a philosopre. 13050  
Ther ben ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre

To schewe hem thus moche of my science;  
 For ye schul seen heer by experience,  
 That this quiksilver I wol mortifye,  
 Right in youre sight anoon, withouten lye,  
 And make it as good silver and as fyn  
 As ther is any in youre purs or myn,  
 Or elles wher: and make it malleable;  
 And elles holdeth me fals and unable  
 Amonges folk for ever to appeere. 13060  
 I have a powder heer that cost me deere,  
 Schal make al good, for it is cause of al  
 My connyng, which that I you schewe schal.  
 Voydith youre man, and let him be theroute;  
 And schet the dore, whils we ben aboute  
 Oure privetee, that no man us asprie,  
 Whiles we werken in this philosophie."  
 Al, as he bad, fulfilled was in dede.  
 This ilke servaunt anoon right out yede,  
 And his maister schitte the dore anoon, 13070  
 And to here labour speedily thai goon.

This prest, at this cursed chanouns bidding,  
 Upon the fuyr anoon sette this thing,  
 And blew the fuyr, and busied him ful fast;  
 And this chanoun into the croslet cast  
 A powder, noot I wherof that it was  
 I-maad, outh of chalk, outh of glas,  
 Or som what elles, was nought worth a flye,  
 To blynde with this prest; and bad him hie  
 These coles for to couchen al above 13080  
 The croslet; for "in tokenyng I the love,"  
 Quod this chanoun, "thin oughne handes tuo  
 Schal wirche al thing which that schal be do."  
 "Graunt mercy," quod the prest, and was ful glad,  
 And couchede coles as the chanoun bad.  
 And whil he besy was, this feendly wrecche,  
 This false chanoun (the foule feend him fecche!)  
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,  
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,  
 And therin put was of silver lymayle 13090  
 An unce, and stopped was withoute fayle  
 The hole with wax, to kepe the lymail in.  
 And understandith, that this false gyn  
 Was not maad ther, but it was maad bifore;  
 And other thinges I schal telle more  
 Herafter-ward, which that he with him brought.  
 Er he com there, to bigyle him he thought,  
 And so he dede, er thay wente atwynne;  
 Til he had torned him, outh he nought blynnne.  
 It dulleth me, whan that I of him speke; 13100  
 On his falschede fayn wold I me wreke,  
 If I wist how, but he is heer and there,  
 He is so variant, he byt no where.

But taketh heed now, sires, for Goddes love.  
 He took his cole of which I spak above,  
 And in his hond he bar it prively,  
 And whiles the preste couched bysily  
 The coles, as I tolde yow er this,  
 This chanoun sayde, "Freend, ye doon amys;  
 This is not couched as it oughte be, 13110  
 But soone I schal amenden it," quod he.  
 "Now let me melle therwith but a while,  
 For of yow have I pitee, by seint Gile!  
 Ye been right hoot, I se wel how ye swete;  
 Have heer a cloth and wype away the wete."  
 And whiles that this prest him wyped haas,  
 This chanoun took his cole, I schrewe his faas!

13062. *good.* I have ventured to retain Tyrwhitt's reading, which is supported by the Lansdowne Ms. The Harl. Ms. reads *gold*.

And layd it aboven on the myd-ward  
 Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,  
 Til that the coles gonne faste brenne. 13120  
 "Now geve us drinke," quod the chanoun thenne,  
 "Als swithe al schal be wel, I undertake.  
 Sitte we doun, and let us mery make."  
 And whan that the chanounes bechene cole  
 Was brennt, al the lymail out of the hole  
 Into the crosselet anoon fel adoun;  
 And so it moste needes by resoun,  
 Sins it so even above couched was;  
 But therof wist the prest no thing, allas!  
 He demed alle the colis i-liche goode, 13130  
 For of the sleight he no thing understood.

And whan this alecyster saugh his tyme,  
 "Rys up, sire prest," quod he, "and stonde by me;  
 And for I wot wel ingot have ye noon,  
 Goth, walkith forth, and bryngte a chalk-stoon;  
 For I wol make it of the same schap,  
 That is an ingold, if I may have hap.  
 And bringte with you a bolle or a panne  
 Ful of water, and ye schul wel se thanne 13.39  
 How that oure besynes schal happe and preve.  
 And yit, for ye schul have no nysbilleve  
 Ne wrong conceyt of me in youre absence,  
 I ne wol nought ben out of youre presence,  
 But go with you, and come with you agayn."  
 The chamber dore, schortly for to sayn,  
 Thay opened and schette, and wente here weye,  
 And forth with hem they caryed the keye,  
 And comen agayn withouten eny delay.  
 What schuld I tary al the longe day?  
 He took the chalk, and schop it in the wise 13.50  
 Of an ingot, as I schal yow devyse;  
 I say, he took out of his oughne sleeve  
 A teyne of silver (evel mot he cheeve!)  
 Which that was but an unce of wight,  
 And taketh heed now of his cursed slight;  
 He schop his ingot in lengthe and in brede  
 Of this teyne, withouten eny drede,  
 So sleightly, that the prest it nought aspyde;  
 And in his sleeve agayn he gan it hyde;  
 And fro the fuyr he took up his mateere, 13.60  
 And into the ingot put it with mery cheere;  
 And into the watir-vessel he it cast,  
 Whan that him list, and bad this prest as fast,  
 "Loke what ther is; put in thin hond and grope;  
 Thou fynde ther schalt silver, as I hope."

What devel of helle schold it elles be?  
 Schavyng of silver, silver is, pardé!  
 He putte in his hond and tok up a teyne  
 Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne  
 Was this prest, whan he saugh it was so. 13170  
 "Goddes blessing, and his modres also,  
 And alle halwes, have ye, sire chanoun!"  
 Seyde this prest, and I her malisoun;  
 "But, and ye vouchesauf to teche me  
 This nobil craft and this subtilité,  
 I wil be youre in al that ever I may."  
 Quod this chanoun, "Yet wol I make assay

13124. This line, as it stands in the Harl. Ms.,

And whan the chanouns bechene cole,

appears to be imperfect, although it is supported by the Lansdowne Ms. I have ventured to add the word *that* from Tyrwhitt, and to insert the *e* in *chanounes*, which had probably slipped out by the inadvertence of a scribe.

13146. *wente here weye.* The Harl. and Lansd. Mss. read *wente forth here weye*, which makes a redundancy in the measure; the superfluous word appears to have been brought in here from the beginning of the next line.



The second tyme, that ye mow taken heede,  
 And ben expert of this, and in your neede  
 Another day assay in myn absence 13180  
 This discipline, and this crafty science.  
 Let take another unce," quod he tho,  
 "Of quyksilver, withouten wordes mo,  
 And do therwith as ye have doon er this  
 With that other, which that now silver is."  
 The prest him busyeth in al that he can  
 To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,  
 Comaunded him, and faste blew the fuyr,  
 For to come to theeff of his desyr.  
 And this chanoun right in the mene while 13190  
 Al redy was this prest eft to bygile,  
 And for a countenance in his hond bar  
 An holow stikke (tak keep and be war),  
 In thende of which an unce and no more  
 Of silver lymail put was, as bifore  
 Was in his cole, and stopped with wex wel  
 For to kepe in his limail every del.  
 And whil the prest was in his besynesse,  
 This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse  
 To him anon, and his powder cast in, 13200  
 As he dede er, (the devel out of his skyn  
 Him torne, I pray to God, for his falshede!  
 For he was ever fals in worde and deede).  
 And with this stikke above the croslet,  
 That was ordeyned with that false get,  
 He styred the coles, til relente gan  
 The wex agayn the fuyr, as every man,  
 But it a fool be, woot wel it moot nede  
 And al that in the hole was out yede,  
 And into the croslet hastily it fel. 13210  
 Now, good sires, what wol ye bet than wel?  
 What that this prest thus was begiled agayn,  
 Supposyng not but trouthe, soth to sayn,  
 He was so glad, that I can nought expresse  
 In no maner his myrthe and his gladnesse,  
 And to the chanoun he profred eft soone  
 Body and good. "Ye," quod the chanoun, "soone,  
 Though pore I be, crafty thou schalt me fynde;  
 I warne the, yet is ther more byhynde.  
 Is ther any coper her withinne?" quod he. 13220  
 "Ye, sir," quod this prest, "I trowe ther be.  
 Elles go bye som, and that as swithe."  
 "Now good sire, go forth thy way and hy the."  
 He went his way, and with this coper cam;  
 And this chanoun it in his hondes nam,  
 And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.  
 Al to simple is my tonge to pronoune,  
 As minister of my witt, the doublenesse  
 Of this chanoun, roote of al cursednesse. 13229  
 He semed frendly to hem that knew him nought,  
 But he was fendly bothe in werk and thought.  
 It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse;  
 And natheles yit wol I it expresse,  
 To that entent men may be war therby,  
 And for noon other cause trewely.

13180. *assay*. The Harl. Ms. substitutes *your self*, which makes an unintelligible sentence, without a verb. The Lansd. Ms. omits the word, and makes the line imperfect in measure as well as grammatical construction.

13203. *worde*. This, which is the reading of the Lansd. Ms., is perhaps better than that of the Harl. Ms., *sch*. Tyrwhitt has *thought*.

13204. *above*. So Tyrwhitt and the Lansd. Ms., apparently the correct reading. The Harl. Ms. reads *alone*.

13228. *as minister of my witt*. I retain this reading from Tyrwhitt, as apparently furnishing the best meaning. Ms. Harl. reads the *minister and of his witt*; the reading of the Lansd. Ms. is, *his monstre and his witt*.

He put this unce of coper in the croslet,  
 And on the fuyr als swithe he hath it set,  
 And cast in powder, and made the prest to blowe,  
 And in his worching for to stoupe lowe,  
 As he dede er, and al nas but a jape; 13240  
 Right as him list the prest he made his ape.  
 And afterward in the ingot he it cast,  
 And in the panne putte it atte last  
 Of water, and in he put his owne hond.  
 And in his sleeve, as ye byforn-hond  
 Herde me telle, he had a silver teyne;  
 He sleighly took it out, this cursed heyne,  
 (Unwitynge this prest of his false craft),  
 And in the pannes botme he hath it left;  
 And in the water rumbleth to and fro. 13250  
 And wonder prively took up also  
 The coper teyne, (nought knowyng this prest)  
 And hidde it, and hent him by the brest,  
 And to him spak, and thus sayde in his game;  
 "Stoupeh adoun! by God, ye ben to blame;  
 Helpeth me now, as I dede yow whil er;  
 Put in your hond, and loke what is ther."  
 This prest took up this silver teyne anon.  
 And thanne sayde the chanoun, let us goon  
 With these thre teynes whiche that we han  
 wrought, 13260

To som goldsmyth, and wite if it be ough.  
 For by my faith I nolde, for myn hood,  
 But if they were silver fyn and good,  
 And that as swithe proved schal it be."  
 Unto the goldsmith with these teynes thre  
 Thay went, and putte these teynes in assay  
 To fuyr and hammer; might no man say nay,  
 But that thay were as hem oughte be.

This sotted prest, who was gladder than he?  
 Was never brid gladder agayn the day; 13270  
 Ne nightyngale in the sesoun of May  
 Was never noon, that liste better to synge;  
 Ne lady lustier in carolyng;  
 Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,  
 Ne knyght in armes doon an hardy deede  
 To stonde in grace of his lady deere,  
 Than hadde this prest this craft for to lere;  
 And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde;  
 "For the love of God, that for us alle deyde,  
 And as I may deserve it unto yow, 13280  
 What schal this receyt coste? telleth now."

"By oure lady," quod the chanoun, "it is deere,  
 I warne yow wel, for, save I and a freere,  
 In Engelond ther can no man it make."  
 "No fors," quoth he; "now, sire, for Goddes sake,  
 What schal I paye? telleth me, I pray."

"I wis," quod he, "it is ful dere I say.  
 Sire, at a word, if that ye lust it have,  
 Ye schul paye fourty pound, so God me save;  
 And nere the frendschipe that ye dede er this  
 To me, ye schulde paye more i-wys." 13291  
 This prest the somme of fourty pound anon  
 Of nobles fette, and tooke hem everychoon  
 To this chanoun, for this ilk receyt.

Al his werkyng nas but fraude and deceyt.  
 "Sire prest," he seyde, "I kepe have no loos  
 Of my craft, for I wold it kept were cloos;  
 And as ye loveth me, kepeth it secré.  
 For and men knewe al my sotilé,  
 By God, men wolden have so gret envye 13300

13283. *for, save*. The Harl. Ms. reads *for, sire*, which is evidently an error: the Lansd. Ms. has *bot, save*, and Tyrwhitt, *that save*.



To me, bycause of my philosophie,  
I schulde be deed, ther were noon other weye."  
"God it forbede," quoth the prest, "what seye.  
Yet had I lever spenden al the good  
Which that I have, (and elles wax I wood)  
Than that ye schulde falle in such meschief."  
"For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,"  
Quoth the chanoun, "and far wel, *graunt mercy.*"  
He went his way, and never the prest him sey  
After this day; and whan that this prest scholde  
Maken assay, at such tyme as he wolde, 13311  
Of this receyt, far wel, it wold not be.  
Lo, thus byjaped and bygilt was he;  
Thus maketh he his introduccioun  
To bringe folk to here destruccioun.

Considereth, sires, how that in ech astaat  
Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat,  
So ferforth that unneeth ther is noon.  
This multiplying blent so many oon,  
That in good faith I trowe that it be 13320  
The cause grettest of swich scarseté.  
Philosophres spoken so mistyly  
In this craft, that men come not come therby,  
For any witt that men han now on dayes.  
They may wel chiteren, as doon these jayes,  
And in here termes sette lust and peyne,  
But to her purpos schul they never atteyne.  
A man may lightly lerne, if he have ought,  
To multiplye and bringe his good to nought.  
Lo, such a lucre is in this lusty game; 13330  
A mannes mirthe it wol torne into grame,  
And empte also grete and hevvy purses,  
And make folk for to purchase curses  
Of hem, that han her good therto i-lent.  
O, fy! for schame, thay that have be Brent,  
Allas! can thay not fie the fyres hete?  
Ye that it usen, I rede ye it lete,  
Lest ye lesen al; for bet than never is late;  
Never to thrive, were to long a date.  
Though ye prolle ay, ye schul it never fynde;  
Ye ben as bolde as is Bayard the blynde, 13341  
That blundreth forth, and peril casteth noon;  
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon,  
As for, to go bysides in the wey;  
So fare ye that multiplie, I sey.  
If that youre yghen can nought seen aright,  
Loke that youre mynde lakke nought his sight.  
For though ye loke never so brode and stare,  
Ye schul nought wyne a mite on that chaffare,  
Yet wasten al, that thay may rape and renne.  
Withdrawe the fuyr, lest it to faste brenne;  
Medleth no more with that art, I mene; 13352  
For gif ye doon, youre thrift is goon ful clene.  
And right as swithe I wol yow telle heree  
What philosophres sein in this mateere.  
Lo, thus saith Arnold of the Newe-toun,

13341. *Bayard the blynde.* This appears to have been a very popular old proverb. A number of references illustrative of it will be found in Mr. Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*; the following passage from Gower's *Confess. Amantis* is nearly parallel to Chaucer:—

Ther is no God, ther is no lawe  
Of whom that he taketh eny hede,  
But as Bayarde the blynde stede,  
Tille he falle in the diche amidde,  
He goth ther no man wol him bidde.

13350. *they.* The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *ye.*

13356. *Arnold.* Arnald de Villeneuve (in Lat. de Villa Nova, or Villanovanus), a distinguished French physician and alchemist of the fourteenth century, whose *Rosarius*

As his Rosarie maketh menciou, He saith right thus, withouten eny lye: Ther may no man Mercury mortifye, But it be with his brother knowleching. 13360 Lo, how that he, which that first sayd this thing, Of philosophres fader was, Hermes; He saith, how that the dragoun douteles He dyeth nought, but if that he be slayn With his brother. And that is for to sayn, By the dragoun, Mercury, and noon other He understood, and brinstoon be his brother, That out of Sol and Luna were i-drawe. [sawe; "And therefore," sayde he, "take heed to my Let no man besy him this art to seche, 13370 But if that he thentencioun and speche Of philosophres understonde can; And if he do, he is a lewed man. For this sciens, and this connyng," quod he, "Is of the Secré of secretz, pardé."

Also ther was a disciple of Plato,  
That on a tyme sayde his maister to,  
As his book Senior wil bere witnessé,  
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnesse:  
"Tel me the name of thilke privé stoon." 13380  
And Plato answered unto him amoon,  
"Take the stoon that titanos men name."  
"Which is that?" quod he. "Magnasia is the  
Sayde Plato. "Ye, sire, and is it thus? [same,"  
This is *ignotus per ignotus.*  
What is magnasia, good sir, I you pray?"  
"It is a water that is maad, I say,  
Of elementes foure," quod Plato.  
"Telle me the rote, good sira," quod he tho,  
"Of that water, if it be your wille." 13390  
"Nay, nay," quod Plato, "certeyn that I nylle.  
The philosophres sworn were everichoon,  
That thay ne scholde discovere it unto noon,  
Ne in no book it write in no manere;  
For unto Crist it is so leef and deere,  
That he wil not that it discovered be,  
But wher it liketh to his deité

*Philosophorum* was a text-book for the alchemists of the following age.

13361. *Lo.* This word, which seems necessary to the sense, is not found either in Ms. Harl. or in Ms. Lansd.

13362. *Hermes.* The treatise of the philosopher's stone, ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, was popular in the middle ages; its author being supposed to have been the founder of the Hermetical philosophy.

13375. *the Secré of secretz.* "He alludes to a treatise, entitled *Secreta Secretorum*, which was supposed to contain the sum of Aristotle's instructions to Alexander. See Fabric. *Bibl. Gr. v. ii. p. 167.* It was very popular in the middle ages. Ægidius de Columna, a famous divine and bishop, about the latter end of the thirteenth century, built upon it his book *De regimine principum*, of which our Oecleve made a free translation in English verse, and addressed it to Henry V. while Prince of Wales. A part of Lydgate's translation of the *Secreta Secretorum* is printed in Ashmole's *Theat. Chem. Brit. p. 397.* He did not translate more than about half of it, being prevented by death. See Ms. Harl. 2251, and Tanner, *Bib. Brit. in v. LYDGAETE.* The greatest part of the seventh book of Gower's *Conf. Amant.* is taken from this supposed work of Aristotle."—*Tyrwhitt.*

13378. *his book Senior.* The Harl. and Lansd. Mss. read *Somer.* Tyrwhitt observes on this passage, "The book alluded to is printed in the *Theatrum Chemicum*, vol. v. p. 219, under this title: 'Senioris Zadith fil. Hamuleus tabula chymica.' The story which follows of Plato and his disciple, is there told (p. 249), with some variations, of Salomon. 'Dixit Salomon rex, Recipe lapidem qui dicitur *Thyriarios*.—Dixit sapiens, Assigna mihi illum. Dixit, est corpus *magnesia*.—Dixit, Quid est *magnesia*? Respondit, *Magnesia est aqua, composita, &c.*'"

13389. *rote.* The Harl. Ms. reads *rooche.*

Man to enspire, and eek for to defende  
Whom that him liketh; lo, this is the ende."  
Than thus conclude I, syn that God of hevenc  
Ne wol not that the philosophres nevenc, 13401  
How that a man schal come unto this stoon,  
I rede as for the beste, let it goon.  
For who so maketh God his adversarie,  
As for to werke eny thing in contrarie  
Unto his wil, certes never schal he thrive,  
Though that he multiplie terme of al his lyve.  
And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale.  
God send every trewe man boote of his bale !

## THE DOCTOURES PROLOGE.

"YE, let that passen," quod oure hoste, "as  
Sire Doctour of Physike, I praye you, [now.  
Tel us a tale of som honest matere." 13412  
"It schal be don, if that ye wol it here,"  
Said this doctour, and his tale began anon.  
"Now, good men," quod he, "herkeneth everi-  
chon.]"

## THE TALE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHISIK.

THER was, as telleth Titus Lyvius,  
A knight, that cleped was Virginius,  
Fulfil of honours and of worthines,  
And strong of freundes, and of gret riches.  
This knight a daughter hadde by his wyf, 13420  
And never ne hadde he mo in al his lyf.  
Fair was this mayde in excellent beauté  
Above every wight that men may se;  
For nature hath with sovereyn diligence  
I-formed hir in so gret excellence,  
As though sche wolde say, "Lo, I nature,  
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,  
Whan that me lust; who can me counterfete?  
Pigmalion? nought, though he alwey forge and  
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel sayn, fete,

*The Doctoures Prologe.* Ms. Harl., with others of the  
best Mss., has no prologue to the tale of the Doctor of  
Physick. In two mss. quoted by Tyrwhitt there is a  
mere colophon to the effect, *Here endeth the Frankeleyns  
Tale, and beginneth the Physicians Tale without a prologe.*  
Other mss. have different prologues; that printed above  
is given by Tyrwhitt from one ms., but it is not much in  
Chaucer's style; the following, which is given in the  
Lansd. Ms., is still less so:—

"Now trewly," quod oure oste, "this a prati tale;  
For litel mervelle it is that thou lokest so pale,  
Sethen thou hast medeled with so many broches;  
With bloweing at the cole to melte bothe bronz and  
And other many jewels dar I undertake, [ringes,  
And that thi lorde couthe us tel if we might him overtake.  
Bot lat him go a devel waye, the compaigny is never the  
And al suche fals harlotes I sette not be hem a kers; [wers;  
Bot latt pas overe nowe al the subtiltees,  
And sume worthi man tel us summe veritees,  
As ye, worschiful maister of phisike,  
Telleth us somme tale that is a cronkye,  
That we may of yowe leren sum wite."  
Quod the maister of phisik, "A tale that I finde writte  
In cronkye passed of olde tyme,  
Herkeneth, for I wil tel it yow in rime."

*The Tale of the Doctor of Phisik.* It is hardly necessary  
to state that this tale is the common story of Virginius  
and his daughter, related, as here stated, by Livy, but a  
little modified in its details to suit medieval notions.  
Chaucer seems to have followed chiefly the version of  
the story given in his favourite book the *Roman de la  
Rose* (vol. ii. p. 74 et seqq. ed. Meon.), and perhaps he  
had also in his eye Gower, who gives the story of Vir-  
ginus in the seventh book of his *Confessio Amantis*.

13420. *This knight a daughter.* Mss. Harl. and Lansd.  
omit the first two words, and read the line, *A daughter he  
hadde by his wyf.*

Apelles, Zeuxis, schulde wirche in vayn, 13431  
Other to grave, or paynte, or forge or bete,  
If thay presumed me to counterfete.  
For he that is the former principal,  
Hath maad me his viker general  
To forme and peynte ertly creature  
Right as me lust, al thing is in my cure  
Under the moone that may wane and waxe.  
And for my werke no thing wol I axe;  
My lord and I ben fully at accord. 13440  
I made hir to the worschip of my lord;  
So do I alle myn other creatures,  
What colour that thay been, or what figures."  
Thus semeth me that nature wolde say.

This mayde was of age twelf yer and tway,  
In which that nature hath suche delite.  
For right as sche can peynte a lili white  
And rody a rose, right with such peynture  
Sche peynted hath this noble creature  
Er sche was born, upon her limes fre, 13450  
Wheras by right such colours schulde be;  
And Phebus deyed hadde hire tresses grete,  
I-lyk to the stremes of his borned hete.  
And if that excellent was hir beauté,  
A thousand fold more vertuouus was sche.  
In hire ne lakketh no condicioun,  
That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.  
As wel in body as goost chaste was sche;  
For which sche floured in virginité,  
With alle humilité and abstinence, 13460  
With alle attemperance and paciencie,  
With mesure cek of beryng of array.  
Discret sche was in answeyng alway,  
Though sche were wis as Pallas, dar I sayn,  
Hir facound cek ful wommanly and playn.  
Noon countrefeted termes hadde sche  
To seme wys; but after hir degré  
Sche spak, and alle hire wordes more and lesse  
Sounyng in vertu and in gentillesse.  
Schamefast sche was in maydenes schamfastnesse,  
Constant in hert, and ever in besynesse, 13471  
To dryve hire out of idel slogardy.  
Bachus had of hir mouth no maistrye;  
For wyn and thought doon Venus encrece,  
As men in fury wil caste oyle or grece.  
And of hir oughne vertu unconstreigned,  
Sche hath ful ofte tyme hire seek y-feyned,  
For that sche wolde fleen the compaigne,  
Wher likly was to treten of folye,  
As is at festes, reveles, and at daunces, 13480  
That ben occasiouns of daliaunces.  
Suche thinges maken children for to be  
To soone rype and bold, as men may se,  
Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore;  
For al to soone may sche lerne lore  
Of boldenesse, whan sche is a wyf.  
And ye maystresses in youre olde lyf

13431. *Apelles, Zeuxis.* The Harl. and Lansd. Mss.  
read the names corruptly, *Appollus, Zepherus*. This re-  
ference to the painters of antiquity, as well as most of  
the ideas relating to the personification and operations  
of nature, are taken from the *Roman de la Rose*. See vol.  
iii. p. 102-3. ed. Meon.

13451. I have in this line adopted Tyrwhitt's reading.  
The Harl. Ms. reads *Here als bright as such colour schulde  
be.* Ms. Lansd. has the same reading.

13474. *wyn and thought.* I have retained *wyn* instead of  
*wille*, which latter is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd.  
Mss. The sense would seem to require, as Tyrwhitt con-  
jectures, *sleuth* instead of *thought*, but this is not found in  
the mss. The Lansd. Ms. reads, with Tyrwhitt, *youthe*.



That lordes doughtres han in gouernaunce,  
 Ne taketh of my word no displeaunce;  
 Thinketh that ye ben set in governynges 13490  
 Of lordes doughtres, oonly for two thinges;  
 Outher for ye han kept your honesté,  
 Other elles for ye han falle in freleté,  
 And knowe wel y-nough the olde daunce,  
 And conne forsake fully such meschaunce  
 For evermo; therefore, for Cristes sake,  
 Kepeth wel tho that ye undertake.  
 A theof of venisoun, that hath for-laft  
 His licorousnesse, and al his theves craft,  
 Can kepe a forest best of every man. 13500  
 Now kepe hem wel, for and ye wil ye cau;  
 Loke wel, that ye unto no vice assent,  
 Lest ye be dampned for your wikked entent,  
 For who so doth, a traytour is certayn;  
 And taketh keep of that that I schal sayn;  
 Of al tresoun sovereign pestilence  
 Is, whan a wight hytrayeth innocence.  
 Ye fadres, and ye modres eek also,  
 Though ye han children, be it oon or mo,  
 Your is the charge of al her sufferaunce, 13510  
 Whiles thay be under your gouernaunce.  
 Beth war, that by ensample of youre lyvyng,  
 Outher by negligence in chastisyng,  
 That thay ne perische; for I dar wel seye,  
 If that thay doon, ye schul ful sore abeye.  
 Under a schepherd softe and neglect,  
 The wolf hath many a schep and lamb to-rent.  
 Sufficeth oon ensample now as here,  
 For I moot turne agein to my matiere.

This mayde, of which I telle my tale expresse,  
 So kept hir self, hir neded no maystresse; 13521  
 For in hir lyvyng maydens mighte rede,  
 As in a book, every good word and dede,  
 That longeth unto a mayden vertnoug;  
 Sche was so prudent and so bounteous.  
 For which the fame outsprong on every syde  
 Bothe of hir beauté and hir bounté wyde;  
 That thurgh the lond thay prayed hir ilkoone,  
 That lovede vertu, save envye alloone,  
 That sory is of other mennes wele, 13530  
 And glad is of his sorwe and wehele.  
 The doctor made this descripcioun.  
 This mayde wente upon a day into the toun  
 Toward the temple, with hir moder deere,  
 As is of yonge maydenes the manere.  
 Now was tiner than a justice in the toun,  
 That governour was of that region.  
 And so bifel, this juge his eyghen cast  
 Upon this mayde, avyngs hir ful fast,  
 As sche cam forby ther the juge stood. 13540  
 Anoon his herte changed and his mood,  
 So was he caught with beauté of this mayde,  
 And to him self ful prively he sayde,  
 "This mayde schal be myn for any man."  
 Anoon the feend into his herte ran,  
 And taughte him sodeinly, that he by slighte  
 This mayde to his purpos wyne mighte.

13497. This line is given from the Harl. and Lansd. Mss., instead of Tyrwhitt's reading, *To teche hem vertue loke that ye ne elake.*

13501. *kepe hem.* The Harl. Ms. reads *hir*, apparently incorrectly.

13510. *sufferaunce.* So the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. Tyrwhitt reads *surveance.*

13532. *The doctor.* In the margin of a ms. quoted by Tyrwhitt this description of envy is ascribed to St. Augustine.

For certes, by no fors, ne by no meede,  
 Him thought he was not able for to speede;  
 For sche was strong of frendes, and eek sche 13550  
 Conformed was in such soverayne beauté,  
 That wel he wist he might hir never wyne,  
 As for to make hir with hir body synne.  
 For which with gret deliberacioun  
 He sent after a clerk was in the toun,  
 The which he knew for subtil and for bold.  
 This juge unto the clerk his tale hath told  
 In secré wyse, and made him to assure,  
 He schulde telle it to no creature;  
 And if he dede he schulde lese his heed. 13560  
 Whan that assented was this curséd reed,  
 Glad was the juge, and made him gret cheere,  
 And gaf him giftes preciaus and deere.

Whan schapen was al this conspiraunce  
 Fro poynt to poynt, how that his lecherie  
 Performed scholde be ful subtilly,  
 As ye schul here after-ward openly,  
 Hom goth this clerk, that highte Claudijs.  
 This false juge, that highte Apius,—  
 (So was his name, for it is no fable, 13570  
 But known for a storial thing notable;  
 The sentence of it soth is out of doute),—  
 This false juge goth now fast aboute  
 To hasten his delit al that he may.  
 And so bifel, soone after on a day  
 This false juge, as telleth us the story,  
 As he was wont, sat in his consistory,  
 And gaf his domes upon sondry caas;  
 This false clerk com forth a ful good paas,  
 And saide, "Lord, if that it be your wille, 13580  
 As doth me right upon this pitous bille,  
 In which I pleyne upon Virginijus.  
 And if he wile seyn it is nought thus,  
 I wil it prove, and fynde good witnesse,  
 That soth is that my bille wol expresse."  
 The juge answerd, "Of this in his absence  
 I may not give diffinity sentence.  
 Let do him calle, and I wol gladly hiere;  
 Thou schalt have alle right, and no wrong heere."  
 Virginijus com to wite the jugges wille, 13590  
 And right anoon was red this curséd bille;  
 The sentence of it was as ye schul here.  
 "To yow, my lord sire Apius so deere,  
 Scheweth youre pore servaunt Claudijs,  
 How that a knight called Virginijus,  
 Ageins the lawe, agens alle equyté,  
 Holdeth, expresse against the wille of me,  
 My servaunt, which that my thral is by right,  
 Which fro myn hous was stolen on a night  
 Whiles sche was ful yong, that wol I preve 13600  
 By witnesse, lord, so that ye wot not greve;  
 Sche is nought his daughter, what so he say.  
 Wherefore to yow, my lord the jugge, I pray,  
 Yelde me my thralle, if that it be your wille."  
 Lo, this was al the sentence of the bille.

Virginijus gan upon the clerk byholde;

13551. *Conformed . . . beauté.* This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. Tyrwhitt reads *Conformed* and *bounté*, which seem to make a better sense.

13557. *clerk.* This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. Tyrwhitt, who gives the reading *cherl*, says he took it from "the best mss. and ed. Ca. 2. The common edit. have *client*. In the *Rom. de la R.* where this story is told, ver. 6815—6894, Claudijs is called *Sergent of Appius*; and accordingly Chaucer a little lower, ver. 12204, calls him 'servant—unto—Appius.'" *Clerk* seems the better reading, as a *cherl* would hardly possess thral or bondsmen.



But hastily, er he his tale tolde,  
 And wolde have proved it, as schold a knight,  
 And eek by witnessyng of many a wight,  
 That al was fals that sayde his adversarie, 13610  
 This cursed juge wold no lenger tarye,  
 Ne heere a word more of Virginius,  
 But gaf his jugement, and saide thus;  
 "I deme anon this clerk his servaunt have.  
 Thou schalt no lenger in thin hous hir save.  
 Go bringe hir forth, and put hir in oure warde.  
 This clerk schal have his thral; thus I awarde."

And whan this worthy knight Virginius,  
 Thurgh thassent of this juge Apius,  
 Moste by force his deere daughter given 13620  
 Unto the juge, in lechery to lyven,  
 He goth him hom, and sette him in his halle,  
 And leet anon his deere daughter calle;  
 And with a face deed as aisschen colde,  
 Upon hir humble face he gan byholde,  
 With fadres pité stiking thorough his herte,  
 Al wolde he from his purpos not converte.  
 "Doughter," quod he, "Virginia by name,  
 Ther ben thou weyes, eyther deth or schame,  
 That thou most suffre, allas that I was bore! 13630  
 For never thou deservedest wherfore  
 To deyen with a swerd or with a knyf.  
 O deere doughter, ender of my lif,  
 Which I have fostred up with such plesaunce,  
 That thou nere never oute of my remembrance;  
 O doughter, which that art my laste wo,  
 And in this lif my laste joye also,  
 O gemme of chastité in pacience  
 Tak thou thy deth, for this is my sentence;  
 For love and not for hate thou must be deed, 13640  
 My pitous hond mot smyten of thin heed.  
 Allas that ever Apius the say!  
 Thus hath he falsly jugged the to daye."  
 And told hir al the caas, as ye bifore  
 Han herd, it nedeth nought to telle it more.

"Mercy, deere fader," quod this mayde.  
 And with that word sche bothe hir armes layde  
 Aboute his nekke, as sche was wanto to doo,  
 (The teeres brast out of hir eyghen tuo),  
 And sayde: "Goode fader, schal I dye? 13650  
 Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?"  
 "No, certeyn, deere doughter myn," quod he.  
 "Than geve me leve, fader myn," quod sche,  
 "My deth for to compleyne a litel space;  
 For pardy Jepte gaf his daughter grace  
 For to compleyne, er he hir slough, allas!  
 And God it woot, no thing was hir trespas,  
 But that sche ran hir fader first to se,  
 To welcome him with gret solemnité."  
 And with that word aswoun sche fel anon, 13660  
 And after, whan hir swownyng was agoon,  
 Sche riseth up, and to hir fader sayde;  
 "Blessed be God, that I schal deye a mayde.

13615. *save.* So Ms. Lansd.; Ms. Harl. reads *have*.  
 13640. *For love.* Rom. de la R. vol. ii. p. 77.

*Car il par amors, sans haine,  
 A sa belle fille Virgine  
 Tantost a la teste copée,  
 Et puis au juge présentée  
 Devant tous en plain consistoire:  
 Et li juges, selonc l'estoire,  
 Le commanda tantost à prendre, &c.*

See below, v. 13670-3.

13655. *Jepte.* The Harl. and Lansd. Mss. read *Jeffa*. This reference to Jephtha's daughter is one of the anachronisms so common in the medieval poets, and which are found so late even as the age of Shakespeare.

Geve me my deth, er that I have a schame.  
 Do with your child your wille, a goddes name!"  
 And with that word sche prayed him ful ofte,  
 That with his swerd he schulde smyte hir softe;  
 And with that word on swomne doum sche fel.  
 Hir fader, with ful sorwful hert and fel,  
 Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente, 13670  
 And to the juge bigan it to presente,  
 As he sat in his doom in consistency.  
 And whan the juge it say, as saith the story,  
 He had to take him, and honge him faste.  
 But right anon alle the peple in thraste  
 To save the knight, for routhe and for pité,  
 For known was the fals iniquité.  
 The peple anon had suspect in this thing,  
 By maner of this clerkes chalengyng,  
 That it was by thassent of Apius; 13680  
 That wiste wel that he was lecherous.  
 For which unto this Apius thay goon,  
 And casten him in prisoun right anon.  
 Wher as he slough him self; and Claudius,  
 That servaunt was unto this Apius,  
 Was demed for to honge upon a tree;  
 But Virginius of his grette pité  
 Prayde for him, that he was exiled,  
 And elles certes he had ben bigiled. 13689  
 The remenaunt were anhangd, more and lesse,  
 That were consented to this cursednesse.  
 Her may men se how synne hath his merite;  
 Be war, for no man woot how God wol smyte  
 In no degré, ne in which maner wise  
 The worm of conscience wol agrise  
 Of wicked lyf, though it so pryve be,  
 That no man woot of it but God and he;  
 Whether that he be lewed man or lered,  
 He not how soone that he may be afered.  
 Therefore I rede yow this counseil take, 13700  
 Forsakith synne, er synne yow forsake.

## THE PROLOGE OF THE PARDONER.

OWRE ost gan swere as he were wood;  
 "Harrow!" quod he, "by nayles and by blood!  
 This was a cursed thef, a fals justice.  
 As schendful deth as herte can devise  
 So falle upon his body and his boones!  
 The devel I bykenne him al at oones!  
 Alas! to deere boughte sche hir beauté.  
 Wherfore I say, that alle men may se,  
 That giftes of fortune or of nature 13710  
 Ben cause of deth of many a creature.  
 Hir beauté was hir deth, I dar wel sayn;  
 Allas! so pitously as sche was slayn!  
 [Of bothe giftes, that I speke of now,  
 Men han ful often more for harm than prow.]  
 "But trewely, myn owne maister deere,  
 This was a pitous tale for to heere;  
 But natheles, pas over, this is no fors.  
 I pray to God to save thi gentil corpes,  
 And eek thyn urinals, and thy jordanes, 13720  
 Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,

13706. *So falle, &c.* Instead of this and the following line, Tyrwhitt reads:—

Come to this juges and hir advocas.  
 Algate this sely maide is slain, alas!

13714-5. These two lines are omitted in the Harl. Ms., and they seem superfluous. Tyrwhitt has made them up from more than one ms.

13720-1. These two lines are also omitted in the Harl. Ms., but they seem necessary for the sense, and are given

And every boist ful of thi letuarie,  
 God blesse hem and oure lady seinte Marie!  
 So mot I then, thou art a propre man,  
 And y-lik a prelat, by seint Runyan.  
 Sayde I not wel? can I not speke in terme?  
 But wel I woot, thou dost myn herte erme,  
 I have almost y-caught a cardiaele;  
 By corpus boones, but I have triacle, 13729  
 Other elles a draught of moyst and corny ale,  
 Other but I hiere anoon a mery tale,  
 Myn hert is brost for pité of that mayde.  
 Thow, pardonor, thou, *belamy*," he sayde,  
 "Tel us a tale, for thou canst many oon."

"It schal be doon," quod he, "and that anoon.  
 But first," quod he, "her at this ale-stake  
 I wil both drynke and byten on a cake."  
 But right anoon the gentils gan to crie,  
 "Nay, let him tellen us no ribaudye.  
 Tel us som moral thing, that we may leere." 13740  
 "Gladly," quod he, and sayde as ye schal heere.  
 "But in the cuppe wil I me bethinke  
 Upon som honest tale, whil I drinke."—

"Lordyngs," quod he, "in chirche whan I  
 I peyne me to have an hauteyn speche, [preche,  
 And ryng it out, as lowd as doth a belle,  
 For I can al by rote that I telle.  
 My teeme is alway oon, and ever was;  
*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*

"First I pronounce whennes that I come, 13750  
 And thanne my bulles schewe I alle and some;  
 Oure liege lordes seal upon my patent,  
 That schewe I first my body to warent,  
 That no man be so hardy, prest ne clerk,  
 Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk.  
 Bulles of popes, and of cardynales,  
 Of patriarkes, and of bisshops, I schewe,  
 And in Latyn speke I wordes fewe  
 To savore with my predicacioun, 13760  
 And for to sterc men to devocioun.

Thanne schewe I forth my longe cristal stoones,  
 I-rammed ful of cloutes and of boones,  
 Reliks thay ben, as wene thei echoon.  
 Than have I in latoun a schulder boon,  
 Which that was of an holy Jewes sheep.  
 Good men," say I, "tak of my wordes keep;  
 If that this boon be waise in eny welle,  
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe stonge,  
 That eny worm bath etc, or worm i-stonge, 13770  
 Tak water of that welle, and waisch his tonge,  
 And it is hool anoon; and forthermore  
 Of pokkes, and of scabbe, and every sore,  
 Schal every sheep be hool, that of this welle  
 Drynketh a draught; tak heed eek what I telle.  
 If that the goode man, that the beest oweth,  
 Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,  
 Fastynge, drynke of this welle a draught,  
 As thilke holy Jew oure eldres taught,  
 His beestes and his stoor schal multiplie. 13780  
 And, sires, also it kelith jalousie.

here from the Lansd. Ms. For the explanation of the last of these two lines see the note on l. 433.

13741-2. Instead of these two lines, Tyrwhitt and the Lansd. Ms. have,

Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here.  
 I graunte y-wis, quod he, but I must thinke.

13749. *radix malorum*. The Harl. and Lansd. Mss. have *radix omnium malorum*, but the word *omnium* seems to be redundant, and spoils the metre.

13781. *kelith*. The Lansd. Ms. has, with Tyrwhitt, *heleth*, which is perhaps the better reading.

For though a man be ful in jalous rage,  
 Let make with this water his potage,  
 And never schal he more his wyf mystrist,  
 Though he the soth of hir defeaute wist;  
 Al hadde sche take prestes tuo or thre.  
 Here is a meteyn eek, that ye may see;  
 He that his honde put in this metayn,  
 He schal have multiplying of his grayn,  
 Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes, 13790  
 So that ye offre pans or elles grootes,  
 And, men and wommen, oon thing warne I yow;  
 If eny wight be in this chirche now,  
 That hath doon synne orrible, that he  
 Dar nought for schame of it schryven be;  
 Or ony woman, be sche yong or old,  
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,  
 Such folk schal have no power ne grace  
 To offre to my relikes in this place.  
 And who so fitt him out of suche blame, 13800  
 That wol come up and offre in Goddes name,  
 And I assoile hem by the auctorité,  
 Which that by bulle was i-graunted me.

"By this gaude have I wonne every yer  
 An hundred mark, syn I was pardonor.  
 I stonde lik a clerk in my pulpit,  
 And whan the lewed people is doun i-set,  
 I preche so as ye have herd before,  
 And telle hem an hondred japes more. 13809  
 Than peyne I me to streche forth my neeke,  
 And est and west upon the peopel I bekke,  
 As doth a dowfe, sytting on a berne;  
 Myn hendes and my tonge goon so yerne,  
 That it is joye to se my busynesse.  
 Of avarice and of such cursednesse  
 Is al my preching, for to make hem fre  
 To geve here pans, and namely unto me.  
 For myn entent is nought but for to wyne,  
 And no thing for correccioun of synne.  
 I rekke never when thay ben i-beryed. 13820  
 Though that here soules gon a blakeberyed."

"For certes many a predicacioun  
 Cometh ofte tyme of evel entencioun;  
 Som for plesauns of folk and flaterie,  
 To ben avaunced by ypoicrisie;  
 And som for veine gloir, and som for hate.  
 For whan I dar not other weys debate,  
 Than wil I styngre him with my tonge smerte  
 In preching, so that he schal not asterte  
 To be diffamed falsly, if that he  
 Hath trespass to my bretheren or to me.  
 For though I telle not his propre name,  
 Men schal wel knowe that it is the same  
 By signes, and by other circumstaunces.  
 Thus quyrt I folk, that doon us displeasaunces;  
 Thus put I out my venym under biewe  
 Of holynes, to seme holy and trewe.  
 But schortly myn entent I wol devyse,  
 I preche no thing but of covetise.  
 Therfor my teem is yit, and ever was, 13840  
*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*

"Thus can I preche agayn the same vice  
 Which that I use, and that is avarice.  
 But though my self be gulty in the synne,  
 Yit can I make other folk to twynne  
 From avarice, and soone to repent.  
 But that is not my principal entent;  
 I preche no thing but for covetise.  
 Of this matier it ought i-nough suffice.

"Than telle I hem ensamples may oon 13850



Of olde thinges longe tyme agoon.  
 For lewed peopeloven tales olde;  
 Which thinges can thay wel report and holde.  
 What? trowe ye, whiles I may preche  
 And wyne gold and silver for I teche,  
 That I wil lyve in povert wilfully?  
 Nay, nay, I thought it never trewely.  
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes.  
 I wil do no labour with myn hondes,  
 Ne make basketis and lyve therby, 13860  
 Bycause I wil nought begge ydelly.  
 I wol noon of thapostles counterfete;  
 I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,  
 Al were it geven of the prestes page,  
 Or of the porest wydow in a village,  
 And schold hir children sterve for famyn.  
 Nay, I wol drinke licour of the wyn,  
 And have a joly wenche in every toun.  
 But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun,  
 Your lykyn is that I schal telle a tale. 13870  
 Now have I dronk a draught of corny ale,  
 By God, I hope I schal telle yow a thing,  
 That schal by resoun be at your liking;  
 For though my self be a ful vicious man,  
 A moral tale yit I yow telle can,  
 Which I am wont to preche, for to wyne.  
 Now hold your pees, my tale I wol bygiane."

## THE PARDONERES TALE.

In Flaundes whilom was a compagne  
 Of yonge folkes, that haunted folye,  
 As ryot, hasard, stywes, and tavernes; 13880  
 Wher as with lutes, harpes, and gyternes,  
 Thay daunce and play at dees bothe day and night,  
 And ete also, and drynk over her might;  
 Thurgh which thay doon the devyl sacrifice  
 Withinne the develes temple, in cursed wise,  
 By superfluite abhominable.  
 Her othes ben so greet and so dampnable,  
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere.  
 Our blisful Lordes body thay to-tere;  
 Hem thoughte Jewes rent him nought y-nough;  
 And ech of hem at others synne lough. 13891  
 And right anon ther come tombesteris  
 [Fetis and smale, and yonge fruitesteres,  
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,]  
 Whiche that ben verray develes officeres,  
 To kyndle and blowe the fuyr of lecherie,  
 That is anxid unto glotonye.  
 The holy wryt take I to my witenesse,  
 That luxury is in wyn and dronkenesse. 13900  
 Lo, how that dronken Loth unkyndely  
 Lay by his doughtres tuo unwityngly,  
 So dronk he was he niste what he wrought.

13864. *prestes page*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *poorest page*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.

The *Pardoneres Tale*. This beautiful moral story appears to have been taken from a fabliau, now lost, but of which the outline is preserved in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. lxxxii., as well as the story itself by Chaucer.

13889. *to-tere*. The common oaths in the middle ages were by the different parts of God's body; and the popular preachers represented that profane swearers tore Christ's body by their imprecations.

13893-4. These two lines are omitted in the Harl. Ms. 13893. *holy wryt*. Ms. Harl. and others have in the margin the reference, ¶ *Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria*.

13900. *drunken Loth*. This transgression of Lot is one of the most favourite examples, in the mediæval moralists, of the ill consequences of drunkenness. Compare *Piers Ploughman*, l. 512 et seqq.

Herodes, who so wel the story sought,  
 Whan he of wyn was replect at his fest,  
 Right at his oughne table gaf his best  
 To sle the baptist Johan ful gilteles.  
 Seneca seith a good word douteles;  
 He saith he can no difference fynde  
 Betyux a man that is out of his mynde,  
 And a man the which is dronkelewe; 13910  
 But that woodnes, fallen in a schrewe,  
 Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.

O glutonye, ful of corsidnesse;  
 O cause first of oure confusioun,  
 O original of oure dampnacioun,  
 Til Crist had bought us with his blood agayn!  
 Loketh, how dere, schortly for to sayn,  
 Abought was first this cursed felonye;  
 Corupt was al this world for glotonye.  
 Adam our fader, and his wyf also, 13920

Ero Paradys to labour and to wo  
 Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede.  
 For whils that Adam fasted, as I rede,  
 He was in Paradis, and whan that he  
 Eet of the fruyt defendit of a tre,  
 He was out east to wo and into peyne.  
 O glotony, wel ought us on the pleyne!  
 O, wist a man how many maladyes  
 Folwith of excesse and of glotonyes,  
 He wolde be the more mesurable 13930

Of his diete, sitting at his table.  
 Allas! the schorte throte, the tendre mouth,  
 Maketh that Est and West, and North and South,  
 In erthe, in watir, in ayer, man to swynke,  
 To gete a sely glotoun mete and drynke.  
 Of this matier, O Poul, wel canstow trete.  
 Mete unto wombe, and wombe unto mete,  
 Schal God destroyen bothe, as Powel saith.  
 Allas! a foul thing is it by my faith

To say this word, and fouler is the dede, 13940  
 Whan men so drynke of the whyt and rede,  
 That of his throte he makith his privé  
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluite.  
 Thapostil wepyng saith ful pitously,  
 Ther walkith many, of which you told have I,  
 I say it now wepyng with pitous vois,  
 Thay are enemys of Cristes croys;  
 Of which the ende is deth, wombe is her God.

O wombe, o bely, o stynkyng is thi cod,  
 Fulfid of dong and of corpeucioun; 12950

At eyther ende of the foul is the soun  
 How grete cost and labour is the to fynde!  
 These cokes how they stamp, and streyn, and  
 And torne substance into accident, [grynde,  
 To fulfill thy licorous talent!  
 Out of the harde boones gete thay  
 The mary, for thay caste nought away

13907. *Seneca*. "Perhaps he refers to Epist. lxxxiii. *Extende in plures dies illum ebrii habitum: nunquid de furore dubitatis? nunc quoque non est minor sed brevior.*" —Tyrwhitt.

13918. *felonye*. The Lansd. Ms. reads, with Tyrwhitt, *vilante*.

13923. *whils that Adam*. In the margin of Ms. Harl. is the quotation, *Quamdu jejnavit Adam in Paradiso fuit, comedit et ejectus est; statim duxit uxorem, &c.* It is from *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum*.

13937. *Mete unto wombe*. The margin of the Harl. Ms. has the quotation, *Esca ventris et venter escis, Deus autem hunc et illam destruet, &c.*

13944. *Thapostil . . . saith*. *Philipp*. iii. 18, 19, *Multi enim ambulat, quos sæpe dicebam vobis (nunc autem et fens dico) inimicos crucis Christi: quorum finis interitus, quorum deus venter est.*



That may go thurgh the golet softe and soote;  
 Of spicery and levys, barke and roote,  
 Schal ben his sause maad to his delyt 13960  
 To make him have a newe appetit.  
 But certes he that haunteth suche delices,  
 Is deed ther, whiles that he lyveth in vices.  
 A licorous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse  
 Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.  
 O dronke man, disfigured is thi face,  
 Sour is thy breth, foul artow to embrace;  
 A thurgh thi dronkenesse sowneth the soun,  
 As though thou seydest ay, Sampsoun, Sampsoun;  
 And yit, God wot, Sampson drank never wyn.  
 Thow fallist, as it were a stiked swyn; 13971  
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thin honest cure,  
 For dronkenes is verrey sepulture  
 Of mannes witt and his discrecioun.  
 In whom that drynk hath dominacioun,  
 He can no counsel kepe, it is no drede.  
 Ne keep yow from the white and from the rede,  
 And namely fro the white wyn of Leepe,  
 That is to selle in Fleetstreet or in Chepe.  
 This wyn of Spayne erepith subtly 13980  
 In other wynes growyng faste by,  
 Of which ther riseth such fumosite,  
 That whan a man hath dronke draughtes thre,  
 And weneth that he be at hom in Chepe,  
 He is in Spayne, right at the toum of Lepe,  
 Nought at the Rochel, ne at Burdeaux toum;  
 And thanne wol thai say, Sampsoun, Sampsoun.  
 But herken, lordyngs, o word, I you pray,  
 That alle the soverayn actes, dar I say,  
 Of victories in the Olde Testament, 13990  
 That thurgh the verrey God omnipotent  
 Were doon in abstinence and in prayere;  
 Lokith the Bible, and ther ye may it here.  
 Loke Athila, the grete conquerour,  
 Deyd in his sleep, with schame and dishonour,  
 Bleedyng ay at his nose in dronkenesse;  
 A captayn schuld ay lyve in sobrenesse.  
 And over al this, avyse yow right wel,  
 What was commaunded unto Lamuel;  
 Nought Samuel, but Lamuel say I. 14000  
 Redith the Bible, and fyndeth expressly  
 Of wyn gevyng to hem that han justice.  
 No more of this, for it may wel suffice.  
 And now that I have spoke of glotonye,  
 Now wil I yow defende hasardrye.

13963. *drunkenesse*. Tyrwhitt has *drunken nose*, which is perhaps the better reading.

13978. *white wyn of Leepe*. "According to the geographers, Lepe was not far from Cadiz. This wine, of whatever sort it may have been, was probably much stronger than the Gascon wines, usually drunk in England. La Rochelle and Bordeaux, the two chief ports of Gascony, were both, in Chaucer's time, part of the English dominions. Spanish wines might also be more alluring on account of their greater rarity. Among the Orders of the Royal Household, in 1604, is the following. (Ms. Harl. 293, fol. 162.) 'And whereas, in tymes past, Spanish wines, called sacke, were little or noe whit use in our court, and that in later years, though not of ordinary allowance, it was thought convenient, that noblemen, &c. might have a boule or glass, &c. We understanding that it is now used as common drinke, &c., reduce the allowance to twelve gallons a day for the court, &c.'"—Tyrwhitt.

13979. *Fleetstreet*. So the Harl. Ms. The Lansd. Ms. reads *Fischestreet*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.

13993. *hierc*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt have *lere*.

13994. *Athila*. Attila died in the night suffocated by a hæmorrhage, brought on by a debauch, in the year 453, when he was preparing for a new invasion of Italy.

14001. *Redith the Bible*. See *Proverbs* xxiii.

Hasard is verrey moder of lesynges,  
 And of decept, and cursed forswynges;  
 Blaspheme of Crist, manslaught, and wast also  
 Of catel, and of tyme; and forthermo  
 It is reproof, and contrair of honour, 14010  
 For to be halde a comun hasardour.  
 And ever the heyer he is of astaat,  
 The more is he holden desolaat.  
 If that a prince use hasardrie,  
 In alle governance and policie  
 He is, as by comun opinioun,  
 Holde the lasse in reputacioun.  
 Stilbon, that was a wis embasitour,  
 Was sent unto Corinthe with gret honour  
 Fro Lacidome, to make hir alliance; 14020  
 And whan he cam, him happede *par chauce*.  
 That alle the grettest that were of that lond  
 Playing atte hasard he hem fond.  
 For which, as soone as it mighte be,  
 He stal him hoom agein to his contré,  
 And saide ther, "I nyl nought lese my name,  
 I nyl not take on me so gret diffame,  
 Yow for to allie unto noon hasardours.  
 Sendeth som other wise embasitours,  
 For by my trouthe, me were lever dye, 14030  
 Than I yow scholde to hasardours allye.  
 For ye, that ben so glorious in honoures,  
 Schal not allie yow with hasardours,  
 As by my wil, ne as by my treté."  
 This wise philosopre thus said he.

Lo eek how that the king Demetrius  
 The king of Parthes, as the book saith us,  
 Sent him a paire dees of gold in scorn,  
 For he had used hasard ther to-forñ;  
 For which he held his gloir and his renoun 14040  
 At no valieu or reputacioun.

Lordes may fynde other maner play  
 Honest y-nough to dryve away the day.  
 Now wol I speke of othes fals and grete  
 A word or tuo, as other bookes entrete.  
 Gret swering is a thing abhominable,  
 And fals swering is more reprovable.  
 The hye God forbad sweryng at al,  
 Wines on Mathew; but in special  
 Of sweryng saith the holy Jeremye, 14050  
 Thou schalt say soth thin othes, and not lye;  
 And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnes;  
 But ydel sweryng is a cursédnes.  
 Bihold and se, ther in the firste table  
 Of hihe Goddes heste honurable,  
 How that the secounde heste of him is this;  
 Tak not in ydel my name or amys.  
 Lo, rather he forbedith such sweryng,  
 Than homicide, or many a corsed thing.  
 I say that as by order thus it stondith; 14060  
 This knoweth he that the hestes understondeth,  
 How that the second hest of God is that.

14020. *Lacidome*. The Lansdowne Ms. reads *Calidomye*, and Tyrwhitt adopts *Calidone* in his text; but he observes in the note, "John of Salisbury, from whom our author probably took this story and the following, calls him *Chilon*. Polycrat. lib. i. c. 5. *Chilon* Laedæmonius, *jugende societatis causa missus Corinthum, duces et seniores populi ludentes invenit in alea. Infecito itaque negotio reversus est, &c.* Accordingly, in ver. 14020, Ms. C. l. reads very rightly *Lacedomye* instead of *Calidone*, the common reading. Our author has before used *Lacedomye* for *Lacedæmon*."

14038. *hasard*. This is Tyrwhitt's reading, supported by the Lansd. Ms., which reads *hasardrye*. The Harl. Ms. reads *taurn*, which does not agree so well with the context.

And furthermore, I wol the telle a plat,  
That vengeance schal not parte fro his hous,  
That of his othes is outrageous.  
"By Goddes precious hert, and by his nayles,  
And by the blood of Crist, that is in Hayles,  
Seven is my chauce, and also cink and tray!  
By Goddes armes, and thou falsly play,  
This daggere schal thurgh thin herte goo!" 14070  
This fruyt cometh of the bicchid boones tuo,  
Forswering, ire, falsnes, homicide.  
Now for the love of Crist that for us dyde,  
Levith youre othis, bothe gret and smale.  
But, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.

These riottoours thre, of which I telle,  
Longe erst than prime rong of eny belle,  
Were set hem in a tavern for to drynke;  
And as thay sat, thay herd a bell clinke  
Bifrom a corps, was caried to the grave; 14080  
That oon of hem gan calle unto his knave,  
"Go bet," quoth he, "and axe redily,  
What corps is that, that passeth her forthy;  
And loke that thou report his name wel."  
"Sire," quod he, "but that nedeth never a del;  
It was me told er ye com heer tuo houres;  
He was, pardy, an old felaw of youre,  
And sodeinly he was i-slayn to night;  
For-dronk as he sat on his bench upright,  
Ther com a privé thef, men clepen Deth, 14090  
That in this contré al the peple sleth.  
And with his spere he smot his hert a-tuo,  
And went his way withoute wordes mo.  
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.  
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,  
Me thinketh that it is ful necessarie,  
For to be war of such an adversarie,  
Beth redy for to meete him evermore.  
Thus taughte me my dame, I say nomore."  
"By seinte Mary!" sayde this taverner, 14100  
"The child saith soth; for he hath slayn this yeer,  
Hens over a myle, withinne a gret village,  
Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, and page;

14066. *his nayles*. Not his finger-nails, but the nails with which he was nailed to the cross. These were objects of superstition in the middle ages. Sir John Maundeville, c. vii. says, "And thereby in the walle is the place where the four nayles of oure Lord weren hid; for he had two in his hondes, and two in his feet; and of on of theise the emperour of Constantynoble made a brydille to his hors, to bere him in bataylle; and thorghe vertue therof he overcam his enemyes, &c." He had said before, c. ii. that "on of the nayles that Crist was naylled with on the cros," was at Constantynoble; and "on in France, in the kinges chapelle."

14067. *blood . . . in Hayles*. "The abbey of Hailes, in Gloucestershire, was founded by Richard, King of the Romans, brother to Henry III. This precious relic, which was afterwards commonly called 'the blood of Hailes,' was brought out of Germany by the son of Richard, Edmund, who bestowed a third part of it upon his father's abbey of Hailes, and some time after gave the other two parts to an abbey of his own foundation, at Ashrug, near Berkhamsted. Hollinsh. v. ii. p. 275."—*Tyrwhitt*.

14071. *bicchid boones*. This is the general reading of the manuscripts, and Tyrwhitt acted unadvisedly in changing it to *bicchel*. *Bicchid boones* appears to have been not an uncommon term for dice: in the Towneley mystery of the *Processus Talentorum*, where the executioners are deciding their right to Christ's tunic by throwing the dice, one of them (p. 241), who has lost, exclaims,—

I was falsly begylyd withe thise *bicchid boones*,  
Ther cursyd thay be!

14103. *and hyne*. I have inserted these two words, which are not in Mss. Harl. and Lansd., from Tyrwhitt; they appear necessary to complete the line.

I trowe his habitacioun be there.  
To ben avysed gret wisdom it were,  
Er that he dede a man that dishonour."  
"Ye, Goddis armes!" quod this ryoutour,  
"Is it such peril with him for to meete?  
I schal him seeke by way and eek by strete.  
I make avow to Goddis digne boones! 14110  
Herkneth, felaws, we thre ben al oones;  
Let ech of us hold up his hond to other,  
And ech of us bycome otheser brother,  
And we wil slee this false traitour Deth;  
He schal be slayne, that so many sleeth,  
By Goddis digneté, er it be night!"

Togideres han these thre here trouthes plight  
To lyve and dye ech of hem with other,  
As though he were his oughne sworne brother.  
And up thai startyn, al dronke in this rage, 14120  
And forth that goon towarde that village,  
Of which the taverner hath spoke biforn,  
And many a grisly oth than han thay sworn,  
And Cristes blessed body thay to-rent;  
Deth schal be deed, if that they may him hent.  
Right as thay wolde have torned over a style,  
Whan thai han goon nought fully a myle,  
An old man and a pore with hem mette.  
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,  
And saide thus, "Lordynges, God yow se!" 14130  
The proudest of the ryoutours thre  
Answerd agein, "What? carle, with sory grace,  
Why artow al for-wrapped save thi face?  
Whi lyvest thou so longe in so gret age?"  
This olde man gan loke on his visage  
And saide thus, "For that I can not fynde  
A man, though that I walke into Inde,  
Neither in cité noon, ne in village,  
That wol change his youthe for myn age;  
And therefore moot I have myn age stille 14140  
As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille.  
And deth, allas! ne wil not have my lif.  
Thus walk I lik a resteles caytif,  
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,  
I knokke with my staf, erly and late,  
And saye, 'Leeve moder, let me in.  
Lo, how I wane, fleisch, and blood, and skyn.  
Allas! whan schulum my boones ben at rest?  
Moder, with yow wil I change my chest,  
That in my chamber longe tyme hath be, 14150  
Ye, for an haire clout to wrap in me.'  
But yet to me sche woi not do that grace,  
For which ful pale and welkid is my face.  
But, sires, to yow it is no curtesye  
To speke unto an old man vilonye,  
But he trespas in word or elles in dede.  
In holy writ ye may your self wel rede,  
Agens an old man, hoor upon his hede,  
Ye schold arise; wherefor I yow rede,  
Ne doth unto an old man more harm now, 14160  
Namore than ye wolde men dede to yow  
In age, if that ye may so long abyde.  
And God be with you, wherso ye go or ryde!  
I moot go thider as I have to goo."

"Nay, olde cheryl, by God! thou schalt not so  
Sayde that other hasardour anoon;  
"Thou partist nought so lightly, by seint Johan  
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deth,  
That in this contré alle oure frendes sleth;

14119. *sworne*. Tyrwhitt reads *boren*; but he does not appear to have been aware of the frequency of this sworn fraternity in medieval story.



Have her my trouth, as thou art his aspere, 14170  
 Tel wher he is, or elles thou schalt dye,  
 By God and by that holy sacrament!  
 For sothly thou art oon of his assent  
 To slen us yonge folk, thou false theef.”  
 “Now, sires, than if that yow be so leef  
 To fynde Deth, torn up this croked way,  
 For in that grove I laft him, by my fay!  
 Under a tree, and ther he wil abyde;  
 Ne for your best he nyl him no thing hyde.  
 Se ye that ook? right ther ye schuln him fynde.  
 God save yow, that bought agein mankynde, 14181  
 And yow amend.” Thus sayde this olde man,  
 And everich of these riotoures ran,  
 Til thay come to the tre, and ther thay founde  
 Of florins fyn of gold y-coyned rounde,  
 Wel neygh a seven busschels, as hem thought.  
 No lenger thanne after Deth thay sought;  
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sight,  
 For that the florens so faire were and bright,  
 That donn thay sette hem by that precious hord.  
 The yongest of hem spak the firste word. 14191  
 “Bretheren,” quod he, “take keep what I schal say;  
 My witte is gret, though that I bourde and play.  
 This tresour hath fortune to us given  
 In mirth and jolyté our lif to lyven,  
 And lightly as it comth, so wil we spende.  
 Ey, Goddis precious dignité! who wende  
 To day, that we schuld have so fair a grace?  
 But might this gold be caried for this place  
 Hom to myn hous, or ellis unto youre, 14200  
 (For wel I wot that this gold is nought oures),  
 Than were we in heyh felicité.  
 But trewely by day it may not be;  
 Men wolde say that we were theves stronge,  
 And for oure tresour doon us for to honge.  
 This tresour moste caried be by night  
 As wysly and as sleyly as it might.  
 Wherefore I rede, that cut among us alle  
 We drawe, and let se wher the cut wil falle;  
 And he that hath the cut, with herte blithe 14210  
 Schal renne to the toun, and that ful swithe,  
 And bring us bred and wyn ful prively;  
 And tuo of us schal kepe subtilly  
 This tresour wel; and if he wil not tarie,  
 When it is night, we wol this tresour carie  
 By oon assent, ther as us liketh best.”  
 That oon of hem the cut brought in his fest,  
 And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wil falle;  
 And it fel on the yongest of hem alle;  
 And forth toward the toun he went anon. 14220  
 And al so soone as he was agoon,  
 That oon of hem spak thus unto that other;  
 “Thow wost wel that thou art my sworne brother,  
 Thy profyt wol I telle the anon.  
 Thow wost wel that our felaw is agoon,  
 And her is gold, and that ful gret plenté,  
 That schal departed be among us thre.  
 But natheles, if I can schape it so,  
 That it departed were bitwix us tuo,  
 Had I not doon a frendes torn to the?” 14230  
 That other answerd, “I not how that may be;  
 He wot wel that the gold is with us tway.  
 What schulde we than do? what schulde we say?”  
 “Schal it be counsail?” sayde the ferste schrewe,  
 “And I schal telle the in wordes fewe  
 What we schul donn, and bringe it wel aboute.”

14188. *a seven busschels.* So Mss. Harl. and Lansd. Tyrwhitt reads *an eight busschels.*

“I graunte,” quod that other, “withoute doute,  
 That by my trouthe I wil the nought bywray.”  
 “Now,” quod the first, “thou wost wel we ben  
 And tuo of us schuln strenger be than oon. [tway,  
 Lok, whanne he is sett, thou right anon 14241  
 Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;  
 And I schal ryf him thurgh the sydes tweye,  
 Whils that thou strogelest with him as in game,  
 And with thi dagger loke thou do the same;  
 And than schal al the gold departed be,  
 My dere frend, bitwixe the and me;  
 Than may we onre lustes al fulfillle,  
 And play at dees right at our owne wille.”  
 And thus accorded ben these schrewes twayn,  
 To sle the thridde, as ye herd me sayn. 14251  
 This yongest, which that wente to the toun,  
 Ful fast in hert he rollith up and donn  
 The beauté of the florins newe and bright;  
 “O Lord!” quod he, “if so were that I might  
 Have al this gold unto my self alloone,  
 Ther is no man that lyveth under the troone  
 Of God, that schulde lyve so mery as I.”  
 And atte last the feend oure enemy  
 Put in his thought, that he schuld poysoun beye,  
 With which he mighte sle his felaws tweye. 14261  
 For why, the feend fond him in such lyvyng,  
 That he had leve to sorwe him to bryng.  
 For this witterly was his ful entent  
 To slen hem bothe, and never to repent.  
 And forth he goth, no lenger wold he tary,  
 Into the toun unto a potecary,  
 And prayde him that he him wolde selle  
 Som poysoun, that he might his rattis quelle.  
 And eek ther was a polkat in his hawe, 14270  
 That, as he sayde, his capouns had i-slave;  
 And said he wold him wreke, if that he might,  
 On vermyn, that destroyed him by night.  
 Thapotecary answerd: “And thou schalt have  
 A thing that, also God my soule save,  
 In al this world ther nys no creature,  
 That ete or dronk had of this confection,  
 Nought but the mountance of a corn of whete,  
 That he ne schuld his lif anon for-lete;  
 Ye, sterve he schal, and that in lasse while, 14280  
 Than thou wilt goon a paas not but a myle;  
 The poysoun is so strong and violent.”  
 This cursed man hath in his hond i-hent  
 This poysoun in a box, and sins he ran  
 Into the nexte stret unto a man,  
 And borwed of him large botels thre;  
 And in the two his poysoun poured he;  
 The thrid he kepte clene for his drynke,  
 For al the night he schop him for to swynke  
 In carying the gold out of that place. 14290  
 And whan this riotour, with sory grace,  
 Hath fillid with wyn his grete botels thre,  
 To his felaws agein repairreth he.  
 What nedith it therof to sermoun more?  
 For right as thay had cast his deth bifore,  
 Right so thay han him slayn, and that anon.  
 And whan this was i-doon, thus spak that oon:  
 “Now let us drynk and sitte, and make us mery  
 And sithen the we wil his body bery.” 14300  
 And afterward it happed him *parcas*,  
 To take the botel ther the poysoun was,  
 And drank, and gaf his felaw drink also,  
 For which anon thay sterved bothe tuo.  
 But certes I suppose that Aveyen  
 14304. *Aveyen.* The Harl Ms. reads *Amyen.* Avicenna



Wrot never in canoun, ne in non fen,  
Mo wonder sorwes of empoisonyng,  
Than hadde these wrecches tuo or here endyng.  
Thus endid been these homicides tuo,  
And eek the fals empoysoner also.

O cursed synne ful of cursednesse! 14310

O traytorous homicidy! O wikkednesse!  
O glotony, luxurie, and hasardrye!

Thou blasphemour of Crist with vilanye,  
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!  
Allas! mankynde, how may it bytyde,  
That to thy creatour, which that the wrought,  
And with his precious herte-blood the bought,  
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas! [pas,

"Now, good men, God forgeve yow your tres-  
And ware yow fro the synne of avarice. 14320

Myn holy pardoun may you alle warice,  
So that ye offren noblis or starlinges,

Or elles silver spones, broches, or rynges.  
Bowith your hedes under this holy bulle.

Cometh forth, ye wyves, and offreth your wolle;  
Your names I entre her in my rolle anon;

Into the blis of heven schul ye goon;  
I yow assoile by myn heyh power,

If ye wold offre, as elene and eek als cler 14329  
As ye were born. And, sires, lo, thus I preche;

And Jhesu Crist, that is oure soules leche,  
So graunte yow his pardoun to receyve;

For that is best, I wil not yow disceyve.  
But, sires, o word forgat I in my tale;

I have reliks and pardoun in my male,  
As fair as eny man in Engelond,

Which were me geve by the popes hond.  
If eny of yow wol of devocioun

Offren, and have myn absolioun,  
Cometh forth anon, and knelith her adoun, 14340

And ye schul have here my pardoun.  
Or elles takith pardoun, as ye wende,

Al newe and freissch at every townes ende,  
So that ye offren alway new and newe

Nobles and pens, which that ben good and trewe.  
It is an honour to every that is heer,

That ye may have a suffisaunt pardoner  
Tassoile yow in contré as ye ryde,

For adventures which that may bytyde.  
For paraunter ther may falle oon, or tuo, 14350

Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke a-tuo.  
Loke, such a seureté is to you alle

That I am in your felaschip i-falle,  
That may assoile you bothe more and lasse,

Whan that the soule schal fro the body passe.  
I rede that oure hoste schal bygygne,

For he is most envolpied in synne.  
Com forth, sire ost, and offer first anon,

And thou schalt kisse the reliquis everichoon,  
Ye, for a grote; unboele anon thi purs." 14360

"Nay, nay," quod he, "than have I Cristes curs!  
Let be," quod he, "it schal not be, so theech.

Thou woldest make me kisse thin olde breech,  
And swere it were a relik of a seynt,

Though it were with thy foundement depeynt.  
But by the cros, which that seynt Heleyn foud,

was one of the most distinguished physicians of the Ara-  
bian school of the eleventh century, and enjoyed great  
popularity in the middle ages.

14341. *And ye schul have here.* Tyrwhitt reads *And  
weekly receiveth.* The Lansd. Ms. reads this and following  
line on a different rhyme,—

Commeth for anone, and kneleth adowne here,  
And ye schal have my pardon that is dere.

I wold I had thy coyloons in myn hond,  
In stede of reliks, or of seintuary.

Let cut hem of, I wol help hem to cary;  
Thay schul be schryned in an hogges tord." 14370

This Pardoner answerde nat o word;  
So wroth he was, he wolde no word say.

"Now," quod oure host, "I wol no lenger play  
With the, ne with noon other angry man."

But right anon the worthy knight bygan,  
(Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough)

"No more of this, for it is right y-nough.  
Sir Pardoner, be glad and mery of cheere;

And ye, sir host, that ben to me so deere,  
I pray yow that ye kisse the Pardoner; 14380

And Pardoner, I pray yow draweth yow ner,  
And as we dede, let us laugh and play."

Anon thay kisse, and riden forth her way.

## THE SCHIPMANNES PROLOGE.

[OUR hoste upon his stirrops stode anon,  
And saide, "Good men, herkeneth everichon,

This was a thrifty tale for the nones.  
Sire parish preest," quod he, "for Goddes bones,

Tell us a tale, as was thy forward yore;  
I see wel that ye lerned men in lore

Can mochel good, by Goddes dignitee." 14390  
The Person him answerd: "*Benedicite!*

What elieh the man, so sinfully to swere?"  
Our hoste answerd: "O Jankin, be ye there?"

Now, good men," quod our hoste, "kerkneht to  
I smell a loller in the wind," quod he. [me.

"Abideth for Goddes digne passion,  
For we schul han a predication;

This loller here wol prechen us somwhat."  
"Nay by my fathers soule! that schal he nat."

Sayde the Schipman, "here schal he nat preche,  
He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche. 14401

We leven al in the gret God," quod he.

*The Schipmannes Prologe.* The Shipman's tale has no  
prologue in the Harl. Ms., and in other of the best copies  
of the Canterbury Tales. The prologue here given is  
from Tyrwhitt, who observes,—“The tale of the Shipman  
in the best mss. has no prologue. What has been printed  
as such in the common editions is evidently spurious. To  
supply this defect I have ventured, upon the authority of  
one ms. (and, I confess, not one of the best) to prefix to  
this tale the prologue which has usually been prefixed to  
the tale of the Squier. As this prologue was undoubtedly  
composed by Chaucer, it must have had a place somewhere  
in this edition, and if I cannot prove that it was really in-  
tended by him for this place, I think the reader will allow  
that it fills the vacancy extremely well. The Pardoner's  
tale may very properly be called a *thrifty tale*, and he him-  
self a *learned man* (ver. 14475,8); and all the latter part,  
though highly improper in the mouth of the *curteis Squier*,  
is perfectly suited to the character of the Shipman.” The  
following short and doggerel prologue to the Shipman's  
tale, from the Lansd. Ms., is given only as an example of  
the way in which different persons attempted to supply  
the deficiencies in Chaucer's unfinished work:—

Bot than spak oure oste unto maister Schipman,  
"Maister," quod he, "to us summe tale tel ye can,

Wherewithe ye myght glad al this company,  
If it were yore plesinge, I wote wele sekurly."

"Sertes," quod this Schipman, "a tale I can telle,  
And therefore herkeneth hynderward how that I will  
spelle."

14395. *a loller.* "This is in character, as appears from a  
treatise of the time. Harl. Catal. n. 1666. 'Now in Engo-  
lond it is a comun protectioun ayens prescutions—If a  
man is customable to swere nedeles and fals and unavised,  
by the bones, nails, and sides, and other members of  
Crist.—And to absteyne fro othes nedeles and unieful,—  
and repreve sinne by way of charite, is mater and cause  
now, why prelates and some lordes sclaudren men, and  
clepen hem *lollards*, *eretikes*, etc."—Tyrwhitt.

"He wolden sowen som difficultee,  
Or springen cockle in our clene corne.  
And therefore, hoste, I warne thee beforen,  
My joly body schal a tale telle,  
And I schal clinken you so mery a belle,  
That I schal waken al this compaignie;  
But it schal not ben of philosophie,  
Ne of physike, ne termes queinte of lawe; 14410  
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe."]

## THE SCHIPMANNES TALE.

A MARCHAUNT whilom dwelled at Seint Denys,  
That riche was, for which men hild him wys.  
A wyf he had of excellent beauté,  
And companable, and reverent was sche;  
Which is a thing that causeth more despence,  
Than worth is al the cher and reverence  
That men doon hem at festes or at daunces.  
Such salutaciouns and continaunces  
Passeth, as doth the shadow on a wal; 14420  
But wo is him that paye moot for al.  
The sely housbond algat moste pay,  
He most us clothe in ful good array  
Al for his oughne worship richely  
In which array we daunce jolly.  
And if that he may not, paravent<sup>re</sup>,  
Or elles wil not such dispens endure,  
But thynketh it is wasted and i-lost,  
Than moot another paye for our cost,  
Or lene us gold, that is perilous. 14430  
This worthy marchaunt huld a noble hous,  
For which he hadde alday gret repair  
For his largesce, and for his wyf was fair.  
What wonder is? but herkneith to my tale.  
Amonges al these gastes gret and smale,  
Ther was a monk, a fair man and a bold,  
I trowe, thrity wynter he was old,  
That ever in oon was drawing to that place.  
This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,  
Aqeynted was so with the goode man, 14440  
Sith that her firste knowleche bygan,  
That in his hous as familier was he  
As it possibil is a frend to be.  
And for as mochil as this goode man  
And eek this monk, of which that I bygan,  
Were bothe tuo i-born in oon village,  
The monk him claymeth, as for cosynage;  
And he agein him saith nat oones nay,  
But was as glad therof, as foul of day;  
For to his hert it was a gret plesaunce. 14450  
Thus ben thay knyht with eterne alliaunce,  
And ilk of hem gan other to assure  
Of brotherhed, whil that her lif may dure.  
Fre was daun Johan, and namely of despence  
As in that hous, and ful of diligence  
To do plesaunce, and also gret costage;  
He nought forgat to geve the leste page  
In al that hous; but, after her degré,  
He gaf the lord, and siththen his meyné, 14459

14401. Or *springen cockle*. This alludes to a punning derivation of *Lollard*, from the Latin *lollum*.

The *Schipmannes Tale*. In this tale also Chancer probably gives an English version of an earlier French *Fabliau*. The same story probably formed the groundwork of the first story in the *Eighth Day of the Decameron*, which differs little from Chaucer's tale, and was frequently imitated by subsequent *conteurs*.

14454. *namely*. I have adopted this reading from the Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt, as giving apparently the best sense. The Harl. Ms. reads *manly*.

Whan that he com, som maner honest thing;  
For which thay were as glad of his comyng  
As foul is fayn, whan that the sonne upriseth.  
No mor of this as now, for it suffiseth.

But so bifel, this marchaunt on a day  
Schop him to make redy his array  
Toward the toun of Bruges for to fare,  
To byen ther a porcioun of ware;  
For which he hath to Paris sent anon  
A messenger, and prayed hath dan Johan  
That he schuld come to Seint Denys, and play  
With him, and with his wyf, a day or tway, 14471  
Er he to Brigges went, in alle wise.  
This nobil monk, of which I yow devyse,  
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,  
(Bycause he was a man of heih prudence,  
And eek an officer out for to ryde,  
To se her graunges and her bernes wyde);  
And unto Seint Denys he cometh anon.  
Who was so welcome as my lord dan Johan,  
Oure deere cosyn, ful of curtesie? 14480  
With him brought he a jubbe of Malvesie,  
And eek another ful of wyn vernage,  
And volantyn, as ay was his usage;  
And thus I lete him ete, and drynk, and play,  
This marchaunt and his monk, a day or tway.

The thridde day this marchaunt up he riseth,  
And on his needes sadly him avyseth;  
And up into his countour hous goth he,  
To rekyng with him self, as wel may be,  
Of thilke yer, how that it with him stood, 14490  
And how that he dispended had his good,  
And if that he encrested were or noon.  
His bookes and his bagges many oon  
He hath byforn him on his countour bord,  
For riche was his tresor and his hord;  
For which ful fast his countour dore he schette;  
And eek he wolde no man schold him lette  
Of his accomptes, for the mene tyme;  
And thus he sat, til it was passed prime.

Dan Johan was risen in the morn also, 14500  
And in the gardyn walkith to and fro,  
And hath his thinges said ful curteisly.  
This good wyf com walkyng ful prively  
Into the gardyn, ther he walketh softe,  
And him salueth, as sche hath doon ful ofte.  
A mayde child com in hir compaignie,  
Which as hir list sche may governe and gye,  
For yit under the yerde was the mayde.  
"O dere cosyn myn, dan Johan," sche sayde,  
"What ayleth yow so rathe to arise?" 14510  
"Neece," quod he, "it aught y-nough suffice  
Fyve houres for to slepe upon a night;  
But it were for eny old palled wight,  
As ben these weddid men, that lye and dare,  
As in a forme lith a wery hare,  
Were al for-straight with boundes gret and smale.  
But, dere nece, why be ye so pale?  
I trowe certis, that oure goode man  
Hath on yow laborid, sith the night bygan,  
That yow were nede to resten hastiliche." 14520  
And with that word he lowgh ful merliche,  
And of his owne thought he was al reed.

14466. *Bruges*. Bruges was the grand central mart of European commerce in the middle ages, until its decline in consequence of the wars and troubles of the sixteenth century.

14483. *volantyn*. So the Harl. Ms. The Lansd. Ms. has *volatile*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt, and is probably the correct one.



This faire wyf bygan to schake hir heed,  
And sayde thus, "Ye, God wot al," quod sche.  
"Nay, cosyn myn, it stant not so with me.  
For by that God, that gaf me soule and lif,  
In al the reme of Fraunce is ther no wyf  
That lasse lust hath to that sory pay;  
For I may syngelallas and waylaway  
That I was born, but to no wight," quod sche, 14530  
"Dar I not telle how it stont with me.  
Werfor I think out of this lond to wende,  
Or elles of my self to make an ende,  
So ful am I of drede and eek of care."

This monk bygan upon this wyf to stare;  
And sayd, "Allas! my nece, God forbede,  
That ye for eny sorw, or eny drede,  
For-do your self; but tellethe me your greef,  
Paraventure I may in youre mescheef  
Council or help; and therfor telleth me 14540  
Al your annoy, for it schal be seeré.  
For on my portos here I make an oth,  
That never in my lif, for lief ne loth,  
Ne schal I of no counseil you bywray."  
"The same agein," quod sche, "to yow I say.  
By God and by this portos wil I swere,  
Though men me wolde al in peeces tere,  
Ne schal I never, for to go to helle,  
Bywrewe word of thing that ye me telle,  
Not for no cosyngne, ne alliance, 14550  
But verrayly for love and affiaunce."  
Thus ben thay sworn, and herupon i-kist,  
And ilk of hem told other what hem list.

"Cosyn," quod sche, "if that I had a space,  
As I have noon, and namly in this place,  
Then wold I telle a legend of my lyf,  
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf  
With myn housbond, though he be your cosyn."  
"Nay," quod this monk, "by God and seint Martyn!  
He is no more cosyn unto me, 14560  
Than is this leef that longeth on the tre;  
I cleped him so, by seint Denis of Fraunce,  
To have the more cause of acquyntaunce  
Of yow, which I have loved specially  
Aboven alle women sikerly;  
This swere I yow on my profession.  
Telleth youre greef, lest that he come adoun,  
And hasteth yow; and goth your way anon."  
"My deere love," quod sche, "o dan Johan,  
Ful leef me were this counseil for to hyde, 14570  
But out it moot, I may no more abyde.  
Myn housbond is to me the worste man,  
That ever was siththe the world bigan;  
But sith I am a wyf, it sit nought me  
To telle no wight of oure priveté,  
Neither a bedde, ne in noon other place;  
God schilde I scholde telle it for his grace.  
A wyf ne schal not say of hir housbonde  
Al at honour, as I can understonde.  
Save unto yow thus moche telle I schal; 14580  
As help me God, he is nought worth at al,  
In no degré, the valien of a flec.

But yit me greveth most his nigardye.  
And wel ye wot, that wymmen naturelly  
Desiren sixe thinges, as wel as I.  
They wolde that here housbondes scholde be  
Hardy, and wys, and riche, and therto fre,  
And buxom to his wyf, and freisch on bedde.  
But by the Lord that for us alle bledde,

14566. This line is omitted in Ms. Harl. and is here given from Ms. Lansdowne.

For his honour my selven to array, 14590  
A sonday next comyng yit most I pay  
An hundred frank, or elles I am lorn.  
Yit were me lever that I were unborn,  
Than me were doon a sclaunder or vilenye.  
And if myn housbond eek might it espie,  
I ner but lost; and therfor I yow pray  
Lene me this summe, or elles mot I dey.  
Dan Johan, I seye, lene me this hundred frankes;  
Pardé I wil nought faille you my thankes,  
If that yow list to do that I yow pray. 14600

For at a certein day I wol yow pay,  
And do to yow what pleasaunce and servise  
That I may do, right as you list devyse;  
And but I do, God take on me vengeance,  
As foul as hadde Geneloun of Fraunce!"  
This gentil monk answard in this manere;  
"Now trewely, myn owne lady deere,  
I have on yow so gret pité and reuthe,  
Thut I yow swere, and plighte yow my treuthe,  
Than whan your housbond is to Flaundes fare,  
I schal deliver yow out of youre care, 14611  
For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes."  
And with that word he caught hir by the schankes,  
And hir embraced hard, and kist hir ofte.  
"Goth now your way," quod he, "al stille and softe,  
And let us dyne as sone as ye may,  
For by my chilindre it is prime of day;  
Goth now, and beth as trew as I schal be."  
"Now elles God forbede, sire!" quod sche.

And forth sche goth, as joly as a pye, 14620  
And bad the cookies that thai schold hem hye,  
So that men myghte dyne, and that anon.  
Up to hir housbond this wyf is y-goon,  
And knokketh at his dore boldely.  
"Quy est là?" quod he. "Peter! it am I."  
Quod sche. "How longe, sire, wol ye fast?  
Goth longe tyme wol ye reken and cast  
Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?  
The devel have part of alle such rekenynges.  
Ye have i-nough party of Goddes sonde. 14630  
Com don to day, and let your bagges stonde.  
Ne be ye not aschamed, that daun Johan  
Schal alday fastyng thus elenge goon?  
What? let us hierre masse, and gowe dyne."

"Wif," quod this man, "litel canstow divine  
The curious besynesse that we have;  
For of us chapmen, al so God me save,  
And by that lord that cleped is seint Ive,  
Scarsly amonges twelve, two schuln thrive  
Continuelly, lastyng into her age. 14640  
We may wel make cheer and good visage,  
And dryve forth the world, as it may be,  
And kepen our estat in priveté,  
Til we be deed, or elles that we play  
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the way.  
And therfor have I gret necessité  
Upon this queynte world to avyse me.

14597-14600. These four lines are also omitted in the Harl. Ms., by an evident error of the scribe, arising from a similar termination of lines 14596 and 14600. They are here supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

14605. Geneloun. Geneloun, or Ganelon, in the old romances, was the person whose treason led to the disastrous battle of Roncesvalles.

14617. chilindre. This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. Tyrwhitt has substituted *kalender*.

14639. twelve, two. This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss., except that the latter has *twelve for two*. Tyrwhitt reads *amonges twenty, ten*.

14640. her. The Lansd. Ms. reads *our*.



For evermor we moste stond in drede  
 Of hap and fortun in our chapmanhede.  
 To Flaundres wil I go to morw at day, 14650  
 And come agayn as soone as I may;  
 For which, my deere wif, I the byseeke  
 As he to every wight buxom and meeke,  
 And for to kepe oure good be curious,  
 And honestly governe wel our hous,  
 Thou hast y-nough, in every maner wise,  
 That to a thrifty housbond may suffice.  
 The lakketh noon array; ne no vitaile;  
 Of silver in thy purs thon mayst not faile." 14659  
 And with that word his countour dore he schitte,  
 And doun he goth; no lenger wold he lette;  
 And hastily a masse was ther sayd,  
 And spedily the tables were i-layd,  
 And to the dyner faste thay hem spedde,  
 And rychely this chapman the monk fedde.

And after dyner daun Johan sobrelly  
 This chapman took on part, and prively  
 Sayd him thus: "Cosyn, it stondesth so,  
 That, wel I se, to Brigges wol ye go;  
 God and seint Austyn spede ye and gyde. 14670  
 I pray yow, cosyn, wisly that ye ryde;  
 Governeth yow also of your diete  
 Al temperelly, and namely in this hete.  
 Bitwix us tuo nedeth no straunge fare;  
 Far wel, cosyn, God schilde you fro care.  
 If any thing ther be by day or night,  
 If it lay in my power and my might,  
 That ye wil me comaunde in eny wise,  
 It schal be doon, right as ye wold devyse.  
 O thing er that ye goon, if it might be, 14680  
 I wolde pray yow for to lene me  
 An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye,  
 For certeyn bestis that I moste beye,  
 To store with a place that is oures;  
 (God help me so, I wolde it were yours!)  
 I schal not faile seurlly of my day,  
 Nought for a thousand frankes, a myle way.  
 But let this thing be secre, I yow pray;  
 For for the bestis this night most I pay.  
 And fare now wel, myn owne cosyn deere. 14690  
 Graunt mercy of your cost and of your cheere."

This noble merchaunt gentilly anoon  
 Answerd and sayde: "O cosyn daun Johan,  
 Now sikerly this is a smal request;  
 My gold is youre, whanne that yow lest,  
 And nought oonly my gold, but my chaffare;  
 Tak what yow liste, God schilde that ye spare!  
 But oon thing is, ye know it wel y-nough  
 Of chapmen, that her money is here plough.  
 We may creauce whils we have a name, 14700  
 But goldles for to be it is no game.  
 Pay it agayn, when it lith in your ese;  
 After my might ful fayn wold I yow plese."

This hundred frankes he set forth anoon,  
 And prively be took hem to daun Johan;  
 No wight in al this world wist of this loone,  
 Savyng this marchaund, and daun Johan alloone.  
 Thay drynke, and speke, and rome a while and  
 Til that dan Johan rydeth to his abbay. [play,  
 The morwe cam, and forth this marchaund rideth  
 To Flaundres-ward, his prentis wel him gydeth,  
 Til that he cam to Brigges merily. 14712

14657. *housbond*. This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. Tyrwhitt reads *houshold*. I think the reading of the mss. is the best—thou hast enough money, consistent with a thrifty husband.

Now goth this marchaund faste and busily  
 Aboute his neede, and bieth, and creaucneeth;  
 He neither pleyeth atte dys, ne daunceth;  
 But as a marchaund, shortly for to telle,  
 He lad his lyf, and ther I let him dwelle.

The sonday next the marchaund was agoon,  
 To Seint Denys i-come is daun Johan,  
 With croune and berd al freisch and newei-schawe.  
 In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave, 14721  
 Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn,  
 For that my lord dan Johan was come agayn.  
 And shortly to the poynte for to gon,  
 This faire wif acordith with dan Johan,  
 That for these hundred frank he schuld al night  
 Have hir in his armes bolt upright;  
 And this acord performed was in dede.  
 In mirth al night a bisy lif thay lede 14729  
 Til it was day, than dan Johan went his way,  
 And bad the meigné far wel, have good day.  
 For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun,  
 Hath of dan Johan noon suspeccioun;  
 And forth he rideth hom to his abbay,  
 Or wher him list, no more of him say.

This marchaund, whan that ended was the faire,  
 To Seynt Denys he gan for to repaire,  
 And with his wif he maketh fest and cheere,  
 And tellith hir that chaffar is so deere.  
 That needes most he make a chevisaunce, 14740  
 For he was bounde in a reconaissance,  
 To paye twenty thousand scheldes anoon.  
 For which this marchaund is to Paris goon,  
 To borwe of certeyn frendes that he hadde  
 A certain frankes, and some with him he ladde.  
 And whan that he was come into the toun,  
 For gret chiertee and gret affecioun  
 Unto dan Johan he first goth him to play;  
 Nought for to borwe of him no kyn monay,  
 But for to wite and se of his welfare, 14750  
 And for to telle him of his chaffare,  
 As frendes doon, whan thay ben met in fere.  
 Dan Johan him maketh fest and mery cheere;  
 And he him told agayn ful specially,  
 How he had bought right wel and graciously  
 (Thanked be God!) al hole his marchaundise;  
 Save that he most in alle manere wise  
 Maken a chevysauns, as for his best;  
 And than he schulde be in joye and rest.  
 Dan Johan answerde, "Certis I am fayn, 14760  
 That ye in hele are comen hom agayn;  
 And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,  
 Of twenty thousand scheld schuld ye not mysse.  
 For ye so kyndely this other day  
 Lente me gold; and as I can and may  
 I thanke yow, by God and by seint Jame.  
 But natheles I took it to oure dame,  
 Your wif at home, the same gold agein  
 Upon your bench, sche wot it wel certeyn,  
 By certain toknes that I can hir telle. 14770  
 Now by your leve, I may no lenger duelle;  
 Oure abbot wol out of this toun anoon,  
 And in his campaigne yout I goon.  
 Grete wel oure dame, myn owen nece swete,

14742. *scheldes*. The literal version of the French *écus*, or crowns. They are said to have received their name from bearing the figure of a shield on one side.

14756. *hole*. I have added this word from the Lansd. Ms. It is omitted in the Harl. Ms.

14768. *at home*. These words also are added from the Harl. Ms., as being evidently necessary to complete the metre.

And far wel, dere cosyn, til that we meete."  
 This marchaund, which that was bothe war and  
 Craunced hath, and payed eek in Parys [wys,  
 To certeyn Lombardes redy in hir hond  
 This somme of gold, and took of hem his hond,  
 And hom he goth, as mery as a popinjay. 14780  
 For wel he knew he stood in such array,  
 That needes most he wyne in that viage  
 A thousand frankes, above al his costage.  
 His wyf ful redy mette him at the gate,  
 As sche was wont of old usage algate;  
 And al that night in mirthe thay ben sette,  
 For he was riche, and clerly out of dette.  
 When it was day, this marchaund gan embrace  
 His wyf al newe, and kist hir on hir face,  
 And up he goth, and maketh it ful tough. 14790  
 "No more," quod sche, "by God, ye have  
 y-nough;"

And wantonly with him sche lay and playde,  
 Till atte laste thus this marchaund sayde:—  
 "By God," quod he, "I am a litel wroth  
 With yow, my wyf, although it be me loth;  
 And wite ye why? by God, as that I gesse,  
 Ye han i-maad a maner straungenesse  
 Bitwixe me and my cosyn dan Johan.  
 Ye schold have warned me, er I had goon,  
 That he yow had an hundred frankes payd 14800  
 By redy tokne; and huld him evil appayd;  
 For that I to him spak of chevisaunce,  
 (Me semed so as by his countenance);  
 But natheles, by God of heven king!  
 I thoughte nought to axe him no thing.  
 I pray the, wyf, do thou no more so.  
 Tel me alway, er that I fro the go,  
 If eny dettour hath in myn absence  
 I-payed the, lest in thy negligence  
 I may him axe a thing that he hath payed."

This wyf was not affereed ne affrayed, 14811  
 But boldely sche sayde, and that anon:  
 "Mary! I diffy that false monk, dan Johan,  
 I kepe not of his tokens never a del;  
 He took me a certeyn gold, that wot I wel.  
 What? evel thedom on his monkes snowte!  
 For, God it wot! I wende withoute doute,  
 That he had geve it me, bycause of yow,  
 To do therwith myn honour and my prow,  
 For cosynage, and eek for *bele cheer* 14820  
 That he hath had ful ofte tyme heer.  
 But synnes that I stonde in this disjoynt,  
 I wol answer yow schortly to the poynt.  
 Ye han mo slakke dettours than am I;  
 For I wol pay yow wel and redily  
 Fro day to day, and if so be I faile,  
 I am your wyf, score it upon my taile,  
 And I schal paye it as soone as I may.  
 For by my trouthe, I have on myn array,  
 And nought on wast, bistowed it every del.  
 And for I have bistowed it so wel 14821  
 For youre honour, for Goddes sake I say,  
 As both nought wroth, but let us laugh and play;  
 Ye schul my joly body have to wedde;  
 By God, I wol not pay yow but on bedde;  
 Forgeve it me, myn owne spouse deere;

14778. *Lombardes*. It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that the Lombard merchants were the chief money-dealers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, after the Jews had been placed under a ban. Lombard Street in London seems to have preserved traditionally the peculiar character given to it by its former inhabitants from whom it was named.

Turne hider-ward and make better cheere."

This marchaund saugh noon other remedy;  
 And for to chide, it nas but foly,  
 Sith that the thing may not amendid be. 14840  
 "Now, wif," he sayde, "and I forgive it the;  
 And by thi lif, ne be no more so large;  
 Keep better my good, this give I the in charge."  
 Thus endeth now my tale, and God us sende  
 Talyng y-nough, unto our lyves ende!"

## THE PRIORESSES PROLOGE.

"WEL sayd, by corpus boones!" quod oure  
 "Now longe mot thou sayle by the cost, [host,  
 Sir gentil maister, gentil mariner.  
 God give the monk a thousand last quade yer.  
 Haha! felaws, be war for such a jape. 14850  
 The monk put in the mannes hood an ape,  
 And in his wyves eek, by seint Austyn.  
 Drawth no monkes more unto your in.  
 But now pas over, and let us loke aboute,  
 Who schal now telle first of al this route  
 Another tale;" and with that word he sayde,  
 As curteisly as it had ben a mayde,  
 "My lady Prioeresse, by your leve,  
 So that I wist I scholde yow not greve,  
 I wolde deme, that ye telle scholde 14860  
 A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.  
 Now wol ye vouche sauf, my lady deere?"  
 "Gladly," quod sche, and sayd in this manere.

## THE PRIORESSES TALE.

O LORD, oure Lord, thy name how mervelous  
 Is in this large world i-sprad! (quod sche)  
 For nought oonly thy laude precious  
 Performed is by men of heih degre,  
 But by mouthes of children thy boundté  
 Performed is; on oure brest soukyng  
 Som tyme schewe thy thin heriyng. 14870

Wherefore in laude, as I best can or may,  
 Of the and of thy white lily flour,  
 Which that the bar, and is a mayde alway,  
 To telle a story I wil do my labour;  
 Nought that I may encesce youre honour,  
 For sche hir silf is honour and roote  
 Of boundté, next hir sone, and soules boote.  
 O moodir mayde, o mayde mooder fre,  
 O bush unbrent, brenyng in Moises sight,  
 That ravysshedest doum fro the deité, 14880  
 Thurgh thin humblesse, the gost that in the  
 Of whos vertu, he in thin herte pight, [alight;  
 Conceived was the fadres sapience;  
 Help me to telle it in thy reverence.

Lady, thi boundté, and thy magnificence,  
 Thy vertu and thi gret humilité,  
 Ther may no tonge expres in no science;  
 For som tyme, lady, er men pray to the,  
 Thow gost biforn of thy benignité, 14889  
 And getist us the light, thurgh thy prayere,  
 To gyden us the way to thy sone so deere.  
 My conyng is so weyk, o blisful queene,  
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse,

*The Prioresses Tale*. The subject of this story was a very popular legend in the middle ages, told in a variety of forms, and located in as many different places, but tending and perhaps intended to keep up a strong prejudice against the Jews. It is not necessary to enumerate these different stories.

14864. *O Lord, oure Lord*. This is a translation of the first words of the eighth Psalm, *Domine, Domineus noster*, &c.



That I may not this in my wyt sustene;  
But as a child of twelf mouth old or lesse,  
That can unnethes eny word expresse,  
Right so fare I, and therfor I you pray,  
Gydeþ my song, that I schal of yow say.

Ther was in Aey, in a greet citee,  
Amonges Cristen folk a Jewerye, 14900  
Susteyned by a lord of that contré,  
For foul usure, and lucre of felonye,  
Hateful to Crist, and to his compaignye;  
And thurgh the strete men might ride and wende,  
For it was fre, and open at everich ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood  
Doun at the forther ende, in which ther were  
Children an heep y-comen of Cristen blood,  
That lered in that scole yer by yere  
Such maner doctrine as men used there; 14910  
This is to say, to syngre and to rede,  
As smale childer doon in her childhede.

Among these children was a widow sone,  
A litel clergeoun, that seve yer was of age,  
That day by day to scole was his wone,  
And eek also, wherso he saugh thymage  
Of Cristes moder, had he in usage,  
As him was taught, to knele adoun, and say  
His *Ave Maria*, as he goth by the way.

Thus hath this widow her litel child i-taught  
Oure blisful lady, Cristes moder deere, 14921  
To worship ay, and he forgat it nought;  
For cely child wil alway soone leere.  
But ay when I remembre of this matiere,  
Seint Nicholas stont ever in my presence,  
For he so yong to Crist dede reverence.

This litel child his litel book lernynge,  
As he sat in the scole in his primere,  
He *O alma redemptoris* herde syngre,  
As children lerned her antiphonere; 14930  
And as he durst, he drough him ner and neere,  
And herkned ever the wordes and the note,  
Til he the firste vers couthe al by rote.

Nought wist he what this Latyn was to say,  
For he so yong and tender was of age;  
But on a day his felaw gan he pray  
To expounne him the song in his langage,  
Or telle him what this song was in usage;  
This prayd he him to construe and declare,  
Ful often tyme upon his knees bare. 14940

His felaw, which that elder was than he,  
Answerd him thus: "This song, I have herd seye,  
Was makid of our blisful lady fre,  
Hire to saluen, and eek hire to preyre  
To ben our help and socour when we deye.  
I can no more expounne in this matere;  
I lerne song, I can no more gramer."

"And is this song i-maad in reverence  
Of Cristes moder?" sayde this innocent;  
"No certes I wol do my diligence 14950

14898. *Gydeþ*. The Harl. Ms. has *endeth*.

14899. *Aey*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *Ace*. Tyrwhitt *Asia*, i. e. *Asia*.

14902. *felonye*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt have *vilanye*. These two words are not unfrequently interchanged in the mss.

14925. *Seint Nicholas*. We have an amusing account of the very early piety of this saint in his lesson, *Brev. Roman.* vi. Decemb. "Cujus viri sanctitatis, quanta futura esset, jam ab incunabilis apparuit. Nam infans, cum reliquas dies lac nutricis frequens suggeret, quarta et sexta feria (on Wednesdays and Fridays) semel duntaxat, idque vesperi, sugubat."

14947. *no more gramer*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *but smal grammere*.

To conne it al, er Cristemasse be went,  
Though that I for my primer schal be schent,  
And schal be betyn thries in an hour,  
I wol it conne, oure lady to honour."

His felaw taught him hom-ward prively  
From day to day, til he couthe it by rote,  
And than he song it wel and boldly;  
Twyces on the day it passed thurgh his throte,  
From word to word accordyng with the note,  
To scole-ward and hom-ward when he went;  
On Cristes moder was set al his entent. 14961

As I have sayd, thurghout the Jewrye  
This litel child as he cam to and fro,  
Ful merly than wold he syngre and crie,  
*O alma redemptoris*, evermo;  
The swetnes hath his herte persed so  
Of Cristes moder, that to hir to pray  
He can not stynt of syngyng by the way.

Oure firste foo, the serpent Sathanas,  
That hath in Jewes hert his waspis nest, 14970  
Upswal and sayde: "O Ebreik peple, allas!  
Is this a thing to yow that is honest,  
That such a boy schal walken as him lest  
In youre despyt, and syngre of such sentence,  
Which is agens your lawes reverence?"

Fro thennesforth the Jewes han conspired  
This innocent out of this world to enchace;  
An homicide therto han thay hired,  
That in an alei had a privé place;  
And as the childe gan forthby to pace, 14980  
This kut Jewe him hent, and huld ful faste,  
And kut his throte, and in a put him caste.

I say in a wardrobe thay him threw,  
Wher as the Jewes purgen her entraille.  
O cursed folk, o Herodes al newe,  
What may your evyl entente you availe?  
Morthur wol out, certeyn it wil nought faile,  
And namly ther thouour of God schuld sprede;  
The blood out crieth on your cursed dede.

"O martir sondit to virginité, 14990  
Now maystow syngre, folwyng ever in oon  
The white lomb celestial," quod sche,  
"Of which the grete evaungelist seint Johan  
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that thay that goon  
Bifore the lamb, and syngre a song al newe,  
That never fleischly wommen thay ne knewe."

This pore widow wayteth al this night,  
After this litel child, but he cometh nought;  
For which as soone as it was dayes light,  
With face pale, in drede and busy thought, 15000  
Sche hath at scole and elles wher him sought,  
Til fynally sche gan of hem aspye,  
That he was last seyn in the Jewerie.

With moodres pité in hir brest enclosed,  
Sche goth, as sche were half out of hir mynde,  
To every place, wher sche hath supposed  
By liklihedde hir child for to fynde;  
And ever on Cristes mooder meke and kynde  
Sche cried, and atte laste thus sche wrought,  
Among the cursed Jewes sche him sought. 15010

Sche freyned, and sche prayed pitously  
To every Jew that dwelled in that place,  
To telle hir, if hir child wente ther by;  
Thay sayden nay; but Jhesu of his grace  
Gaf in hir thought, withinne a litel space,  
That in that place after hir sone sche cryde,

14982. *and in a put him caste*. This is the reading of the Lansd. Ms. The Harl. Ms. reads *and threw him in atte laste*.



Wher as he was cast in a put bysyde.

O grete God, that parfomedist thin lande  
By mouth of innocent, lo, here thy might!  
This gemme of chastité, this emeraude, 15020  
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,  
Ther he with throte y-corve lay upright,  
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to synge  
So lowde, that al the place bigan to ryngc.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete went,  
In comen, for to wonder upon this thing;  
And hastily for the provost thay sent.  
He cam anon, withoute taryng,  
And heriede Crist, that is of heven king,  
And eek his moder, honour of mankynde, 15030  
And after that the Jewes let he bynde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun  
Up taken was, syngyng his song alway;  
And with honour of gret processioun,  
Thay caried him unto the next abbay.  
His modir swownyng by the beere lay;  
Unnethe might the peple that was there  
This newe Rachel bringe fro the beere.

With torment and with schamful deth echon  
This provost doth these Jewes for to sterve, 15040  
That of this moerder wist, and that anon;  
He wolde no such cursednesse observe;  
Evel schal have, that evyl wol deserve.  
Therefore with wilde hors he dede hem drawe,  
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Upon his beere ay lith the innocent  
Bifrom the chief auter whiles the masse last;  
And after that, thabbot with his covent  
Han sped hem for to burie him ful fast;  
And whan thay halywater on him cast, 15050  
Yet spak this child, whan spreynde was the water,  
And song, *O alma redemptoris mater*.

This abbot, which that was an holy man,  
As monkes ben, or elles oughte be,  
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,  
And said: "O deere child, I balse the,  
In vertu of the holy Trinite,  
Tel me what is thy cause for to synge,  
Sith that thy throte is kit at my menyngc."

"My throte is kit unto my nekke-boon," 15060  
Sayde this child, "and as by way of kynde  
I schulde han ben deed long tyme agoon;  
But Jhesu Crist, as ye in bookes fynde,  
Wol that his glorie laste and be in mynde;  
And for the worschip of his moder deere,  
Yet may I synge *O alma* lowde and cleere.

"This wellle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,  
I loved alway, as after my connyngc;  
And whan that I my lyf schulde leete,  
To me sche cam, and bad me for to synge 15070  
This antym verrailly in my deyingc,  
As ye have herd, and, whan that I had songe,  
Me thought sche layde a grayn under my tonge.

"Wherfor I synge, and synge moot certeyne  
In honour of that blisful mayden fre,  
Til for my tonge taken is the greyne.  
And after that thus saide sche to me:  
'My litil child, now wil I fecche the,  
Whan that the grayn is fro thi tonge i-take;  
Be nought agast, I wol the nought forsake.'" 15080

This holy monk, this abbot him mene I,  
His tonge out caught, and took away the greyn;  
And he gaf up the gost ful softly.

15022. *y-corve*. I have substituted this reading (from the Lansd. Ms.) for *i-kut*, the reading of the Harl. Ms.

And whan the abbot hath this wonder seyn,  
His salte teres striken down as reyn;  
And gril he fel adoun unto the grounde,  
And stille he lay, as he had ben y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the payment  
Wepyng and heryng Cristes moder deere.  
And after that thay rise, and forth thay went, 15090  
And took away this martir fro his beere,  
And in a tombe of marble stoones cleere  
Enclosed thay this litil body sweete;  
Ther he is now, God lene us for to meete!  
O yonge Hughe of Lyncoln, slayn also  
With cursed Jewes (as it is notable,  
For it nys but a litel while ago),  
Pray eek for us, we synful folk unstable,  
That of his mercy God so merciable  
On us his grete mercy multiplie, 15100  
For reverence of his modir Marie.

#### PROLOGE TO SIRE THOPAS.

WHAN sayd was this miracle, every man  
As sober was, that wonder was to se,  
Til that oure host to jape he bigan,  
And than at erst he loked upon me,  
And sayde thus: "What man art thou?" quod he,  
"Thou lokest as thou woldest fynde an hare,  
For ever upon the ground I se the stare.

"Approche ner, and loke merily.  
Now ware you, sires, and let this man have space.  
He in the wast is schape as well as I; 15111  
This were a popet in an arm to embrace  
For any womman, smal and fair of face.  
He semeth elvisch by his countenance,  
For unto no wight doth he daliaunce.

"Say now som what, sins other folk han said;  
Telle us a tale and that of mirthe anon."  
"Host," quod I, "ne beth nought evel apayd,  
For other tale certes can I noon,  
But of a rym I lerned yore agoon." 15120  
"Ye, that is good," quod he, "now schul we heere  
Som deynté thing, me thinketh by thy cheere."

#### THE TALE OF SIR THOPAS.

LESTENETH, lordyngs, in good entent,  
And I wol telle verrayment  
Of myrthe and solas,  
Al of a knyght was fair and gent  
In batail and in tournament,  
His name was Sir Thopas.

15095. *Hughe of Lyncoln*. The story of Hugh of Lincoln, which was made the subject of a variety of ballads, &c., is placed by the historians in the year 1255. The ballads, in English and French, were collected together by M. Michel, and published at Paris in a small volume in 1834.

15104. *he bigan*. I have ventured to add the personal pronoun, which is wanting in the Harl. and Lansd. Mss., from Tyrwhitt.

*The Tale of Sir Thopas*. The introduction of this story by Chaucer is clearly intended as a satire on the dull metrical romances, then so popular, but of which Chaucer fully saw the absurdity. It is in fact a protest against the literary taste of his day. It is made up of phrases from the common metrical romances, if it be not a fragment of a romance dragged in by Chaucer. It has been stated that such a romance existed under the title of *The giant Olyphant and chyldre Thopas*; but literary historians have not yet been able to find any traces of such a romance. This notion is, however, somewhat favoured by the circumstance that all the mss. do not end with the same line, the Lansd. Ms. concluding with l. 15322, and the Harl. wanting the last fragment of a line, as though different scribes omitted some, or added as from a poem which they had in memory.

I-bore he was in fer contré,  
 In Flaundes, al byyonde the se, 15130  
 At Popering in the place;  
 His fader was a man ful fre,  
 And lord he was of that contré;  
 As it was Goddes grace.  
 Sir Thopas wax a doughty swayn;  
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn,  
 His lippes reed as rose;  
 His rode is lik scarlet en grayn,  
 And I yow telle in good certayn 15140  
 He had a scmly nose.  
 His heer, his berd, was lik safroun,  
 That to his girdil rought andoun;  
 His schoon of cordewane;  
 Of Brigges were his hosen brow; n;  
 His robe was of sieladoun,  
 That coste many a jane.  
 He couthe hunt at wilde deer,  
 And ride on haukyng for ryver  
 With gray goshauk on honde;  
 Therto he was a good archeer. 15150  
 Of wrastelyng was noon his peer,  
 Ther eny ram schal stonde.  
 Ful many mayde bright in bour  
 Thay mournne for him, *par amour*,  
 Whan hem were bet to slepe;  
 But he was chast and no lechour,  
 And sweet as is the brembre flour  
 That bereth the reede heepe.  
 And so it fel upon a day,  
 For soth as I yow telle may, 15160  
 Sir Thopas wold out ryde;  
 He worth upon his steede gray,  
 And in his hond a launcegay,  
 A long sword by his syde.  
 He priketh thurgh a fair forest,  
 Therin is many a wilde best,  
 Ye, bothe buk and hare;  
 And as he priketh north and est,  
 I tel it yow, hym had almost 15170  
 Bityd a sory care.  
 Ther springen herbes greet and smale,  
 The lieorys and the cetewale.  
 And many a clow gilofre,  
 And notemuge to put in ale,  
 Whethir it be moist or stale,  
 Or for to lay in cofre.  
 The briddes synge, it is no nay,  
 The sperhauk and the popinjay,  
 That joye it was to heere,  
 The throstilcock maad eek his lay, 15180  
 The woode downe upon the spray  
 Sche song ful lowde and cleere.

15131. *Poperyng*. Poppering or Poppeling was a parish in the marches of Calais.

15145 *jane*. A coin of Genoa (*Janua*), some of which, apparently of inferior value, are called in the English statutes *galley halfpence*. The *siglaton*, or *sielaton*, was a rich cloth or silk brought from the East, and is therefore appropriately mentioned as bought with Genoese coin.

15148. *on haukyng for ryver*. The river side is commonly described in the romances as the scene of hawking. Thus in the Squier of Low Degree,—

Homward thus schal ye ryde  
 On haukyng by the ryvers syde,  
 With goshauke and with gentil fawcon,  
 With buglehorn and merlyon.

See also before, l. 646:

15192. *eny ram*. See before, line 550, and the Tale of *Camelyn*, l. 172.

15192. *Sche song*. The Harl. Ms. reads *so for soche*.

Sir Thopas fel in love-longing,  
 Whan that he herde the briddes synge,  
 And priked as he were wood;  
 His faire steede in his prikyng  
 So swette, that men might him wryng,  
 His sydes were al blood.  
 Sir Thopas eek so wery was  
 For priking on the softe gras, 15190  
 So feers was his corrage,  
 That doun he layd him in that place  
 To make his steede som solace,  
 And gaf him good forage.  
 "O, seinte Mary, *benedicite*,  
 What eylyth this love at me  
 To bynde me so sore?  
 Me dremed al this night, pardé,  
 An elf queen schal my lemman be,  
 And slepe under my gore. 15200  
 An elf queen wol I have i-wis,  
 For in this world no womman is  
 Worthy to be my make  
 In toune;  
 Alle othir women I forsake,  
 And to an elf queen I me take  
 By dale and eek by doune."  
 Into his sadil he clomb anon,  
 And priked over stile and stoon  
 An elf queen for to spye; 15210  
 Til he so longe hath ryden and goon,  
 That he fond in a privé woon  
 The contré of fairye,  
 So wylde;  
 For in that contré was ther noon,  
 That to him dorste ride or goon,  
 Neither wif ne childe.  
 Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,  
 His name was sir Olifaunt,  
 A perilous man of dede; 15220  
 He swar, "Child, by Termagant,  
 For if thou prike out of myn haunt,  
 Anoon I slee thy stede,  
 With mace.  
 Heer is the queen of fayerie,  
 With harp, and lute, and symphonye,  
 Dwellyng in this place."  
 The child said: "Al so mote I the,  
 To morwe wil I meete with the,

Tyrwhitt gives *he*. The reading of the text is taken from the Lansd. Ms.

15214. *so wylde*. This and the following lines, with the whole of this stanza, are given as they stand in the Harl. and Lansd. Mss., which I believe to be correct. I do not think, with Tyrwhitt, that there is any thing necessarily wanting; he closes one stanza with line 15213, and gives as another stanza (the supplementary lines have been taken from a late and bad Ms.),—

Wherin he soughte north and south,  
 And of he spied with his mouth  
 In many a forest wilde,  
 For in that contree n'as ther non,  
 That to him dorst ride or gon,  
 Neither wif ne childe.

15219. *sir Olifaunt*. *Olifaunt* means an elephant, and is not an inappropriate name for a pagan giant.

15221. *Termagant*. Termagant or Termagant is the name of one of the favourite gods of the Saracens and pagans, in the popular literature of the middle ages. From the way in which he was made to bluster and rant, arose our modern use of the word *termagant*.

15222. *For*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *But*, which is perhaps better.

15223. *thy stede*. This reading is adopted from the Lansd. Ms., as being evidently the correct one. The Harl. Ms. reads as one line, *Anoon I slee this with mace*.

- Whan I have myn armure. 15230  
 And yit I hope, par ma fay,  
 That thou schalt with this launcegay  
 Abyen it ful sore;  
 Thy mawe  
 Schal I persyn, if that I may,  
 Er it be fully prime of day,  
 For heer schalt thou be slawe."  
 Sir Thopas drough on bak ful fast;  
 This geannt at him stoonces cast  
 Out of a fell staf slyng; 15240  
 But faire eschapeth child Thopas,  
 And al it was thurgh Goddis gras,  
 And thurgh his faire berynge.  
 Yet lesteneth, lordynges, to my tale,  
 Merier than the nightyngale  
 I wol yow rounde,  
 How sir Thopas with sides smale,  
 Prikynge over hnl and dale,  
 Is come ageyn to tounne.  
 His mery men comanded he, 15250  
 To make him bothe game and gle,  
 For needs most he fight  
 With a geannt with heedes thre,  
 For paramours and jolité  
 Of oon that schon ful bright.  
 "Do come," he sayde, "my mynstrales  
 And gestours for to telle tales  
 Anoon in myn armyng,  
 Of romaunces that ben reales,  
 Of popes and of cardinales, 15260
15243. *faire*. I have added this word from the Lansd. Ms.  
 15257.—*gestours for to telle tales*. "The proper business of a *gestour* was to recite tales, or *gestes*; which was only one of the branches of the minstrel's profession. Minstrels and *gestours* are mentioned together in the following lines, from William of Nassington's translation of a religious treatise by John of Waldby. Ms. Reg 17 C. viii, p. 2.  
 I warne you furst at the begynnynge,  
 That I will make no vain carlinge  
 Of dedes of armys ne of amours,  
 As dus mynstrales and jestours,  
 That makys carpinge in many a place  
 Of *Octoviane* and *Isebrase*,  
 And of many other jestes,  
 And namely whan they come to festes;  
 Ne of the life of *Bevys of Hampton*,  
 That was a knight of gret renoun,  
 Ne of *Sir Gye of Warwyke*,  
 Al if it might sum men lyke—
- I cite these lines to shew the species of tales related by the ancient *gestours*, and how much they differed from what we now call *jestes*."—*Tyrwhitt*.  
 15259. *romauces . . reales*. "So in the rom. of *Yvain and Gawain*, Ms. Cott. Galb. E. ix.  
 He fund a knight under a tre;  
 Upon a cloth of gold he lay;  
 Byfor him sat a ful fayr may:  
 A lady sat with tham in fere;  
 The maiden red, that thai might here,  
 A *real romance* in that place.—
- The original of this title, which is an uncommon one, I take to be this. When the French romances found their way into Italy (not long before the year 1300, *Crescim.* t. i. p. 336), some Italian undertook to collect together all those relating to Charlemagne and his family, and to form them into a regular body of history. The six first books of this work come down to the death of Pepin. They begin thus: *Qui se comenza la hystoria el Real di Franza comenzando a Constantino imperatore secondo molte lezende che io ho attrovate e raccolte insieme*. Edit. *Mutina*, 1491, fol. It was reprinted in 1537 under this title, '*I reali di Franza*, nel quale si contiene la generazione di tutti i Re, Duchi, Principi e Baroni di Franza, e delli Paladini, colle Battaglie da loro fatte, etc.' *Quadrio*, t. vi. p. 530. Salvati had seen a ms. of this work written about 1350 (*Crescim.* t. i. p. 330), and I do not believe that any men-
- And eek of love-lykyng."  
 Thay fet him first the swete wyn,  
 And made him eek in a maselyn  
 A real spicerie,  
 Of gyngebred that was so fyn,  
 And licorys, and eek comyn,  
 With sugre that is trye.  
 He dede next his white leere  
 Of cloth of lake whyt and cleere  
 A brech and eek a schert;  
 And next his schert an aketoun,  
 And over that an haberjonn, 15270  
 For persyng of his hert;  
 And over that a fyn hauberk,  
 Was al i-wrought of Jewes werk,  
 Ful strong it was of plate;  
 And over that his cote-armour,  
 As whyt as is a lily flour,  
 In which he wold debate.  
 His scheld was al of gold so red,  
 And thereinne was a bores heed,  
 A charboole by his syde;  
 And ther he swor on ale and bred 15280  
 How that the geannt schal be deed,  
 Bytyde what betyde.  
 His jambeux were of quirboily,  
 His swerde schethe of yvory,  
 His helm of latoun bright.  
 His sadel was of rowel boon.  
 His bridel as the sonne schon,  
 Or as the moone light.  
 His spere was of fine cipres,  
 That bodeth werre, and no thing pees, 15290  
 The heed ful scharp i-grounde.  
 His steede was al dappul gray,  
 It goth an ambel in the way  
 Ful softly and rounde  
 In londe.  
 Lo, lordes, heer is a fyt;  
 If ye wil eny more of it,  
 To telle it wol I fonde.
- [FIT II.]  
 Now hold your mouth for charité,  
 Bothe knight and lady fre, 15300  
 And herketh to my spelle;  
 Of batail and of chivalry,  
 Of ladys love and drewery,
- tion of a *real*, or *royal*, *romance* is to be found, in French or English, prior to that date."—*Tyrwhitt*.  
 15261. *love-lykyng*. The Lansd. Ms. reads, with *Tyrwhitt*, *love-longyng*.  
 15263. *Tyrwhitt* reads this and the next line,—  
 And mede eke in a maselin,  
 And real spicerie.  
 But I prefer much the reading of Harl. Ms., as mead was not a very romantic liquor to be served to a knight adventurous.  
 15272. *Jewes werk*. I have not met with any passage in medieval writers explaining the nature of this *Jewes werk*, but I am not quite prepared to think with *Tyrwhitt* that a *Jew* means here a magician.  
 15286. *rowel boon*. This material, whatever it may be, is mentioned elsewhere as that of which rich saddles were made; as in the early ballad of *Thomas and the Elf queen*, speaking of the latter,—  
 Hir saddle was of *reynyle bone*,  
 Semely was that sight to se,  
 Stiffy sette with precious stone,  
 Compaste aboute with *crapoté*.  
 15289. *fine*. I have added this word from the Lansd. Ms.  
 15296. *a fyt*. This was a common English term for the different parts or divisions of a metrical romance.



Anoon I wol yow telle.  
 Men spoken of romauns of pris,  
 Of Horn child, and of Ypotis,  
 Of Beveys, and sir Gy,  
 Of sir Libeaux, and Pleyndamour,  
 But sir Thopas bereth the flour  
 Of real chivalry. 15310  
 His goode steede he bistrood,  
 And forth upon his way he glood,  
 As spark out of the bronde;  
 Upon his crest he bar a tour,  
 And therin stiked a lily flour,  
 God schilde his corps fro schonde.  
 And for he was a knyght auntrous,  
 He nolde slepen in noon hous,  
 But liggen in his hood.  
 His brighte helm was his wonger, 15320  
 And by him baytith his destrer  
 Of herbes fyne and goode.  
 Him self drank water of the welle,  
 As dede the knight sir Percivelle  
 So worthy under wede,  
 [Til on a day] —

## PROLOGE TO MELIBEUS.

"No mor of this, for Goddes dignité!"  
 Quod our hoste, "for thou maigest me  
 So wery of thy verrey lewednesse,  
 That al so wisly God my soule blesse, 15330  
 Myn eeres aken for thy drasty speche.  
 Now such a rym the devel I byteche!  
 This may wel be rym dogerel," quoth he.  
 "Why so," quod I, "why wilt thou lette me  
 More of my tale than another man,  
 Syn that it is the beste rym that I can?"  
 "By God!" quod he, "for plainly at o word,  
 Thy drasty rymyng is not worth a tord;  
 Thou dost nought elles but dependist tyme.  
 Sir, at o word, thou schalt no lenger ryme. 15340  
 Let se wher thou canst tellen ought in gest,  
 Or telle in prose som what atte lest,  
 In which ther be som merthe or doctrine."  
 "Gladly," quod I, "by Goddes swete pyne,  
 I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,

15305—*romans of pris*. Nearly all the romances here enumerated are extant. The romance of Horn is preserved in Anglo-Norman and in English; the latter version is printed in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*. Ypotis is found in a Cottonian Ms. (Callig. A. 11) and in the Vernon Ms. at Oxford. Bevis of Hampton and Guy of Warwick are too well known to need any explanation. Sir Libeaux, or Libeaux Desconus (the fair unknown), is printed also in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*.

15324. *sir Percivelle*. I have adopted Tyrwhitt's reading instead of that of the Harl. Ms., of *Pertinelle*, because I remember no romance or tale of a *Knicht of Pertinelle*, and the romance of *Percival* is well known. Tyrwhitt observes, "The romance of *Perceval le Galois*, or *de Galis*, was composed in octosyllable French verse by Chrestien de Troyes, one of the oldest and best French romancers, before the year 1191. *Fauchet*, l. ii. c. x. It consisted of above sixty thousand verses (*Bibl. des Rom.* t. ii. p. 250), so that it would be some trouble to find the fact which is, probably, here alluded to. The romance, under the same title, in French prose, printed at Paris, 1530, fol. can only be an abridgement, I suppose, of the original poem."

15325. *So worthy under wede*. "This phrase occurs repeatedly in the romance of *Emaré*.

fol. 70. b. Than sayde that worthy unther wede.

74. b. The childre was worthy unther wede,  
 And sate upon a nobyl stede.

See also fol. 71, b. 73, a."—*Tyrwhitt*.

15326. *Til on a day*. These words are not in the Harl. Ms.

That oughte like yow, as I suppose,  
 Or elles certes ye be to dangerous.  
 It is a moral tale vertuous,  
 Al be it told som tyme in sondry wise 15350  
 Of sondry folk, as I schal yow devyse.  
 As thus, ye woot that every evaungelist,  
 That tellet us the peyne of Jhesu Crist,  
 Ne saith not alle thing as his felawes doth;  
 But natheles here sentence is al soth,  
 And alle accorden as in here sentence,  
 Al be ther in her tellyng difference.  
 For some of hem sayn more, and some lesse,  
 Whan thay his pitous passioun expresse;  
 I mene of Mark and Mathew, Luk and Johan,  
 But douteles her sentence is al oon. 15360  
 Therfor, lordynges alle, I yow biseche,  
 If yow think that I varye as in my speche,  
 As thus, though that I telle som what more  
 Of proverbes, than I have herd bifore  
 Comprehended in this litel tretys here,  
 To enforen with theeffect of my matiere,  
 And though I not the same wordes say  
 As ye have herd, yit to yow alle I pray,  
 Blameth me nought, for, in my sentence,  
 Schul ye no wher fynde difference 15370  
 For the sentence of this tretys lite,  
 After the which this litil tale I write.  
 And therfor herkeneth what I schal say,  
 And let me tellen al my tale, I pray."

## THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

A YONG man called Melibeus, mighty and riche,  
 bygat upon his wif, that called was Prudens,  
 a daughter which that called was Sophie.<sup>1</sup> Upon  
 a day byfel, that for his desport he is went into  
 the felde him to play. His wif and his daughter  
 eek hath he laft within his hous, of which the  
 doras were fast i-schitte. Thre<sup>2</sup> of his olde foos  
 han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles  
 of his hous, and by the wyndowes ben entred,  
 and betyn his wif, and woundid his daughter  
 with fyve mortal woundes, in fyve sondry places,  
 that is to sayn, in here feet, in here hondes,  
 in here eeres, in here nose, and in here mouth; and  
 lafte her for deed, and went away.

Whan Melibeus returned was into his hous,  
 and seigh al this meschief, he, lik a man mad,  
 rendyng his clothes, gan wepe and crie. Pruden-  
 dens his wif, as ferforth as sche dorste, bysought  
 him of his wepyng to stynte. But not forthis he  
 gan to crie ever lenger the more.

This noble wyf Prudence remembered hire upon  
 the sentens of Ovide,<sup>3</sup> in his book that cleped is  
 the Remedy of Love, wher as he seith: He is a

15364. *I have*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *ye*.

*The Tale of Melibeus*. This is a literal translation from a French story, of which there are two copies in the British Museum, Ms. Reg. 19, C. vii. and Ms. Reg. 19, C. xi., both of the fifteenth century. The former, as apparently the best copy, is quoted in the following notes. (Since these notes were first written, the French text of Melibeus has been printed in *le Ménager de Paris*, published by the Société des Bibliophiles Français.)

<sup>1</sup> *Sophie*. The name of the daughter is omitted in both the French mss.

<sup>2</sup> *Thre*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *four*. The reading of both the French mss., however, is *trois*, which is in all probability correct. *Three* was a favourite number in the mediæval tales and apologues.

<sup>3</sup> *The sentens of Ovide*. The allusion is to the *Remed. Am.* l. 125,—

Quis matrem, nisi matris inops, in funere natū  
 Flere vetet? &c.

fool that distourbeth the moder to wepe in the deth of hir childe, til sche have i-wept hir fille, as for a certeyn tyme; and than schal man doon his diligence as with amiable wordes hire to recomforte and praye hire of hire wepyng to stinte. For which resoun this noble wif Prudens suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and crie, as for a certeyn space; and whan sche seigh hir tyme, sche sayd him in this wise: "Allas! my lord," quod sche, "why make ye youre self for to be lik a fool? Forsothe it apperteyneth not to a wys man, to make such sorwe. Yourre daughter, with the grace of God, schal warischt be and eschape. And al were it so that sche right now were deed, ye ne oughte nought as for hir deth youre silf destroye. Senec saith, The wise man schal not take to gret discomfort for the deth of his children, but certes he schulde suffren it in pacience, as wel as he abydeth the deth of his owne persone."

This Melibeus answerde anon and sayde: "What man," quod he, "schuld of his wepyng stynte, that hath so gret a cause for to wepe? Jhesu Crist, oure Lord, him self wepte for the deth of Lazarus his frend." Prudens answerde: "Certes, wel I wot, attemperel wepyng is no thing defended to him that sorful is, amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The apostel Poule unto the Romayns wrieth, A man schal rejoice with hem that maken joye, and wepe with such folk as wepen. But though attemperel wepyng be graunted, outrageous wepyng certes is defended. Mesure of wepyng schuld be conserved,<sup>4</sup> after the lore of Crist that techeth us Senec; Whan that thi frend is deed, quod he, let nought thin yen to moyste ben of teres, ne to moche drye; although the teeres come to thine eyghen,<sup>5</sup> let hem not falle. And whan thou hast for-gon thy frend, do diligence to gete another frende; and this is more wisdom than to wepe for thy frend, which that thou hast lorn, for therin is no boote. And therefore if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of youre hert. Remembreth yow that Jhesus Sirac saith, A man that is joyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florisching in his age; but sothly sorweful herte maketh his boones drye. He saith eek thus, that sorwe in herte sleth ful many a man. Salamon saith, that right as motthes in schepes flees annoyeth the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tre, right so annoyeth sorwe to the herte. Wherefore us oughte as wel in the deth of oure children, as in the losse of oure goodes temporales, have pacience. Remembreth yow upon the pacient Job, whan he hadde lost his children and his temporal substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacioun, yit sayde he thus: Oure Lord it sent unto me, oure Lord it hath raft fro me; right so as oure Lord wil, right so be it doon; i-blessed be the

name of oure Lord!" To these forsayde thinges answerith Melibeus unto his wif Prudens: "Alle thine wordes ben soth," quod he, "and therto profytable, but sothly myn herte is so troubled with this sorwe, that I noot what to doone." "Let calle," quod Prudence, "thy trewe frendes alle, and thy linage, whiche that ben trewe and wise; tellet hem youre grevaunce, and herken what thay say in counseilunge, and yow governe after here sentence. Salamon saith, werke al thi thing by counseil, and the thar never rewe."

Than, by the counseil of his wyf Prudens, this Melibeus let calle a gret congregacioun of peple, as surgiens, phisiciens, olde, and yonge,<sup>6</sup> and some of his olde enemyes reconciled (as by her semblaunt) to his love and to his grace; and therwithal ther come some of his neigheours, that deden him reverence more for drede than for love, as happeth ofte. Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers, and wise advoketes lerned in the lawe. And whan these folk togidere assembled were, this Melibeus in sorful wyse schewed hem his caas, and by the maner of his speche, it semed that in herte he bar a cruel ire, redy to do vengeance upon his foom, and soodeynly desirede that the werre schulde bygynne, but natheles yit axed he her counseil in this matier. A sirurgien, by licens and assent of suche as were wyse, up ros, and to Melibeus sayde, as ye may here.

"Sire," quod he, "as to us sirurgiens appertieneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher as we ben withholde, and to oure pacient that we do no damage; wherfore it happeth many tyme and ofte, that whan tweye han everich wounded other, oo same surgien heleth hem bothe, where unto oure art it is not perteyned to norische werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to warisching of youre daughter, al be it so that sche perilously be woundid, we schullen do so tentyf besynes fro day to night, that with the grace of God sche schal be hool and sound, als soone as it is possible."<sup>7</sup> Almost right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that thay sayden a fewe wordes more; that ryght as maladies ben cured by her contraries, right so schal men warissch werre by vengeance.<sup>7</sup> His neyghobours ful of envy, his feynerd freendes that semede reconciled, and his flatereres, maden semblaunt of wepyng, and appaired and aggregated moche of this matiere, in preisyng gretly Melibé of might, of power, of riches, and of frendes, despising the power of his adversaries; and sayden outerly, that he anon schulde wreke him on his adversaries be bygynnyng of werre.

Up roos thanne an advocate that was wys, by leve and by counseil of othere that were wise, and sayde: "Lordynges, the needes for whiche we ben assembled in this place, is ful hevny thing, and an heigh matier, because of the wrong and of the wikkednes that hath ben doon, and eek by resoun of the grette damages that in tyme comyng ben possible to falle for the same, and eek because of the grette riches and power of the parties

<sup>6</sup> *olde, yonge*. This is literal from the French original. Tyrwhitt reads *olde folk and yonge*.

<sup>7</sup> *warissch werre by vengeance*. So the Harl and Lansd. Mss. read correctly. Tyrwhitt omits the words *by vengeance*. The original is, "aussi doit on guerir guerre par vengeance."

<sup>4</sup> *conserved*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *considered*; but the reading of the Harl. Ms., representing the word *garder*, is correct. The original is, "E pour ce on doit paine metre et garder la mesure, que Senesques dist."

<sup>5</sup> *come to thine eyghen*. I have kept the reading of Tyrwhitt, as most accordant with the original "Car ja soit ce que la larme viengne à l'eneil, elle ne doit point yssir dehors." The Harl. Ms. has *come out of thine eyghen*; the Lansd. Ms. *comen of*.



bothe, for the whiche resouns, it were a ful gret peril to erren in these materes. Wherefore, Melibeus, this is oure sentence; we counseile yow, aboven alle thinges, that right anon thou do diligence in kepyng of thy body in such a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne vacche thy body for to save. And after that, we counseile that in thin hous thou sette suffisaunt garnison, so that thay may as wel thy body as thin hous defende. But certes for to moeve werre, ne soodeynly for to doo vengeance, we may not deme in so litel tyme that it were profitable. Wherefore we axen leysir and a space to have deliberacioun<sup>8</sup> in this caas to demen; for the comune proverbe saith this; He that soone demeth, soone schal repente. And eek men sayn, that thilke juge is wys, that soone understandeth a matier, and juggeth by leysir. For al be it so, that alle taryng is anyoful, algates it is no reproef in gevynge of juggement, ne of vengauce takyng, whan it is suffisaunt and resonable. And that shewed oure Lord Jhesu Crist by ensample, for whan that the womman that was i-take in advoutrie, was brought in his presence to knowen what schulde be doon of hir persone, al be it that he wist him self what that he wolde answer, yit wolde he not answer soodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground hem wrot twyes. And by these causes we axe deliberacioun; and we schul thanne by the grace of God counseile the thing that schal be profytable." Upstarten thenne the yonge folkes anon at oones, and the moste parte of that companye han skorned these olde wise men, and bygonne to make noyse and sayden: "Right so as whil that iren is hoot men scholden smyte, right so schulde men wreke here wronges, whil that thay ben freische and newe;" and with lowde vois thay cryde, "Werre, werre."

Uproos the oon of these olde wise, and with his hond make countenance that men schulde holde hem stille, and given him audience. "Lordyngs," quod he, "ther is ful many a man that crieth werre, werre, that wot ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his bygynnyng hath so greet an entre and so large, that every wight may entre whan him liketh, and lightly fynde werre; but certes what ende schal falle therof, it is not lightly to knowe. For sothly whan that werre is oones bygonne, ther is ful many a child unbore of his moeder that schal sterve yong, bycause of thilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe and deye in wrecchidnes; and therefore er that eny werre be bygonne, men moste have gret counseil and gret deliberacioun." And whan this olde man wende to enforce his tale by resouns, wel neigh alle at oones bygonne thay to rise, for to breke his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes to abrigge. For sothly he that precheth to hem that liste not to heere his wordes, his sermoun hem anyeth. For Jhesus Sirac saith, that musik in wepyng<sup>9</sup> is a noyous thing. This is to say, as moche awayleth to speke to-fore folk

to whiche his speche annoyeth, as it is to synge byfore hem whiche that wepith. And whan this wise man saugh him wanted audience, al schamefast he sette him down agayn. For Salomon saith, Ther as thou may have noon audience, enforce the not to speke. "I se wel," quod this wise man, "that the comune proverbe is soth, that good counseil wantith, whan it is moste neede." Yit hadde this Melibeus in his counseil many folk, that prively in his eere counseled him certain thinges, and counseled him the contrarie in general audience.

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the grettest party of his counseil were accorded that he schulde make werre, anon he consented to here counseil-yng, and fully affermed here sentence. Thanne dame Prudence, whan that sche saugh that hir housbonde schop him to wreke him of his enemyes, and to gynne werre, sche in ful humble wise, whan sche saugh hire tyme, sayde him these wordes: "My lord," quod sche, "I yow biseche<sup>10</sup> as hertly as I dar and kan, ne haste yow nought to faste, and for alle guerdouns as geve me audience. For Peres Alfons<sup>11</sup> saith, Who that doth to the other good or harm, haste the nought to quyten him, for in this wise thy freend wil abyde, and thin enemy schal the lenger lyve in drede. The proverbe saith, He hastith wel that wisly can abyde; and in wikked haste is no profyt." This Melibeus answerde unto his wyf Prudens; "I purpose not," quod he, "to werke by thy counseil, for many causes and resouns; for certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool; this is to sayn, if I for thy counseil wolde change thinges that affermed ben by so many wise. Secoundly, I say that alle women be wikked, and noon good of hem alle. For of a thousand men, saith Salomon, I fond oon good man; but certes of alle women good woman fond I never oon. And also certes, if I governe me by thy counseil, it schulde seme that I hadde given to the over me the maistry; and God forbeede er it so were. For Jhesus Sirac saith, that if a wif have maistry, sche is contrarious to hir housbond. And Salomon saith, Never in thy lif to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne geve no power over thi self; for better it were that thy children axen of thy persone thinges that been needful to hem, than thou se thi self in the hondes of thy children. And also, if I wolde werke by thy counselyng, certes it moste som tyme be secré, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe; and this ne may not be."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *I yow biseche.* "Sire, dist elle, je vous prie que vous ne vous hastez, et que vous pour tous dons me donnez espace."

<sup>11</sup> *Peres Alfons.* Peter Alfonsus, or Alfonsi, was a converted Spanish Jew, who flourished in the twelfth century, and is well known for his *disciplina clericalis*,—a collection of stories and moralisations in Latin prose, which was translated afterwards into French verse under the title of the *Castoiment d'un pere à son fils*. It was a book much in vogue among the preachers from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.

<sup>12</sup> *Ne may not be.* After this paragraph, Chaucer has omitted to translate a passage of the French original, which, as it is requisite to understand some parts of the lady's reply, is here given. Melibeus concludes his discourse with the observation, "Car il est escript, la gulerie des femmes ne puet riens celler fors ce qu'elle ne set. Après le philozophie dit, en mauvais conseil les femmes vainquent les hommes. Et par ces raisons je ne dois point user de ton conseil."

<sup>8</sup> *Space to have deliberacioun.* I have added the three last words from the Lansd. Ms., as they are authorised by the French original. They are omitted in the Harl. Ms.

<sup>9</sup> *Musik in wepyng.* The Harl. Ms. reads *wepyng in musik*; but the other reading, taken from the Lansd. Ms., is authorised not only by the French original, but it is required by the context.



Whan dame Prudence, ful debonerly and with gret pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde liked for to seye, thanne axed sche of him licence for to speke, and sayde in this wise; "My lord," quod sche, "as to youre firste resoun, certes it may lightly be answered; for I say it is no foly to chaunge counsel whan the thing is chaungid, or elles whan the thing semeth otherwise than it was biforn. And moreover I say, though that ye han sworn and i-hight to parforme youre emprise, and natheles, ye wayve to parforme thilke same emprise by juste cause, men schulde not say therfore that ye were a lyere, ne for-sworn; for the book seith, that the wise man maketh no lesyng, whan he torneth his corrage to the better. And al be it so that youre emprise be establish and ordeyned by gret multitude of people, yet thar ye not accomple thilke same ordinaunce but you like; for the trouthe of a thing, and the profyt, ben rather founde in fewe folk that ben wise and ful of resoun, than by gret multitude of folk, ther every man crieth and clatereth what that him liketh; sothly such multitude is not honest. And to the secounde resoun, wher as ye sayn, that alle women ben wikke; save youre grace, certis ye despise alle women in this wise, and he that alle despysith, saith the book, alle displeseth.<sup>12</sup> And Senec saith, Who so wil have sapience, schal no man dispraise, but he schal gladly teche the science that he can, withoute presumpcioun or pryde; and suche thinges as he nought can, he schal not ben ashamed to lerne hem, and enquire of lasse folk than himself. And, sire, that ther hath be ful many a good womman, may lightly be prooved; for certes, sire, our Lord Jhesu Crist nolde never han descended to be borne of a womman,<sup>14</sup> if alle women hadde ben wikke. And after that, for the grete bounté that is in women, oure Lord Jhesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deth to lyve, apperede rather to a womman than to his apostles. And though that Salamon say, he fond never good womman, it folwith nought therfore, that alle women ben wikke; for though that he fonde noone goode women, certes many another man hath founden many a womman ful goode and trewe. Or elles paraventure thentent of Salamon was this, as in sovereyn bounté he fond no womman; this is to say, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bounté, save God aloone, as he him self recordeth in his Evaungelie. For ther nys no creature so good, that him ne wantith som what of the perfeccioun of God that is his makere. Yourre thridde resoun is this; ye seyn that if ye governed yow by counsel of me, it schulde seme that ye hadde geve me the maystry

and the lordschipe over youre persone. Sire, save youre grace, it is not so; for if so were that no man schulde be counseiled but by hem that hadde maystrye and lordschipe of his persone, men wolde nought be counseiled so ofte; for sothly thilke man that axeth counsel of a purpos, yet hath he fre chois whether he wil werke by that purpos or non. And as to youre ferthe resoun, ther ye sayn that the janglerie of wommen can hyde thinges that thay wot not of; as who saith, that a womman can nought hyde that sche woot; sire, these wordes ben understonde of wommen that ben jangelers and wikke; of whiche wommen men sayn that three thinges dryven a man out of his oughne hous; that is to say, smoke, droppying of reyn, and wikked wyfes. Of suche wommen saith Salamon, that it were better to a man to dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous. And, sire, by youre leve, that am not I; for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my grete pacience, and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that ben secretly to hyde. And sothly, as to youre fyfte resoun, wher as ye sayn, that in wikkede conseil wommen venquisscheth men, God wot thilke resoun stont here in no stede; for understondith now, ye axen counsel to do wickidnes; and if ye wil wirke wickidnes, and youre wyf restreyneth thilke wicked purpos, and overcome you by resoun and by good conseil, certis youre wyf oweth rather be preised than y-blamed. Thus schulde ye understonde the philosopher that seith, In wicked conseil wommen venquyschen her housbondes. And ther as ye blame alle wyimmen and here resouns, I schal schewe by many resouns and ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yit been and here counseiles ful holsume and profitable. Eke some men han sayd, that the counseilyng of wommen is outhur to dere, or to litel of pris. But al be it so that ful many a womman is badde, and hir counsel vile and not worth, yet han men founde many a ful good womman, and ful discret and wys in counseilyng. Lo, Jacob, by counsel of his moder Rebecca, wan the blessing of his fader Ysaac, and the lordschipe of alle his bretheren. Judith, by hire good conseil, delyvered the citee of Bethulie, in which sche dwelled, out of the honde of Olophernus, that had byseged it, and wolde it al destroye. Abigayl delivered Nabal hir housbond fro David the king, that wolde have i-slayn him, and appesed the ire of the kyng by hir witte, and by hir good counseilynge. Hester by good conseil enhaused gretly the poeple of God, in the regne of Assuerus the kyng. And the same bounté in good counseilyng of many a good womman may men rede and telle. And moreover, whan oure Lord had creat Adam oure forme fader, he sayde in this wise: It is not good to be a man aloone; make we to him an help semblable to him self. Here may ye se that if that a womman were not good, and hir counsel good and profytable, oure Lord God of heven wolde neither have wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusioun of man. And ther sayde oones a clerk in tuo versus,<sup>15</sup> What is better that gold? Jasper.

<sup>12</sup> *Ne may not be.* After this paragraph, Chaucer has omitted to translate a passage of the French original, which, as it is requisite to understand some parts of the lady's reply, is here given. Melibeus concludes his discourse with the observation—"Car il est escript, la janglerie des femmes ne puet riens celler fors ce qu'elle ne sçet. Après le philozophe dit, en mauvais conseil les femmes vainquent les hommes." Et par ces raisons je ne dois point user de ton conseil.

<sup>13</sup> *And he that alle despysith.* "Car il est escript, qui tout despreise, à tous desplaist." The words *alle displeseth* are omitted in the Harl. Ms.

<sup>14</sup> *May lightly . . . of a woman.* The whole of this passage has been accidentally omitted by the scribe of the Harl. Ms. It is here supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

<sup>15</sup> *In two versus.* I have not met with the two verses in question; but they seem to be a modification of a distich

And what is better than jasper? Wisdom. And what is better than wisdom? Womman. And what is better than a good womman? No thing. And, sire, by many other resouns may ye se, that many wommen ben goode, and eek her counsel good<sup>16</sup> and profitable. And therefore, if ye wil truste to my counsel, I schal restore you youre daughter hool and sound; and eek I wil doon you so moche, that ye schul have honour in this cause."

Whan Melibé had herd these wordes of his wif Prudens, he seide thus: "I se wel that the word of Salamon is soth; he seith, that the wordes that ben spoken discretly by ordinaunce, been honycombes, for thay geven swetnes to the soule, and holsomnes<sup>17</sup> to the body. And, wyf, by-cause of thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and proved thi grete sapiens and thi grete trouthe, I wil governe me by thy counsel in alle thinges."

"Now, sire," quod dame Prudens, "and syn ye vouchen sauf to be governed by my counselyng, I wil enforme you how ye schul governe youre self, in chesyng of youre conseil. Ye schul first in alle youre werkes mekely biseche to the hihe God, that he wol be your conseilour; and schape you to that entent that he give you conseil and confort, as taughte Toby his sone: At alle tymes thou schalt blesse God, and pray him to dresse thy wayes; and loke that alle thi conseilles be in him for evermore. Seint Jame eek saith: If eny of yow have neede of sapiens, axe it of God. And afurward, thanne schul ye take conseil in youre self, and examine wel youre thoughtes, of suche thinges as you thinkith that is best for youre profyt. And thanne schul ye dryve fro youre herte thre thinges<sup>18</sup> that ben contrarie to good conseil; that is to say, ire, covetyse, and hastynes. First, he that axeth conseil of him self, certes he moste be withoute ire, for many cause. The first is this: he that hath gret ire and wraththe in him self, he weneth alwey he may do thing that he may not doo. And secondly, he that is irous and wroth, he may not wel deme; and he that may not wel deme, may nought wel counseile. The thridde is this: that he that is irous and wroth, as saith Senec, may not speke but blameful thinges, and with his vicious wordes he stireth other folk to anger and to ire. And eek, sire, ye moste dryve covetise out of youre herte. For thapostle saith that covetyse is roote of alle harmes. And trusteth wel, that a covetous man ne can not deme ne

thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his covetise; and certes that may never ben accomplished; for ever the more abundaunce that he hath of riches, the more he desireth. And, sire, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastynes; for certes ye may nought deme for the beste a sodein thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse you on it ful ofte. For as ye herde here biforn, the comune proverbe is this; that he that soone demeth, soone repentith. Sire, ye ben not alway in lik disposicioun, for certis som thing that som tyme semeth to yow that it is good for to doo, another tyme it semeth to you the contrarie. Whan ye han taken conseil in youre selven, and han demed by good deliberacioun such thing as yow semeth best, thanne rede I you that ye kepe it seeré. Bywreye nought youre conseil to no persone, but it so be that ye wene securly, that thurgh youre bywreyinge youre condicioun schal be to yow the more profytable. For Jhesus Syrac saith, Neither to thi foo ne to thi freend discovere not thy seeré ne thy foly; for they wil give you audience and loking and supportacioun in thi presence, and scorn in thi absence. Another clerk saith, that skarsly schal thou fynde eny persone that may kepe conseil seerely. The book saith: Whil thou kepest thi counsaile in thin herte, thou kepest it in thi prison; and whan thou bywreyst thi counsaile to any wight, Le holdeth the in his snare. And therefore yow is better hyde youre conseil in youre herte, than prayen him to whom ye have bywreied youre conseil, that he wol kepe it clos and stille. For Seneca seith: If so be that thou ne maist not thin owne conseil hyde, how darst thou preyen any other wight thy conseil seerely to kepe? But natheles, if thou wene securly that thy bywreying of thy counsaile to a persone wol make thy condicioun stonde in the better plite, thanne schalt thou telle him thy counsaile in this wise. First, thou schalt make no semblaunt wher the were lever werre or pees, or this or that; ne schewe him not thi wille and thin entent; for truste wel that comunly these conseilours ben flaterers, namely the counsellours of grete lordes, for thay enforen hem alway rather to speke plesaunt wordes enclynyng to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe and profytable. And therefore men say, that the riche man hath selden good conseil, but if he have it of him self. And after that thou schalt consider thy frendes and thine enemyes. And as touching thy frendes, thou schalt considere which of hem both most faithful and most wise, and eldest and most approvyd in counsayinge; and of hem schalt thou axe thy counsaile, as the caas requireth.

"I say, that first ye schul clepe to youre conseil youre frendes that ben trewe. For Salamon saith, that right as the hert of a man delith in savour that is soote, right so the counsaile of trewe frendes geveth swetnes to the soule. He saith also, ther may no thing be likened to the trewe frend; for certes gold ne silver beth nought so moche worth as the goode wil of a trewe freend. And eek he sayde, that a trewe frend is a strong defence; who that it fyndeth, certes he fyndeth a gret tresour. Thanne schul ye eek considere if that youre trewe frendes ben

which is not uncommon in mss., and which are printed thus in the Reliq. Antiq. i. p. 19:—

Auro quid melius? jaspis. Quid jaspide? sensus.  
Sensu quid? ratio. Quid ratione? nihil.

In the manuscript from which this distich is there printed, it is coupled with another much less favourable to the fair sex than the version given by dame Prudence:—

Vento quid levius? fulgur. Quid fulgure? flamma.  
Flamma quid? mulier. Quid muliere? nihil.

<sup>16</sup> And eek her counsel good. These words have been accidentally omitted in the Harl. Ms.

<sup>17</sup> Holsomnes. The Harl. Ms. reads erroneously *hoines*. The French original has *et santé au corps*.

<sup>18</sup> Dryve fro youre herte thre thinges. The Harl. Ms. reads imperfectly *hertes tho that ben*, and the Lansd. Ms. omits the word *thre*, which, however, is requisite to give the full sense of the original.—"Et lors tu dois oster de toy trois choses qui sont contraires à conseil."



discrete and wyse; for the book saith, Axe thi counseil alwey of hem that ben wyse. And by this same resoun schul ye clepe to youre counseil of youre frendes that ben of age, suche as have i-seye sightes and ben expert in many thinges, and ben approyd in counseyllinges. For the book saith,<sup>19</sup> that in olde men is the sapience, and in longe tyme the prudence. And Tullius saith, that grete thinges ben not ay accomplished by strengthe, ne hy delyvernes of body, but by good counseil, by autorité of persones, and by science; the whiche thre thinges ne been not feble by age, but certis thay enforseen and encreasen day by day. And thanne schul ye kepe this for a general reule. First schul ye clepe to youre counseil a fewe of youre frendes that ben especial. For Salamon saith, many frendes have thou, but among a thousand chese the oon to be thy counsellour. For al be it so, that thou first ne telle thy counseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be neede. But loke alwey that thy counsellours have thilke thre condicions that I have sayd bifore; that is to say, that they ben trewe, and olde, and of wys experiens. And werke nought alwey in every neede by oon counsellour alloone; for som tyme byhoveth it be counseiled by many. For Salamon saith, Salvacioun of thinges is wher as there both many counsellours.

"Now sith that I have told yow of whiche folk ye schul be counseiled, now wil I telle yow which counseil ye ought eschiewe. First, ye schal eschiewe the counseil of foolles; for Salamon seith, Take no counseil of a fool, for he ne can not counseile but after his oughne lust and his affeccioun. The book seith, that the propreté of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bounté in him self. Thow schalt eschiewe eek the counseil of alle flaterers, suche as enforcen hem rather to prayse youre persone by flaterie, than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. Werfore Tullius saith, Amonges alle pestilences that ben in frendschipe, the grettest is flaterie. And therefore is it more neede that thou eschiewe and drede flaterers, more than eny other peple. The book saith, Thou schalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flaterers, then fro the egre wordes of thy frend that saith the thi sothes. Salamon saith, that the wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacche in innocentz. He saith also, He that speketh to his frend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a nette byfore his feet to cacchen him. And therefore saith Tullius, Encline not thin eeres to flaterers, ne tak no counseil<sup>20</sup> of the wordes of flaterers. And Catoun<sup>21</sup> saith, Avyse the wel, and eschiewe wordes of swetes and of plesaunce. And eek thou schalt eschiewe the counselyng of thin olde enemyes that ben reconciled. The book saith, that no wight retorneth safly<sup>22</sup> into the grace

of his olde enemyes. And Ysope<sup>23</sup> saith, Ne truste not to hem, with which thou hast had som tyme werre or emnyté, ne telle not hem thy counseil. And Seneca telleth the cause why; it may not be, saith he, that wher as a greet fury hath longe tyme endured, that there ne leveth som vapour of hete. And therefore saith Salamon, In thin olde enemye truste thou nevere. For securly, though thin enemy be reconciled, and make the cheer of humilité, and lowteth to the his heed, ne trist him never; for certes he makith thilke feyned humilité more for his profyt, than for eny love of thi persone; because he demyth to have victorie over thi persone by such feyned countynance, the which victorie he might nought have by stryf and werre. And Petir Alphons saith: Make no felaschipe with thine olde enemyes, for if thou do hem bonnté, they wil perverten it into wikkednes. And eek thou most eschiewe the counselyng of hem that ben thy servauntz, and beren the gret reverence; for paraventure thai say it more for drede than for love. And therefore saith a philosopre in this wise: Ther is no wight parfytly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth. And Tullius saith, Ther is no might so gret of eny emperour that longe may endure, but if he have more love of the peple than drede. Thow schalt also eschiewe the counseil of folk that ben dronkelewe, for thay ne can no counsel hyde. For Salamon saith, Ther is no priveté ther as regneth dronkenesse.<sup>24</sup> Ye schul also have in suspect the counseil of such folk as counseileth you oon thing prively, and counseile yow the contrarie openly. For Cassiodorie saith, It is a maner sleighte to hindre,<sup>25</sup> when he schewith to doon oon thing openly, and werkith prively the contrarie. Thou schalt also eschiewe the counseil of wikked folkes; for the book saith, The counselyng of wikked folk is alway ful of fraude. And David saith, Blisful is that man that hath not folwed the counselyng of wikked men or schrewes. Thow schalt also eschiewe the counselyng of yonge folk, for here counseil is nought ryte.

"Now, sire, syn I have schewed yow of what folk ye schul take youre counsil, and of whiche folk ye schullen eschiewe the counseil, now schal I teche yow how ye schul examyne youre counseil after the doctrine of Tullius. In examynyng of youre counsellours, ye schul considre many thinges. Althirfirst ye schul considre that in thilke thing that thou proposit, and up what thing thou wilt have counseil, that verray trouthe be sayd and considerid; this is to sayn, telle trewely thy tale. For he that saith fals, may not wel be counseiled in that cas of which he lyeth. And after this, thou schalt considere the thinges that accorden to that purpos for to do by thy counseil, if resoun accorde therto, and eek if

<sup>19</sup> For the book saith. The original refers for this maxim to the book of Job,—"Car il est escript en Job."

<sup>20</sup> counseil. I have retained this reading on the authority of Ms. Lansd. and the original French. The Harl. Ms. reads confort.

<sup>21</sup> Catoun. Lib. iii. dist. 6.—

Sermones blandos blæsoque cavere memento.

<sup>22</sup> Saflly. In the French original, *seurement*. The Harl. Ms. reads *soone*.

<sup>23</sup> Ysope. Several collections of fables in the middle ages went under the name of Ysope, or *Æsop*; so that it would not be easy to point out the one from which this moral aphorism is taken.

<sup>24</sup> *drunkenesse*. Nul secret n'est où regne yvresse. *Fr. orig.*

<sup>25</sup> to hindre. Tyrwhitt, with the Lansd. Ms., reads to hinder his enemy, which conveys a meaning totally different from that of the original French, which has: "Cassiodoro dit, une maniere de grever son amy est quant on lui counseille une chose en secret et monstre en appert que on veult le contraire."



thy might may accorde therto, and if the more part and the better part of thy conseilours accorde therto noon. Thanne schalt thou considere what thing schal folwe of that consailynge; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profyt, or damage, and many other thinges; and in alle these thinges thou schalt chese the beste, and weyve alle other thinges. Thanne schalt thou considre of what roote engendred is the matier of thy counsell, and what fruyt it may conceive and engendre. Thow schalt also consider all these causes, from whens thai ben sprongen. And whan ye have examined youre counsell, as I have said, and which party is the better and more profitable, and han approved by many wise folk and olde, than schalt thou considre, if thou maist performe it and make of it a good ende. For resoun wol nought that any man schuld bygynne a thing, but if he mighte performe it and make therof a good ende; ne no wight schulde take upon him so hevy a charge, that he mighte not bere it. For the proverbe seith, He that moche embrasith destroyeth<sup>26</sup> lital. And Catoun<sup>27</sup> seith, Assay to do such thing as thou hast power to doon, lest that thy charge oppresse the so sore, that the bihove to wayve thing that thou hast bygonne. And if so be that thou be in doute, wher thou maist performe a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than bygynne. And Petre Alfons saith, If thou hast might to doon a thing, of which thou most repente, it is better nay than yee; this is to sayn, that the is better holde thy tonge stille than to speke. Than may ye understonde by stronger resouns, that if thou hast power to performe a werk, of which thou schalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than bygynne. Wel seyn thay that defenden every wight to assaie thing of which he is in doute, whethir he may performe it or noon. And after whan ye han examyned youre counsell, as I have said bifore, and knowen wel ye may performe youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende.

"Now is it tyme and resoun that I schewe yow whanne, and wherfore, that ye may change youre counsell withouten reproof. Sothly, a man may change his purpos and his counsell, if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe cause bytydeth. For the lawe seith, upon thinges that newly bytydeth, bihoveth newe counsell. And Seneca seith, If thy counsell be comen to the eeres of thin enemy, change thy counsell. Thow maist also change thy counsell, if so be that thou fynde that by error, or by other processe, harm or damage may bytde. Also thou change thy counsell,<sup>28</sup> if thy counsell be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishonesté; for the lawes sayn, that alle the hestes that ben dishoneste ben of no valieu; and eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may not goodly be performed or kept. And

<sup>26</sup> *destroyeth*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *distreineth*. The original has, "Car on dit ou proverbe, Qui trop embrasse, pou estraint."

<sup>27</sup> *Catoun*. This is from the *De Morib.* lib. iii. dist. 16.

Quod potes, id tentato; operis ne pondere pressus Succumbat labor, et frustra tentata relinquas.

<sup>28</sup> *also thou changing*. The original gives this briefly, "Après, quant le conseil est deshoneste ou vient de cause deshoneste, il est de nulle value."

take this for a general reule, that every counsell that is affermed or strengthed so strongly that it may not be changed for no condicioun that may bitide, I say that thilke counsell is wikked."

This Melibeus, whan he had herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudens, answerde in this wise. "Dame," quod he, "yt as into this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me, as in general, how I schal governe me in the chesyng and in the witholdynge of my counsellours; but now wold I fayn ye wolde condescende as in especial, and telleth me what semeth or how liketh yow by oure counsellours that we han chosen in oure present neede."

"My Lord," quod sche, "I hyseke yow in al humblesce, that ye wil not wilfully repplye ageinst my resouns, ne distempere youre herte, though I say or speke thing that yow displesith, for God woot that, as in myn entent, I speke it for youre beste, for youre honour, and for your profyt eek, and sothly I hope that youre benignité wol take it into pacience. For trusteth me wel," quod sche, "that youre counsell as in this caas ne schulde not (as for to speke properly) be called a counseilyng, but a mocion or a moevynge of foly, in which counsell ye han erred in many a sondry wise. First and forward, ye han erred in the gaderyng of youre counsellours; for ye schulde first han cleped a fewe folkes, if it hadde be neede. But certes ye han sodeinly cleped to your counsell a gret multitude of poeple, ful chargeous and ful anyous for to hie. Also ye han erred, for ther as ye schulde oonly have clepid to youre counsell youre trewe frendes, olde and wise, ye have i-cleped strange folk, yonge folk, false flatereres, and enemyes reconciled, and folk that doon yow reverence withoute love. And also ye han erred, for ye han brought with yow to youre counsell ire, covetise, and hastynes, the whiche thre things ben contrarious to every counsell honest and profitable; the whiche thre thinges ye have nought annentissched or destroyed, neyther in youre self ne in youre counsellours, as ye oughte. Also ye have erred, for ye have schewed to youre counsellours youre talent and youre affeccion to make werre, and for to doon vengeance anon, and thay han espyed by youre wordes to what thinge ye ben enclined; and therefore have thay counseiled yow rather to youre talent than to youre profyt. Ye have erred also, for it semeth that yow sufficeth to have ben counseiled by these counsellours only, and with lital avys, wher as in so gret and so heigh a neede, it hadde be necessarius mo counsellours and more deliberacion to performe youre emprise. Ye have erred also,<sup>29</sup> for ye have maked no divisoun bytwix youre counsellours; this is to seyn, bitwix youre frendes and youre feyned counsellours; ne ye ne have nought i-knowe the wille of youre frendes, olde and wise, but ye have cast alle here wordes in an hochepoche, and enclyned youre herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre, and there

<sup>29</sup> *Ye have erred also*. Tyrwhitt has here added a short paragraph, apparently made up from more than one ms. The original is: "Après tu as erré quant tu as fait la division de ton conseil; tu n'as mie suivy la volenté de tes loyaux amis saiges et anciens, mais as seulement regardé le grant nombre; et tu scees que tousjours li fol sont en plus grant nombre que les saiges."

be ye condescendid; and syn ye wot wel men schal alway fynde a gretter nombre of fooles than of wyse men, and therefore the counsailes that ben at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther as men taken more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, ye se wel that in suche counseilynges fooles have maystrie."

Melibeus answerde agayn and sayde: "I graunte wel that I have erred; but ther as thou hast told me to-for, that he is nought to blame that chaungeth his conseilours in certeyn caas, and for certeyn juste causes, I am al redy to change my conseilours right as thou wilt devyse. The proverbe saith, that for to do synne is mannsch, but certes for to persevere longe in synne is werk of the devyl."

To this sentence anon answerde dame Prudence, and saide: "Examyneth," quod sche, "youre counsaill, and let us se which of hem hath spoke most resonably, and taught you best counsaill. And for as moche as the examinacioun is necessarie, let us byginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first speken in this matiere. I say you that the surgiens and the phisiciens han sayd yow in youre counsaill discretly, as hem ought; and in here speche sayden ful wisely, that to the office of hem appendith to doon to every wight honour and profyt, and no wight to annoy, and after here craft to do gret diligence unto the cure of hem whiche that they have in here governaunce. And, sire, right as thay answerde wisely and discretly, right so rede I that thay be heighly and sovereignly guerdoned for here noble speche, and eek for thay schullen do the more ententif besynes in the curyng of youre doughter dere. For al be it so that thai be youre frendes, therefore schul ye nought suffre that thay schul serve you for nought, but ye oughte the rather to guerdonne hem and schewe hem youre largesse. And as touchynge the proposiciouns whiche the phisiciens han schewed you in this caas, this is to sayn, that in maladyes oon contrarie is warished by another contrarie, I wolde fayn knowe thilke text and how thay understonde it, and what is youre entente." "Certes," quod Melibeus, "I understonde it in this wise; that right as thay han do me a contrarie, right so schold I do hem another; for right as thai han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so schal I venge me upon hem, and doon hem wrong; and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another." "Lo, lo," quod dame Prudence, "how lightly is every man enclenyd to his oughne plesance and to his oughne desir! Certes," quod sche, "the wordes of the phisiciens ne schulde nought have ben understonde sone in that wise; for certes wikkednesse is no contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengans to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong, but thai ben semblable; and therefore a vengeaunce is nought warished by another vengeaunce, ne oon wrong by another wrong, but everych of hem encreseth and enreggith other. But certes the wordes of the phisiciens schul ben understonde in this wise; for good and wikkednesse ben tuo contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and sufferance, discord and accord, and many other thinges; but, certes, wikkednes schal be warished by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of other thinges. And herto ac-

cordith seint Paul the apostil in many places; he saith, Ne yeldith nought harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; but do wel to him that doth the harm, and blesse him that saith the harme. And in many other places he amonesteth pees and accord. But now wil I speke to yow of the counsaill, which was give to yow by the men of lawe, and the wise folk, and olde folk,<sup>30</sup> that sayde alle by oon accord as ye have herd byfore, that over alle thinges ye schal do youre diligence to kepe youre persone, and to warmstore youre house; and seyden also, that in this yow aughte for to wirche ful avysily and with gret deliberacioun. And, sire, as to the firste poynt, that touched to the kepinge of youre persone, ye schul understonde, that he that hath werre, schal evermore devoutly and mekely prayen biforn alle thinges, that Jhesu Crist wil of his mercy have him in his proteccioun, and ben his soverayn helpyng at his neede; for certes in this world ther nys no wight that may be counseiled or kept sufficauntly, withoute the kepinge of oure lord Jhesu Crist. To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: If God ne kepe not the citee, in ydel wakith he that kepith it. Now, sire, thanne schul ye committe the keping of youre persone to youre trewe frendes, that ben approved and y-knowe, and of hem schul ye axen help, youre persone to kepe. For Catoun<sup>31</sup> saith: If thou have neede of help, axe it of thy frendes, for ther is noon so good a phisician at neede as is a trewe frend. And after this than schal ye kepe you fro alle straunge folkes, and fro lyeres, and have alway in suspect here compaignye. For Pieres Alfons saith: Ne take no compaignie by the way of a straunge man, but so be that thou knowe him of a lenger tyme; and if so be he falle into thy compaignye paraventure withouten thin assent, enquire thanne, as subtilly as thou maist, of his conversacioun, and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy way, and say that thou wilt go thider as thou wolt nought goon; and if he bere a spere, holde the on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, holde the on the lyft syde. And so after this, thanne schul ye kepe you wisely from al such peple as I have sayd bifore, and hem and here counsaill eschiewe. And after this, thanne schul ye kepe yow in such manere, that for eny presumpcioun of youre strengthe, that ye despise not the might of youre adversarie so lite, that ye lete the kepinge of youre persone for your presumpcioun; for every wis man dredeth his enemy. And Salomon saith, Weleful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes he that thurgh hardynes of his herte, and thurgh the hardinesse of himself, hath to gret presumpcioun, him schal evyl bitide. Thanne schal ye evermore conterwayte embussmentz and alle espaille. For Senec saith, that the wise man that dredith harmes, eschiewith harmes, ne he ne fallith into noone perils, that perils eschieweth. And al be it so that the seme that thou art in

<sup>30</sup> and olde folk. These three words are omitted in the Harl. Ms., but I have restored them from the Ms. Lansd. and the French original.

<sup>31</sup> Catoun. The passage alluded to is found in the Distich. de Morib. lib. iv. dist. 14.

Auxilium a notis petito, si forte laboras,  
Nec quisquam melior medicus quam fidus amicus.



siker place, yit schaltow alway do thy diligence in keyping of thy persone; this is to say, be not negligēt to kepe thy persone, nought oonly for thy gretteste enemyes, but for thy lest enemyes. Senec saith: A man that is wel avysed, he dredith his lest enemy. Ovide seith,<sup>32</sup> that the lital wesil wol sle the grete bole and the wilde hert. And the book saith, a lital thorn wol prikke a kingful sore, and an hound wol holde the wilde boore. But natheles, I say not that ye schul be so moche a coward, that ye doute where is no neede or drede. The book saith,<sup>33</sup> that som folk have gret lust to disceyve, but yit thay dreden hem to be deceyved. Yet schal ye drede to ben empoisoned. And kepe the fro the companye of scorners; for the book saith, with scorners make no compaignye, but flee hem and here wordes as venym.

"Now as to the secounde poynt, where as youre wise conseilours warnede yow to warmstore youre hous with gret diligence, I wolde fayn wite how that ye understoode thilke wordes, and what is your sentence." Melibeus answerde and saide: "Certes, I understonde it in this wise, that I schal warmstore myn hous with toures, suche as han castiles and other maner edifices, and armure, and artilleries; by suche thinges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and edifyen and defenden, that myn enemyes schul be in drede myn hous to approche."

To this sentence answerde dame Yrudence: "Warmstorynge," quod sche, "of heihe toures and grete edifices, is with grete costages and grete travaile; and whan that thay ben accomplished, yit beth thay nought worth a straw, but if they be defended by trewe frendes, that beth olde and wise. And understondeth that the grettest strength or garnison that the riche man may have, as wel to kepe his persone as his goodes, is that he be biloved with his subgites and with his neighbours. For thus saith Tullius, that ther is a maner garnison that no man may venquisshe ne discomfite, and that is a lord to be biloved with his citezeins and of his peple.

"Now thanne as to youre thridde poynt, where as youre olde and wise conseilours sayde, ye oughte nought sodeinly ne hastily procede in this neede, but that ye oughte purveyen yow and appaile yow in this caas with gret diligence and gret deliberacioun; trewely, I trowe, that thay sayden soth and right wisely. For Tullius saith: 'In every nede, er thou bigynne it, appaile the with gret diligence.' Thanne say I, that in vengeance takinge, in werre, in bataille, and in warmstoringe of thin hous, er thou bygynne, I rede that thou appaile the therto, and do it with gret deliberacioun. For Tullius saith, that long apparaylyng byfore the bataille, maketh schort victorie. And Cassidorus saith, the garnison is strengier whan it is long tyme avysed.

"But now let us speke of the counsel that was

<sup>32</sup> Ovide seith. The original quotes more fully, "Et Ovide, ou livre du Remede d'Amours." The maxim is not found, as far as I can discover, in Ovid. de Remed. Amor.

<sup>33</sup> The book saith. "Car il est escript, aucunes gens ont ensaignie leur decevoir, car ils ont trop doubté que on ne les deceust." Tyrwhitt has what he calls "patched up" this passage in his edition, by the insertion of some words of his own. I have followed the Harl. Ms. exactly. Chaucer amplifies and alters his original in this part, which makes it difficult to correct it by the French.

accorded by youre neighbours, suche as doon yow reverence withoute love, youre olde enemyes recounseled, your flatereres, that counseile yow certeyn thinges pryvely, and openly counseile yow the contrarie, the yonge also, that counseile yow to make werre and venge yow anon. And certes, sire, as I have sayd byfore, ye have gretly erred to have cleped such maner folk to youre conseil, whiche be now reprieved by the resouns byfore sayd. But natheles let us now descende to the purpos special. Ye schul first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes, the trouthe of this matier or this conseil nedeth nought diligently enquire, for it is wel wist whiche it ben that doon to yow this trespas and vilonye, and how many trespasoures, and in what maner thay han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vilonye. And after that schul ye examyne the secounde condicioun, which Tullius addith therto in this matier. Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth consentynge;<sup>34</sup> this is to sayn, who ben thay, and whiche ben thay, and how many, that consentid to this matiere, and to thy counsaill in thy wilfulness, to do hasty vengeance. And let us considere also who ben tho, and how many ben tho, that consenteden<sup>35</sup> to youre adversaries. And certes, as to the first poynt, it is wel known whiche folk ben thay that consentid to youre first wilfulness. For trewely, alle tho that counsailled yow to make sodeyn werre, beth nought youre frendes. Let us considere whiche ben tho that ye holde so gretly youre frendes, as to youre persone; for al be it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye been allooine; for certes ye have no childe but a daughter, ne ye have no bretheren, ne cosins germayns, ne noon other neigh kynrede, wherfore that youre enemyes for drede schulden stynte for to plede with you, and struye youre persone. Ye knowe also, that youre richesnes mooten in divers parties be departed; and whan every wight hath his part, thay wol take but lital reward to venge thy deth. But thynne enemyes ben thre, and have many children, bretheren, cosynges, and other neigh kynrede; and though it so were ye hadde slayn of hem tuo or thre, yet dwellen there y-nowe to wreke here deth and sle thi persone. And though so were that youre kynrede were more sekir and stedefast than the kynrede of youre adversaries, yit natheles youre kynrede nis but a fer<sup>36</sup> kynrede, and lital sib to yow, and the kyn of youre enemyes ben neigh sibbe to hem. And certes, as in that, here condicioun is bet than youre. Thanne let us considere also if the counseilynge of hem that counseiled yow to take sodeyn vengeance, whethir it acorde to resoun. And certes, ye knowe wel, nay; for as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance upon no wight, but the juggle that hath juridicioun of it, whan it is y-graunted him to take thilke vengeance hastily, or attemperey, as the lawe requireth. And yit moreover of thilke word that Tullius clepeth con-

<sup>34</sup> Consentynge. The Harl. Ms. reads *covetynges*, by an error of the scribe, as appears by the sequel.

<sup>35</sup> *Consenteden*. I have restored this reading from Ms. Lansd. and the French original, instead of the reading of the Harl. Ms., *that ben conseilours*.

<sup>36</sup> *A fer*. This is Tyrwhitt's reading, which seems to agree better with the context than the reading of the Harl. Ms., *lital*.



sentynge, thou schalt considre, if thy might and thy power may consente and suffice to thy wilfulness and to thy counsellours. And certes, thou maist wel say, that nay; for sicurly, as for to speke properly, we may doo no thing but oonly oon thing which we may do rightfully; and certes rightfully may ye take no vengeance, as of youre owne auctorite. Than may ye se that youre power consentith not, ne accordith not, with youre wilfulness.

"Let us now examyne the thridde poynt, that Tullius clepeth consequente. Thou schalt understonde, that the vengeance that thou purposiddest for to take, is consequent, and therof folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre, and other damages withoute nombre, of whiche we be not war, as at this tyme. And as touching the fourthe poynt, that Tullius clepeth engendrynge, thou schalt considre that this wrong which that is doon to the, is engendred of the hate of thin enemies, and of the vengeance takinge up that wolde engendre another vengeance, and moche sorwe and wastynge of riches, as I sayde. Now, sire, as to the poynt that Tullius clepeth causes, whiche that is the laste poynt, thou schalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeyn causes, whiche that clerkes calle *oriens*, and *efficiens*, and *causa longinqua*, and *causa propinqua*, this is to say, the fer cause, and the neigh cause. For the fer cause is almighty God, that is cause of all thinges; the nere cause is the three enemies; the cause accidental was hate; the causes materiales been the fyve woundes of thy daughter; the cause formal is the maner of here werkyng, that brought in ladders and clombe in at thin wyndowes; the cause final was for to sle thy daughter; it letted nought in as moche as was in hem. But for to speke of the fer cause, as to what ende thay schal come, or what schal finally betyde of hem in this cause, can I not deme, but by coniectyng and by supposyng; for we schul suppose, that thay schul come to a wikked ende, bycause that the book of Decrees saith: Seelden, or with gret peyne, ben causes i-brought to a good ende, when thay ben evyl bygonne.

"Now, sire, if men wolde axe me, why that God suffrede men to do yow this wrong and vilonye, certes I can not wel answer, as for no sothfastnes. For the apostil saith, that the sciences and the juggements of oure Lord God almyghty ben ful deepe, ther may no man comprehendre &c serchen hem sufficiantly. Natheles, by certeyn presumpciouns and coniectinges, I holde and belyeve, that God, which that is ful of justice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this to bityde, by juste cause reasonable. Thy name, Melibé, is to say, a man that drynketh hony. Thou hast y-dronke so moche hony of sweete temperel riches and delices and honours of this world, that thou art dronke, and hast forgete Jhesu Crist thy creatour; thou hast not doon him such honour and reverence as the oughte to doone, ne thou hast nought wel taken keep to the wordes of Ovide,<sup>37</sup> that saith, Under the hony of thy goodes of thy body is hid the venym that sleeth

<sup>37</sup> Ovide. I presume the allusion is to *Ovid. Amor. lib. i. el. viii. 104.*

Impia snb dulci melle venena latent.

thi soule. And Salamen saith, If thou have founde hony, etc of it that sufficeth; for if thou etc of it out of mesure, thou schalt spewe, and be nedey and povere. And peraventure Crist hath the in despit, and hath torned away from the his face and his eeres of misericorde; and also he hath suffred that thou hast ben punysshed in the maner that thou hast i-trespased. Thou hast doon synne against oure Lord Crist, for certes thi three enemyes of mankynde, that is to say, thy flessche, the feend, and the world, thou hast y-suffred hem to entre into thin herte wilfully, by the wyndow of thy body, and hast nought defended thyself sufficiently agayns here assautes,<sup>38</sup> and here temptaciouns, so that thay have woundid thi soule in fyve places, this is to sayn, the dedly synnes that ben entred into thin herte by thy fyve wittes; and in the same maner oure Lord Crist hath wolde and suffred, that thy three enemyes ben entred into thin hous by the wyndowes, and have i-woundid thi daughter in the forsayde maner."

"Certes," quod Melibeus, "I se wel that ye enforce yow moche by wordes to overcome me, in such manere, that I schal not venge me on myn enemyes, schewynge me the perils and the yveles that mighten falle of this vengeance. But who so wolde considre in alle vengeancees the periles and the yveles that mighten folwe of vengeancees takynge, a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm; for by vengeance takynge be wikked men destroyed and dissevered fro the goode men. And thay that have wille to wikkednes, restreignen here wikked purpos, when thay seen the punysshynge and the chastisyng of trespasours.

"And yit<sup>39</sup> say I more, that right so as a sengle persone synneth in taking of vengeance, right so the juggle synneth if he doo no vengeance of him that it hath deserved. For Senec saith thus: That maister, he saith, is good that reprovet schrewes.<sup>40</sup> And as Cassoder saith: A man dredeth to doon outrage, when he woot and knoweth that it displeseth to the jugges and the soveraynes. And another saith: The juggle that dredeth to demen right, maketh schrewes. And seint Poul thapostoil saith in his epistil, when he writeth to the Romayns: The jugges bere not the spere withoute cause, but they beren it to punyssh the schrewes and mysdoers, and for to defende with the goode men. If ye wol take vengeance on youre enemyes, ye schul retourne or have recours to the jugges, that have juridicoun upon hem, and he schal punissche hem, as the lawe axeth and requireth." "A!" quod

<sup>38</sup> *Assautes*. The Harl. Ms. reads *ascensis*, and the Lands. Ms. *defautes*. The reading here adopted from Tyrwhitt is authorised by the French original, which has *assauz*.

<sup>39</sup> *And yit*. The commencement of this paragraph, which is very necessary for the sense, is not found in Chaucer's translation in any of the mss. In the French original it stands thus:—"Et à ce respont dame Prudence, 'Certes' dist-elle, 'je t'octroye que de vengeance vient molt de maux et de biens, mais vengeance n'appartient pas à un chascun, fors seulement aux juges, et à ceux qui ont la juridiction sur les malfaitteurs. Et dit plus que,'" &c

<sup>40</sup> *For Senec . . . schrewes*. I give this reading, adopted by Tyrwhitt, instead of that of the Harl. Ms., *He that maister is, he saith good to reprove schrewes*; which neither offers any apparent sense, nor represents the French original, "*Car Senesque dit, Cellui nuit aux bons qui epargne les mauvis.*"

Melibeus, "this vengeance liketh me no thing. I bythenke me now, and take heed, how fortune hath norissched me fro my childhode, and hath holpe me to passen many a strayt passage; now wol I aske her that sche schal, with Goddes help, helpe me my schame for to venge."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "if ye wil wirche by my counseil, ye schul not assaye fortune by no maner way, ne schul not lene ne bowe unto hire, after the word of Senec; for thinges that beth folly, and that beth in hope of fortune, schul never come to good ende. And as the same Senek saith: The more cleer and the more schynynge that fortune is, the more brutil, and the sonner brketh sche. So trusteth nought in hire, for sche is nought stedefast ne stable: for whan thou wenest or stowedest to be most seur of hir help, sche wol fayle and deceyve the. And wher as ye say, that fortune hath norissched yow fro youre childhode, I say that in so mochel ye schul the lasse truste in hire and in hire witte. For Senek saith: What man that is norissched by fortune, sche maketh him to gret a fool. Now siththe ye desire and axe vengeance, and the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and by-forne the juggle ne liketh yow nought, and the vengeance that is doon<sup>41</sup> in hope of fortune, is perilous and uncerteyn, thanne haveth ye noon other remedye, but for to have recours unto the soveraigne juggle, that vengith alle vilonies and wronges; and he schal venge yow, after that himself witnesseth, where as he saith: Leveth the vengeance to me, and I schal yelde it." Melibeus answerd: "If I ne venge me nought of the vilonye that men have doon unto me, I schal sonnere warne hem that han doon to me that vilonye, and alle othere, to doo me another vilonye. For it is writen: If thou tak no vengeance of an old vilonye, thou somnest thin adversarie do the a newe vilonye. And also, for my suffraunce, men wolde do me so moche vilonye, that I mighte neither bere it ne susteyne it; and so schulde I be put over lowe. For men say, in moche sufferynge schal many thinges falle unto the, whiche thou schalt nought now suffre." "Certes," quod Prudence, "I graunte yow wel, that over mochil suffraunce is nought good, but yit folwith it nought therof, that every persone to whom men doon vilonye, take of it vengeance. For it appertieneth and lengtheth al only to the jugges; for thay schul venge the vilonyes and injuries; and therefore the auctorites that ye have sayd above been onoly understonden in the jugges; for whan thay suffre to mochil the wronges and the vilonyes that ben doon withoute punysshing, thay somme not a man only to doo newe wronges, but thay comaunde it. Also the wise man saith: The juggle that correcteth not the synnere, comaundith him and byddith him doon another synne. And the jugges and soveraignes mighten in here lond so mochil suffren of the schrewes and mysdoeres, that thay schulde by such suffraunce, by proces of tyme, wexen of such power and might, that thay schulde put out

the jugges and the soveraignes from here places, and atte laste do hem lese here lordschipes. But lete us now putte, that ye han leve to venge yow; I say ye ben nought of might ne power as now to venge yow; for if ye wolde make comparisoun as to the might of youre adversaries, ye schulde fynde in many thinges, that I have i-schedwed yow er this, that here condicioun is bettre than yourres, and therefore say I, that it is good as now, that ye suffre and be pacient.

"Forthermore ye knowe that after the comune sawe, it is a woodnesse, a man to stryve with a strengre or a more mighty man than him selven is; and for to stryve with a man of evenestrength, that is to say, with as strong a man as he is, it is peril; and for to stryve with a weykere, is is folye; and therefore schulde a man fe stryvyng as moche as he mighte. For Salamon seith: It is a gret worschipe, a man to kepe him fro noyse and stryf. And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art, do the grevaunce, studie and busye the rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge the. For Senec saith, he putteth him in a gret peril that stryvet with a gretter man than he him selven is. And Catoun<sup>42</sup> saith: If a man of heiber estat or degré, or more mighty then thou, do the anoye or grevaunce, suffre him; for he that hath oones don the a greivaunce, may another tyme relieve the and helpe the.

"Yit sette I a caas, ye have both might and licence for to venge yow, I say ther ben ful many thinges that schulde restreigne yow of vengeance takynge, and make yow to encline to suffre, and to have pacience of the wronges that han ben doon to yow. First and forward, ye wol conside the defautes that been in youre owne persone, for whiche defautes God hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun, as I have sayd yow herbyfore. For the poete saith, We ougthen paciently to suffre the tribulacioun that cometh to us, whan that we thenken and consideren, that we han deserved to have hem. And seint Gregorie saith, that whan a man considereth wel the nombre of his defautes, and of his synnes, the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffereth semen the lasse unto him. And in as moche as him thinkith his synnes the more hevye and grevous, in so moche his peyne is the lighter and the more esier unto him. Also ye ougthen to encline and bowe youre herte, to take the pacience of oure Lord Jhesu Christ, as saith seint Peter in his Epistles. Jhesu Crist, he seith, hath suffred for us, and given ensample unto every man to folwe and sewe him, for he dede never synne, ne never cam vileyns worde out of his mouth. Whan men cursed him, he cursed hem not; and whan men bete him, he manased hem not. Also the grete pacience which that seintes that been in Paradyz han had in tribulaciouns that thay have had and suffred withoute desert or gult, ougthe moche stire yow to pacience. Forthermore, ye schul enforce yow to have pacience, consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel while enduren, and soon passed ben and goon, and the joye that a man secheth to have

<sup>41</sup> After the lawe... that is doon. These words are omitted in the Harl. Ms. by an evident error of the scribe, who skipped from the first *doon* to the second. They have their representative in the original French, and are here given from the Lands. Ms.

<sup>42</sup> *Cotoun*. Lib. iv. dist. 40:—

"Cede locum lesus, fortune cede potentis;  
Lædere qui potuit, prodesset aliquando valebit."



by pacience in tribulaciounis is perdurable; after that the apostil seith in his Epistil: the joye of God, he saith, is perdurable, that is to say, evermore lastynge. Also trothew and believeth stedefastly, that he is not wel norisched and taught, that can nought have pacience, or wil nought receyve pacience. For Salamon saith, that the doctrine and the witte of a man is i-knowe by pacience. And in another place he seith: He that hath pacience governeth him by gret prudence. And the same Salamon seith, that the wrathful and the angry man maketh noyses, and the pacient man attempereth and stilleth him. He seith also: It is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong. And he that may have his lordschipe of his oughne herte, is more worth and more to preise than he that by his force and by his strengthe taketh grete citees. And therefore saith seint Jame in his Epistil, that pacience is a gret vertu of perfeccioun."

"Certes," quod Melibeus, "I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a grete vertue of perfeccioun;<sup>43</sup> but every man may not have the perfeccioun that ye sekyn, ne I am not of the nombre of right parfyt men; for myn herte may never be in pees, unto the tyme it be venged. And al be it so, that it was a gret peril to myne enemyes to don me a vilonye in takinge vengeance upon me, yit taken that noon heede of the peril, but fulfilden here wikked desir and her courage; and therefore me thenketh men oughten nought repreve me, though I putte me in a lital peril for to venge me, and though I do a gret excesse, that is to say, that I venge oon outrage by another."

"A" quod dame Prudence, "ye say youre wille and as yow likith; but in noon caas in the world a man ne schulde nought doon outrage ne excesse for to venge him. For Cassidore saith, as evel doth he that avengith him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage. And therefore ye schul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to sayn, by the lawe, and nought by excesse, ne by outrage. And also if ye wil venge yow of the outrage of youre adversaries, in other maner than right comaundeth, ye synnen. And therefore saith Senec, that a man schal never venge schrewednes by schrewednes. And if ye say that right axeth a man to defende violence by vyolence, and fightyng by fightyng; certes, ye say soth, whan the defence is doon anon withouten intervalle, or withouten taryng or dilay, for to defenden him, and nought for to venge him. And it bihoveth a man putte such attemperance in his defence, that men have no cause ne matiere to repreven him, that defendith him, of excesse and outrage. Pardé! ye knowe wel, that ye make no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; and so semeth it, that ye have no wille to do youre wille attemperelly; and therefore me thenkith that pacience is good. For Salamon saith, that he that is not pacient schal have gret harm." "Certes," quod Melibeus, "I graunte you wel, that whan

a man is impacient and wroth of that that toucheth him nought, and that aperteyneth nought to him, though it harme him it is no wonder.<sup>44</sup> For the lawe saith, that he is coupable that entremettith him or melleth him with such thing, as aperteyneth not unto him. Dan Salamon saith, He that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lik him that takith the straunge hound<sup>45</sup> by the eeres; for right as he that takith a straunge hound by the eeres is other while biten with the hound, right in the same wise, it is resoun that he have harm, that by his impacience melleth him of the noise of another man, where it aperteyneth not to him. But ye schul knowe wel, that this dede, that is to sayn, myn disease and my grief, toucheth me right neigh. And therefore, though I be wroth, it is no mervayle; and (savynge your grace) I can not see that it mighte gretly harme me, though I toke vengeance, for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemyes been; and wel knowe ye, that by money and by havynge of grete possessions, ben alle the thinges of this world governede. And Salamon saith, that alle thinges obeyen to moneye."

Whan Prudence had herd hire nounsbond avante him of his richesse and of his moneye,<sup>46</sup> dispraisynge the power of his adversaries, tho sche spak and sayde in this wyse: "Certes, deere sire, I graunte yow that ye ben riche and mighty, and that richesse is good to hem that wel have geten it, and that wel conne use it. For right as the body of a man may not be withoute the soule, no more may a man lye withoute temperel goodes, and by richesse may a man gete him greet frendschipe. And therefore saith Pamphilles:<sup>47</sup> If a neethurdes daughter, he saith, be riche, sche may cheese of a thousand men, which sche wol take to hir housbonde; for of a thousand men oon wil not forsake hir ne refuse hire. And this Pamphilles seith also: If thou be right happy, that is to sayn, if thou be right riche, thanne schalt thou fynde a gret nombre of felawes and frendes; and if thy fortune change, that thou waxe pore, fare wel frendschipe, for thou schalt ben aloone withouten eny compagne, but if it be the compaignye of pore folk. And yit saith this Pamphilles moreover, that they that ben thral and bonde of linage, schullen ben maad worthy and noble by richesse. And right so as by richesse ther comen many goodes, right so by povert comen ther many harmes and yvels; for grete poverte constraigneth a man to doon many yvels.<sup>48</sup> And therefore clepeth Cassidore povert

<sup>44</sup> of that . . . no wonder. This passage is omitted in the Harl. Ms., but it is restored from the Lands. Ms., supported by the French original.

<sup>45</sup> the strange hound. The word *strange* is omitted in the Harl. and Lansd. Mss., the latter of which is somewhat confused here. It is, however, evidently necessary; the French has "le chien qui ne connoist." In the next line the Harl. Ms. reads the *strong hound*.

<sup>46</sup> Whan Prudence . . . his moneye. This is also omitted in the Harl. Ms. by an oversight of the scribe, who passed on from the word *moneye* at the end of the preceding paragraph.

<sup>47</sup> Pamphilles. This poem has already been mentioned in the note on line 11422. Tyrwhitt has given from a Bodleian Ms. the lines here alluded to,—

Dummodo sit dives enjdsam nata bubulei,  
Eligit e mille quemlibet illa virum, etc.

<sup>48</sup> and yvels . . . many yvels. The passage, omitted in the Harl. Ms., is restored from the Lansd. Ms.

<sup>43</sup> Certes. . . perfeccioun. These words have been omitted by the scribe of the Harl. Ms., whose eye ran on from the word *perfeccioun* which closes the preceding paragraph to the words *but every man, etc.* They are here restored from the Lansd. Ms.



the moder of<sup>49</sup> ruyn, that is to sayn, the moder of overthrowng or fallynge doun. And therefore saith Pieres Alphons: Oon of the grettest adversités of this world, is whan a freeman by kyn or burthe is constreyned by povert to eten the almes of his enemyes. And the same seith Innocent in oon of his bookes, that sorweful and unhappy is the condicioun of a povere begger, for if he axe nought his mete, he deyeth for hunger, and if he axe, he deyeth for schame; and algates the necessité constreigneth hym to axe. And therefore saith Salamon; that bettre is it to dey, than to have such povert. And as the same Salamon saith: Bettir is to deye on bitter deth, than for to lyve in such a wyse.

“By these resonns that I have sayd unto yow, and by many another reson that I know and couthe say, I graunte yow that riches ben goode to hem that gete hem wel, and to hem that hem wel usen; and therefore wol I schewe yow how ye schulde bere yow in getyng of riches, and in what maner ye schulde use hem. First, ye schulde gete hem withoute gret desir, by good leysir, sokynge, and nought over hastily; for a man that is to desiryng for to gete riches, abandoneth him first to thefte and to alle othere yveles. And therefore saith Salamon: He that hastith him to bisyly to waxe riche, schal ben noon innocent. He saith also, that the riches that hastily cometh to a man, soone and lightly goth and passeth for a man, but that riches that cometh alway litel and litel, waxeth alway and multiplieth. And, sire, ye schal gete riches by youre witte and by youre travayle, unto youre profyt, and that withoute wrong or harm doyng to any other persone. For the lawe saith, that no man maketh him self riche, that doth harm to another wight; that is to say, that nature defendeth and forbedith by right, that no man make him self riche unto the harm of another persone. Tullius saith, that no sorwe ne drede of deth, ne no thing that may falle to a man, is so moche ageinst nature, as a man to encrease his oughe profyt to the harm of another man. And though the grete men and the riche men gete riches more lightly than thon, yit schalt thou not be ydil ne slowe to thy profyt, for thou schalt in alle wise flee ydilnes. For Salamon saith, that ydelnesse techith a man to do many yveles. And the same Salamon saith, that he that travaileth and besiet him to tilye the lond, schal ete breed; but he that is ydil, and casteth him to no busynesse ne occupacioun, schal falle into povert, and deye for hunger. And he that is ydel and slough, can never fynde him tyme for to do his profyt. For ther is a versifiour saith, the ydel man excuseth him in wynter, because of the grete colde, and in somer by enchesoun of the grete hete. For these causes, saith Catoun, waketh,<sup>50</sup> and enclinet yow nought over moche for to slepe, for over moche reste norischeth and causeth many vices. And therefore saith saint Jerom: Doth some goode deedes, that the

devel, which that is oure enemy, ne fynde yow unoccupied; for the devel ne takith not lightly unto his werkes suche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes. Thanne thus in getyng of riches ye moot flee ydelnesse. And afterward ye schul use the riches, the whiche ye han geten by youre witte and by youre travaile, in such a maner, that men holde yow not skarce ne to sparyng, ne to fool large, that is to say, over large a spender. For right as men blamen an averous man, bycause of his skarseté and chyncherie, in the same manere is he to blame, that spendeth over largely. And therefore saith Catoun: Use, he saith, thy riches that thou hast y-geten in such a manere, that men have no matier ne cause to calle the neither wrecche ne chynche; for it is gret schame to a man to have a pover herte and a riche purse. He saith also: The goodes that thou hast i-geten, use hem by mesure, that is to say, spende hem mesurably; for thay that follyly wasten and spenden the goodes that thay have, whan thay have no more propre of here oughe, thay schape hem to take the goodes of another man. I say thanne ye schul flee avarice, usynge youre riches in such manere, that men seyn nought that youre riches<sup>51</sup> be buried, but that ye have hem in youre might and in youre weldyng. For the wise man reprovet the averous man, and saith thus in tuo versus: Wherto and why burieth a man his goodes by his gret avarice, and knowith wel, that needs most he deye, for deth is the ende of every man, as in this present lif? and for what cause or enchesoun joyneth he him, or knetteth him so fast unto his goodes, that alle his wittes mowe nought dissever him, or departe him from his goodes, and knowith wel, or oughe knowe wel, that whan he is deed, he schal no thing bere with him out of this world? And therefore seith saint Austyn, that the averous man is likned unto helle, that the more that it wolwith, the more it desireth to swolve and devour. And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be cleped an averous man or chynche, as wel schulde ye kepe yow and governe yow, in such a wise, that men clepe yow nought fool large. Therefore saith Tullius: The goodes, he saith, of thin hous schulde nought ben hidde ne kepte so clos, but that thay might ben opened by pité and by bonairété;<sup>52</sup> that is to sayn, to give hem part that han gret neede; ne thy goodes schul not be so open, to be every mannes goodes.

“Aftirward, in getyng of youre riches, and in usynge hem, ye schul alway have three things in youre herte, that is to say, oure lord God, conscience, and good name. First, ye schul have God in youre herte, and for no riches ye schul in no manere doo no thing which might displese God that is your creatour and youre maker. For after the word of Salamon, it is better to have litil good with love of God, than to have mochil good and tresor, and lese the love of his lord God. And the prophete saith:

<sup>49</sup> the moder of. These three words are omitted in the Harl. Ms., by an oversight of the scribe. The original is *mes des crims*, mother of crimes.

<sup>50</sup> waketh. “I can find nothing nearer to this in *Cato* than the maxim, lib. iii. dist. 7, ‘*Segnitium fugito*.’ For the quotations from the same author a few lines below, see lib. iv. dist. 17, and lib. iii. dist. 23.”—*Tyrwhitt*.

<sup>51</sup> men seyn nought that youre riches. These words, omitted in the Harl. Ms., are restored from the Lansd. Ms.  
<sup>52</sup> bonairété. This seems to be altogether an English form of the word, and occurs elsewhere in English writers. The French had only *debonnaire*. Tyrwhitt here reads *debonairété*, and the French original has “*que pitie et debonnaireté ne les puissent ouvrir*.”

Better is to ben a good man, and have litel good and tresore, than to ben holden a schrewe, and have gret riches. And yit say I forthermore, that ye schuln alway doon youre businesse to gete yow riches, so that ye gete hem with good conscience. And the apostil seith, ther nys thing in this world of which we schuln have so gret joye, as whan oure conscience bereth us good wittnes. And the wise man saith: The substance of a man is ful good, whan synne is not in his conscience. Afterward, in getyng of youre richesses, and in usyng of hem, you most have gret busynesse and gret diligence, that youre good name be alway kept and conserved. For Salamon saith: Better it is, and more aveylith a man, for to have a good name, than for to have gret riches. And therefore he saith in another place: Do gret diligence, saith Salamon, in kepyng of thy friend, and of thy good name, for it schal lenger abyde with the, than eny tresor, be it never so precious. And certes, he schulde nought be cleped a gentil man, that after God and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne doth his diligence and busynesse, to kepe his good name. And Cassidore saith, that it is signe of a good man and a gentil, or of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth or desireth to have a good name. And therefore saith seint Augustyn, that ther ben two thinges that ben necessarie and needful; and that is good conscience and good loos; that is to sayn, good conscience in thin oughne persone in-ward, and good loos of thin neghebor out-ward. And he that trusteth him so moche in his good conscience, that he despiseth and settith at nought his good name or loos, and rekketh nought though he kepe not his good name, nys but a cruel churl.

"Sire, now have I schewed yow how ye schulde doon in getyng of good and riches, and how ye schulde use hem; I see wel that for the trust that ye have in youre riches, ye wolde meve werre and bataille. I counseile yow that ye bygynne no werre in trust of youre riches, for thay suffisen not werre to mayntene. And therefore saith a philosophre: That man that desireth and wol algate have werre, schal never have sufficeaunce; for the richere that he is, the gretter dispenses most he make, if he wol have worschipe or victorie. And Salamon saith: The gretter riches that a man hath, the moo despendours he hath. And, deere sire, al be it so that for youre riches ye mowe have moche folk, yit byhoveth it not ne it is not good to bygynne werre, ther as ye may in other maner have pees unto youre worschipe and profyt; for the victorie of batailles that ben in this world, lith not in gret nombre or multitude of poeple, ne in vertu of man, but it lith in the wille and in the hond of oure lord God almighty. And Judas Machabens, which was Goddes knight, whan he schulde fighte ageinst his adversaries, that hadde a gretter nombre and a gretter multitude of folk and strengere than was the poeple of this Machabé, yit he reconforted his litel poeple, and sayde ryght in this wise: As lightly, quod he, may oure lord God almighty give victory to fewe folk, as to many folk;<sup>53</sup> for the victorie of ba-

<sup>53</sup> as to many folk. These words are omitted in the Harl. Ms., evidently by a mere oversight of the scribe.

tailles cometh nought by the grete nombre of poeple, but it cometh fro oure lord God of heven. And, deere sire, for as moche as ther is no man certeyn, if it be worthi that God give him victorie or nought, after that that Salamon saith, therefore every man schulde gretly drede werres to bygynne. And bycause that in batailles falle many mervayles and periles, and happeth other while, that as soone is the grete man slayn as the litel man; and, as it is written in the secoude book of Kynges, the deedes of batayles be adventurous, and no thing certeyn, for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another; and for ther is gret peril in werre, therefore schulde a man flee and eschewe werre in as moche as a man may goodly. For Salamon saith: He that loveth peril, schal falle in peril."

After that dame Prudens hadde spoke in this maner, Melibé answerde and sayde: "I se wel, dame, that by youre faire wordes and by youre resouns, that ye have schewed me, that the werre liketh yow no thing; but I have not yit herd youre counsel, how I schall doo in this neede." "Certes," quod sche, "I counseile yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye have pees with hem. For seint Jame saith in his Epistles, that by concord and pees, the smale ryches wexen grete, and by debaat and discord the gret richesses fallen down. And ye knowe wel, that oon of the moste grettest and sovereign thinges that is in this world, is unité and pees. And therefore saith oure lord Jhesu Crist to his aposteles in this wise: Wel happy and blessed be thay that loven and purchacen pees, for thay ben called children of God."<sup>54</sup> "A!" quod Melibé, "now se I wel, that ye loven not myn honour, ne my worschipe. Ye knowe wel that myne adversaries han bygonne this debate and brige by here outrage, and ye see wel that thay require ne praye me not of pees, ne thay askyn nought to be reconseild; wol ye thanne that I goo and meke me unto hem, and erie hem mercy? For sothe that were not my worschipe; for right as men seyn, that over gret pryde engendreth dispisyng, so fareth it by to gret humbledt or mekenes." Thanne bygan dame Prudence to make semblant of wraththe, and sayde: "Certes, sire, save youre grace, I love youre honour and youre profyt, as I doo myn owne, and ever have doon; ye ne mowe noon other seyn; and yit if I hadde sayd, ye scholde han purchaced pees and the reconciliacioun, I ne hadde not moche mystake in me, ne seyd amys. For the wise man saith: The discencioun bigynneth by another man, and the reconcilyng bygynneth by thy self. And the prophete saith: Flee schame and schrewednesse and doo goodnesse; seeke pees and folwe it, as moche as in the is. Yet seith he not, that ye schul rather pursewe to youre adversaries for pees, than thei schul to yow; for I knowe wel that ye be so hard-herted, that ye wil doo no thing for me; and Salamon saith: He that is over hard-herted, atte laste he schal myshappe and mystyde."

Whan Melibé had seyn dame Prudence make

<sup>54</sup> God. The Harl. Ms. reads *Crist*; but the reading adopted in the text is not only supported by the Lansd. Ms. and the original French, but by the words of St. Matthew v. 9: "Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur."



semblance of wraththe, he sayde in this wise: "Dame, I pray yow that ye be not displeyd of thinges that I say, for ye knoweth wel that I am angry and wroth, and that is no wonder; and thay that ben wroth, wot not wel what thay doon, ne what thay say. Therefore the prophete saith, that troublit eyen have no cleer sight. But sayeth and counsaileth me forth as yow liketh, for I am redy to doo right as ye wol desire. And if ye reprove me of my folye, I am the more holde to love yow and to prayse yow. For Salamon saith, that he that repreveth him that doth folie, he schal fynde greter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes." Thanne sayde dame Prudence: "I make no semblant of wraththe ne of anger, but for youre grete profyt. For Salamon saith: He is more worth that reproveth or chydeth a fool for his folie, schewyng him semblant of wraththe, than he that supporteth him and prayseth him in his mysdoing, and laugheth at his folie. And this same Salamon saith afterward, that by the sorrowful visage of a man, that is to sayn, by sory and hevvy countenance of a man, the fool correteth himself and amendeth." Thanne sayde Melibeus: "I schal not conne answer to so many faire resouns as ye putten to me and schewen; sayeth schortly youre wille and youre counseil, and I am al redy to fulfill and perfourme it."

Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hire counsaill and hire wille unto him and sayde: "I counseile yow," quod sche, "above alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwen God and yow, and beth reconciled unto him and to his grace, for as I have sayd yow herbiforn, God hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun and disease<sup>55</sup> for youre synnes; and if ye do as I say yow, God wol sende youre adversaries unto yow, and make hem falle at youre feet, al redy to doo youre wille and youre comaundment. For Salamon saith: Whan the condicioun of man is plesant and likyng to God, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreigneth hem to biseke him of pees and of grace. And I pray yow let me speke with youre adversaries in privé place, for thay schul not knowe it by youre wille or youre assent;<sup>56</sup> and thanne, whan I knowe here wille and here entent, I may counseile yow the more seurlly."

"Dame," quod Melibeus, "doth youre wille and youre likyng, for I putte me holly in youre disposicioun and ordinaunce." Thanne dame Prudence, whan sche seih the good wille of hir housbond, sche delibered and took avis by hir self, thankyng how sche mighte bringe this neede unto good conclusioun and to a good ende. And whan sche saugh hire tyme, sche sente for these adversaries to come unto hire into a privé place, and schewed wysly unto hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that ben in werre; and sayde to hem, in goodly manere, how that hem aughte to have gret repentaunce of the injurie and wrong that thay hadde doon to Melibé hire lord, and unto

hire and hire daughter. And whan thay herden the goodly wordes of dame Prudence, they were tho surprised and ravyssched, and hadden so gret joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. "A lady!" quod thay, "ye have schewed unto us the blessing of swetes, after the sawe of David the prophete; for the reconcusyng, which we be nought worthy to have in no manere, but we oughten require it with gret contricioun and humilité, ye of youre grete goodnes have presented unto us. Now we se wel, that the science of Salamon is ful trewe: he saith, that swete wordes multiplen and encreseen frendes, and maken schrewes to ben debonaire and meke. Certes," quod thay, "we putten oure deede, and al oure matier and cause, al holly in youre good wille, and ben redy to obeye to the speche and to the comaundement of my lord Melibé. And therefore, deere and benigne lady, we pray yow and byseke yow, as meekely as we conne and may, that it like to yowre grete goodnes to fulfill in deede youre goodliche wordes. For we considere and knowleche wel that we have offended and greved my lord Melibé out of resoun and out of mesure, so ferforth that we ben nought of power to make his amendes; and therefore we oblie us and bynde us and oure frendes, for to doo al his wille and his comaundmentz. But peradventure he hath such hevynes and such wraththe to usward, bycause of oure offence, that he wol enjoyne us such peyne as we mow not bere ne susteyne; and therefore, noble lady, we biseke to youre wommanly pité to take such avysement in this neede, that we, ne oure frendes, ben not disherited and destroyed thurgh oure folye." "Certes," quod dame Prudence, "it is an hard thing, and right a perilous, that a man put him al outrely in the arbitracioun and judgement and the might and power of his enemyes. For Salamon saith: Leeveth and giveth credence to that that I schal say: I say, quod he, geve peple and governours of holy chirche,<sup>57</sup> to thy sone, to thi wyf, to thy frend, ne to thy brother, ne geve thou never might ne maystry of thy body, whil thou lyvest. Now, sith he defendith that a man schulde not give to his brother, ne to his frend, the might of his body, by a strengier resoun he defendeth and forbedith a man to give his body to his enemye. But natheles, I counseile yow that ye mystruste nought my lord; for I wot wel and knowe verraily, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteys, and no thing desirous ne covetyous of good ne richesse: for there is no thing in this world that he desireth, save only worschipe and honour. Forthmore I knowe, and am right seure, that he wol no thing doo in this neede withoute counsaill of me; and I schal so worche in this cause, that by the grace of oure lord God ye schul be reconciled unto us." Thanne sayde thay, with oon voys: "Worschippful lady, we putte us and oure goodes al fully in youre wille and disposicioun, and ben redy to come, what day that it like yow and unto youre noblesse to limite us or assigne us, for to make

<sup>55</sup> *Tribulacioun and disease.* The Harl. Ms. omits the two first words, which are given from the Lands. Ms. The French original has *ceste tribulacion only.*

<sup>56</sup> *For thay schul not knowe. . . . youre assent.* "Sans faire semblant que ce viengne de vostre consentement."

<sup>57</sup> *I say, quod he, geve peple and governours of holy chirche.* These words are not found in the Lands. Ms., and are omitted by Tyrwhitt. They are confused; but the word *head* or *ear* appears to be omitted after *geve.* The French has, "Car Salmon dit, diez moy, dist-il, tous peuples, toutes gens et gouverneurs de gloire, à ton filz," &c.



oure obligacioun and bond, as strong as it liketh to youre goodnes, that we mowe fulfill the wille of yow and of my lord Melibé." Whan dame Prudence had herd the answer, of these men, sche bad hem go agayn pryvely, and sche retourned to hir lord Melibé, and tolde him how sche fond his adversaries ful repentant, knowlechinge ful lowly here synnes and trespasses, and how thay were redy to suffre alle payne, requiring and praying him of mercy and pité.

Thanne saide Melibeus, "He is wel worthy to have pardoun and forgovenes of his synne, that excusith not his synne, but knowlecheth and repentith him, axinge indulgence. For Senek saith: Ther is the remission and forgovenes, wher as the confessioun is; for confessioun is neighbor to innocence. And he saith in another place, He that hath schame of his synne, knowlechith it. And therefore I assente and conferme me to have pees, but it is good that we doo it nought withoute assent and the wille of oure frendes." Thanne was Prudence right glad and jolyf, and sayde: "Certes, sire," quod sche, "ye ben wel and goodly avysed; for right as by the counsail and assent and help of youre frendes, ye have be stired to venge yow and make werre, right so withoute here counseil schul ye nought acorde yow ne have pees with youre adversaries. For the lawe saith: Ther nys no thing so good by way of kinde, as thing to be unbounde by him that it was bounde." And thanne dame Prudence, withoute delay or taryinge, sente anon messageres for here kyn and for here olde frendes, whiche that were trewe and wyse; and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibé, of this matier, as it is above expressed and declared; and praide hem that thay wolde give here avys and counseil what best were to doon in this matiere. And whan Melibeus frendes hadde take here avys and deliberacioun of the forsayde matier, and hadden examyned it by greet besynes and gret diligence, they gafé him ful counsail to have pees and reste, and that Melibeus schulde with good hert receyve his adversaries forforgives and mercy.

And whan dame Prudence had herd thassent of hir lord Melibeus, and counseil of his frendes acorde with hire wille and hire entencioun, sche was wonderly glad in herte, and sayde: "Ther is an olde proverbe that saith, the goodnesse that thou maist do this day abyde not ne delaye it nought unto to morwe; and therefore I counseile yow ye sende youre messageres, whiche that ben discrete and wise, unto youre adversaries, tellynge hem on youre bihalve, that if thay wol trete of pees and of accord, that thay schape hem withoute dilay or taryinge to come unto us." Which thing was performed in dede; and whan these trespassours and repentynge folk of here folies, that is to sayn, the adversaries of Melibé, hadden herd what the messageres sayden unto hem, thay were right glad and jolyf, and answerden ful mekely and benignely, yeldynge graces and thankinges to here lord Melibé, and to al his compaignye; and schope hem withoute delay to go with the messageres, and obeye hem to the comaundement of here lord Melibé. And right anon thay token here way to the court of Melibé, and token with hem some of

here trewe frendes, to make faith for hem, and for to ben here borwes. And whan thay were comen to the presence of Melibeus, he seyde hem thisse wordes: "It stonndith thus," quod Melibeus, "and soth it is, that ye causeles, and withouten skile and resoun, have doon gret injuries and wronges to me, and to my wyf Prudence, and to my daughter also, for ye have entred into myn hous by violence, and have doon such outrage, that alle men knowe wel that ye have deserved the deth; and therefore wil I knowe and wite of yow, whether ye wol putte the punysehment and the chastisement and the vengeance of this outrage, in the wille of me and of my wyf, dame Prudence, or ye wil not." Thanne the wisest of hem thre answerde for hem alle, and sayde: "Sire," quod he, "we knowe wel, that we be unworthy to come to the court of so gret a lord and so worthy as ye be, for we han so gretly mystake us, and have offendid and giltid in such a wise ageins youre heighe lordschipe, that trewely we have deserved the deth. But yit for the grette goodnes and debonaireté that al the world witnesseth of youre persone, we submitten us to the excellence and beniginité of youre gracious lordschipe, and ben redy to obeye to alle youre comaundementz, biscehyng yow that of youre merciable pité ye wol conside oure grette repentance and lowe submissioun, and graunte us forgivnes of oure outrage, trespas, and offence. For wel we knowen, that youre liberal grace and mercy strechen forthere into goodnesse than doth oure outrage, gilt, and trespas, into wikkednes; al be it that cursedly and dampnably we have agilt ageinst youre heighe lordschipe." Thanne Melibé took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and reseeyved here obligaciouns, and here bondes, by here othes upon here plegges and borwes, and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne unto his court for to accepte and receyve the sentence and judgement that Melibé wolde comaunde to be doon on hem, by these causes aforñ sayde; which thing ordeyned, every man returned home to his hous. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hire tyme, sche freyned and axed hire lord Melibé, what vengeance he thoughte to take upon his adversaries. To which Melibeus answerd and saide: "Certes," quod he, "I thenke and purpose me fully to desherite hem of al that ever thay have, and for to putte hem in exil for evermore."

"Certes," quod dame Prudence, "this were a cruel sentence, and mochil ageinst resoun. For ye ben riche y-nough, and have noon neede of other mennes good; and ye mighte lightly gete yow a covetous name, which is a vicious thing, and oughte to ben eschewed of every man; for after the sawe of thapostil, covetise is roote of alle harmes. And therefore it were better for yow to lese so moche good of youre oughe, than for to take of here good in this manere. For bettir it is to lese good with worschipe, than it is to wyne good with vilonye and schame. And every man oughte to do his diligence and his busynesse, to gete him a good name. And yit schal he nought only busie him in kepinge of his good name,<sup>58</sup> but he schulde enforce him

<sup>58</sup> *And yit schal . . . good name.* This passage, omitted in the Harl. Ms., is restored from the Lansd. Ms.

alway to do som thing, by which he may renovele his good name; for it is written, that the olde goode loos of a man is soone goon and passed, whan it is not newed ne renoveled. And as touchinge that ye sayn, that ye wol exile youre adversaries, that thinketh me mochil ageinst resoun, and out of mesure, considered the power that thay han gyve to yow upon here body and on hem self. And it is written, that he is worthy to lese his privelege, that mysuseth the might and the power that is gyve to him. And yit I sette the caas, ye mighte enjoyne hem that peyne by right and lawe (which I trowe ye mow nought do), I say, ye mighte nought putte it to execucioun peraventure, and thanne were it likly to torne to the werre, as it was biforn. And therefore if ye wol that men do yow obeissaunce, ye moste deme more curteisly, that is to sayn, ye moste give more esyre sentence and juggement. For it is written: He that most curteisly comaundeth, to him men most obeyen. And therefore I pray yow, that in this necessité and in this neede ye caste yow to overcome youre herte. For Senek saith, he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes. And Tullius saith: Ther is no thing so comendable in a gret lord, as whan he is debonaire and meeke, and appesith him lightly. And I pray yow, that ye wol forbere now to do vengeance, in such a manere, that youre goode name may be kept and conserved, and that men mowe have cause and matiere to prayse yow of pité and of mercy; and that ye have noon cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. For Senek saith: He overcometh in an evel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie. Wherefore I pray yow let mercy be in youre herte, to theffect and thentent, that God almighty have mercy and pité upon yow in his laste juggement. For seint Jame saith in his Epistel: juggement withoute mercy schal be doon to him, that hath no mercy of another wight."

Whan Melibé had herd the grete skiles and reouns of dame Prudens, and hir wys informacioun and techynge, his herte gan enclnye to the wille of his wyf, considering hir trewe entent, confermed him anon and consented fully to werke after hir reed and counseil, and thankid God, of whom procedeth al goodnes, that him sente a wif of so gret discrecioun. And whan the day cam that his adversaries schulden appere in his presence, he spak to hem ful goodly, and sayde in this wise: "Al be it so, that of youre pryde and heigh presumpcioun and folye, and of youre negligence and unconnyng, ye have mysbore yow, and trespassed unto me, yit forasmoche as I se and biholde youre humilité, that ye ben sory and repentaunt of youre giltes, it maystreigneth me to do yow grace and mercy. Wherefore I receyve yow to my grace, and forgeve yow outerly alle the offenses, injuries, and wronges, that ye have don to me and agayns me and myne, to this effect and to this ende, that God of his endeles mercy wole at the tyme of oure deyng forgive us oure giltes, that we have trespassed to him in this wretched world; for douteles and we ben sory and repentaunt of the synnes and giltes whiche we have trespassed inne in the sight of oure lord God, he is so free

and so merciabile, that he wil forgive us oure gultes, and bringe us to the blisse that never hath ende." Amen.

## THE PROLOGE OF THE MONKES TALE.

WHAN ended was my tale of Melibé,  
And of Prudence and hire benignité,  
Oure hoste sayde, "As I am faithful man,  
And by the precious corpus Madryan!  
I hadde lever than a barel ale  
That gode leef my wyf had herd this tale. 15380  
For sche is no thing of such pacience  
As was this Melibeus wyf dame Prudence.  
By Goddes boones! whan I bete my knaves,  
Sche bringeth me forth the grete clobbet staves,  
And crieth, 'slee the dogges everychon!  
And breke of hem bothe bak and bon!'  
And if that eny neghebour of myne  
Wol nought to my wyf in chirche enclnye,  
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,  
Whan sche comth hom, sche rampeth in my face,  
And crieth, 'false coward, wreke thy wyf! [15391  
By corpes boones! I wil have thy knyf,  
And thou schalt have my distaf and go spyne.'  
Fro day to night right thus sche wil bygynne;  
'Allas!' sche saith, 'that ever I was i-schape,  
To wedde a mylk-sop or a coward ape,  
That wil be over-lad with every wight!  
Thou darst nought stonde by thy wyves right.'  
This is my lif, but if that I wil fight;  
And out atte dore anon I most me dight, 15400  
And ellis I am lost, but if that I  
Be lik a wilde leoun fool-hardy.  
I wot wel sche wol do me sle som day  
Som neighebor, and thanne renne away.  
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,  
Al be it that I dar not hir withsonde.  
For sche is big in armes, by my faith!  
That schal he fynde that hire mysdoth or saith.  
But let us passe away fro this matiere.  
My lord the monk," quod he, 'be mery of chere,  
For ye schul telle a tale trevely. 15411  
Lo, Rowcheste stant heer faste by. [game!  
Ryde forth, myn onghne lord, brek nought oure  
But, by my trouthe, I can not youre name;  
Whether schal I calle yow my lord dan Johan,  
Or daun Thomas, or elles dan Albon?  
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kyn?  
I vow to God thou hast a ful fair skyn!  
It is a gentil pasture ther thou gost;  
Thow art not like a penaunt or a goost. 15420  
Upon my faith, thou art an officer,  
Som worthy sexteyn, or some celerer;  
For, by my fader soule, as to my doome,  
Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom,  
No pover cloysterer, ne non noyvs,  
But a governour bothe wily and wys;  
And therwithal of brawne and of bones  
A wel faying persone for the noones.  
I praye God give him confusioun,  
That first the broughte to religioun! 15430

15378. *corpus Madryan*. Urry explains this as referring to the relics of St. Materne of Treves.

15424. a *maister*. The Harl. Ms. reads an *officer*, which probably slipped in by the negligence of a scribe, who had those words on his ear from line 15421. The present reading is given from the Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt.

15426. *bothe*. I have added this word as apparently necessary to the metre, though found neither in the Harl. Ms. nor Lansd. Ms.



Thow woldist han be a trede-foul aright;  
 Haddist thou as gret a leve as thou hast might  
 To performe al thi wil in engendrure,  
 Thow haddist bigeten many a creature.  
 Allas! my werest thou so wyd a cope?  
 God gif me sorwe! and I were a pope,  
 Nought only thou, but every mighty man,  
 Though he were schore brode upon his pan,  
 Schuld han a wif; for al this world is lorn,  
 Religioun hath take up al the corn  
 Of treading, and we burel men ben schrympes;  
 Of feble trees ther cometh feble ympes.  
 This makith that oure heires ben so selender  
 And feble, that thay may not wel engender.  
 This maketh that oure wyfes wol assaye  
 Religious folk, for thay may bettre paye  
 Of Venus payementes than may we.  
 God woot, no lusscheburghes paye ye!  
 But beth nought wroth, my lorde, though I play,  
 For oft in game a soth I have herd say." 15450

This worthy monk took al in pacience,  
 And saide, "I wol doon al my diligence,  
 Als fer as souneth into honesté,  
 To telle yow a tale, or tuo or thre;  
 And if yow lust to berken hider-ward,  
 I wil yow say the lif of seint Edward,  
 Or elles first tregedis wil I yow telle,  
 Of which I have an hundred in my celle.  
 Tregedis is to sayn a certeyn storie,  
 As olde bookes maken us memorie, 15460  
 Of hem that stood in greet prosperité,

15432. *Thou hast.* These words are added from the Lansd. Ms., and seem necessary to the sense and metre.

15448. *lusscheburghes.* A somewhat similar comparison occurs in Piers Ploughman, l. 10322.

"Ac there is a defeaute in the folk  
 That the feith kepeth;  
 Wherefore folk is the febler,  
 And noght ferm of bileve,  
 As in *lusschebourues* is a luther alay  
 And yet loketh he like a sterlyng.  
 The merk of that monee is good,  
 Ac the metal is feeble."

In fact, the coin alluded to was a base money (a *luther*, or bad, *alay*) which was brought into this country in considerable quantities in the times of the first Edwards, and, as we see from the specimens existing, it must when new have easily passed for the sterling money of the English kings. The name appears to have been derived from its being struck at Luxemburg, by the counts.

All sorts of false money appear to have been continually brought into this country in the middle ages; but these *lusscheburghes* seem to have been the greatest cause of annoyance. In the year 1346 the petition of the Commons in the parliament assembled at Westminster pointed out several mal-practices which were supposed to be the cause of the scarcity of good money at that time, and began with stating, that many merchants and others carried the good money out of the realm, and brought in its room false money called *lusschebourues*, which were worth only eight shillings the pound, or less; by which means the importers, and they who took them at a low price to utter again, were suddenly, wrongfully, and beyond measure enriched; whilst they who were unable to distinguish the said money were cheated and impoverished, and the whole realm was fraudulently filled with those base coins. In 1347, the false *lusschebourues* still continued to be brought into the kingdom in great quantities, and the Commons petitioned that the guilty might suffer the punishment of drawing and hanging. In 1348, it was again necessary to forbid the circulation of *lusscheburghes*; and in 1351, the Statute of Purveyors was passed, which (cap. 11) declares what offences shall be adjudged to ason, amongst which is this: if a man counterfeit the king's seal on his money, and if a man bring false money into the realm, counterfeit of the money of England, as the money called *luschburgh*, or other like to the said money of England, etc.

And is y-fallen out of heigh degré  
 Into miserie, and endith wrecchedly;  
 And thay ben versifyed comunly  
 Of six feet, which men clepe exametron.  
 In prose ben eek endited many oon;  
 In metre eek, in many a sondry wise;  
 Lo, this declaryng ought y-nough suffice.  
 Now herkneth, if yow likith for to heere;  
 But first I yow biseche in this matiere, 15470  
 Though I by ordre telle not these thinges,  
 Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,  
 After her age, as men may write fynde,  
 But telle hem som bifore and som byhynde,  
 As it cometh now to my remembrance,  
 Haveth me excused of myn ignoraunce.

## THE MONKES TALE.

I wol bywaile, in maner of tregedye,  
 The harm of hem that stood in heigh degré,  
 And fallen so ther is no remedye  
 To bring hem out of her adversité; 15480  
 For certeynly, whan fortune lust to flee,  
 Ther may no man the cours of hir whiel holde;  
 Let no man truste in blynd prosperité,  
 Beth war by these ensamples trewe and olde.

*Lucifer.*

At Lucifer, though he an augil were,  
 And nought a man, at him wil I bygygne;  
 For though fortune may non augel dere,  
 From heigh degré yit fel he for his synne  
 Down into helle, wher he yet is inne.  
 O Lucifer! brightest of augels alle, 15490  
 Now art thou Sathanas, thou maist nought  
 twynne  
 Out of miserie in which thou art falle.

*Adam.*

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene  
 With Goddes oughne fynger wrought was he,  
 And nought bigeten of mannes sperma unclene,  
 And welt al paradys, sayvng oon tre.  
 Had never wordly man suche degré  
 As Adam, til he for mysgovernance  
 Was dryven out of heigh prosperité,  
 To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce. 15500

*Sampson.*

Lo Sampson, whiche that was annunciate  
 By thangel, long er his nativité,  
 And was to God Almighty consecrate,  
 And stood in nobles whil that he might se.

15467. I have ventured to emendate this line from the Lansd. Ms. The Harl. Ms. has, "And in metre eek, and in sondry wise," in which both sense and metre suffer.

*The Monkes Tale.* This tale is evidently founded upon Boccaccio's celebrated work *De casibus virorum illustrium*; but Chaucer has introduced the several stories according to his own fancy, and has often taken them from other sources. They are not contained in the same order in all the manuscripts of Chaucer.

15482. *the cours of hir whiel holde.* Tyrwhitt has adopted a reading which is far less natural and expressive, in the language of Chaucer's age, "of hire the course witholde." The wheel of fortune is a well-known emblem, not only in mediæval literature, but in mediæval art.

15493. *Lo Adam.* Adam comes first in the stories of Boccaccio. Lydgate, in his translation of Boccaccio, says of Adam and Eve,—

"Of slime of the erth in *Damassene* the felde  
 God made them above eche creature."

15501. *Lo Sampson.* Chaucer appears to have taken the story of Sampson directly from the book of Judges, which he quotes in express words a few lines further on.



Was never such another as was he,  
To speke of strength, and therto hardynesse;  
But to his wyfes told he his secré, [nesse.  
Thurgh which he slough himselfe for wrecchid-  
Sampson, this noble and myhty champion,  
Withouten wepen save his hondes tuye, 15510  
He slowhe and al to-rent the lyoun  
To-ward his weddinge walkinge be the waie.  
The false wif couthe him plesse and preie  
Til sche his counseile knewe, and sche untrewé  
Unto his foos his conseil gan bewreye,  
And him for-soke, and toke another newe.

Thre hundred foxis took Sampson for ire,  
And alle her tayles he togider bond;  
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fyure,  
For he in every tail hath knyted a brond; 15520  
And thay brent alle the cornes of that lond,  
And alle her olyvers and ynes ecke.  
A thousand men he slough eek with his hond,  
And hadde no wepen but an asses cheeke.

Whan thay were slayn, so thursted him that he  
Was wel ner lorn, for which he gan to preye  
That God wolde of his peyne have som pité,  
And send him drynk, and elles must he deye.  
And out of this asses cheke, that was so dreye,  
Out of a woung toth sprong anon a welle, 15530  
Of which he dronk y-nough, shortly to seye;  
Thus halp him God, as Judicum can telle.

By verray fors at Gasan, on a night,  
Maugré the Philistiens of that cité,  
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,  
And on his bak caried hem hafu he,  
Heigh upon an hil, wher men might hem se.  
O noble almighty Sampson, leef and deere,  
Haddest thou nought to women told thy secré,  
In al the world ne hadde be thy peere. 15540

This Sampson neyther siser dronk ne wyn,  
Ne on his heed com rasour noon ne schere,  
By precept of the messenger divin,  
For alle his strengthes in his heres were.  
And fully twenty wynter, yer by yere,  
He hadde of Israel the governaunce.  
But soone he schal wepe man a teere,  
For wymmen schul him bringe to meschaunce.

Unto his lemman Dalida he tolde  
That in his heres al his strengthe lay; 15550  
And falsly to his foomen sche him solde,  
And slepyng in hir barm upon a day  
Sche made to clippe or schere his heres away  
And made his foomen al his craft espie.  
And whan thay fonde him in this array,  
They bound him fast, and put out bothe his yen.

But er his heer clipped was or i-schawe,  
Ther was no bond with which men might him  
But now is he in prisoun in a cave, [bynde;  
Ther as thay made him at the querne grynde. 15560  
O noble Sampson, strengest of al mankynde!  
O whilom juge in glory and in richesse!

15509. This stanza has been accidentally omitted in the Harl. Ms., and is here inserted from the Lansd. Ms. It represents the fourteenth chapter of the book of Judges.

15533. at Gasan. The Harl. Ms. reads, by an evident mistake of the scribe, of Algason.

15541. neyther siser. Sicera; a general term for other intoxicating drinks than wine. The Lansd. Ms. reads sither. Tyrwhitt has substituted siser.

15546. Israel. I have substituted this from the other manuscripts, in place of Jerusalem, which is the reading of the Harl. Ms.

15560. at the querne grynde. Et clausum in carcere molere fecerunt. Jud. xvi. 21.

Now maystow wepe with thine eyghen blynde,  
Sith thou fro wele art falle to wrecchednesse?

Thend of this caytif was, as I schal say,  
His foomen made a fest upon a day,  
And made him as here fool bifrom hem play;  
And this was in a temple of gret array.  
But atte last he made a foul affray; 15569  
For he two pilers schook, and made hem falle,  
And down fel temple and al, and ther it lay,  
And slough himsilf and cek his fomen alle;  
This is to sayn, the princes everichon;  
And eek thre thousand bodies were ther slayn.  
With fallyng of the grette temple of stoon.  
Of Sampson now wil I no more sayn;  
Be war by these ensamples, olde and playn,  
That no man telle his conseil to his wyf,  
Of such thing as he wold have secré fayn,  
If that it touche his lymes or his lif. 15580

### De Hercule.

Of Hercules, the sovereign conquerour,  
Singen his werkes laude and heigh renou;  
For in his tyme of strength he bar the flour.  
He slough and rafte the skyn fro the leoun;  
He of Centaures layde the bost adoun;  
He Arpies slough, the cruel briddes felle;  
The gold appul he raft fro the dragoun;  
He drof out Cerbures the fend of helle;

He slough the cruel tyrant Buserun,  
And made his hors to frete him fleisch and boon;  
He slough the verray serpent veneneus; 15591  
Of Achiloyus tuo hornes he raft oon;  
He slough Cacus in a cave of stoon;  
He slough the geaunt Anteus the stronge;  
He slough the grisly bore, and that anoon;  
And bar the hevene upon his necke loun.

15581. Of Hercules. The account of the labours of Hercules is almost literally translated from Boethius *De Consol. Philos.*, lib. iv. metr. 7, though Chaucer has changed the order of some of them.

Herculeum duri celebrant labores;  
Ille Centauros domuit superbos;  
Abstulit sævo spolium leoni;  
Fixit et certis volucres sagittis;  
Poma cæmenti rapuit draconi  
Aureo læva gravior metallo;  
Cerberum traxit triplici catena;  
Victor immitem posuisse fertur  
Pabulum sævis dominum quadrigis;  
Hydra combusto perit veneno;  
Fronte turpatus Achelous amnis  
Ora demersit pudibunda ripis;  
Stravit Antheum Libycis arenis;  
Cacus Evandri satiavit iras,  
Quosque pressurus foret altis orbis  
Setiger spumis humeros notavit.  
Ultimus colli labor irreflexo  
Sustulit collo, pretiumque rursus  
Ultimi cælum meruit laboris.

I restore the names from the Lansdowne Ms., as they are very incorrectly written in the Harl. Ms.

15588. draf, drew. The Lansd. Ms. reads *droune*.  
15595. bore. Substituted from the Lansd. Ms. for *leoun*, the reading of the Harl. Ms.

15596. hevene. I have retained Tyrwhitt's reading, which he found in other mss., because it represents the Latin of Boethius, as quoted above, and which in Chaucer's prose version of that writer is translated thus, "And the last of his labors was, that he sustained the heaven upon his necke unbowed." The Harl. and Lansd. Mss. read the *head*, evidently supposing it refers to the head of the bore; the printed editions, with the same notion, read "and bare his head upon his spere longe."

— *longe*. It may be observed that the final *e* marks the adverbial form of the word: it is not "upon his long neck," but "long upon his neck." One of the mss. used by Tyrwhitt contains the Latin marginal gloss *dū*.

Was never wight, siththen the world bigan,  
That slough so many monstres as dede he;  
Thurghout the wide world his name ran,  
What for his strengthe and for his bounté, 15600  
And every roialme went he for to se;  
He was so strong, ther might no man him lette.  
At bothe the worldes endes, as saith Trophé,  
In stede of boundes he a piler sette.

A lemman hadde this noble campioun,  
That highte Dejanire, freissh as May;  
And as these clerkes maken menciuon,  
Sche hath him sent a schurte fresch and gay.  
Alas! this schirt, allas and wallaway!  
Envenymed was subtilly withalhe, 15610  
That er he hadde wered it half a day,  
It made his fleisch al fro his bones falle.

But natheles som clerkes hir excusen,  
By oon that highte Nessus, that it makyd.  
Be as be may, I wil nought hir accensyn;  
But on his bak he wered this schirt al naked,  
Til that his fleisch was for the venym blaked.  
And whan he saugh noon other remedye,  
In hote colis he hath himself i-raked;  
For no venym deynd him to dye. 15620

Thus starf this mighty and worthy Ereules.  
Lo! who may truste fortune eny throwe?  
For him that folweth al this world of pres,  
Er he be war, is oft y-layd ful lowe.  
Ful wys is he that can himselven knowe!  
Be war, for whan that fortune lust to glose,  
Than waytith sche hir man to overthrowe,  
By suche way as he wolde lest suppose.

*De rege Nabugodonosor.*

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,  
The glorious ceptre and real magesté, 15630  
That had the king Nabugodonosore,  
With tonge unnethes may deservyd be.  
He twyes wan Jerusalem that cité;  
The vessel out of the temple he with him ladde;  
At Babiloyne was his sovereyu see,  
In which his glorie and his delyt he ladde.

The fairest children of the blood roial  
Of Israel he dede gelde anon,  
And made ylk of hem to ben his thral;  
Amonges othre Daniel was oon, 15640  
That was the wisest child of everychoon,  
For he the dremes of the king expouned,  
Ther as in Caldeyn was ther clerkes noon  
That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned.

This proude king let make a statu of gold,  
Sixty cubites long and seven in brede,  
To which ymage bothe yonge and olde  
Comaunded he to love and have in drede,  
Or in a fornays ful of flames rede  
He schulde be brent that wolde not obeye. 15650  
But never wolde assente to that dede  
Danyel ne his felawes tweye.

This king of kinges preu was and elate;  
He wende God that sit in magesté  
Ne might him nought bireve of his estate.  
But soodeynly he left his dignité,  
I-lik a best him semed for to be,

15603. *Trophé.* It is not clear to what writer Chaucer intended to refer under this name. In the margin of one of the Cambridge Mss. collated by Tyrwhitt, we find the gloss, *Alle vates Chaldaeorum Trophæus.*

15653. *preu was and elate.* I have added the conjunction from Tyrwhitt, who reads *proul was and elate.*

And eek hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute  
In rayn, with wilde bestes walkyd he, 15660  
Til certain tyme was i-come aboute.

And lik an eglis fetheres were his heres,  
His hondes like a briddes clowes were,  
Til God releessed him a certeyn yeres,  
And gaf him witte, and thanne with many a tere  
He thanked God, and ever he is afere  
To doon amys or more to trespace.  
And er that tyme he layd was on bere,  
He knew wel God was ful of might and grace.

*Balthazar.*

His sone, which that highte Balthazar,  
That huld the regne after his fader day, 15670  
He by his fader couthe nought be war,  
For proud he was of hert and of array;  
And eek an ydolaster was he ay.  
His heigh astate assured him in pryde;  
But fortune cast him down, and ther he lay,  
And soodeynly his regne gan divide.

A fest he made unto his lordes alle  
Upon a tyme, he made hem blithe be;  
And than his officeres gan he calle, 15679  
"Goth, bringeth forth the vesseals," quod he,  
"The which my fader in his prosperité  
Out of the temple of Jerusalem byrafft;  
And to oure hihe goddis thanke we  
Of honours that oure eldres with us laft!"  
His wif, his lordes, and his concubines  
Ay dronken, whiles her arriont last,  
Out of this noble vesseals sondry wyne.

And on a wal this king his yhen cast,  
And saugh an hond armles, that wroot fast;  
For fere of which he quook and siked sore. 15690  
This hond, that Balthazar made so sore agast,  
Wrot, *Mane, uchel, phares,* and no more.

In al the lond magicien was noon  
That couthe expoude what this lettre ment.  
But Daniel expoundith it anoon,  
And sayde, "King, God to thy fader sent  
Glori and honour, regne, tresor, and rent;  
And he was proud, and nothing God ne dredde.  
And therfor God gret wreche upon him sent,  
And him birafft the regne that he hadde. 15700

"He was out east of mannes compaignye,  
With asses was his habitacioun,  
And eete hay in wet and eek in drye,  
Til that he knew by grace and by resoun  
That God of heven had dominaçioun  
Over every regne and every creature;  
And than had God of him compassioun,  
And him restored to his regne and his figure.  
"Eke thou that art his sone art proud also,  
And knowest al this thing so verrayly, 15710  
And art rebel to God and art his fo;  
Thou dronk eek of his vessel bodily,  
Thy wyf eek and thy wenche sinfully

15662. *hondes.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *nayles*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

15665. *he is afere.* The Lansd. Ms., which is followed by Tyrwhitt, reads,—

and his life in fere  
Was he to doon amys.

15669. *His sone.* This story and the preceding are taken from Daniel, i. 5; the latter only is given in Boccaccio.

15698. *arriont.* This is the reading of the Harl. Ms.; it is a word which occurs nowhere else, as far as I am aware, but I have not ventured to alter it. The Lansd. Ms. reads *appetites*, which Tyrwhitt adopts.



Dronke of the same vessel sondry wynes;  
And heriest false goddes cursedly;  
Therefore to the schapen ful gret pyne es.

"This hond was send fro God, that on the wal  
Wrot, *Mane, techel, phares*, truste me,  
Thy regne is doon, thou weyist nought at al;  
Divided is thy regne, and it schal be 15720  
To Meedes and to Perses geven," quod he.  
And thilke same night, the king was slawe,  
And Darius occupied his degre,  
Though therto neyther had he right ne lawe.

Lordyngs, ensample her-by may ye take,  
How that in lordschip is no sikernesse;  
For whan fortune wil a man for-sake,  
Sche bereth away his regne and his richesse,  
And eek his frendes bothe more and lesse.  
And what man hath of frendes the fortune, 15730  
Mishap wil make hem enemyes, I gesse;  
This proverbe is ful sothe and ful comune.

### Zenobia.

Cenobia, of Palmire the queene,  
As writen Perciens of hir noblesse,  
So worthy was in armes and so keene,  
That no wight passed hir in hardynesse,  
Ne in lynage, ne in other gentillesse.  
Of the kinges blood of Pers sche is descendid;  
I say that sche had not most fairnesse,  
But of hir schap sche might not be amendid. 15740

Fro hir childhod I fynde that sche fledde  
Office of wommen, and to woode sche went,  
And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde  
With arwes brode that sche to hem sent;  
Sche was so swyft, that sche anon hem hent.  
And whan that sche was elder, sche wolde kille  
Leouns, lebardes, and beres al to-rent,  
And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille.

Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke,  
And renne in the mounteyns al the night, 15750  
And slepe under a bussh; and sche conthe eek  
Wrastil by verray fors and verray might  
With eny yong man, were he never so wight.  
Ther mighte no thing in hir armes stonde.  
Sche kept hir maydenhed from every wight;  
To no man deynd hire to be ony.

But atte last hir frendes han hir married  
To Odenake, prince of that citee,  
Al were it so that sche him longe taried.  
And ye schul understonde how that he 15760  
Had suche fantasies as hadde sche.  
But natheles, whan thay were knynt in fere,  
Thay lyved in joye and in felicité;  
For ech of hem had other leef and deere.

Save onn thing, sche wolde never assent  
By no way that he schulde by hir lye  
But oones, for it was hir playn entent  
To have a child the world to multiplie;  
And also soone as sche might aspye  
That sche was not with childe yit in dede, 15770  
Than wold sche snfre him doon his fantasie  
Eftsones, and nought but oones, out of drede.

And if sche were with child at thilke cast,  
No more schuld he playe thilke game  
Til fully fourty dayes were y-past,  
Than wold sche snfre him to do the same.

15719. *weyist*. This reading is taken from the Lansd. Ms. The Harl. Ms. reads *wenist*.

15733. *Cenobia*. The story of Zenobia is taken chiefly from Boccaccio's work, *De claris mulieribus*.

Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,  
He gat no more of hir, for thus sche sayde,  
Hit nas but wyves lechery and schame,  
In other caas if that men with hem playde. 15780

Tuo sones by this Odenak had sche,  
The which sche kept in vertu and lettrure.  
But now unto our purpos torne we;  
I say, so worschiful a creature,  
And wys, worthy, and large with mesure,  
So penyble in the werre and curteys eek,  
Ne more labour might in werre endure,  
Was nowher noon in al this world to seeke.

Hir riche array, if it might be told,  
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing, 15790  
Sche was al clothed in perré and gold;  
And eek sche lafte nought for hir huntyng  
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing;  
Whan sche had leyser and might therto entent,  
To lerne bookes was al hir likyng,  
How sche in vertu might hir lif despent.

And schortly of this story for to trette,  
So doughty was hir housbond and eek sche,  
That thay conquered many regnes grete  
In thorient, with many a fair citee 15800  
Appurtienant unto the magesté  
Of Rome, and with strong hond bulden hem fast;  
Ne never might hir fomen doon hem fle  
Ay while that Odenakes dayes last.

Her batails, who so lust hem for to rede,  
Agayn Sapor the king and other mo,  
And how that this processe fel in dede,  
Why sche conquered, and what title had therto,  
And after of hir meschief and hir woo,  
How that sche was beseged and i-take, 15810  
Let hem unto my mayster Petrark go,  
That writeth of this y-nough, I undertake.

Whan Odenake was deed, sche mightily  
The regnes huld, and with hir propre hond  
Ageins hir foos sche faught ful trewely,  
That ther nas king ne prince in al that lond  
That he nas glad if he that grace fond  
That sche ne wold upon his lond werraye.  
With hir thay made alliaunce by bond,  
To ben in peese, and let hir ryde and play. 15820

The emperour of Rome, Claudius,  
Ne him biforn the Romayn Galiene,  
Ne dorste never be so corrageous,  
Ne noon Ermine, ne Egipcienne,  
No Surrien, ne noon Arrabiene,  
Withinne the feld that durste with hir fight,  
Lest that sche wold hem with her hondes sleen.  
Or with hir meyné putten hem to flight.

In kinges abyt went hir sones tuo,  
As heires of her fadres regnes alle; 15830  
And Hermanno and Themaleo  
Here names were, and Parcien men hem calle.  
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;  
This mighty queene may no while endure,  
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle  
To wretchednesse and to mysadventure.

Aurilian, whan that the governaunce  
Of Rome cam into his hondes tway,  
He schop him of this queen to do vengeance;

15810. *beseged*. This reading is adopted from the Lansd. Ms., as best suited to the context. The Harl. Ms. has *deceyved*.

15815. *trewely*. The mss. I have examined agree in this word; Tyrwhitt reads *cruelly*.

15832. *and Parcien men hem calle*. The Lansd. Ms. and Tyrwhitt read *as Persians hem calle*.



And with his legions he took the way 15840  
Toward Cenoby; and schortly to say  
He made hir flee, and atte last hir hent,  
And feterid hir, and eek hir children tweye,  
And wan the lond, and home to Rome he went.

Amonges other thinges that he wan,  
Hir chaar, that was with gold wrought and perré,  
This grete Romayn, this Aurilian,  
Hath with him lad, for that men schulde se.  
Bifore this triumpe walkith sche,  
And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongynge; 15850  
Corouned sche was, as aftir hir degré,  
And ful of perré chargid hir clothyng.

Allas! fortune! sche that whilom was  
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,  
Now gaulith al the pepul on hir, alas!  
And sche that helmyd was in starke stoures,  
And wan bifore tounes stronge and toures,  
Schal on hir heed now were a wyntermyte;  
And sche that bar the cepter ful of floures,  
Schal bere a distaf hirself for to quyte. 15860

*De Petro Hispanie rege.*

O noble Petro, the glori of Spayne,  
Whom fortune held so heigh in magesté,  
Wel oughte men thy pitous deth compleyne;  
Thy bastard brother made the to fle,  
And after at a sege by subtilté  
Thow were bytrayed, and lad to his tent,  
Wher as he with his oughne hond slough the,  
Succedyng in thy lond and in thy rent.

The feld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne,  
Caught with the leoun, reed coloured as is the  
gleede, 15870

15855. *gaulith*, yelleth, howleth, shonteth. Tyrwhitt follows other mss. in reading *gaureth*, shonteth.

15857. *bifore*. Other mss. read *by fors*.

15858. *wyntermyte*. This word, the exact meaning of which seems not to be known, is given differently in the mss. *vitrymite*, *fitermyte*, *witermyte*, *vitryte*, and in the old printed editions, *autremite*; the latter of which is probably a mere error of the printers.

15860. *hirself*. Other mss., followed by Tyrwhitt, read *hir cast*.

15861. *O noble Petro*. Tyrwhitt has adopted a different arrangement from some of the manuscripts, so as to place the histories more nearly in chronological order, by inserting after Zenobia, Nero, Holofernes, Antiochus, Alexander, Cæsar, and Cresus, and the monk's tale is made to end with the story of Hugolin of Pisa. I retain, however, the arrangement of the Harl. Ms., not only because I think it the best authority, but because I think this to be the order in which Chaucer intended to place them. The conclusion of the monk's tale, as it here stands, seems to be the natural one. When Chaucer wrote his grand work, the eventful history of Pedro the Cruel of Aragon was fresh in people's memories, and possessed a special interest in this country, from the part taken in the events connected with him by the Black Prince; we can easily suppose the monk, who professes to disregard chronological order, wandering from the story of Zenobia to some events of his own time, and then recalling other examples from antiquity. Tyrwhitt adopts from the reading of other mss., *O noble a worthy Petro, glorie of Spaine*. It may be observed, that the cause of Pedro, though he was no better than a cruel and reckless tyrant, was popular in England from the very circumstance that Prince Edward had embarked in it.

15864. Other mss. read for this line, *Out of thy lond thy brother made the floe*.

15868. *lond*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *regne*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt, and is perhaps the better reading.

15870. *leoun, reed coloured*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *line rodde colours*, and Tyrwhitt has adopted *limerod coloured*. The arms here described are probably those of Duguesclin, who must be the person alluded to below as the Oliver of Armoryk, for it was notoriously Duguesclin

He brewede the cursednesse and synne,  
The wikked nest werker of this neede.  
Nought Oliver, ne Charles that ay took heede  
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armoryk  
Geniloun Oliver, corrupted for mede,  
Broughte this worthy king in such a bryk.

*De Petro Cipre rege.*

O worthy Petro king of Cipres, also,  
That Alisaunder wan by heigh maistrye,  
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo,  
Of which thin oughne lieges had enye; 15880  
And for no thing but for thy chivalrie,  
Thay in thy bed han slayn the by the morwe.  
Thus can fortune the whel governe and gye,  
And out of joye bringe men into sorwe.

*De Barnabo comite Mediolano.*

Of Melayn grete Barnabo Viscount,  
God of delyt and scourge of Lumbardye,  
Why schuld thyn infortune I nought accounte,  
Syn in astat thou clombe were so hye;  
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allie,  
For he thy newew was and sone in lawe, 15890  
Withinne his prisoun made the to dye;  
But why ne how, not I, that thou were slave.

*De Hugilino comite Pise.*

Of the erl Hugilin of Pise the langour  
Ther may no tonge telle for pité.  
But litil out of Pise stant a tour,  
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he;  
And with him been his litil children thre,  
The eldest skarsly fyf yer was of age;  
Allas! fortune! it was gret cruelté  
Suche briddes to put in such a cage. 15900

Dampnyd he was to deye in that prisoun,  
For Roger, which that bisschop was of Pise,  
Had on him maad a fals suggestioun;  
Thurgh which the peple gan on him arise,  
And putte him in prisoun in such wise  
As ye han herd, and mete and drynk he hadde  
So smal that wel unnethe it may suffice,  
And therewithal it was ful pore and badde.

And on a day bifel that in that hour  
Whan that his mete was wont to be brought, 15910  
The gayler schet the dores of that tour.  
He herd it wel, but he saugh it nought,  
And in his hert anon ther fel a thought  
That thay for hungir wolde doon him dyen.  
"Alas!" quod he, "allas! that I was wrought!"

who betrayed Pedro into his brother's tent, where he was slain.

15873. *Nought Oliver, ne Charles*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *Charles and Olyver*, and Tyrwhitt has *Not Charles Oliver*, which he explains, "Not the Oliver of Charles (Charlemagne), but an Oliver of Armoria, a second Guenelon."

15877. *Petro king of Cypres*. Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, who captured Alexandria in Egypt in 1365, an event before alluded to at the beginning of the *Canterbury Tales* (l. 51). This prince was assassinated in 1639.

15885. *Of Melayn grete Barnabo*. Bernabo Visconti, duke of Milan, was deposed by his nephew and thrown into prison, where he died in 1385. This tragedy must have occurred so recently when Chaucer wrote, that we do not wonder at his not knowing the circumstances of his death.

15886. *scourge*. I have adopted this reading from the Lansd. Ms., in place of *strength*, given by the Harl. Ms., which seems evidently incorrect.

15893. *Of the erl Hugilin*. The story of Hugolin of Pisa had been told by Dante, in the *Inferno*, canto 33, whom Chaucer quotes directly as his authority.

Therwith the teeres felle fro his eyen.

His yongest sone, that thre yer was of age,  
Unto him sayde, "Fader, why do ye wepe?  
Whan wil the gayler bringen oure potage?  
Is ther no morsel bred that ye doon kepe? 15920  
I am so hongry that I may not sleepe.  
Now wolde God that I might slepe ever!  
Than schuld not hunger in my wombe crepe.  
Ther is no thing save bred that me were lever."

Thus day by day this child bigan to crie,  
Til in his fadres barn adoun he lay,  
And sayde, "Far wel, fader, I moot dye!"  
And kist his fader, and dyde the same day.  
And whan the woful fader deed it say,  
For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte, 15930  
And sayde, "Fortune, alas and waylaway!  
Thin false querel al my woo I wyte."

His childer wende that it for hongir was,  
That he his armes gnew, and nought for wo,  
And sayden, "Fader, do nought so, allas!  
But rather et the fleisch upon us tuo. [us fro,  
Oure fleisch thou gave us, oure fleisch thou take  
And ete y-nough;" right thus thay to him seyde.  
And after that, withinne a day or tuo,  
Thay layde hem in his lappe adoun and deyde.

Himself despeired eek for hongir starf. 15941  
Thus ended is this mighty eorl of Pise;  
For his estate fortune fro him earf.  
Of this tregrede it ought y-nough suffice;  
Who so wil it here in lenger wise,  
Rede the gret poet of Itaille  
That highte Daunt, for he can it devise,  
Fro poynt to poynt nought oon word wil he fayle.

#### De Nerone.

Although Nero were als vicious 15950  
As any fend that lith ful lowe adoun,  
Yit he, as tellith us Swethoneus,  
This wyde world had in subjeccioun,  
Bothe est and west and septemtrioun.  
Of rubies, safers, and of perles white,  
Were alle his clothes embrouddid up and down;  
For he in gemmis gretly gan delite.

More delycat, more pompos of array,  
More proud was never emperour than he.  
That ylke cloth that he had wered a day,  
After that tyme he nolde it never se. 15960  
Nettis of gold thred had he gret plenté,  
To fische in Tyber, whan him lust to pleye.  
His willes were as lawe in his degré,  
For fortune as his frend wold him obeye.

15932. *querel*. The Lansd. Ms. has *whele*, which is perhaps the better reading.

15949. *Although Nero*. Although Chaucer quotes Suetonius, his account of Nero is really taken from the *Roman de la Rose*, and from Boethius *de Consolat. Philos.*, lib. ii. met. 6.

15953. *and septemtrioun*. This line stands as here printed in the Harl. and Lansd. Ms. Tyrwhitt inserts *south* (south and septemtrion), and observes: "The mss. read *north*; but there can be no doubt of the propriety of the correction, which was made, I believe, in ed. Urr. In the *Rom. de la R.*, from whence great part of this tragedy of Nero is translated, the passage stands thus, 6501:

Ce desloyal, que je te dy,  
Et d'Orient et de Midy,  
D'Ocident, de Septentrion,  
Tint-il la jurisdiccion."

15963. *willes*. The Lansd. Ms. has *lustes*, the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt. I am inclined to prefer the reading of the Harl. Ms., which avoids the repetition of the word from the previous line.

He Rome brent for his delicacie;  
The senatours he slough upon a day,  
To here how men wolde wepe and crye;  
And slough his brother, and by his suster lay.  
His modir made he in pitous array,  
For hire wombe slyt he, to byholde 15970  
Wher he conceived was, so waylaway!  
That he so litel of his moodir tolde.

No teer out of his eyen for that sight  
Ne came; but sayde, a fair womman was sche  
Gret wonder is that he couthe or might  
Be domesman on hir dede beauté.  
The wyng to bringen him comaundid he,  
And drank anon, noon other wo he made.  
Whan might is torned unto cruelté,  
Allas! to deepe wil the venym wade. 15980

In youthe a maister had this emperour,  
To teche him letterure and curtesye;  
For of moralité he was the flour,  
And in his tyme, but if bokes lye.  
And whil his maister had of him maistrie,  
He made him so connyng and so souple,  
That long tyme it was or tyranny  
Or any vice dorst on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,  
Bycause Nero had of him such drede, 15990  
For fro vices he wol him chastise  
Diserety as by word, and nought by dede.  
"Sir," wold he sayn, "an emperour mot neede  
Be vertuous and hate tyrannye."  
For which he in a bath made him to bleede  
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.

This Nero hadde eek a custumance  
In youthe agein his maister for to ryse,  
Which after-ward him thought a gret grevance;  
Therefore he made him deye in this wise. 16000  
But natheles this Seneca the wise  
Ches in a bath to deye in this manere,  
Rather than to have another tormentise;  
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister deere.

Now fel it so that fortune lust no lenger  
The high pride of Nero to cherice;  
For though he were strong, yit was sche stronger,  
Sche thoughte thus, "By God! I am to nyce,  
To set a man that is ful sad of vice  
In high degré, and emperour him calle; 16010  
By God! out of his sete I wil him trice;  
Whan he lest weneth, sonnest schal byfalle.

The peole ros on him upon a night  
For heigh defaute, and whan he it aspyed,  
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight  
Aloone, and ther he wende have ben allyed,  
He knocked fast; and ay the more he cried,  
The faster schette thay the dores alle.  
Than wist he wel he had himself mysgyed,

15970. *hire wombe slyt he*. So the Harl. and Lansd. Mss.; Tyrwhitt reads *he hire wombe let slytte*.

15976. *on hir dede beauté*. The word *dede*, omitted in the Harl. Ms., is evidently necessary for the sense and measure. Chaucer is translating the words of Boethius, lib. ii. met. 6,—

"Ora non tinxit lacrymis, sed esse  
Censor extineti potuit decoris;"

which he has given thus in his prose version of Boethius, "Ne no tere wette his face, but he was so harde harted, that he might he domesman, or judge, of her *dede beauté*." In both, *domesman* represents the Latin *censor*.

16003. *tormentise*. I have substituted this reading from Tyrwhitt, in place of that of the Harl. Ms., *tyrannie*. The Lansd. Ms. has *tormentiv*.

16009. *sad*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *ful filled*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.



And went his way, no lenger durst he calle. 16020

The peple cried, and rumbled up and doun,  
That with his eris herd he how thay sayde,  
"Her is this fals traitour, this Neroun!"  
For fere almost out of his wytte he brayde,  
And to his goddes pitously he prayde  
For socour, but it mighte nought betyde;  
For drede of this him thoughte that he dyde,  
And ran into a gardyn him to hyde.

And in this gardyn fond he cherlis twayne  
Sittyng by a fuyr ful greet and reed. 16030  
And to these cherles tuo he gan to praye  
To steen him, and to girden of his heed,  
That to his body, whan that he were deed,  
Were no despyt y-doon for his defame.  
Himself he slough, he couthe no better reed;  
Of which fortune thai lough and hadde game.

*De Olipherno.*

Was never capitaigne under a king  
That regnes mo put in subjeccioun,  
Ne strengier was in feld of alle thing  
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun, 16040  
Ne more pompous in heih presumpeioun,  
Than Oliphern, which that fortune ay kist  
So licorously, and ladde him up and doun,  
Til that his heed was of, er he it wist.

Nought ononly that the world had of him awe,  
For lesyng of riches and liberté,  
But he made every man reneye his lawe;  
Nabugodonosor was lord, sayde he;  
Noon other god schuld honoured be.  
Ageinst his heste dar no wight trespass, 16050  
Save in Betholia, a strong cité,  
Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

But tak keep of that dethe of Olipherne;  
Amyd his ost he dronke lay on night  
Withinne his tente, large as is a berne,  
And yit, for all his pomp and al his might,  
Judith, a woman, as he lay upright  
Slepyng, his heed of smot, and fro his tent  
Ful prively sche stal from every wight,  
And with his heed unto hir toun sche went. 16060

*De rege Antiochie illustri.*

What newdith it of king Antiochius,  
To telle his heyre real magesté,  
His heyhe pride, his werke venomous?  
For such another was ther noon as he.  
Redeth which that he was in Machabé,  
And redith the proude wordes that he sayde,  
And why he fel fro his prosperité,  
And in an hil how wrecchidly he deyde.

Fortune him hath enhanced so in pryde,  
That verraily he wend he might atteyne 16070  
Unto the sterris upon every syde;  
And in a balance weyen ech mounteyne;

16037. *Was never capitaine.* This story is of course taken from the book of Judith. Tyrwhitt has committed a singular oversight in his note on line 16037,—“I cannot find any priest of this name (Eliachim) in the book of Judith. The high priest of Jerusalem is called Joachim in c. iv., which name would suit the verse better than Eliachim.” In the vulgate Latin version of the book of Judith, which, of course, was the one used by Chaucer, the high priest's name is *Eliachim*.

16061. *king Antiochius.* This story is taken from 2 Maccabees, c. ix.

16072. *atteyne.* 16072. *weyen ech mounteyne.* I have not hesitated in correcting the Harl. Ms. in this instance by others; the former reads, by an evident error of the scribe, *have teyned* and *weyen whet ech mounteyned*.

And alle the floodes of the see restreyne.  
And Goddes peple had he most in hate;  
Hem wold he slee in torment and in peyne,  
Wenyng that God ne might his pride abate.

And for that Nichanor and Thimothe  
With Jewes were venquist mightily,  
Unto the Jewes such an hate had he,  
That he bad graithe his chaar hastily, 16080  
And swor, and sayde ful despitously,  
Unto Jerusalem he wold eftsoone,  
To wreke his ire on it full cruelly;  
But of his purpos he was let ful soone.

God, for his manace, him so sore smoot  
With invisible wounde incurable,  
That in his guttes carf it so and bot,  
That his peynes were importable.  
And certeynly the wreche was resonable;  
For many a mannes guttes dede he peyne; 16090  
But fro his purpos cursed and dampnable,  
For al his smert, he nolde him nought restreyne.

But bad anon apparailen his host,  
And sodeynly, er he was of it ware,  
God daunted al his pride and al his bost  
For he so sore fel out of his chare,  
That it his lymes and his skyn to-tare,  
So that he nomore might go ne ryde;  
But in a chare men aboute him bare  
Al for-brosed, bothe bak and syde. 16100

The wreche of God him smot so cruely,  
That in his body wicked wormes crept,  
And therewithal he stouk so orribly,  
That noon of al his meyné that him kepte,  
Whether that he wook or elles slepte,  
Ne mighte nought the stynk of him endure.  
In this meschief he weyled and eek wepte,  
And knew God lord of every creature.

To al his host and to himself also  
Ful wlatson was the stynk of his carayne; 16110  
No man ne might him bere to ne fro;  
And in his stynk and his orrible payne  
He starf ful wrecchedly in a mountayne.  
Thus hath this robbour and this homicide,  
That many a man made wepe and playne,  
Such guerdoun as that longeth unto pryde.

*De Alexandro Magno, Philippi regis Macedonie filio.*

The story of Alisaunder is so comune,  
That every wight that hath discrecioun  
Hath herd som-what or al of this fortune;  
Thys wyde world as in conclusioun 16120  
He wan by strengthe, or for his heigh renoun,  
They were glad for pees unto him sende.  
The pride of man and bost he layd adoun,  
Wher so he cam, unto the worldes ende.

Comparisoun yit mighte never be made  
Bitwen him and noon other conquerour;  
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked.  
He was of knyghthod and of fredam flour;  
Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;  
Save wyn and wymmen, no thing might aswage  
His heigh entent in armes and labour, 16131  
So was he ful of leonyne corage.

What pité were it to him, though I yow tolde  
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo

16132. *leonyne.* I have adopted this reading from Tyrwhitt. That of the Harl. Ms., *lunyne*, seems to make no sense; and the reading of the Lansd. Ms., *loveynge*, is no better.



Of kynges, princes, dukes, and eorles bolde,  
Which he conquered and brought unto wo?  
I say, as fer as men may ryde or go,  
The world was his, what schold I more devyse?  
For though I write or tolde you evermo,  
Of his knighthood it mighte nought suffice. 16140

Twelf yer he regned, as saith Machabé;  
Philippes son of Macedon he was,  
That first was king in Greece that contré.  
O worthy gentil Alisandre, alas!  
That ever schulde falle such a caas!  
Empoysoned of thin oughne folk thou were;  
Thyn sis fortune is torned into an aas,  
And right for the ne wepte sche never a teere.

Who schal me give teeres to compleigne  
The deth of gentiles and of fraunchise, 16150  
That al the worlde had in his demeigne;  
And yit him thought it mighte nought suffice,  
So ful was his corage of high emprise.  
Allas! who schal helpe me to endite  
Fals infortune, and poysonn to devyse,  
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte.

*Julius Cesar.*

By wisdomed, manhod, and by gret labour,  
Fro humblehede to royal magesté  
Up roos he, Julius the conquerour,  
That wan al thoccident by land and see, 16160  
By strengthe of hond or elles by treté,  
And unto Rome made hem contributarie.  
And siththe of Rome temperour was he,  
Til that fortune wax his adversarie.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalie  
Agains Pompeus, fader thin in lawe,  
That of the orient had al the chivalrie,  
Als fer as that the day bigynnes to dawe, [slawe,  
Thorough thi knighthod thou hast him take and  
Save fewe folk that with Pompeus fledde; 16170  
Thurgh which thou puttist al thorient in awe;  
Thanke fortune that so wel the spede.

But now a litel while I wil bywaile  
This Pompeus, the noble governour  
Of Rome, which that floure fro this bataile;  
Alas! I say, oon of his men, a fals traitour,  
His heed of smoot, to wyne his favour  
Of Julius, and him the heed he brought.  
Alas! Pompeus, of the orient conquerour,  
That fortune to such a fyn the brought. 16180

To Rome agayn repaireth Julius,  
With his triumphe laurial ful hie.  
But on a tyme Brutus and Cassius,  
That ever had to his estat envye,  
Ful prively hath made conspiracie  
Agains this Julius in subtil wise;  
And cast the place in which he schulde dye  
With boydekyns, as I schal yow devyse.

This Julius to the capitoile went  
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon; 16190  
And in the capitoil anon him hent  
This false Brutus, and his other foon,  
And stiked him with boydekyns anon  
With many a wounde, and thus thay let him lye.  
But never gront he at no strook but oon,  
Or elles at tuo, but if the storie lye.

So manly was this Julius of hert,  
And so wel loved estatly honesté,  
That though his deedly woundes sore smert  
His mantil over his hipes caste he, 16200  
For no man schulde scen his priveté.

And as he lay deyng in a traunce,  
And wiste wel that verraily deed was he,  
Of honesté yet had he remembrance.

Lucan, to the this story I recomende,  
And to Swetoun and to Valirius also,  
That al the story written word and ende,  
How to these grete conqueroures tuo  
Fortune was first frend and siththen fo.  
No man trust upon hir favour longe, 16210  
But have hir in awayt for evermo,  
Witnessse on alle thise conqueroures stronge.

*Cresus.*

This riche Cresus, whilom king of Lyde,  
Of which Cresus Cirus him sore dradde,  
Yet was he caught amyddes al his pride,  
And to the fuyr to brenne him men ladde.  
But such a rayn down fro the heven schadde,  
That slough the fuyr and made him to eschape.  
But to be war yet grace noon he hadde,  
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape. 16220

When he was escaped, he couth nought stent  
For to bygynne a newe werre agayn;  
He wende wel, for that fortune him sent  
Such hap that he escaped thurgh the rayn,  
That of his foos he mighte not be slayn.  
And eek a sweven upon a night he mette,  
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,  
That in vengeance he al his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was set, as him thought,  
Wher Jubiter him wissch bothe bak and side.  
And Phebus eek a fair towail him brought 16231  
To drye him with, and therefore wax his pride;  
And to his daughter that stood him beside,  
Which that he knew in heigh science aboude,  
And bad hire telle what it signifyde,  
And sche his drem right thus gan expoude.

"The tree," quod sche, "the galwes is to mene,  
And Jubiter betokenith snow and rayn,  
And Phebus with his towail so clene,  
Tho ben the sonne stremes, soth to sayn. 16240  
Thow schalt enhangid ben, fader, certayn;  
Rayn shal the wasch, and sonne schal the drye."  
Thus warned sche him ful plat and ek ful playn,  
His daughter, which that called was Phanie.

And hanged was Cresus this proude king,  
His real trone might him not availe.  
Tregedis, ne noon other maner thing,  
Ne can I synge, crie, ny biwayle, 16249  
But for that fortune wil alway assayle  
With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude;  
For when men trusteth hir, than wil sche faile,  
And cover hir brighte face with a clowde.

16213. *Cresus.* The Harl. Ms. has *Cresus* all through, which I have not thought it necessary to retain. Tyrwhitt observes that,—"In the opening of this story, our author has plainly copied the following passage of his own version of Boethius, B. ii. Pro. 2: 'Wiste thou not how Cresus, king of Lydiens, of whiche king Cyrus was ful sore agaste a litel before, etc.' But the greatest part is taken from the *Rom. de la Rose*, ver. 6847—6912."

16217. *heven.* The Lansd. Ms. has *waalkyn*, and Tyrwhitt *welken*.

16247. *Tregedis.* These two lines are given differently in Tyrwhitt, and perhaps better, as follows:

"Tragedie is non other maner thing,  
Ne can in singing crie ne bewaile."

And he observes, "This reflection seems to have been suggested by one which follows soon after the mention of Cresus in the passage just cited from Boethius. 'What other thing bewaylen the crynges of tragedyes but onely the dedes of fortune, that with an aukewarde stroke overturneth the realmes of grete nobleye?'"

## THE PROLOGE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

“Ho, sire!” quod the knight, “no more of this;  
That ye han said is right y-nough y-wys,  
And moehil mor; for litel hevynesse  
Is right i-nough for moche folk, I gesse.  
I say for me, it is a gret disease,  
Wher as men han ben in gret welthe and ease,  
To hieren of her sodeyn fal, allas!  
And the contraire is joye and gret solas; 16260  
As when a man hath ben in pore estate,  
And clymbith up, and wexeth fortunate,  
And ther abydeth in prosperite;  
Such thing is gladson, and it thinkth me,  
And of such thing were goodly for to telle.”  
“Ye,” quod our host, “by seint Paules belle,  
Ye say right soth; this monk hath clappid lowde;  
He spak, how fortune was clipped with a clowde  
I not never what, and als of tregedie  
Right now ye herd; and pardy! no remedye  
It is for to bywayle or compleyne 16271  
That that is doon; and also it is a peyne,  
As ye han said, to hierie of hevynesse.  
Sire monk, no more of this, so God yow blesse;  
Your tale anoyeth al this compaignie;  
Such talkyng is nought worth a boterflye,  
For therinne is noon disport ne game.  
Wherfor, sir monk, damp Pieres by your name,  
I pray yow hertly, tel us somewhat ellis,  
For securly, ner gingling of the bellis 16280  
That on your bridil hong on every syde,  
By heven king, that for us alle dyde,  
I schold er this han falle down for sleep,  
Although the slough had never ben so deep;  
Than had your tale have be told in vayn.  
For certeynly, as these clerkes sayn,  
Wher as a man may have noon audience,  
Nought helpith it to tellen his sentence.  
And wel I wot the substance is in me,  
If any thing schal wel reported be. 16290  
Sir, say somewhat of hunting, I yow pray.”  
“Nay,” quod the monk, “I have no lust to play;  
Now let another telle, as I have told.”  
Then spak our ost with rude speche and bold,  
And said unto the nonnes prest anon,  
“Com ner, thou prest, com ner, thou sir Johan,  
Tel us such thing as may our hertes glade;  
Be blithe, although thou ryde upon a jade.  
What though thin hors be bothe foul and lene?  
If he wil serve the, rek not a bene; 16300  
Lok that thin hert be mery evermo.”  
“Yis, sire, yis, hoste,” quod he, “so mot I go,  
But I be mery, i-wis I wol be blamed.”  
And right anon he hath his tale tamyd;  
And thus he sayd unto us everichoon,  
This sweete prest, this goodly man sir Johan.

## THE NONNE PREST HIS TALE.

A PORE wydow, somdel stope in age,  
Was whilom duellyng in a pore cotaige,

16268. *was clipped.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *covered* was, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

16290. *gingling.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *clynking*, the reading which Tyrwhitt adopts. Compare, however, the Prologue, l. 170, and the note.

The *nonne prest his tale.* This tale was taken from the fifth chapter of the old French metrical *Roman de Renart*, entitled *Si comme Renart prist Chant-cler le coc* (ed. Meon. tom. i. p. 49). The same story forms one of the fables of

Bisyde a grove, standyng in a dale.  
This wydowe, of which I telle yow my tale,  
Syn thilke day that sche was last a wif, 16311  
In paciens ladde a ful symple lyf.  
For litel was hir catel and hir rent;  
For housbondry of such as God hir sent,  
Sche fond herself, and eek hir doughtres tuo.  
Thre large sowes had sche, and no mo,  
Thre kyn, and eek a scheep that highte Malle.  
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,  
In which sche eet ful many a sclender meel.  
Of poynant saws hir needid never a deel. 16320  
Noon deyneth morsel passid thorough hir throte;  
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.  
Repleccioun ne made hir never sik;  
Attempre dyete was al hir phisik,  
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.  
The goute lette hir nothing for to daunce,  
Ne poplexie schente not hir heed;  
No wyn ne drank sche, nother whit ne reed;  
Hir bord was servyd most with whit and blak,  
Milk and broun bred, in which sche fond no lak,  
Saynd bacoun, and som tyme an ey or tweye;  
For sche was as it were a maner deye.  
A yerd sche had, enclosed al aboute  
With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,  
In which sche had a cok, hight Chaunteclere,  
In al the lond of crowyng was noon his peere.  
His vois was merier than the mery organ,  
On masse dayes that in the chirche goon;  
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,  
Than is a klok, or an abbay orologge. 16340  
By nature knew he ech ascencioun  
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;  
For whan degrees fyftene were ascendid,  
Thanne crewe he, it might not ben amendid.  
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,  
And batayld, as it were a castel wal.  
His bile was blak, and as the geet it schon;  
Lik asur were his legges and his ton;  
His nayles whitter than the lily flour,  
And lik the burnischt gold was his colour. 16350  
This gentil cok had in his governaunce  
Seven hennes, for to do al his plesaunce,  
Whiche were his sustres and his paramoures,  
And wonder lik to him, as of coloures.  
Of whiche the fairest hiewed on hir throte,  
Was cleped fayre damysel Pertilote.  
Curteys sche was, discret, and debonaire,  
And companable, and bar herself ful faire,  
Syn thilke day that sche was seven night old.  
That sche hath trewely the hert in hold 16360  
Of Chaunteclere loken in every lith;  
He loved hir so, that wel him was therwith.  
But such a joye was it to here him synge,  
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,  
In swete accord, “my lief is faren on londe.”

Fro thilke tyme, as I have understonde,  
Bestis and briddes cowde speke and synge.  
And so byfel, that in a dawenyng,  
As Chaunteclere among his wyves alle  
Sat on his perche, that was in his halle, 16370  
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,  
This Chauntecler gan Gronen in his throte,

Marie of France, where it stands as fab. 51, *Dou coc et dou werpil*; see Roquefort's edition of the works of Marie, tom. ii. p. 240.

16359. *seven night.* I adopt this reading from the Lansd. Ms.; the reading of the Harl. Ms. *seven yer* is certainly wrong.



As man that in his dreem is drecched sore,  
 And whan that Pertelot thus herd him rore,  
 Sche was agast, and sayde, "herte deere,  
 What eylyth yow to grone in this manere?  
 Ye ben a verray sleper, fy for schame!"  
 And he answard and sayde thus, "Madame,  
 I pray yow, that ye take it nought agreef:  
 By God, me mette I was in such meschief 16380  
 Right now, that yit myn hert is sore afright.  
 Now God," quod he, "my sweven rede aright,  
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!  
 Me mette, how that I romed up and down  
 Withinne oure yerd, wher as I saugh a beest,  
 Was lik an hound, and wold have maad arrest  
 Upon my body, and wold han had me deed.  
 His colour was bitwixe yolow and reed;  
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his ceres  
 With blak, unlik the remenaunt of his heres. 16390  
 His snowt was smal, with glowyng yen tweye;  
 Yet of his look for fer almost I deye;  
 This caused me my gronyng douteles."  
 "Away!" quod sche, "fy on yow, herteles!  
 Allas!" quod sche, "for, by that God above!  
 Now have ye lost myn hert and al my love;  
 I can nought love a coward, by my feith.  
 For certis, what so eny womman seith,  
 We alle desiren, if it mighte be,  
 To have housbondes, hardy, riche, and fre, 16400  
 And secré, and no nygard, ne no fool,  
 Ne him that is agast of every tool,  
 Ne noon avaunter, by that God above!  
 How dorst ye sayn for schame unto your love,  
 That any thing might make yow afferd?  
 Have ye no mannes hert, and han a berd?  
 Allas! and can ye ben agast of swenyys?  
 Nought, God wot, but vanité, in sweren is.  
 Swevens engendrid ben of replecciouns,  
 And often of fume, and of complexiouns, 16410  
 Whan humours ben to abundaunt in a wight.  
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,  
 Cometh of the grete superfluité  
 Of youre reede *colera*, *pardé*,  
 Which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes  
 Of arwes, and of fuyr with reede beemes,  
 Of rede bestis, that thai wil him byte,  
 Of contek, and of whelpis greet and lite;  
 Right as the humour of malencolie  
 Causeth, in sleep, ful many a man to crye, 16420  
 For fere of beres, or of boles blake,  
 Or elles blake develes wol hem take.  
 Of other humours couthe I telle also,  
 That wirken many a man in slep ful woo;  
 But I wol passe as lightly as I can.  
 Lo Catoun, which that was so wis a man,  
 Sayde he nought thus, ne do no force of dremes?  
 Now, sire," quod sche, "whan we fle fro thise  
 For Goddis love, as tak som laxatyf; [beemes,  
 Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf, 16430  
 I counsel yow the best, I wol not lye,  
 That bothe of colour, and of malencolye  
 Ye purge yow; and for ye schol nought tarye,

16426. *Lo Catoun. Cato de Moribus*, l. ii. dist. 32, *Somnia ne cures*. "I observe, by the way, that this distich is quoted by John of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* l. ii. c. 16, as a precept *virii sapientis*. In another place, l. vii. c. 9, he introduces his quotation of the first verse of dist. 20, l. iii. in this manner. *Ait vel Cato, vel alius, nam autor incertus est.*"—*Tyrwhitt*.

16432-3. These two lines, omitted in the Harl. Ms. by an oversight of the scribe, are here inscribed from the *Lansd. Ms.*

Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,  
 I schal myself tuo herbes techyn yow,  
 That schal be for your hele, and for youre prow;  
 And in oure yerd tho herbes schal I fynde,  
 The whiche han of her propreté by kynde  
 To purgen yow bynethe, and eek above.  
 Forget not this, for Goddis oughne love! 16440  
 Ye ben ful colerik of complexioun;  
 Ware the sonne in his ascencioun  
 Ne fynd yow not replet in humours hote;  
 And if it do, I dar wel lay a grote,  
 That ye schul have a fever terciane,  
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane.  
 A day or tuo ye schul have digestives  
 Of wormes, or ye take your laxatives,  
 Of lauriol, century, and fumytere,  
 Or elles of elder bery, that groweth there, 16450  
 Of catapus, or of gaytre beris,  
 Of erbe yve that groweth in our yerd, ther mercy

[is;  
 Pike hem up right as thay growe, and et hem in.  
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader kyn;  
 Dredith non dremes; I can say no more."  
 "Madame," quod he, "*graunt mercy* of your love.  
 But natheles, as touching daun Catoun,  
 That hath of wisdom such a gret renoun,  
 Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,  
 By God, men may in olde bookes rede 16460  
 Of many a man, more of auctorité  
 Than ever Catoun was, so mot I the,  
 That al the revers sayn of his sentence.  
 And han wel founden by experience.  
 That dremes ben significaciouns  
 As wel of joye, as of tribulaciouns,  
 That folk enduren in this lif present.  
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;  
 The verray preve schewith it in dede.  
 Oon of the grettest auctours that men rede, 16470  
 Saith thus, that whilom tway felawes wente  
 On pylgrimage in a ful good entente;  
 And happed so, thay com into a toun,  
 Wher as ther was such congregacioun  
 Of poeple, and eek so streyt of herbergage,  
 That thay fond nought as moche as oon cotege,  
 In which that thay might bothe i-logged be.  
 Wherfor thay mosten of necessité,  
 As for that night, depart her compaignye;  
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye, 16480  
 And took his loggyng as it wolde falle.  
 That oon of hem was loggid in a stalle,  
 Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;  
 That other man was logged wel y-nough,  
 As was his adventure, or his fortune,  
 That us governith alle in comune.  
 And so bifel, that, long er it were day,  
 This oon met in his bed, ther as he lay,  
 How that his felaw gan upon him calle,  
 And sayd, 'allas! for in an oxen stalle 16490  
 This night I schal be murdrid ther I lye.  
 Now help me, deery brother, or I dye;  
 In alle haste cum to me,' he sayde.

16450. *elder bery*. This is the reading of the Harl. Ms. The *Lansd. Ms.* has *elobore*, and *Tyrwhitt elleber*.

16470. *Oon of the grettest auctours*. "*Cicero, de Divin.* l. i. c. 27, relates this and the following story, but in a contrary order; and with so many other differences, that one might be led to suspect that he was here quoted at second hand, if it were not usual with Chaucer, in these stories of familiar life, to throw in a number of natural circumstances, not to be found in his original authors" *Tyrwhitt*.



This man out of his slep for fer abrayde;  
 But whan that he was waked out of his sleep,  
 He turned him, and took of this no keep;  
 Him thought his drem nas but a vanité.  
 Thus twies in his sleepe dremed he.  
 And at the thridde tyme yet his felaw 16499  
 Com, as him thought, and sayd, 'I am now slave;  
 Bihold my bloody woundes, deep and wyde.  
 Arise up erly in the morwe tyde,  
 And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,  
 'A cart of donge there schalt thou see,  
 In which my body is hyd prively.  
 Do thilke cart arresten boldly.  
 My gold caused my mourdre, soth to sayn.'  
 And told him every poynnt how he was slayn.  
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe. 16509  
 And truste wel, his drem he fond ful trewe.  
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,  
 To his felawes in he took the way;  
 And whan that he cam to this oxen stalle,  
 After his felaw he bigan to calle.  
 The hostiller answered him anon,  
 And sayde, 'Sire, your felaw is agoon.  
 Als soone as day he went out of the toun.'  
 This man gan falle in a suspeccioun,  
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette, 16519  
 And forth he goth, no leuger wold he lette,  
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond  
 A dong cart went as it were to donge lond,  
 That was arrayed in the same wise  
 As ye han herd the dede man devise:  
 And with an hardy hert he gan to erie  
 Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye.  
 'My felaw mordrid is this same night,  
 And in this carte he lith heer upright.  
 I erie out on the ministres,' quod he,  
 'That schulpe kepe and reule this cité: 16530  
 Harrow! allas! her lith my felaw slayn!'  
 What schold I more unto this tale sayn?  
 The peple upstert, and caste the cart to grounde,  
 And in the middes of the dong thay founde  
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.  
 O blisful God, thou art ful just and trewe,  
 Lo, how thow bywreyst mordre alday.  
 Mordre wil out, certes it is no nay.  
 Morder is so wlatom and abhominable  
 To God, that is so just and resonable, 16540  
 That he ne wold nought suffre it hiled be;  
 Though it abyde a yeer, or tuo, or thre,  
 Morder wil out, this is my conclusioun.  
 And right anon, the mynistres of that toun  
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,  
 And eek the hostiller so sore engnyed,  
 That thay biknew her wikkednes anon,  
 And were anhonged by the nekke boon.  
 "Here may men se that dremys ben to drede.  
 And certes in the same book I rede, 16550  
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this,  
 (I gabbe nought, so have I joye or blis),  
 Tuo men that wolde have passed over see  
 For certeyn causes into fer contré,  
 If that the wynd ne hadde ben contrarie,  
 That made hem in a cité for to tarie,  
 That stood ful mery upon an haven syde.  
 But on a day, agayn the even tyde, [list.  
 The wynd gan change, and blew right as hem  
 Jolyf and glad they wenten unto rest, 16560

16523, *heer upright*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *gaping upright*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.

And casten hem ful erly for to sayle;  
 But to that oon man fell a gret mervayle.  
 That oon of hem in his slepyng as he lay,  
 Him met a wonder drem, agayn the day:  
 Him thought a man stood by his beddes syde,  
 And him comaunded, that he schuld abyde,  
 And sayd him thus, 'if thou to morwe wende,  
 Thow schalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'  
 He wook, and told his felaw what he mette,  
 And prayde him his viage to lette, 16579  
 As for that day, he prayd him for to abyde.  
 His felaw that lay by his beddis syde,  
 Gan for to lawgh, and scorned him ful fast.  
 'No drem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte gaste,  
 That I wil lette for to do my thynges.  
 I sette not a straw by thy dremynges,  
 For swevens been but vanitees and japes.  
 Men dreme al day of owles and of apes,  
 And eke of many a mase therwithal;  
 Men dreme of thynges that never be schal. 16589  
 But s'ith I see that thou wilt her abyde,  
 And thus forslouthe wilfully thy tyde,  
 God wot it reweth me, and have good day.'  
 And thus he took his leve, and went his way.  
 But er he hadde half his cours i-sayed,  
 Noot I nought why, ne what meschaunce it ayled,  
 But casuelly the schippes bothom rent,  
 And schip and man under the watir went  
 In sight of other schippes ther byside,  
 That with him sailed at the same tyde. 16599  
 "And therefore, faire Pertelot so deere,  
 By such ensamples olde maistow leere  
 That no man scholde be to recheles  
 Of dremes, for I say the douteles,  
 That many a drem ful sore is for to drede.  
 Lo, in the lif of seint Kenelm, I rede,  
 That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king  
 Of Mercenrike, how Kenilm mette a thyng.  
 A litil or he was mordred upon a day,  
 His mordre in his avisioun he say. 16600  
 His norice him expouned every del  
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel  
 For traisoun; but he nas but seven yer old,  
 And therefore litel tale hath he told  
 Of eny drem, so holy was his hert.  
 By God, I hadde lever than my schert,  
 That ye had rad his legend, as have I.  
 Dame Pertelot, I say yow trewely,  
 Macrobius, that writ the avisioun  
 In Auffrik of the worthy Cipioun, 16610  
 Affermeth dremes, and saith that thay been  
 Warnyng of thynges that men after seen.  
 And furthermore, I pray yow loketh wel  
 In the olde Testament, of Daniel,  
 If he huld dremes eny vanyté.  
 Rede eek of Joseph, and ther schal ye see  
 Whethir dremes ben som tyme (I say nought alle)  
 Warnyng of thynges that schul after falle.  
 Lok of Egypt the king, dann Phraao,  
 His baker and his botiler also, 16620  
 Whethir thay felte noon effect in dremis.

16580, *never be schal*. I have not ventured to change the reading of the Harl. Ms. Tyrwhitt reads *never was ne shall*.

16596, *Kenelm*. Kenelm succeeded his father, Kenulph, on the throne of the Mercians, in 821, at the age of seven years, and was murdered by order of his aunt, Quedreda. He was subsequently made a saint, and his legend will be found in *Capgrave*, or in the *Golden Legend*.

16610, *Cipioun*. The *Somnium Scipionis* of Macrobius was a favourite work during the middle ages.

Who so wol seke actes of sondry remays,  
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.  
 Lo Cressus, which that was of Lydes king,  
 Mette he not that he sat upon a tre,  
 Which signified he schuld hanged be?  
 Lo hir Andromachia, Ectors wif,  
 That day that Ector schulde lese his lif,  
 Sche dremed on the same night byforn,  
 How that the lif of Ector schuld be lorn, 16620  
 If thilke day he wente to batayle;  
 Sche warned him, but it might nought availle;  
 He wente forth to fighte natheles,  
 And he was slayn anon of Achilles.  
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,  
 And eek it is neigh day, I may not duelle.  
 Schortly I say, as for conclusioun,  
 That I schal have of this avisoun  
 Adversité; and I say forthermore,  
 That I ne telle of laxatifs no store, 16640  
 For thay ben venomous, I wot it wel;  
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.  
 "Now let us speke of mirthe, and lete at this;  
 Madame Pertilot, so have I blis,  
 Of o thing God hath me sent large grace;  
 For whan I se the beauté of your face,  
 Ye ben so scarlet hiew about your eyghen.  
 It makith al my drede for to deyghen,  
 For, al so siker as *In principio*,  
*Mulier est hominis confusio.* 16650  
 (Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is,  
 Womman is mannes joye and mannes blis.)  
 For whan I fiele a-night your softe syde,  
 Al be it that I may not on you ryde,  
 For that your perche is mad so narow, allas!  
 I am so ful of joye and solas,  
 That I defye bothe sweven and drem."  
 And with that word he fleigh doum fro the beam,  
 For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;  
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle, 16660  
 For he had found a corn, lay in the yerd.  
 Real he was, he was nomore aferd;  
 He fetherid Pertelote twenty tyme,  
 And trad as ofte, er that it was prime.  
 He lokith as it were a grim lioun;  
 And on his toon he rometh up and doum,  
 Him deynd not to set his foot to grounde.  
 He chukith, whan he hath a corn i-founde,  
 And to him rennen than his wifes alle.  
 Thus real, as a prince is in his halle, 16670  
 Leve I this Chaunteclere in his pasture;  
 And after wol I telle his aventure.  
 Whan that the moneth in which the world bigan,  
 That highte March, whan God makid first man,  
 Was complet, and y-passed were also,  
 Syn March bygan, tway monthes and dayes tuo,  
 Byfel that Chaunteclere in al his pride,

16627. *Lo hir Andromachia.* Andromache's dream is related in the twenty-fourth chapter of *Dares Phrygius*: the authority for the history of the Trojan war most popular in the middle ages.

16676. *Syn March bygan, tway monthes and dayes tuo.* This is the reading of the Harleian Ms., and I see no reason to change it. Tyrwhitt reads *Sithen March ended, thritty dayes and tuo*, and observes, "I have ventured to depart from the mss. and edit. in this passage. They all read *began* instead of *ended*. At the same time Ms. c. 1, has this note in the margin, 'i. 2<sup>e</sup> die Martii,' which plainly supposes that the thirty-two days are to be reckoned from the end of March. As the vernal equinox (according to our author's hypothesis, Discourse, &c. p. 163) happened on the 12th of March, the place of the sun (as described in ver. 16200, 1.) in 22<sup>e</sup> of Taurus agrees very nearly with

His seven wyves walkyng by his syde,  
 Cast up his cyghen to the bryghte sonne,  
 That in the signe of Taurus had i-ronne 16680  
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more;  
 He knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,  
 That it was prime, and crew with blisful steven.  
 "The sonne," he sayde, "is clomben up on heven  
 Twenty degrees and oon, and more i-wis.  
 Madame Pertelot, my worldes blis,  
 Herkith these blisful briddes how thay synge,  
 And seth these freissche floures how thay sprynge;  
 Ful is myn hert of revel and solaaas."  
 But sodenly him fel a sorwful caas; 16690  
 For ever the latter end of joye is wo.  
 God wot that worldly joye is soone ago;  
 And if a rethor couthe faire endite,  
 He in a chronique sauffy might he write,  
 As for a soverayn notabilité.

Now every wys man let him herkne me;  
 This story is al so trewe, I undertake,  
 As the book is of Launcelot the Lake,  
 That womman huld in ful gret reverence.  
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence. 16700  
 A cole-fox, ful sleigh of iniquité,  
 That in the grove had woned yeres thre,  
 By heigh ymaginacioun forncast,  
 The same nighte thurgh the hegge brast  
 Into the yerd, ther Chaunteclere the faire  
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;  
 And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,  
 Til it was passed uderm of the day,  
 Waytyng his tyme on Chaunteclere to falle;  
 As gladly doon these homicides alle, 16710  
 That in awayte lyn to morther men.  
 O false morder lurekyng in thy den!  
 As newly Scariot, nefe Genilon!  
 Fals dissimulour, o Greke Sinon,  
 That broughtest Troye al utrely to sorwe!  
 O Chauntecler, accused be the morwe,  
 That thou into the yerd flough fro the bemys!  
 Thou were ful wel warned be thy dremys,  
 That thilke day was perilous to the.  
 But what that God forwot most needes be, 16720  
 After the popyoun of certeyn clerkis.  
 Witnessse on him, that eny parfit clerk is,  
 That in scole is gret alteracioun  
 In this matier, and gret disputouson,  
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.  
 But yit I can not bult it to the bren,  
 As can the holy doctor Augustyn,  
 Or Boece, or the bischop Bradwardyn,  
 Whether that Goddis worthy forwetyng  
 Streigneth me needely for to do a thing, 16730  
 (Needely clepe I simple necessité);  
 Or elles if fre choys be graunted me  
 To do that same thing, or to do it nought,  
 Though God forwot it, er that it was wrought;

his true place on the second of May, the fifty-third day incl. from the equinox. Ms. C. reads thus,—

"Syn March began tway monthes and dayes tuo;

which brings us to the same day, but, I think, by a less probable correction of the faulty copies."

16685. *Twenty degrees.* "The reading of the greatest part of the mss. is *fourty degrees*. But this is evidently wrong; for Chaucer is speaking of the altitude of the sun at or about prime, i. e. six o'clock a.m. See ver. 15203. When the sun is in 22<sup>e</sup> of Taurus, he is 21<sup>e</sup> high about three-quarters after six a.m."—Tyrwhitt.

16712. *lurekyng.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *roukeing*, and Tyrwhitt has *rucking*.



Or of his wityng streyneth never a deel,  
 But by necessité condicionel.  
 I wol not have to do of such matiere;  
 My tale is of a cok, as ye schal hiere,  
 That took his counseil of his wyf with sorwe  
 To walken in the yerd upon the morwe, 16740  
 That he had met the dreme, that I tolde.  
 Wymmens counseilles ben ful ofte colde;  
 Wommannes counseil brought us first to woo,  
 And made Adam for paradys to go,  
 Ther as he was ful mery, and wel at ease.  
 But for I not, to him it might displease,  
 If I counseil of womman wolde blame,  
 Pas over, for I sayd it in my game.  
 Red auctours, wher thay trete of such matiere,  
 And what thay sayn of wommen ye may heere.  
 These been the cokkes wordes, and not myne;  
 I can noon harme of womman divine. 16752

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,  
 Lith Pertelot, and alle hir susteres by,  
 Agayn the sonne; and Chaunteclere so free  
 Sang merier than the meremayd in the see;  
 For Physiologus seith sicurly,  
 How that thay syngen wel and merily.  
 And so byfel that as he cast his ye  
 Among the wordes on a boterflye, 16760  
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.  
 No thing ne list him thanne for to crowe,  
 But cryde anon, "cok, cok," and up he stert,  
 As man that was affrayd in his hert.  
 For naturelly a beest desireth flee  
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,  
 Though he never er had sayn it with his ye.

This Chaunteclere, whan he gan it aspye,  
 He wold han fled, but that the fox anon  
 Said, "gentil sire, allas! why wol ye goon? 16770  
 Be ye affrayd of me that am youre frend?  
 Certes, I were worse than eny feend,  
 If I to yow wold harm or vilonye.  
 I am nought come your counsail to espy  
 But trewely the cause of my coming  
 Was only for to herken how ye sing.  
 For trewely ye have als mery a steven,  
 As eny angel hath, that is in heven;  
 Therwith he han of musik more felynge,  
 Than had Boece, or eny that can syngre. 16780  
 My lord your fader (God his soule blesse)  
 And youre moder of her gentillesse  
 Han in myn hous been, to my gret ease;  
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wold I yow please.  
 But for men speke of syngyng, I wol say,  
 So not I brouke wel myn yen tway,  
 Save ye, I herde never man so syngre,  
 As dede your fadir in the morwenyng.  
 Certes it was of hert al that he song.  
 And for to make his vois the more strong, 16790  
 He wold so peynen him, that with bothe his yen

16757. *Physiologus*. This was the title given to a popular metrical Latin treatise on the natures of animals, in the middle ages, which is frequently quoted by the early writers when alluding to subjects of natural history. The chapter de *Sirenis* begins thus,—

"Sirenæ sunt monstra maris resonantia magnis  
 Vocibus et modulis cantus formantia multis,  
 Ad quæ incaute veniunt sepiissime nautæ,  
 Quæ faciunt sompnium nimia dulcedine vocum."

16770. *why wol ye goon?* Tyrwhitt follows the reading of some of the other mss., and prints it, *what wol ye don?*

16775. Two lines omitted here by accident in the Harl. Ms. are supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

He moste wynke, so lowde he wolde crien,  
 And stonden on his typton therwithal,  
 And streche forth his necke long and smal.  
 And eek he was of such discressioun,  
 That ther nas no man in no regioun  
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.  
 I have wel rad in daun Burnel thasse  
 Among his verses, how ther was a cok,  
 That, for a prestes sone gaf him a knok 16800  
 Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce,  
 He made him for to lese his benefice.  
 But certeyn ther is no comparisoun  
 Betwix the wisdom and discressioun  
 Of youre fader, and of his subtilté.  
 Now syngeth, sire, for seinte Charité;  
 Let se, can ye your fader countrefete?"  
 This Chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete,  
 As man that couthe his tresoun nought espye,  
 So was he ravysst with his flaterie. 16810

Allas! ye lordlynges, many a fals flatur  
 Is in your hous, and many a losengour,  
 That pleasen yow wel more, by my faith,  
 Than he that sothfastnesse unto yow saith.  
 Redith Ecclesiast of flaterie;  
 Beth war, ye lordes, of her treccherie.

This Chaunteclere stood heighe upon his toos,  
 Strecching his necke, and held his yhen cloos,  
 And gan to crowe lowde for the noones;  
 And daun Russel the fox stert up at oones, 16820  
 And by the garget hente Chaunteclere,  
 And on his bak toward the woode him bere.  
 For yit was there no man that him sewed.  
 O desteny, that maist not ben eschiewed!  
 Allas, that Chaunteclere fleigh fro the bemis!  
 Allas, his wif ne roughte nought of dremis!  
 And on a Friday fel al this mischaunce,  
 O Venus, that art goddes of pleasaunce,  
 Syn that thy servant was this Chaunteclere,  
 And in thy service did al his powere, 16830  
 More for delit, than the world to multiple,  
 Why woldest thou suffre him on thy day to dye?  
 O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,  
 That, whan the worthy king Richard was slayn  
 With schot, compleynedist his deth so sore,

16798. *in daun Burnel*. The reference, of course, is to the celebrated satirical poem of Nigellus Wireker, entitled *Burnellus*. It was one of the most popular Latin poems of the middle ages.

16812. *hous*. The Lansdowne Ms. reads *courte*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

16820. *daun Russel*. Russel was a common name given to the fox, from his colour.

16833. *O Gaufred*. Geoffrey de Vinsauf, the author of a celebrated medieval treatise on writing poetry, entitled *Nova Poetria*. Tyrwhitt has quoted the bombastic lines on the death of Richard I., which are given as a specimen of the plaintive style, and are here ridiculed by Chaucer. They are,—

"Neustria, sub clypeo regis defensa Ricardi,  
 Indefensa modo, gestu testare dolorem.  
 Exundant oculi lacrymas; exterminet ora  
 Pallor; connotet digitos tortura; cruentet  
 Interiora dolor, et verberet æthera clamor.  
 Tota peris ex morte sua. Mors non fuit ejus,  
 Sed tua; non una, sed publica mortis origo.  
 O Veneris lacrymosa dies! o sydus amarum!  
 Illa dies tua nox fuit, et Venus illa venenum.  
 Illa dedit vulnus," &c.

These lines are sufficient to shew the object, and the propriety, of Chaucer's ridicule. The whole poem is printed in Leysor's *Hist. Po. Med. Ævi*, p. 862—975.

16836. *sentence*. This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. Mss.; Tyrwhitt prints *science*, which weakens the sense.



Why ne had I nought thy sentence and thy lore,  
The Friday for to chiden, as dede ye?

(For on a Fryday sothly slayn was he).

Than wold I schewe how that I couthe pleyne,  
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne. 16840

Certis such cry ne lamentacioun

Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun

Was wonne, and Pirrus with his strit swerd,

Whan he had hente kyng Priam by the berd,

And slaugh him (as saith us *Eneydos*),

As maden alle the hennes in the clos,

Whan thay had sayn of Chauntecler the sight.

But souverainly dam Pertelote schright,

Ful lowder than did Hasdrubaldes wyf,

Whan that hir housebond had lost his lyf, 16850

And that the Romayns had i-brent Cartage,

Sche was so ful of torment and of rage,

That wilfully unto the fuyr sche stert,

And brend hirselves with a stedfast hert.

O woful hennes, right so cride ye,

As, whan that Nero brente the cité

Of Rome, criden the senatoures wyves,

For that her housbondes losten alle here lyves;

Withouten gult this Nero hath hem slayn.

Now wol I torne to my matier agayn. 16860

The sely wydow, and hir doughtres tuo,

Herden these hennys erie and maken wo,

And out at dores starte thay anon,

And sayden the fox toward the woode is goon,

And bar upon his bak the cok away;

They criden, "out! harrow and wayleway!

Ha, ha, the fox!" and after him thay ran,

And eek with staves many another man;

Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlund,

And Malkyn, with a distaf in hir hond; 16870

Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges

So were they fered for berkyng of dogges,

And schowtyng of the men and wymmen eke,

They ronned that thay thought her herte breke.

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;

The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle;

The gees for fere flownen over the trees;

Out of the hyve came the swarm of bees;

So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*

Certes he Jakke Straw, and his meyné, 16880

Ne maden schoutes never half so schrille.

Whan that thay wolden eny Fleming kille,

As thilke day was maad upon the fox.

Of bras thay broughten hornes and of box,

Of horn and boon, in which thay blew and powped,

And therewithal thay schryked and thay powped;

It semed as that heven schulde falle.

Now, goode men, I pray herkenth alle;

Lo, how fortune torneth sodeinly

The hope and pride eek of her enemy. 16890

This cok that lay upon this foxes bak,

In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,

And saide, "sire, if that I were as ye,

Yet schuld I sayn (as wis God helpe me),

Turneth agein, ye proude cherles alle;

A verray pestilens upon yow falle.

Now am I come unto this woodes syde,

Maugré youre hede, the cok schal heer abyde;

I wol him ete in faith, and that anon." 16899

The fox answerd, "in faith, it schal be doon."

16884. *hornes*. Tyrwhitt reads *beemes*.

16890. *envy*. The Harl. Ms. reads *envy*; but as this does not seem to make good sense, I have taken the reading printed by Tyrwhitt.

And whil he spak that word, al sodeinly

This cok brak from his mouth delyverly,

And heigh upon a tree he fleigh anon.

And whan the fox seigh that he was i-goon,

"Allas!" quod he, "o Chaunteclere, allas!

I have to yow," quod he, "y-don trespas,

Inasmoche as I makid yow aferd,

Whan I yow hent, and brought out of the yerd;

But, sire, I dede it in no wicked entent;

Com doun, and I schal telle yow what I ment. 16910

I schal say soth to yow, God help me so."

"Nay than," quod he, "I schrew us bothe tuo.

And first I schrew myself, bothe blood and boones,

If thou bigile me any after than oones.

Thou schalt no more thurgh thy flaterye

Do me to synge and wyne with myn ye.

For he that wynkith, whan he scholde see,

Al wilfully, God let him never the." [chaunce,

"Nay," quod the fox, "but God give him mes-

That is so undiscret of governance, 16920

That jangleth, whan he scholde holde his pees."

Lo, such it is for to be recheles,

And negligint, and trust on flaterie.

But ye that holde this tale a foye,

As of a fox, or of a cok or hen,

Takith the moralite therof, goode men.

For seint Poul saith, that all that writen is,

To oure doctrine it is i-write i-wis.

Takith the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille.

Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille, 16930

As saith my lord, so make us alle good men;

Aud bring us alle to his blisse. Amen.

#### THE PROLOGUE OF THE MAUNICIPLES TALE.

Wot ye not wher ther stont a litel toun,

Which that cleped is Bob-up-and-doun,

16931. *As saith my lord*. "Opposite to this verse, in the margin of Ms. c. 1, is written *Kouatar*, which means, I suppose, that some Archbishop of Canterbury is quoted."

*Tyrwhitt*.

16932. In the MS. in which the Nun's Priest's Tale is followed by that of the Nun, sixteen lines are inserted here, which are given as follows by Tyrwhitt,—

Sire Nonnes Preest, our hoste sayde anon,

Yblessed be thy breche and every ston,

This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere.

But by my trouthe, if thou were seculere,

Thou woldest ben a tredefoule aright:

For if thou had eorage as thou hast might,

Ther were nede of hennes, as I weie,

Ye mo than seven times seventene.

Se, whiche braunes hath this gentil preest,

So gret a necke, and swiche a large breast!

He loketh as a sparhawk with his eyen;

Him nedeth not his colour for to dien

With Brasil, ne with grain of Portingal.

But, sire, faire falle ye for thy tale.

And after that, he with ful mery chere

Sayd to another, as ye schulen here.

Whatever be the authority of these lines, they are evidently imperfect at the end, and Tyrwhitt printed them as being so; but two mss. which he examined gave the last of them thus,—

"Seide unto the nunne as ye shul heer."

And added the following lines to fill up the apparent vacuum,—

"Madame, and I dorste, I wolde you pray

To telle a tale in fortheringe of our way.

Than mighte ye do unto us grete ese.

Gladly, sire, quoth she, so that I might please

You and this worthy company,

And began hire tale riht thus ful sobrelly."

16934. *Bob-up-and-doun*. This appears to have been the popular name for the village of Harbledown, a short distance from Canterbury, which by its situation on a hill,

Under the Ble, in Caunterbury way?  
 Ther gan our hoste for to jape and play,  
 And sayde, "sires, what? Dun is in the myre.  
 Is ther no man for prayer ne for hyre,  
 That wol awake our felawe al byhynde?  
 A thief mighte ful lightly robbe and bynde. 16940  
 Se how he nappith, se, for Goddes boones,  
 That he wol falle fro his hors at ones.  
 Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?  
 Do him come forth, he knoweth his penaunce;  
 For he schal telle a tale, by my fay,  
 Although it be nought worth a botel hay.  
 Awake, thou cook, sit up, God gif the sorwe!  
 So that eyleth the, to slepe by the morwe?  
 Hast thou had fleen al night or artow dronke?  
 Or hastow with som quen al night i-swonke, 16950  
 So that thou maist not holden up thyn heed?"  
 This cook, that was ful pale and nothing reed,  
 Sayd to our host, "So God my soule blesse,  
 As ther is falle on me such hevynesse,  
 Not I nought why, that me were lever slepe,  
 Than the beste galoun wyn that is in Chepe."  
 "Well," quod the Maunceiple, "if that I may  
 doon ease

To the, sir Cook, and to no wight displease  
 Which that her rydeth in this compaignye,  
 And our host wolde of his curteisie, 16960  
 I wol as now excuse the of thy tale;  
 For in good faith thy visage is ful pale.  
 Thyn eyen daswen eek, al so me thinkith,  
 And wel I woot, thy breth ful foule stynkith,  
 That scheweth eek thou art nought wel disposid;  
 Of me certeyn thou schalt nought ben i-glosed.  
 Se how he ganith, lo, this dronken wight,  
 As though he wolde swolve us anoon right.  
 Hold clos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kynne!  
 The devel of helle sette his foot therinne! 16970

and the ups and downs on the road, merits well such an appellation. It stands on the edge of the Ble, or Bleau Forest, which was formerly celebrated for its wildness. Erasmus, in one of his colloquies, the *Pilgrimage for religion's sake*, describes this place exactly, when he tells us that, "those who journey to London, not long after leaving Canterbury, find themselves in a road at once very hollow and narrow, and besides the banks on either side are so steep and abrupt that you cannot escape." See Mr. J. G. Nichols's translation of the *Pilgrimage of Erasmus*, p. 60.

16944. *Do him come forth.* Tyrwhitt observes on this,—"The common reading is—do him *com fort*. The alteration is material, not only as it gives a clearer sense, but as it intimates to us that the narrator of a tale was made to come out of the crowd, and to take his place within hearing of the host, during his narration. Agreeably to this notion when the host calls upon Chaucer, ver. 13628, he says,

Approche nere, and loke up merily.  
 Now ware you, sires, and let this man have place.

It was necessary that the host, who was to be "juge and reportour" of the tales (ver. 816), should hear them all distinctly. The others might hear as much as they could, or as they chose, of them. It would have required the lungs of a Stentor to speak audibly to a company of thirty people, trotting on together in a road of the fourteenth century." We must, however, not take things too literally in the *Canterbury Tales*, for it is evident that the Manciples tale, and the long discourse of the parson, would require more time than could be allowed by the distance between Harbledown and Canterbury, and we might suppose they proceeded very slowly, and such as listened to the tale kept round the speaker, and probably halted from time to time.

16948. *To slepe by the morwe.* "This must be understood generally for the day-time: as it was then afternoon."—Tyrwhitt.

16967. *ganith*, i. e. *yawns*. This is certainly a better reading than Tyrwhitt's *galpeth*. The Lansd. Ms. reads *goth*.

Thy cursed breth effecte wil us alle.  
 Fy, stynkyng swyne! foule mot the falle!  
 A! takith heed, sires, of this lusty man.  
 Now, swete sir, wol ye joust at fan?  
 Therto, me thinkth, ye beth right wel i-schape.  
 I trowe that ye dronken han wyn of ape,  
 And that is whan men playen with a straw."  
 And with his speche the Cook wax angry and  
 wraw,  
 And on the Maunceiple bygan he nodde fast  
 For lak of speche; and down the hors him east.  
 Wher as he lay, til that men him up took. 16981  
 This was a fair ehivaché of a cook!  
 Allas! that he had hold him by his ladil!  
 And er that he agayn were in his sadil,  
 Ther was gret schowvynge bothe to and fro  
 To lift him up, and moche care and wo,  
 So unwelde was this sory pallid gost.  
 And to the Maunceiple thanne spak oure host:  
 "Bycause drink hath dominacion  
 Upon this man, by my savacioun 16990  
 I trow he lewedly tel wol his tale.  
 For were it wyn, or old moysty ale,  
 That he hath dronk, he spekieth in his nose,  
 And snesith fast, and eek he hath the pose.  
 He also hath to do more than y-nough  
 To kepe him and his capil out of the slough;  
 And if he falle fro his capil eftsonne,  
 Than schal we alle have y-nough to doone  
 In lifyng up his hevvy dronken eors.  
 Tel to thy tale, of him make I no fors. 17000  
 But yit, Maunceiple, in faith thou art to nyce,  
 Thus openly reproeve him of his vice;  
 Another day he wil *par adventure*  
 Reclayne the, and bringe the to lure;  
 I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,  
 As for to pynchyn at thy rekenynges,  
 That were not honest, if it cam to pref."  
 Quod the Maunceiple, "That were a gretmeschief;  
 So might he lightly bringe me in the snare.  
 Yit had I lever payen for the mare 17010  
 Which he ryt on, than he sculd with me stryve.  
 I wil not wrath him, al so mot I thrive;  
 That that I speak, I sayd it in my bourde.

16971. *effecte.* Tyrwhitt has *enfecten*, which is perhaps the better reading.

16974. *wol ye joust atte fan?* Some mss. read *van*. The sense of both words is the same. "The thing meant is the quintaine, which is called a fan or vane, from its turning round like a weathercock."—Tyrwhitt.

16976. *wyn of ape.* "This is the reading of the best manuscripts, and I believe the true one. The explanation in the Gloss. of this and the preceding passage, from Mr. Speght, is too ridiculous to be repeated. *Wine of ape* I understand to mean the same as *vin de singe* in the old *Calendrier des Bergiers*, sign. l. ii. b. The author is treating of physiognomy, and in his description of the four temperaments he mentions, among other circumstances, the different effects of wine upon them. The choleric, he says, *a vin de lyon; cest a dire, quant a bien beu veult tanser, noyser, et battre—the sanguine, a vin de singe; quant a plus beu tant est plus joyeux—in the same manner the phlegmatic is said to have vin de mouton, and the melancholic vin de porceau.* I find the same four animals applied to illustrate the effects of wine in a little Rabbinical tradition, which I shall transcribe here from Fabric. Cod. Pseudepigr. V. T. vol. i. p. 275. *Vineas plantanti Noacho Satanam se junzisse memorant, qui, dum Noa vites plantaret, mactaverit apud illas ovem, leonem, simiam, et suem: quod principio potus vini homo sit instar ovis, vinum sumptum efficit ex homine leonem, largius haustum matet eum in satantem simiam, ad ebrietatem infusum transformet illum in pollutum et prostratum suem.* See also *Gesta Romanorum*, c. 159, where a story of the same purport is quoted from Josephus, in *libro de casu rerum naturalium.*"—Tyrwhitt.



And wite ye what? I have heer in a gourde  
 A draught of wyn, is of a ripe grape.  
 And right anoon ye schal se a good jape.  
 This cook schal drinke therof, if I may;  
 Up peyn of deth he wol nought say me nay,"  
 And certainly, to tellen as it was,  
 Of this vessel the cook dronk fast, (allas! 17020  
 What needid it? he drank y-nough biforn);  
 And whan he hadde pouped in his horn,  
 To the Maunciple he took the gourd agayn.  
 And of that draught the cook was wonder fayn,  
 And thanked him in such wise as he couthe.  
 Than gan our host to laughe wonder louthe,  
 And said, "I se wel it is necessarie  
 Wher that we go good drynk with us to carie;  
 For that wol torne rancour and desese  
 To accord and love, and many a wrong apese.  
 O thou Bacus, i-blessid be thin name, 17031  
 That so canst torne earnest into game;  
 Worschip and thonke be to thy deité!  
 Of that matier ye get no more of me.  
 Tel on thi tale, Mauncipel, I the pray."  
 "Wel, sir," quod he, "now hearkyn what I say."

## THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

WHAN Phebus duelt her in this erthe adoun,  
 As olde bookes maken menciuon,  
 He was the moste lusty bachiler  
 Of al this world, and eek the best archer. 17040  
 He slough Phiton the serpent, as he lay  
 Slepyn agayn the sonne upon a day;  
 And many another noble worthy dede  
 He with his bowe wrought, as men may rede.  
 Pleyen he couthe on every mynstraleye,  
 And syngen, that it was a melodye  
 To heren of his cleere vois the soun.  
 Certes the kyng of Thebes, Amphiou, n,  
 That with his singyn wallid that citee,  
 Couth never synge half so wel as he. 17050  
 Therto he was the semlieste man,  
 That is or was, siththen the world bigan;  
 What nedith it his fetures to describe?  
 For in this worlde, is noon so faire on lyve.  
 He was therwith fullid of gentilece,  
 Of honour, and of parfytte whitenesse.

This Phebus, that was flour of bachilerie,  
 As wel in freedom, as in chivalrie,  
 For to disport, in signe of victorie  
 Of Phiton, so as telleth us the storie, 17060  
 Was wont to bere in his hond a bowe.  
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe,  
 Which in a cage he fostred many a day,  
 And taught it speken, as men doon a jay.  
 Whit was this crowe, as is a snow-whyt swan,  
 And countrefete the speche of every man

17030. *A wrong apese.* I take Tyrwhitt's reading of this passage, because no better reading presents itself. The mss. seem in general more or less corrupt. The Harl. Ms. reads *many rancour pese*; while in the Lansd. Ms. it stands *mony worde to pese*.

*The Maunciples Tale.* This tale is, of course, a mediæval version of an old classic story, the original of which will be found in the *Metamorphoses of Ovid*. It is found in mediæval writers under a variety of forms. One of them occurs in the old collection of tales entitled the *Seven Sagos*; another version is given in Gower.

17053. *fetures.* The Harl. Ms. reads *fortune*; but the reading I have here adopted from the Lansd. Ms. is evidently the more correct one.

17054. *so faire.* The Harl. Ms. has here, again, what appears to be an incorrect reading, *noon such on lyve*, and I have again followed the Lansd. Ms.

He couthe, whan he schulde telle a tale.  
 Ther is withinne this world no nightingale  
 Ne couthe by an hundred thousand del  
 Singe so wonder merily and wel. 17070  
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a wyf,  
 Which that he loved more than his lif,  
 And night and day did evermor diligence  
 Hir for to please, and doon hir reverence;  
 Sauf oonly, if the soth that I schal sayn,  
 Jalous he was, and wold have kept hir fayn,  
 For him were loth bigaped for to be;  
 And so is every wight in such degré;  
 But al for nought, for it availeth nought. 17079  
 A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thought,  
 Schuld not be kept in noon awayt certayn;  
 And trewely the labour is in vayn  
 To kepe a schrewe, for it wil nought be.  
 This hold I for a verray nycecté,  
 To spille labour for to kepe wyves;  
 Thus olde clerkes writen in her lyves.

But now to purpos, as I first bigan,  
 This worthi Phebus doth al that he can  
 To pleasen hir, wenyng by such plesaunce,  
 And for his manhod and his governaunce, 17090  
 That no man schuld han put him fro hir grace.  
 But God it woot, ther may no man embrace  
 As to destroy a thing, the which nature  
 Hath naturelly set in a creature.  
 Tak any brid, and put him in a cage,  
 And do al thin entent, and thy corrage,  
 To foster it tenderly with mete and drynk,  
 And with alle the deyntees thou canst think,  
 And keep it al so kyndly as thou may;  
 Although his cage of gold be never so gay, 17100  
 Yit hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold,  
 Lever to be in forest, wyld and cold,  
 Gon ete wormes, and such wrecchidnes.  
 For ever this brid wil doon his busynes  
 To scape out of his cage whan he may;  
 His liberté the brid desireth aye.  
 Let take a cat, and foster him wel with mylk  
 And tender fleisch, and mak his bed of silk,  
 And let him see a mous go by the wal,  
 Anoon he wayveth mylk and fleisch, and al, 17110  
 And every deynté which is in that hous,  
 Such appetit hath he to ete the mous.  
 Lo, heer hath kynd his dominacioun,  
 And appetit flemeth discretioun.  
 Al so a sche wolf hath a vilayns kynde;  
 The lewidest wolf that sche may fynde,  
 Or lest of reptacioun, him wol sche take  
 In tyme whan hir lust to have a make.  
 Alle this ensamples tel I by this men  
 That ben untrewé, and nothing by wommen.  
 For men han ever a licorous appetit 17121  
 On lower thing to parforme her delit  
 Than on her wyves, ben they never so faire,  
 Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.  
 Fleissch is so newfangil, with meschaunce,

17093. *distroy.* The Lansd. Ms. has *discryue*, and Tyrwhitt has adopted *distreine*, which may perhaps be the best reading.

17095. *Tak any brid.* This and the following examples are all taken, as observed by Tyrwhitt, from the *Roman de ia Rose*, but it is hardly necessary to give particular references to each.

17108. *his bed.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *couche*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt. It may be observed that Tyrwhitt's text speaks of the cat in the feminine gender, whereas the Harl. and Lansd. Mss. use the masculine, as in the present text.



That we can in no thinge have plesance  
 That sonneth into vertue eny while.  
 This Phebus, which that thought upon no gile,  
 Deceyved was for al his jolité;  
 For under him another hadde sche, 17130  
 A man of lital reputacioun,  
 Nought worth to Phebus in comparisoun;  
 Mor harm it is; it happeth ofte so;  
 Of which ther cometh bothe harm and woo.  
 And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,  
 His wif anon hath for hir lemman sent.  
 Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavisch speche.  
 Forgiveth it me, and that I yow biseche.  
 The wise Plato saith, as ye may rede,  
 The word mot neede accorde with the dede,  
 If men schal telle properly a thing, 17141  
 The word mot corde with the thing werkyng.  
 I am a boystous man, right thus say I;  
 Ther is no difference trewely  
 Bytwix a wyf that is of heigh degré,  
 (If of hir body dishonest sche be)  
 And a pore wenche, other then this,  
 (If so be thay werke bothe amys)  
 But that the gentil in estat above  
 Sche schal be cleped his lady as in love; 17150  
 And, for that other is a pore womman,  
 Sche schal be cleped his wenche and his lemman;  
 And God it wot, my goode lieve brother,  
 Men layn that oon as lowe as lith that other.  
 Right so bitwixe a titleles tirant  
 And an outlawe, or a thef erraunt,  
 The same I say, there is no difference,  
 (To Alisaunder told was this sentence)  
 But, for the tiraunt is of greter might  
 By force of meyné for to sle doum right, 17160  
 And brenne hous and home, and make al playn,  
 Lo, therfor is he cleped a capitayn;  
 And, for an outlawe hath so smal meyné,  
 And may not doon so gret an harm as he,  
 Ne bringe a contré to so gret meschief,  
 Men clepen him an outlawe or a thef.  
 But, for I am a man not texted wel,  
 I wil not telle of textes never a del;  
 I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.

Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir lemman,  
 Anon thay wroughten al her wil volage. 17171  
 This white crow, that heng alway in cage,  
 Bihild her werk, and sayde never a word.  
 And whan that hom was come Phebus the lord,  
 This crowe song, "cuckow, cuckow, cuckow!"  
 "What? brid," quod Phebus, "what song syng-  
 Ne were thou wout so merly to syng, [istow now?  
 That to myn hert it was a rejoyssyng  
 To here thi vois? allas! what song is this?"  
 "By God," quod he, "I syng not amys. 17180  
 Phebus," quod he, "for al thy worthynes,  
 For al thy beauté, and thy gentiles,  
 For alle thy songes, and thy menstralcie,  
 For al thy waytyng, blered is thin ye,  
 With oon of lital reputacioun,  
 Nought worth to the as in compar'soun  
 The mountauns of a gnat, so mot I thrive;  
 For on thy bed thy wif I sangh him swyve."

17142. *mot corde* with the *thing werkyng*. This is the reading of the Harl. Ms., which makes perfectly good sense. Tyrwhitt, like the Lansd. Ms., reads *must cosin be to the werkyng*.

17155. *a titleles*. This is Tyrwhitt's reading; the Harl. Ms. has *atticles*, which is evidently corrupt, and the Lansd. *a tilles*.

What wol ye more? the crowe anon him tolde.  
 By sadde toknes, and by wordes bolde, 17190  
 How that his wyf had doon hir lecherie  
 Him to gret schame, and to gret vilonye;  
 And told him oft he saugh it with his yen.  
 This Phebus gan away-ward for to wryen;  
 Him thought his sorrowful herte brast on tuo.  
 His bowe he bent, and sett therein a flo;  
 And in his ire he hath his wif i-slayn;  
 This is theeffect, ther is no more to sayn.  
 For sorw of which he brak his menstraleye,  
 Bothe harp and lute, gitern, and sauterie; 17200  
 And eek he brak his arwes, and his bowe;  
 And after that thus spak he to the crowe;  
 "Traytour," quod he, "with tunge of scorioun,  
 Thow hast me brought to my confusioun;  
 Allas that I was born! why nere I deed?  
 O dere wyf, O gemme of lustyhed,  
 That were to me so sad, and eek so trewe,  
 Now list thou deed, with face pale of hewe,  
 Ful guiteles, that dorst I swere y-wis.  
 O racle hond, to do so foule amys. 17210  
 O trouble wit, O ire recheles,  
 That unavysed smyttest guiteles.  
 O wantrust, ful of fals suspeccioun,  
 Wher was thy wit and thy discrecioun?  
 O, every man be ware of raclelesse,  
 Ne trowe no thing withoute gret wisesse.  
 Smyt nought to soone, er that thou wite why,  
 And be avysed wel and sobrely,  
 Er ye doon eny execucioun  
 Upon your ire for suspeccioun. 17220  
 Allas! a thousand folk hath racle ire  
 Fordoon, or Dun hath brought hem in the myre.  
 Allas! for sorw I wil myselfen sle."  
 And to the crowe, "O false theef," said he,  
 "I wil the quyt anon thy false tale.  
 Thow songe whilom, as any nightyngale,  
 Now schaltow, false thef, thy song forgoon,  
 And eek thy white fetheres, everichoon,  
 Ne never in al thy lyf ne schaltow speke;  
 Thus schal men on a fals theef ben awreke. 17230  
 Thou and thin ofspring ever schuln he blake,  
 Ne never sweete noyse schul ye make,  
 But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,  
 In tokenyng that thurgh the my wyf was slayn."

And to the crowe he stert, and that anon,  
 And puld his white fetheres everychoon,  
 And made him blak, and raft him al his song,  
 And eek his speche, and out at dore him slong  
 Unto the devel, which I him bytake;  
 And for this cause ben alle crowes blake. 17240

Lordyngs, by this ensample, I yow pray,  
 Beth war, and taketh kepe what ye say;  
 Ne tellith never man in al youre lif,  
 How that another man hath dight his wyf;  
 He wol yow hatin mortelly certeyn.  
 Daun Salamon, as wise clerkes seyn,  
 Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel.  
 But, as I sayd, I am nought tixted wel  
 But natheles thus taughte me my dame; 17249  
 "My sone, thenk on the crowe, in Goddes name.  
 My soun, keep wel thy tonge, and kep thy frend;  
 A wicked tonge is worse than a feend;

17222. *Dun*. See before, l. 16937. It is said that this proverbial expression arose from a popular game, which was in use as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, and is alluded to in the early dramatists. *Dun*, of course, is the name of a horse.

My sone, fro a feend men may hem blesse.  
 My sone, God of his endeles goodnesse  
 Wallid a tonge with teeth, and lippes eek,  
 For man schal him avyse what he speek.  
 My sone, ful ofte for to mochil speche  
 Hath many a man be spilt, as clerkes teche;  
 But for a litil speche avisily  
 Is no man schent, to speke generally. 17260  
 My sone, thy tonge scholdest thou restreigne  
 At alle tyme, but when thou dost thy peyne  
 To speke of God in honour and prayere.  
 The firste vertue, sone, if thou wilt lere,  
 Is to restreigne and kepe wel thy tonge;  
 Thus lerne clerkes, when that they ben yonge.  
 My sone, of mochil speking evel avised,  
 Ther lasse speking had y-nough suffised, [taught;  
 Cometh mochil harm; thus was me told and  
 In mochel speche synne wantith nought. 17270  
 Wost thou wherof a racle tonge serveth?  
 Right as a swerd for-kutteth and for-kerveth  
 An arm atuo, my dere sone, right so  
 A tonge cutteth frendschip al atuo.  
 A jangler is to God abhominable.  
 Red Salemon, so wys and honourable,  
 Red David in his Psalmes, reed Senek.  
 My sone, spek not, but with thy heed thou bek,  
 Dissimul as thou were deed, if that thou heere  
 A jangler speke of perilous mateere. 17280  
 The Fleming saith, and lere it if the lest,  
 That litil jangling causeth mochil rest.  
 My sone, if thou no wikked word hast sayd,  
 The thar not drede for to be bywrayd;  
 But he that hath myssayd, I dar wel sayn,  
 He may by no way clepe his word agayn.  
 Thing that is sayd is sayd, and forth it goth,  
 Though him repent, or be him never so loth,  
 He is his thral, to whom that he hath sayd  
 A tale, of which he is now yvel payd. 17290  
 My sone, be war, and be noon auctour newe  
 Of tydyngs, whether they ben fals or trewe;  
 Wher so thou comest, amonges heih or lowe,  
 Kep wel thy tonge, and thenk upon the crowe."

## THE PROLOGE OF THE PERSONES TALE.

Br that the Maunciple had his tale endid,  
 The sonne for the south line is descendid  
 So lowe, that it nas nought to my sight  
 Degrees nyne and twenty as in hight.  
 Ten on the clokke it was, as I gesse,

17264. *The firste vertue.* This is taken from *Cato de Moribus*, lib. i. dist. 3.—

*Virtutum primam esse puta compescere linguam.*

Cato was one of the first books put into the hands of young scholars, which explains the remarks here made in line 17266.

17291. *be noon auctour newe.* This also is taken from *Cato*, lib. i. dist. 2.—

*Rumores fuge, ne incipias novus auctor haberi,*

Which Chancer seems to have read,—

*Rumoris fuge ne incipias novus auctor haberi.*

17299. *Ten.* I have not ventured to change the reading of the Harl. Ms., which is partly supported by that of the Lansd. Ms. *Than.* Tyrwhitt, who reads *four*, makes the following observation on this passage: "In this Prologue, which introduces the last tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day; but the hour by the clock is very differently represented in the mss. In some it is *ten*, in others *two*; in most of the best mss. *four*" (Tyrwhitt's judgment of the mss. is not to be depended upon), "and in one *five*. According to the phenomena here mentioned, the sun being 29° high, and the length of the shadow to the projecting body as

For enleven foote, or litil more or lesse, 17300  
 My schadow was at thilk tyme of the yere,  
 Of which feet as my lengthe parted were  
 In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.  
 Therwith the mones exaltacioun,  
 In mena Libra, alway gan ascende,  
 As we were entryng at a townes ende.  
 For which our host, as he was wont to gye,  
 As in this caas, our joly compaignye,  
 Sayd in this wise: "Lordings, everichoon,  
 Now lakketh us no moo tales than oon, 17310  
 Fulfilled is my sentens and my decré;  
 I trowe that we han herd of ech degré.  
 Almost fulfilled is myn ordynance;  
 I pray to God so geve him right good chaunce,  
 That teltith to us his tale lustily.  
 Sir prest," quod he, "artow a vicary?  
 Or artow a persoun? say soth, by thy fay.  
 Be what thou be, ne breke nought oure play;  
 For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.  
 Unbocle, and schew us what is in thy male. 17320  
 For trewely me thinketh by thy chier,  
 Thou scholdist wel knyt up a gret matier.  
 Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes boones!"  
 "This Persoun him anwerde al at oones:  
 "Thow getist fable noon i-told for me,  
 For Poul, that writes unto Thimothé,  
 Repreveth hem that weyveth sothfastnesse,  
 And tellen fables, and such wrecchidnesse.  
 Why schuld I sowen draf out of my fest,  
 When I may sowe whete, if that me lest? 17330  
 For which I say, if that yow lust to hierie  
 Moralité and vertuous matiere,  
 And thanne that ye wil give me audience,  
 I wol ful fayn at Cristis reverence  
 Do yow plesaunce leful, as I can.  
 But trusteth wel, I am a suthern man,

eleven to six, it was *between foure and five*. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the host admonishes the person to *haste him*, because 'the some wool adoun,' and to be 'fructuous in litil space,' and indeed the person, knowing probably how much time he had good, seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition; for his tale, if it may be so called, is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in some mss. '*Tractatus de Penitentia, pro fabula, ut dicitur, Rectoris*;' and I much suspect that it is a translation of some such treatise."

17305. *In mena Libra.* "This is a very obscure passage. Some of the mss. read *I mene Libra*. According to the reading which I have followed, *exaltation* is not to be considered as a technical term, but as signifying simply *rising*; and the sense will be, that the moon's rising in the middle of *Libra*, was continually ascending, etc. If *exaltation* be taken in its technical meaning, as explained in a former note, it will be impossible to make any sense of either of the readings: for the *exaltation* of the moon was not in *Libra*, but in *Taurus*. *Kalendrier des Bergiers*, sign. I. nlt. Mr. Speght, I suppose, being aware of this, altered *Libra* into *Taurus*; but he did not consider that the sun, which has just been said to be *descending*, was at that time in *Taurus*, and that consequently *Taurus* must also have been *descending*. *Libra*, therefore, should by no means be parted with. Being in that part of the zodiac which is nearly opposite to *Taurus*, the place of the sun, it is very properly represented as *ascending* above the horizon toward the time of the sun's setting. If any alteration were to be admitted, I should be for reading—

Therwith *Saturnes* exaltation,

I mene *Libra*, alway gan ascende—

The exaltation of *Saturn* was in *Libra*. *Kalendrier des Bergiers*, sign. K. i.—*Tyrwhitt*.

17306. *a townes.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *at the thropes ende*.

17323. *tale.* The Lansd. Ms. reads *fable*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt, and it seems to be authorised by the parson's reply.



I can not geste, rum, rat, ruf, by letter,  
 Ne, God wot, rym hold I but litel better.  
 And therfor, if yow lust, I wol not glose,  
 I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose, 17340  
 To knyt up al this fest, and make an ende;  
 And Jhesu for his grace wit me sende  
 To schewe yow the way, in this viage,  
 Of thilke perfyte glorious pilgrymage  
 That hatte Jerusalem celestial.  
 And if ye vouchesauf, anon I schal  
 Bygynne my tale, for which I yow pray  
 Telle your avis, I can no better say.  
 But natheles this meditacioun 17350  
 I put it ȝy under correccioun  
 Of clerkes, for I am not textuel;  
 I take but the sentens, trustith wel.  
 Therfor I make protestacioun,  
 That I wol stonde to correccioun."

Upon this word we han assented soone.  
 For, as it semed, it was for to done,  
 To enden in som vertuouse sentence,  
 And for to gove him space and audience;  
 And bad oure host he schulde to him say,  
 That alle we to telle his tale him pray. 17360  
 Our host hadde the wordes for us alle;  
 "Sir prest," quod he, "now faire yow bifalle;  
 Say what yow lust, and we wil gladly here."  
 And with that word he said in this manere;  
 "Tellethe," quod he, "your meditacioun;  
 But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun.  
 Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,  
 And to do wel God sende yow his grace."

## THE PERSONES TALE.

Jer. 6<sup>o</sup>. *State super vias, et videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis quæ sit via bona, et ambulatè in ea, et invenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, etc.*

OWRE swete Lord God of heven, that no man wil perische, but wol that we comen alle to the knowleche of him, and to the blisful lif that is perdurable, ammonesth us by the prophet Jeremye, that saith in this wise: Stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde pathes, that is to sayn, of old sentence, which is the good way, and walketh in that way, and ye schul fynde refresshyng for youre soules, etc. Many ben the wayes espiituels that leden folk to oure Lord Jhesu Christ, and to the regne of glorie; of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble way, and ful covenable, which may not faile to man ne to woman, that thorough synne hath mysyon fro the right way of Jerusalem celestial; and this way is cleped penitence. Of which men schulden gladly herken and enquire with al here herte, to wyte what is penitence, and whens it is cleped penitence, and in what maner, and in how many maneres been the acciones or workynges of penance, and how

17337. *rum, rat, ruf.* This seems generally to be understood as an ironical allusion to the popular alliterative verse of Chaucer's *age*, in contradistinction to rhyme, which is spoken of in the line following.

*The Persones Tale.* In all probability this is a free translation of some treatise on penitence, but it is hardly worth our while to look far after the original. Tyrwhitt's opinion has been given in the note on l 17299. The references to Scripture, and to the theological writers of the Romish Church, are so numerous that I shall not attempt to verify them.

many spieces ben of penitences, and whiche thinges apperteynen and byhoven to penitence, and whiche thinges destourben penitence.

Seint Ambrose saith, that penitence is the pleynnyng of man for the gult that he hath doon and no more to do any thing for which him oughte to pleigne. And som doctour saith, penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne, and peyneth himself for he hath mysdoon. Penitence, with certeyn circumstances, is verray repentaunce of man, that holt himself in sorwe and in woo for his gyltes, and for he schal he verray penitent, he schal first bywaile the synnes that he hath do, and stedfastly purposen in his hert to haven schrifte of month, and to doon satisfaccioun, and never to do thing for which him oughte more to bywayle or to complayne, and to continue in goode werkes, or elles his repentaunce may nought avayle. For, as saith seint Isidor, he is a japere and a gabbere, and no verray repentaunt, that ofsoone doth thing for which him oughte to repente. Wepyng, and nought for to stynte to doon synne, may nought avayle. But natheles, men schal hope that at every tyme that men fallith, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thorough penitence, if he have grace; but certeyn it is gret doute. For as saith seint Gregory, unneth arist he out of his synne that is charged with the charge of yvel usage. And therefore repentaunt folk that stinte for to synne and forlete synne er that synne forlete hem, holy chirche holt hem siker of her savacioun. And he that synneth, and verrailly repentith him in his last ende, holy chirche yit hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, for his repentaunce; but take ye the siker way.

And now sith that I have declared yow, what thing is penitence, now schul ye understonde, that ther ben thre acciouns of penitence. The first is, that if a man be baptized after that he hath synned. Seint Augustyn saith, but if he be penitent for his olde synful lif, he may not bygynne the newe clene lif. For certes, if he be baptized withoute penitence of his olde gilt, he receyveth the mark of baptisme, but nought the grace, ne the remission of his synnes, til he have repentaunce verray. Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly synne after that thay have receyved baptisme. The thridde defaute is, that men fallen into venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. Therof saith seint Austyn, that penitence of goode men, and of humble folk, is the penitens of every day.

The spices of penitence ben thre. That oon of hem is solempne, another is comune, and the thridde is pryvé. Thilke penaunce that is solempne, is in tuo maners; as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of childre, and such maner thing. Another is, when a man hath synned openly, of which synne the fame is openly spoken in the contré; and thanne holy chirche by juggement streyneth him to doon open penaunce. Comune penaunce is, that prestes enjoynen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon peradventure naked in pilgrymage, or barfoot. Privé penaunce is thilk that men doon alday for privé synnes, of whiche we schryve us prively, and receyven privé penaunce.



Now schalt thou understonde what bihoveth and is necessarie to verray perfyt penitence; and this stondith in thre thinges, contricioun of hert, confessioun of mouth, and satisfaccioun. For whiche saith seint Johan Crisostom, penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enyoynd with contricioun of herte, and schrift of mouth, with satisfaccioun, and werking of alle maner humbledé. And this is fruytful penitence agayn tho thre thinges, in whiche we wraththe oure Lord Jhesu Crist; this is to sayn, by delit in thinking, by rechelesnes in speking, and by wicked synful werkynge. Again these thre wickid gutles is penitence, that may be likned unto a tre.

The roote of this tre is contricioun, that hidith him in the hert of him that is verray repentaunt, right as the roote of a tree hidith him in the earth. Of the roote of contricioun springeth a stalk, that bereth branchues and leeves of confessioun and fruyt of satisfaccioun. For whiche Crist saith in his Gospel, doth digne fruyt of penitence, for by this fruyt may men knowe this tree, and nought by the roote that is hyd in the hert of a man, ne by the branchues ne the levys of confessioun. And therefore oure Lord Jhesu Christ saith thus, by the fruyt of hem schul ye knowe hem. Of this roote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is mooder of sikurnes, and this seed is egre and hoote. The grace of this seed springeth of God, thorough remembrance of the day of doom, and of the peynes of helle. Of this matier saith Salomon, that in the drede of God man foreleth his synne. The hete of this seed is the love of God, and the desiring of the joye perdurable. This hete draweth the hert of man to God, and doth him hate his synne. For sothe, ther is nothing that serveth so well to a child, as the milk of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than the milk when it is melled with other mete.<sup>2</sup> Right so the synful man that loveth his synne, him semeth it is to him most swete of eny thing; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nys to him nothing more abhominable. For sothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which Davyd saith, I have loved thy lawe, and hated wikkednesse and hate; he that loveth God, keepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit, upon the avysioun of Nabugodonosor, when he counseiled him to do penance. Penance is tre of lif to hem that it receyven; and he that holdeth him in verray penitence, is blessed, after the sentence of Salomon.

In this penitence or contricioun men schal understonde foure thinges, that is to sayn, what is contricioun, and whiche ben the causes that moeven men to contricioun, and how he schulde be contrit, and what contricioun availeth to the soule. Thanne it is thus, that contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to schryve him,

and to doo penance, and never more to don synne. And this sorwe schal be in this maner, as saith seint Bernard; it schal ben hevye and grevous, and ful scharp and poynaunt in herte; first, for man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour; and more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath agiltid his fader celestial; and yit more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath wrathted and agiltid him that bought him with his precious blood, and hath delyvered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the cruelté of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle.

The causes that oughten to moeve a man to contricioun ben vj. First, a man schal remembre him of his synnes. But loke that thilke remembrance be to no delyt of him by no way, but gret schame and sorwe for his gilt. For Job saith that synful men doon werkes worthy of confessioun. And therfor saith Ezechiel, I wol remembre alle the yerres of my lif, in bitternesse of myn herte. And God saith in thapocalips, remembre yow from whens that ye ben falle, for biforn that tyme that ye synned, ye were the children of God, and lymme of the regne of God;<sup>3</sup> but for youre synne ye be woxe thral, and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclauder of holy chirche, and foode of the fals serpent, perpetuel matier of the fuyr of helle, and yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that torneth to ete his spewynge; and yet ye ber fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne, and youre synful usage, for whiche ye ben roten in youre synne, as a beest in his donge. Suche maner of thoughtes make a man have schame of his synne, and no delit; and God saith, by the prophete Ezechiel, ye schul remembre yow of youre weyes, and thay schal displesse yow. Sothly, synnes ben the way that leden folk to helle.

The secounde cause that oughte make a man to have disdeyn of his synne is this, that, as seith seint Petre, who so doth synne, is thral of synne, and synne put a man in gret thraldom. And therefore saith the prophete Ezechiel, I wente sorwful, in disdeyn of myself. Certes, wel oughte a man have disdeyn of synne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldom and vilonye. And lo what saith Seneca in this matiere. He saith thus, though I wiste, that nere God ne man schulde never knowe it, yit wold I have disdeyn for to do synne. And the same Seneca also saith, I am born to gretter thinges than to be thral to my body, or than for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man, ne woman, make of his body, than give his body to synne. And were it the foulest cheryl, or the foulest woman, that lyveth, and lest of value, yet is thanne synne<sup>4</sup> more foul, and more in servitude. Ever fro the heigher degré that man fallith, the more is he thral, and more to God and to the world<sup>5</sup> vile and abhominable. O goode God! wel oughte a man have gret disdayn of such a thing that thorough synne, ther he was

<sup>1</sup> serveth so wel. Tyrwhitt adopts the reading *savourereth* so sole.

<sup>2</sup> melled with other mete. The words with other which seem necessary for the sense, although omitted in the Harl. Ms., are adopted from the Lansd. Ms.

<sup>3</sup> and lymme . . . God. These words, omitted in the Harl. Ms., are supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

<sup>4</sup> thanne synne. Tyrwhitt reads *yet is he than more foule*.

<sup>5</sup> and to the world. These words, taken from the Lansd. Ms., are not in the Harl. Ms.

'rec, now is he maked bonde. And therefore saith seint Austyn, if thou hast disdayn of thy seruaunt, if he agilte or synne, have thou than disdeigne<sup>6</sup> that thou thiself schuldist do synne. Tak reward of thy value, that thou be nought to foul in thiself. Allas! wel oughte men have disdeyn to be seruautes and thralles to synne, and sore ben aschamed of hemself, that God of his endeles goodnes hath set hem in heigh estate, or geven hem witte, strength of body, hele, beaute, or prosperite, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that thay so unkindely ageinst his gentilesce quyten him so vileynsly, to slaughter of her oughne soules. O goode God! ye wommen that ben of so gret beaute, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, that saith he likeneth a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe; for right as a sowe wrotheth in everich ordure, so wroothith sche hir beaute in stynkyng ordure of synne.

The thridde cause, that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is drede of the day of doome, and of the orrible paynes of helle. For as seint Jerom saith, at every tyme that I remembre of the day of doom, I quake; for whan I ete or drinke, or what so that I doo, ever semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn eere, riseth ye up that ben dede, and cometh to the juggement. O goode God! mochil ought a man to drede such a juggement, ther as we schul be alle, as seith seint Poul, biforn the sete of our Lord Jhesu Crist; wher as he schal make a general congregioun, wher as no man may ben absent; for certes ther avayleth non essoyne ne excusacioun; and nought onoly, that oure defaute schal be juged, but eek that alle oure werkes schul<sup>7</sup> be openly knowne. And, as seint Bernard saith, ther schal no pleyning avayle, ne no sleight; we schuln give rekenyng of every ydel word. Ther schulle we have a juge that may nought be disceyved ne corrupt; and why? for certes, alle oure thoughtes ben discovered as to him, ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not be corrupt. And therefore saith Salomon, the wraththe of God ne wol nought spare no wight, for praier ne for gift. And therefore at the day of doom ther is noon hope to eschape. Wherefore, as seint Anselm seith, ful greet anguisch schuln the synful folk have at that tyme; there schal be the sterne and the wroth juge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open, to destroye him that wolde not byknowe his synnes, which synnes openly ben schewed biforn God and biforn every creature; and on the lift syde, mo divelis than herte may thynke, for to hary and to drawe the synful soules to the pyne of helle; and withinne the hertes of folk schal be the bytyng conscience, and withoute forth schal be the world al brennyng. Whider schal thanne the wrecche synful man fle to hyden him? Certes he may not hyde him, he moot come forth and schewe him. For certes, as seith seynt Jerom, the erthe schal

caste him out of him, and the see also, and the aer also, that schal be ful of thunder clappes and lightnynges. Now sothly, who so wel remembreth him of these tydynges, I gesse his synne schal not torne him to delit, but to gret sorw, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therefore saith Job to God, suffre, Lord, that I may a while biwayle and wepe, or I go withoute retournyng to the derk lond, covered with derknes of deth, to the lond of mysece and of derknesse, wher as is the schadow of deth, wher as is noon order ne ordinaunce, but grislich drede that ever schal last. Loo, her may ye see, that Job prayde respit a while, to wepe and biwayle his trespas; for forsothe oon day of respit is bettre than al the tresor in this world. And for as moche as a man may aquyte himself byforn God by penaunce in this world, and not by tresor, therefore schuld he praye to God give him respit a while, to wepe and to waille his trespas. For certes, al the sorwe that a man myght make for the begynnyng of the<sup>8</sup> world, nys but a litel thing, at regard of the sorwe of helle. The cause why that Job calleth helle the lond of derknes, understondith, that he clepith it lond or erthe, for it is stable and never schal fayle, and derk, for he that is in helle hath default of light material, for certes the derke light that schal come out of the fuyr that ever schal brenne, schal torne him to peyne that is in helle, for it schewith him the horrible develes that him tormenten. Coverea with the derknes of deth; that is to sayn, that he that is in helle, schal have defaute of the sight of God; for certes the sight of God is the lif perdurable. The derknes of deth, ben the synnes that the wrecchid man hath doon, whiche that stourben him to see the face of God, right as a derk cloude doth bitwixe us and the sonne. Lond of myseuse; bycause that there ben thre maner of defaute agains thre thinges that folk of this world han in this present lif, that is to sayn, honours, delices, and richesses. Agayns honours han they in helle schame and confusioun; for wel ye witen, that men clepyn honore the reverence that men doon to the man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence; for certes no more reverence schal ben doon ther to a kyng, than to a knave. For which God saith by the prophete Jeremie, thilke folk that me displesen, schul be despit. Honour is eke cleped gret lordschipe. There schal no wight seven othir but of harm and torment. Honour eek is cleped gret dignite and heighnes; but in helle schulle thay be al for-trode of develes. And God saith, thorrrible develes schuln goon and comen upon the heedes of dampned folk; and this is, for als moche as the heyther that thay were in this present lif, the more schuln thay ben abatid and defouled in helle. Agayns riches of this world schuln thay han mysece of povert, and this povert schal be in iij. thinges: in default of tresor; of which, as David saith, the riche folk that embraseden and onedin in al here herte the tresor of this world, schuln slepen in the slepyng of deth, and nothing schuln thay fynde in her hondes of al her tresor. And moreover, the mysece of helle schal be in the default of mete

<sup>6</sup> of thy seruaunt . . . disdeigne. These words, omitted by an evident error of the scribe in the Harl. Ms., are supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

<sup>7</sup> be juged . . . schul. These words have been accidentally omitted in the Harl. Ms. They are supplied from the Lansd. Ms.

<sup>8</sup> source . . . the. Omitted in the Harl. Ms. They are supplied from the Lansd. Ms.



and drink. For God saith thus by Moyses, thay schul be wasted by hunger, and the briddes of helle schuln devour hem with bittir teeth, and the galle of the dragoun schal be her drink, and the venym of the dragoun here morsels. And forther-moreover her misease schal be in defaut of clothing, for thay schul be naked in body, as of clothing, save of fuyr in which thay brenne, and other filthis; and naked schuln thay be of soule, of alle maner vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Wer ben thanne the gaye robes, and the softe scheetis, and the smale schirtes? Lo, what saith of hem the prophete Isaye, under hem schuln be strawed motthis, and here covertours schuln ben of wormes of helle. And forther-morover here disease schal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not povere that hath goode frendes; but here is no frend, for neither God ne no creature schal be frend unto hem, and everich of hem schal hate other with dedly hate. The sones and the doughtres schuln rebellen agayns the fader and the mooder, and kynrede agayns kynrede, and chiden and despisen everich of hem other, bothe day and night, as God saith by the prophete Michias, and the lovyng children that whilom lovedon so fleisschlich everych other wolden everych of hem eten other if thay mighten. For how schulden thay loven hem togider in the peyne of helle, whan thay hated everich of hem other in the prosperité of this lif? For trustith wel, her fleishly love was dedly hate; as saith the prophete David, who so that loveth wickidnes, he hateth his soule, and who so hatith his oughne soule, certis he may love noon other wight in no manere. And therefore in helle is no solace ne frendschipe, but ever the more fleshly kynredes that ben in helle, the more cursynge, the more chydnynges, and the more dedly hate ther is among hem. And fortherover thay schul have defaute of alle manere delices, for certis delices ben the appetites of thy fyve wittes; as sight, hieryng, smellyng, savoring, and touching. But in helle here sight schal be ful of derknes and of smoke, and her eyen<sup>9</sup> ful of teeris; and her hieryng ful of waymentynge, and of grunteynge of teeth, as saith Jhesu Crist, her nosethurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk; and, as saith Ysaye the prophete, here savoringe schal be ful of bitter galle; and touchyng of al here body schal be y-covered with fuyr that never schal quenche, and with wormes that never schuln deyne, as God saith by the mouth of Ysaye. And for al so moche as thay schuln nought wene that thay may deyne for peyne, and by here deth fle fro peyne, that may thay understonde in the word of Job, that saith, ther as is the schadow of deth. Certes a schadow hath the liknesse of the thing of which it is a schadow, but the schadowe is nought the same thing of whiche it is schadowe;<sup>10</sup> right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lik deth, for the horrible anguishe; and why? for it peyneth hem ever as though men scholden deye anon; but certes thay schul not deye. For as saith saint Gregory, to wrecchid

caytifs schal be give deth withoute deth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withouten faylinge; for here deth schal alway lyven, and here ende schal evermore bygygne, and here defaute schal not fayle. And therfor saith seint Johan the Evaungelist, thay schul folwe deth, and thay schuln nought fynde him, and thay schul desire to deyne, and deth schal fle fro hem. And eek Job saith, that in helle is noon ordre of rule. And al be it that God hath creat al thing in right ordre, and no thing withoute ordre, but alle thinges ben ordeyned and nombred, yit natheles thay that ben dampned been nought in ordre, ne holden non ordre. For the eorthe schal here hem no fruyt; (for, as the prophete David saith, God schal destroye the fruyt of the eorthe, as for hem) ne watir schal give hem no moysture, ne the aier non refreisching, ne fuyr no light. For as seith seint Basile, The brennyng of the fuyr of this world schal God give in helle to hem that ben dampnyd, but the light and the clernesse schal be geve in hevne to his children; right as the goode man geve flesh to his children, and bones to his houndes. And for thay schul have noon hope to eschape, saith seint Job atte laste, that ther schal horroure and grisly drede duelle withouten ende. Horroure is alway drede of harm that is to come, and this drede schal ever duelle in the hertes of hem that ben dampnyd. And therefore han thay lorn al here hope for vij. causes. First, for God that is here juggle schal be withoute mercy to hem, ne thay may not please him, ne noon of his halwes; ne they may give no thing for here rounsoun; ne thay have no voice to speke to him; ne thay may not fle fro peyne; ne thay have no goodnes in hem that thay may schewe to delivere hem fro peyne. And therefore saith Salomon, The wikked man deyeth, and whan he is deed, he schal have noon hope to eschape fro peyne. Who so wolde thanne wel understonde these peynes, bythyne him wel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his synnes, certes he schulde have more talent to sikyn and to wepe, than for to synge or pleye. For as that Salomon saith, Who so that had the science to knowe the peynes that ben establid and ordeynt for synne he wolde make sorwe. Thilke science, as saith seint Austyn, maketh a man to wayment in his herte.

The fourthe poynt, that oughte make a man have contricioun, is the sorful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doon heer in eorthe, and eek the good that he hath lorn. Sothly the goode werkes that he hath left, eyther thay been the goode werkes that he wrought er he fel into dedly synne, or elles thai ben the goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in synne. Sothly the goode werkes that he dede er he fel into synne ben amortised, and astoneyed, and dullid by ofte synnyng; that othere goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in dedly synne, been outrelly deede, as to the lif perdurable in hevne.

Thanne thilke goode werkes that ben mortified by ofte synnyng, whiche goode werkes he dede whiles he was in charité, ne mow never quyken agayn withouten verray penitence. And thereof saith God by the mouth of Ezechiel that if the rightful man retourne agayn fro his rightwisnesse

<sup>9</sup> *her eyen.* These words, which seem to give better sense, are adopted from Tyrwhitt; the Harl. Ms. reads and *Overfore ful of teeris.*

<sup>10</sup> *but schadowe . . . schadowe.* Omitted in the Harl. Ms., and restored from the Lansd. Ms.



and werke wikkednesse, schal he live? nay; for alle the goode werkes that he hath wrought, ne schuln never be in remembrance, for he schal dye in his synne. And upon thilke chapitre saith seint Gregory thus, that we schuln understonde this principally, that whan we doon dedly synne, it is for nought thanne to reherse or to drawe into memorie the goode werkes that we han wrought biforn; for certis in the werkynge of the dedly synne, ther is no trust to no good werkes that we han don biforne this tyme; that is to say, as for to have therby the lif perdurable in heven. But natheles, the goode werkes quiken agayn and comen again, and helpen and availen to have the lif perdurable in heven whan we han contricioun; but sothly the goode werkes that men doon whil that thai ben in dedly synne, for as moche as thay were doon in dedly synne, thay may never quyken. For certis, thing that never hadde lif, may never quyken;<sup>11</sup> and al be it so that thay availen not to have the lif perdurable, yit awaylen thay to abrigging of the peyne of helle, or elles to gete temporal riches, or elles that God wol the rather enlumyne and lightene the hert of the synful man to have repentance; and eek thay availen for to usen a man to do goode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteys Lord Jhesu Crist ne wolde nought no good werk be lost, for in somwhat it schal availe. But for als moche as the goode werkes that men don whil thay ben in good lif ben amortised by synne folwyng, and eek sith that alle the goode werkes that men doon whil thay ben in dedly synne, been outrely deede as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man, that no goode werkes werkith, synge thilke newe freisch so<sup>12</sup>, *J'ay tout perdu moun temps et moun labour*. For certis synne byreveth a man bothe goodnes of nature, and eek the goodnes of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy gost fareth lik fyre that may not ben ydel; for fuyr as it forletith his werkynge, and failthe anon, and right so when the grace failthe anon as it forleteth his werkynge, than lesith the synful man the goodnes of glorie, that oonly is byhight to goode men that labouren and werken. Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to God, as longe as he hath lyved, and eek as longe as he schal lyve, that no goodnes ne hath to paye with his dette to God, to whom he oweth al his lyf; for trusteth wel he schal give accompt, as saith seint Bernard, of alle the goodes that han be geven him in his present lif, and how he hath hem dispendid, nat so moche that ther schal not perische an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an hour ne schal not perische of his tyme, that he ne schal give of it a rekenyng.

The fite maner of contricioun, that moeveth a man therto, is the remembrance of the passion that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us and for oure synnes. For as seith seint Bernard, whil that I lyve, I schal have remembrance of the passion that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us in preaching, his werynesse in travayling,

<sup>11</sup> For certis. . . quyken. These words, not in the Harl. Ms., are added from the Lansd. Ms. These omissions are so frequent that shall not again point them out. English prose manu cripts are always much more incorrect than the verse. From causes which it would not be difficult to explain.

his temptacioun whan he fastid, his longe wakinges whan he prayde, his teeres whan he wepte for pité of good peple; the wo and the schame and the filthe that men saide to him; of the foul spitting that men spitten on his face; of the buffettis that men gaf him; of the foule mowes and of the reproves that men to him saiden; of the nayles with which he was nayled to the cros; and of al the remenaunt of his passiou, that he suffred for my synnes and no thing for his gilt. And ye schal understonde that in mannes synne is every maner ordre of ordinaunce turned up-so-doun. For it is soth, that God, and resoun, and sensualité, and the body of man, be so ordeyned, that everich of these foure schulde have lordschipe over that other, as thus: God schulde have lordschipe over resoun, and resoun over sensualité, and sensualité over the body of man. But sothly whan man synneth, al this ordre, or ordinaunce, is torned up-so-doun; and thanne, for as moche as the resoun of a man ne wol not be subject ne obeissant to God, that is his lord by right, therefore lesith it the lordschipe that it schulde have over sensualité, and eek over the body of man; and why? for sensualité rebellith thans agayns resoun; and by that way lesith resoun the lordschipe over sensualité, and over the body. For right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualité rebel to resoun and the body also. And certis this disorderaunce, and this rebelloun, oure Lord Jhesu Crist bought upon his precious body ful deere; and herkeneth in which wise. For as moche as resoun is rebel to God, therefore is man worthy to have sorwe, and to be deed. This suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, after that he was bytrayed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, so that the blood brast out at every nail of his hondes, as saith seint Austyn. And fortherover, for as mochil as resoun of man wol nought daunte sensualité when it may, therefore is man worthy to have schame; and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, whan thay spitte in his face. And fortherover thanne, for as moche as the caytif body of man is rebelle bothe to resoun and to sensualité, therefore it is worthy the deth; and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for us upon the croys, wher as ther was no part of his body fre, withoute gret peyne and bitter passiou. And al this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist that never forgetid; and thus sayd he, to mochil am I streyned; for the things that I never deservyd; and to moche defouled for schendschip that man is worthy to have. And therefore may the synful man wel seye, as saith seint Bernard, accused be the bitternesse of my synne, for which ther moste be sufferd so moche bitternesse. For certis, after the dyvers discordaunces of oure wikkednes was the passiou of oure Lord Jhesu Crist ordeyned in divers thinges; as thus. Certis sinful mannes soule is bytraysid of the devel, by covetise of temporal prosperité; and scorned by disceyt, whan he cheseth fleischly delytes; and yit is it tormentid by impaciencie of adversité, and byspit by servage and subjeccioun of synne, and atte last it is slayn finally. For this discordaunce of synful man, was Jhesu Crist first bytrayed; and after was he bounde, that com for to unbynden us fro

synne and of peyne. Than was he scorned, that only schulde be honoured in alle thing of alle thinges. Than was his visage, that oughte he desired to be say of al mankynde (in which visage aungels desiren to loke) vileynusly byspit. Thanne was he scorned<sup>12</sup> that nothing had agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was accomplished the word of Ysaye. He was woundid for oure mysdede, and defouled by oure felonyes. Now sith Jhesu Crist tok upon him thilke peyne of alle oure wikkednes mochil oughte synful men wepe and bywayle, that for nis synnes schulde Goddes sone of hevене al this endure.

The sixte thing that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is the hope of thre thinges, that is to sayn, forgyvenes of synne, and the gifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevën, with which God schal guerdoun man for his goode deedis. And for als moche as Jhesu Crist geveth us these giftes of his largesse and of his soverayn bounté, therefore is he cleped, *Jhesu Nazarenus rex Judæorum*. Jhesus is for to say, saveour of savacioun, of whom me schal hope to have forgyvenes of synnes, which that is proprely savacioun of synnes. And therefore seyde the aungel to Joseph, thow schalt clepe his name Jhesus, that schal save his poeple of here synnes. And herof saith seint Petir, ther is noon other name under hevën, that is geve to any man, by which a man may be sayyd, but only Jhesus. Nazarenus is as moche to say as florisching, in which a man schal hope, that he that geveth him remission of synnes, schal give him grace wel to doo. For in the flour is hope of fruyt in tyme somynge, and in forgyvenes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of thin herte, saith Jhesus, and cleped for to entre; he that openith to me, schal have forgyvenes of synne; I wol entre into him by my grace, and soupe with him by the goode werkes that he schal doon, whiche werkes ben the foode of God, and he schal soupe with me by the grete joye that I schal give him. Thus schal man hope, that for his werkis of penaunce God schal give him his regne, as he bihetith him in the Gospel.

Now schal man understonde, in what maner schal be his contricioun. I say, it schal be universal and total, this is to say, a man schal be verray repentaunt for alle his synnes, that he hath doon in delyt of his thought, for delit is ful perilous. For ther ben two maners of consentyng, that oon of hem is cleped consentyng of affecciou, whan a man is moeved to synne, and delith him longe for to thinke on that synne, and his resoun aparceyvet wel that it is synne agayns the lawe of God, and yit his resoun refreyneth not his foule delit or talent, though he seth wel apertly, that it is agenst the reverence of God; although his resoun consente not to do the synne in dede, yit sayn some doctours, delyt that duellith longe it is ful perilous, al be it never so lite. And also a man schulde sorwe, namely for al that he hath desired agayn the lawe of God, with parfynt consentyng of his hert and of his resoun, for therof is no doute, that it is dedly synne in consentyng; for certis ther is no dedly synne, but that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his

delit, and so forth into consentyng, and into dede. Wherefore say I, that many men repente hem never of suche thoughtes and delites, ne never schrive hem of it, but only of the dede of grete synnes outward. Wherefore I say, that suche wikkid delitis and wikkid thoughtes ben sultile bigilours of hem that schuln be dampned. Moreover man oughte to sorwe for his wikked wordes, as wel as his wikked dedes; for certis the repentaunce of a singular synne, and nought repente of alle his other synnes, or elles repente him of alle his othere synnes, and not of a singular synne, may nought availle. For certis God Almighty is al good, and therefore he forgiveth al, or elles right nought. And herof saith seint Augustin, I wot certeynly, that God is enemy to every synnere; and how thanne he that observith oon synne, schal he have remission of the remenant of his other synnes? Nay. And fortherover, contricioun schulde be wounder sorrowful and anguisschous, and therefore givith him God pleynly his mercy. And therefore whan my soule was anguisscheous withinne me, I hadde remembrance of God, that my prayer mighte come to him. And fortherover, contricioun moste be continually, and that a man have stedfast purpos to schryve him, and for to amende him of his lyf. For sothly, whil contricioun lastith, man may ever hope of forgyvenes. And of this cometh hate of synne, that destroyeth synne bothe in himself, and eek in other folk at his power. And therefore saith David, ye that loven God, hatith wikkidnesse; for trustith wel for to love God, is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The laste thing that a man schuld understonde in contricioun is this, wherof availith contricioun? I say, that som tyme contricioun delivereth man fro synne; of which that David saith, I say, quod David, I purposid fermely to schryve me, and thou, Lord, relesedist my synne. And right so as contricioun availith nat withoute sad purpos of schritt if man have oportunité, right so litil worth is schrifte or satisfaccioun withoute contricioun. And, moreover, contricioun destroyeth the prisoun of helle, and makith wayk and feble the strengthes of the develes, and restorith the gift of the holy gost, and of alle vertues, and it clensth the soule of synnes, and delivereth the soule fro the peynes of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of synne, and restorith it to alle goodes espritueles, into the companye and communioun of holy chirehe. And fortherover, it makith him that somtyme was sone of ire, to be the sone of grace; and alle these thinges he provith by holy writte. And therefore he that wil sette his herte to these thinges, he were ful wys. For sothly he scholde not thanne in al his lyf have corrage to synne, but given his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, and therof do him homage. For certis oure swete Lord Jhesu Crist hath spard us so debonerly in oure folyes, that if he ne hadde pité of mannes soule, sory songe mighte we alle syngre.

*Explicit prima pars penitentia; et incipit secunda pars ejusdem.*

The secoude partye of penitence is confes-

<sup>12</sup> scorned. Tyrwhitt reads *scourged* with the Laud. Ms.



sioun, that is, signe of contricioun. Now schul ye understonde what is confessioun; and whether it oughte needes be doon or noon; and whiche thinges ben conuenable to veray confessioun. First schalt thou understonde, that confessioun is verrey schewyng of synnes to the prest; this is to sayn verray, for he moot schewe him of alle the condicions that ben longynge to his synne, as ferforth as he can; al mot be sayd, and nought excused, ne hyd, ne forwrappid; and nought avaunte him of his goode werkis.

And furthermore it is necessary to understonde whens that synnes springe, and how they encreasen, and whiche they ben.

Of the springing of synnes as seint Poul saith, in this wise, that right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thorough that synne deth, right so thilke deth entred into alle men that synned; and this man was Adam, by whom that synne entred into this world, when he brak the comandement of God. And therefore he that first was so mighty, that he schuld not have deyed, bicam siththe suche on that he moste needis deye, whether he wolde or noon, and al his progenie that is in this world, that in thilke manner synned.

Loke that in the estate of innocence, whan Adam and Eve nakid were in paradys, and no thing schame ne hadden of her nakidnesse, how that the serpent, that was most wily of alle other bestis that God hadde makid, sayde to the womman, why comaundid God to yow ye schulde nought ete of every tree in Paradys?

The womman answerde, of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Paradys we fedde us, but sothly of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddil of Paradys God forbad us for to eten, ne not touche it, lest peraventure ye schulde deye.

The serpent sayde to the womman, nay, nay, ye schal not drede of deth, for sothe God wot, that what day ye ete therof youre eyen schal open and ye schul ben as goddis, knowing good and harm.

The womman saugh the tree was good to feeding, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to sight; she tok of the fruyt of the tree and eet it, and gaf to hir housbond, and he eet it; and anon the eyen of hem bothe openeden; and whan that they knowe that they were naked, they sowede of fige leves in maner of breches, to hiden here membris.

Here may ye see, that dedly synne hath first suggestioun of the feend, as scheweth here by the neddri; and aftirward the delit of the fleisch, as scheweth here by Eva; and after that the consentyng of resoun, as scheweth by Adam. For trustith wel, though so were that the feende temptid oon, Eve, that is to sayn the fleissch, and the fleissch hadde delit in the beanté of the fruyt defendid, yit certes til that resoun, that is to say, Adam, consentid to the etyng of the fruyt, yit stood he in thastaat of innocence. Of thilk Adam took we thilke synne original; for of him flesschly descendit be we alle and engendrit of vile and corrupt matiere; and whan the soule is put in oure body, right anon is contract original synne; and that, that was erst but oonly peyne of concupiscence, is aftirward bothe peyne and synne; and therefore be we alle isborn sones of wraththe, and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere baptisme that we receyven, which bynymeth us the culpe.

But forsothe the peyne duellith with us as to temptacioun, which peyne highte concupiscence. And this concupiscence, whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it makith him to covete, by covetise of fleissch, fleisschly synne, by sight of his eyghen, as to ertely thinges, and eek covetise of heighnesse, as by pride of herte.

Now as to speke of the firste covetise, that is concupiscence after the lave of oure membris, that weren lawfully maked, and by rightful judgement of God, I say, for as moche as a man is nought obeissant to God, that is his Lord, therefore is fleissch to him disobeissant thurgh concupiscence, which that yit is cleped norisshing of synne, and occasion of synne. Therefore, al the while that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme and moeved in his fleisch to synne. And this may not faile, as longe as he liveth. It may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of baptisme, and by the grace of God thorough penitence; but fully schal it never quenche, that he schal somtyme be moeved in himself, but if he were al refreydit by siknes, or by malefice of sorserye, or colde drinks.

For what saith seint Poul? the fleissch covetith agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the fleissch; thay ben so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nought alwey do as he wolde. The same seint Poul, after his penaunce, in watir and in lond; in watir by night and by day, in gret peril, and in gret peyne; in lond and in famyne and in thirst, and colde and clothles, oones almost stoned al to the deth; yit salde he, allas! I caytif man, who schal delyvere me fro the prisoun of my caytif body?

And seint Jerom, whan he long tyme had woned in desert, here wher as he hadde no compaignye but of wilde bestes; wher as he hadde no mete but herbs, and water to his drink, ne non bed but the nakid erthe, for which his fleisch was as blak as an Ethiopen for hete, and neigh destroyed for cold; yit sayde he, that the brennyng of leechery boylid in al his body.

Wherefore I wot wel securly that thay be deceyved that say, thay ben not temptid in here body. Witnessse on seint Jame thapostil, that saith, that every wight is tempted in his oughne concupiscence; that is to sayn, that everych of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of the norischyng of synne that is in his body. And therefore seint Johan the Evaungelist saith, if that we sayn we be withoute synne, we deceyve ouresilf, and tronthe is nought in us.

Now schal ye understonde in what maner that synne waxith and encreseceth in a man. The firste thing is thilke norischyng of synne, of which I spak biforn, thilke concupiscence; and after that cometh the suggestioun<sup>12</sup> of the devel, that is to sayn, the devels bely, with which he bloweth in man the fuyr of fleisschly concupiscence; and after that a man bythink him whether he wol don it or non, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne if that a man withstonde and wayve the firste enticynges of his fleisshe, and of the feend, it is no synne, and if so be he do not so, thanne feelth he anon a flame of delit, and thanne it is good to be war and kepe him wel, or ellis he wil falle anon into consentyng of synne, and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme,

<sup>12</sup> suggestioun. The Harl. Ms. reads *subjeccioun*.



and space, and place. And of this matere saith Moyses by the devel, in this maner; the feend saith, I wol chace and pursue the man by wickid suggestiouns, and I wil hent him by moevyng and steryng of synne, and I wil parte my prise, or my pray, by deliberacioun, and my lust schal be accomplis in delit; I wil drawe my sword in consentynge; (for certes, right as a swerd departith a thing in tuo parties, right so consentynge departeth God fro man;) and thanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. Thus saith the feend; for certis, thanne is a man al deed in soule; and thus is synne accomplis; by temptacioun, by delit, and by consentynge; and thanne is the synne cleped actual.

For sothe synne is in two maneres, oother it is venial, or dedly synne. Sothly, whan man lovith any creature more than Jhesu Crist oure creatour, thanne it is dedly synne; and venial synne is, if a man love Jhesu Crist lesse than him oughte. For sothe the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous, for it amenisith the love that men schulde have to God, more and more. And therefore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by schrifte, thay may ful lightly amenise in him al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise skippith venial into dedly synne. For certes, the more that a man chargith his soule with venial synnes, the more is he enclyned to falle in dedly synne. And therefore let us nought be negligent to discharge us of venial synnes. For the proverbe saith, that many smale makith a gret. And herken this ensamble; a greet wawe of the see cometh som tyme with so gret a violence, that it drenchith the schip; and the same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of watir, that enirth thurgh a litil creves into the thurrok, and into the bothum of a schip, if men be so negligent, that thay discharge hit nought by tyme. And therefore, although ther be difference between these tuo causes of drenching, algates the schip is dreynt. Right so farith it som tyme of dedly synne, and of anyuous venial synnes, whan thay multiplien in a man so gretly, that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh which he sinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or more. And therefore the love of every thing that is not byset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although a man love it lasse than God, yit is it venial synne; and dedly synne, whan the love of any thing weyeth in the hert of a man, as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly synne is, as saith seint Austyn, whan man torneth his hert from God, which that is verray soverayn bounte, that may not change and flitte, and give his herte to a thing that may change and flitte; and certes, that is every thing save God of heven. For sothe, if that a man gieve his love, the which that he owith to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as moche of love as he giveth to thilke creature, so moche he revoth fro God, and therefore doth he synne, for he that is dettour to God, ne yeldeth not to God al his dette, that is to sayn, al the love of his hert.

Now sidthe man understandith generally which is venial synne, thanne is it covenable to telle specially of synnes, whiche that many a man peraventure ne demith hem no synnes, and schry-

veth him not of the some thynges, and yet natheles thay ben synnes; and, sothly, as clerkes writen; this is to say, at every tyme that man etith or drinkith more than suffiseth to the sustenance of his body, in certeyn he doth synne; and eek whan he spekith more than it needith, he doth synne; and eek whan he herkeneth nought benignely the pleynt of the pore; eek whan he is in hele of body, and wil not faste whan other folk fasten, withouten cause resonable; eek whan he slepith more than needith, or whan he cometh by thilke enchesour to late to holy chirche, or to other werkes of charité; eke whan he useth his wyf withoute soverayn desir of engendrure, to thonour of God, and for thentent to yelde his wyf the dette of his body; eek whan he wil not visite the sike, and the prisoner, if he may; eek if he love wyf, or child, or other worldly thing, more than reson requireth; eek if he flater or blaundishe more than him oughte for any necessité; eek if a man menuse or withdrawe the almese of the povere; eek if he appa raylith his mete more deliciously than it nedith or ete it to hastily by licouresnes; eek if he talk of vanitees at chirche, or at Goddis service, or that he be a talkere of ydil wordes of vanité, or of vilonye, for he schal yelde of hem account at the day of doome; eek whan he heethith or assur eth to do thynges that he may nought performe; eek whan that by lightnes or foly he myssaith or scorneth his neighebor; eek whan he hath any wicked susseccioun of thing, that he wot of it no sothfastnesse: these thynges and mo withoute nombre ben synnes, as saith seint Austyn. Now schal men understande, that al be it so that noon erthely man may eschieve alle venial synnes, yit may he refreyne hem by the brennyng love that he hath to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and by prayeres, and by confessioun, and other goode werkes, so that it schal but litil greve. For, as saith seint Austyn, gif a man love God in such a maner, that al that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God verraily, for he brenneth in the love of God, loke how moche that a drope of watir, that fallith in a furneys ful of fuyr, annoyeth or greveth the brenning of the fire, so moche in like maner annoyeth or greveth a venial synne unto a man that is perfyt in the love of Jhesu Crist. Men may also refreyne venial synne, by receyvynge of the precious body of Jhesu Crist; by receyvynge eek of holy watir; by almese dede; by general confessioun of Confiteor at masse, and at prime, and at complyn; and by blessing of bisschops and of prestes, and by other goode werkis.

Now it is bihovely thing to telle whiche ben dedly synnes, that is to sayn, chiveteyns of synnes; for as moche as alle thay renne in oon loos, but in divers maners. Now ben thay cleped chiveteyns, for als moche as thay ben chief and springers of all othere synnes. The roote of these seven synnes thanne is pride, the general synne and roote of alle harmes. For of this roote springen general branches; as ire, envye, accidie or sleuthe, avarice or covetise (to commune understandynge), glotonye, and lecherie; and everich of these synnes hath his branches and his twigges, as schal be declarid in hereo chapitres folwinge.

*De superbia.*

And though so be, that no man can telle utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harm that cometh of pride, yit wol I schewe a party of hem, as ye schul understande. Ther is inobediencie, avaunting, ypocrisie, despit, arraigance, impudence, swelling of hert, insolence, elacioun, impacience, strif, contumacie, presumption, irreverence, pertinacie, veinglorie, and many another twigge that I can not telle ne declare. Inobedient is he that disobeieth for despyt to the comaundementz of God, and to his sovereigns, and to his gostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bounté that he hath don. Ypocrisy, is that hydeth to schewe him such as he is, and scheweth him such as he is not is. Despitous, is he that hath desdayn of his neighebour, that is to say, of his even Cristen, or hath despit to doon that him ought to doon. Arraigant, is he that thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him, that he hath not, or weneth that he schulde have hem by desert, or elles he demeth that he is that he is not. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no schame of his synne. Swelling of hert, is whan a man rejoycith him of harm that he hath don. Insolent, is he that dispisith in his juggement alle other folk, as to regard of his valieu, and of his connyng, and of his spekyng, and of his beryng. Elacioun, is whan he may never suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impacient, is he that wil not ben i-taught ne undernome of his vices, and by stryf werreth trouthe witynge, and defendeth his folie. Contimax, is he that thurgh his indignacioun is agains everych auctorité or power of hem that been his soverayns. Presumpcioun, is whan a man undertakith and emprisith that him oughte not to do, or elles that he may not doo, and that is cleped surquidrye. Irreverence, is whan men doon not honour ther as hem ought to doon, and wayteth to be revered. Pertinacie, is whan man defendith his folye, and trusteth to moche to his owne witte. Vainglorie, is for to have pomp, and delit in temporal heighnes, and glorifie him in worldly estaat. Jange-lyng, is whan a man spekih to moche biforn folk, and clappith as a mille, and taketh no keep what he saith.

And yit is ther a privé spice of pride, that wayteth first to be saluet or he saliewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, paradventure; and eek wayteth or desireth to sitte above him, or to go above him in the way, or kisse the pax, or ben encensed, or gon to the offringe biforn his neigheboore, and suche semblable thinges, agains his dueté peraventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in such a proud desir to be magnified and honoured toforn the peopel.

Now ben there tuo maners of pride; that oon is heighnes withinne the hert of a man, and that other is withoute. Of which sothly these forsayde thinges, and mo than I have said, apercetynen to pride that is in the hert of a man; and that other spices of pride ben withoute; but natheles, that oon of these spices of pride is signe of that other, right as the gay leveyselle at the tavernne is signe of wyn that is in the celer. And this is in many thinges; as in speche and contie-

naunce, and in outrageous array of clothing. For certis, if ther hadde be no synne in clothing, Crist wolde not so soome have notid and spoke of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. And seint Gregorie saith, that precious clothing is coupable for derthe of it, and for his schortnes,<sup>14</sup> and for his straungenes and disgisines, and for the superfluité, or for the inordinat skantnes of it; allas! many man may sen as in oure dayes, the synful costlewe array of clothing, and namely in to moche superfluité, or elles in to disordinat skantnes.

As to the firste syn in superfluité of clothing, which that malkid is so dere, to harm of the peopel, not oonly the cost of embrowdyng, the guyse, endentyng or baryng, swandyng, palyng, or bendyng,<sup>15</sup> and semblable wast of cloth in vanité; and ther is also costlewe furring in here gownes, so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make holes, so moche daggyng of scheris, for with the superfluité in lengthe of the forsaide gownes, traylinge in the donge and in the myre, on hors and eek on foote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke traylyng is verrailly (as in effect) wasted, consumed, thredbare, and rotyng with donge, rather than it is given to the pore, to gret damage of the forsaide pore folk, and that in sondry wise; this is to sain, the more that cloth is wastid, the more most it coste to the peopel for the searsenes; and forthermore, if it so be that thay wolde give suche pounsed and daggid clothing to the pore folk, it is not convenient to were to the pore folk, ne suffisaunt to beets here necessité, to kepe hem fro the desperance of the firmament. Upon that other syde, to speke of the horrible disordinat scantnes of clothing, as ben these cuttid sloppis or anslets,<sup>16</sup> that thurgh her schortnes ne covereth not the schamful membre of man, to wickid entent; alas! som men of hem schewen the schap and the boce of the horrible swollen membres, that semeth like to the maledidies of hirnna, in the wrapping of here hose, and eek the buttokes of hem, that faren as it were the hinder part of a sche ape in the fulle of the moone. And moreover the wreched swollen membres that thay schewe thurgh desgysyng, in departyng of here hoses in whyt and reed, seemith that half the schameful privé membres were flayn. And if it so be that thay departe here hosen in other colours, as is whit and blew, or whit and blak, or blak and reed, and so forth; thanne semith it, as by variaunce of colour, that half the party of his privy membris ben corrupt by the furyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or other such meschaunce. And yit of the hynder partye of here buttokes it is ful horrible for to see, for certis in that partie of here body ther as thay purgen her stynkyng ordure, that foule party schewe thay to the peopel proudly in despyt of honesté, which honesté that Jhesu Crist and his frendes observeden to schewen in his lif. Now as of the outrageous array of women, God wot, that though the visage of some of hem seme ful chaste and debonaire, yit notyfy thay,

<sup>14</sup> *schortnes*. So the Harl. Ms.; Tyrwhitt reads *soffness*.  
<sup>15</sup> *the guyse endentyng . . . or bendyng*. In Tyrwhitt this passage stands thus, *the disgysing, endentyng, or baryng, ounding, palyng, winding, or bendyng*.

<sup>16</sup> *anslets*. Tyrwhitt reads with the Lansd. Ms. *hanselines*.



in here array of attyre, licorousnesse and pride. I say not that honesté in clothing of man or woman is unconvencable, but certis the superfluité or disordinat skantnes of clothing is reprevable. Also the synne of here ornament, or of apparaile, as in thinges that aperteynen to rydyng, as in to many delicat horses, that ben holden for delyt, that thay ben so faire, fat, and costlewe; and also in many a vicious knave, mayntened bycause of hem; and in to curious harnoys, as in sadelis, and bridlis, cropours, and peytrelle, covered with precious clothing, and riche barres and plates of gold and of silver. For whiche God saith by Zacharie the prophete, I wol confounde the ryders of suche horsis. These folk take litil reward of the rydyng of Goddes sone of heven, and of his harnes, whan he rode upon an asse, and hadde noon other harnes but the clothing of his disciples newe. Ne rede I not that ever he rode on other beest. I speke this for the synne of superfluité, and nought for resonable honesté, whan resoun it requirith. And fortherover, certis pride is gretly notified in holdyng of gret meyné, whan thay ben of litil profyt or of right no profyt, and namely whan that meyné is felenus and daungerous to the poeple by hardynesse of lordschipe, or by way of offices; for certes, suche lordes selle thanne here lordschipe to the devel of helle, whan thay susteyne the wickidnes of here meyné. Or elles, whan these folk of lowe degré, as is thilke that holden hostilries, and susteyne the thefte of here hostilers, and that is in many maneres of disceytes; thilke maner of folk ben the flyes that folwen the honey, or elles the boundes that folwen the carayn. Suche forsaysde folk strangelen spirituelli here lordschipes; for whiche thus saith David the prophete, Wikked deth moot come upon suche lordschipes, and God geve that thay moot descende into helle adoun; for in here houses ben iniquités and schrewednesses, and not God of heven. And certis, but thay do amendement, right so as Jacob gaf his benisoun to Laban by the service of God, and to Pharao by the service of Joseph, right so God wil geve his malisoun to suche lordschipes as susteynen the wikkednes of her servaunt<sup>s</sup>. but thay come to amendement.

Pride of the table apperith ful ofte; for certes riche men ben eleped to feste, and pore folk ben put away and rebuked; also in excesse of divers metis and drinkis, and namely of suche maner of bake metis and dische metis brennyng of wilde fuyr, and peynted and castelid with papire, and semblable wast, so that it is abusoun for to thinke. And eek in gret preciousnes of vessel, and in curiosnesse of vessel, and of mynstraleye, by the whiche a man is stired the more to delitis of luxurie, if so be that thay sette her herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a synne; and certainly the delites mighte be so grette in this caas, that men mighte lightly falle by hem into dedly synne. The spices that soursoun of pride, sothely whan thay soursoun of malice y-magined and avised, aforn east, or elles of usage, ben dedly synnes, it is no doute. And whan thay soursoun by frelté unavysed sodenly, and sodenly withdrawe agayn, al be thay grevous synnes, I gesse thay ben not dedly.

Now mighte men axe, wherof pride soursouthe and springeth. I say som tyme it springith of the goodes of nature, and som tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som tyme of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden outher in goodes of body, or goodes of soule. Certis, the goodes of the body ben hele of body, strengthe, deliverance,<sup>17</sup> beauté, gentrie, fraunchise; the goodes of nature of the soule ben good wit, scharp understondyng, subtil engyn, vertu naturel, good memorie; goodes of fortune ben riches, highe degrees of lordschipes, and preisyng of the poeple; goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spiritual travaile, benignité, virtuous contemplacioun, withstondyng of temptacioun, and semblable thinges; of whiche forsaysde goodes, certis it is a ful gret foly, a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. Now as for to speke of goodes of nature, God wot that som tyme we have hem in nature as moche to oure damage as to oure profit. As for to speke of hele of body, certis it passith ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of the siknesse of the soule. For God wot, the fleisch is a gret enemy to the soule; and therefore the more that oure body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. Eke for to pride him in his strengthe of body, it is a foly; for certes the fleisch coveyeth again the spirit; and ay the more strong that the fleisch is, the sorier may the soule be; and over al, this strengthe of body and worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many maner peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pride him of his gentrie is ful gret folye; for often tyme the gentrie of the body bynymeth the gentery of the soule; and we ben alle of oon fader and of oon moder; and alle we ben of oon nature roten and corrupt, bothe riche and pore. For sothe oon maner gentry is for to prayse, that apparailleth mannes corrage witha vertues and moralitees, and makith him Cristes child; for trustith wel, over what man that synne hath maistry, he is a verray chert to synne.

Now ben ther general signes of gentillesse; as schewyng of vice and rybaudrie, and servage of synne, in word, in werk and contenance, and usinge vertu, curtesie, and elennes, and to be liberal, that is to sayn, large by mesure; for thilke that passith mesure is foly and synne. And another is to remembre him of bounté that he of other folk hath receyved. Another is to be benigne to his goode subjectis; wherfore, as saith Senek, ther is nothing more covenable to a man of heigh estate, than debonairté and pité; and therefore these flies that men clepen bees, whan thay make here king, thay chesen oon that hath no pricke wherwith he may stynge. Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to atteigne to hihe virtuous thinges. Certis, also who that prideth him in the goodes of grace, is eek an outrageous fool; for thilke giftes of grace that schulde have i-torned him to goodnes and medicyne, torneth him to venym and to confusioun, as saith seint Gregory. Certis also, who that prideth him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful gret fool; for som tyme is a man a gret lord by the morwe, that is a caytif and a wrecche er it be night: and som tyme the riches of a man is cause of his deth: and som

<sup>17</sup> *deliverance*. Tyrwhitt reads *deliverness*



tyme the delice of a man is cause of his grevous maledye, thurgh which he deieeth. Certis, the commendacioun of the poeple is som tyme ful fals and ful brutil for to truste; this day thay prayse, to morwe thay blame. God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the poeple hath causid deth of many a busy man.

*Remedium contra superbiam.*

Now 'sith so is, that ye han herd and understonde what is pride, and whiche ben the spices of it, and whens pride sourdeth and springeth; now schul ye understonde which is the remedy agayns pride; and that is humilité or meekenes, that is a vertue thurgh which a man hath verray knowleche of himself, and holdith of himself no pride, ne pris, ne deynté, as in regard of his desertes, considering evermore his frelté. Now ben ther three maners of humilité; as humilité in hert, another is humilité in his mouth, the thridde in workes. The humilité in his herte is in foure maners; that oon is, whan a man holdith himself not worth biforn God of heven; another is, whan he despiseth no man; the thrid is, whan he ne rekkith nought though a man holde him nought worth; the ferthe is, whan he holdeth him nought sory of his humiliacioun. Also the humilité of mouth is in foure thinges; in attempre speche; in humbles of speche; and whan he byknouth with his owne mouth, that he is such as him thenkith that he is in herte; another is, whan he praisth the bounté of another man and nothing therof amenusith. Humilité eek in werk is in foure maneres. The first is, whan he puttith other men tofore him; the secounde is, to chese the lowest place over al; the thrid is, gladly to assente to good conseil; the ferthe is, gladly to stonde to thaward of his sovereyns, or of him that is in heigher degré; certeyn this is a gret werk of humilité.

*De invidia.*

After pride now wol I speke of the foule synne of envye, which that is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of other mennes prosperité; and after the word of seint Austyn, is it sorwe of other mennes wele, and joye of other mennes harm. This foule synne is platly agayns the Holy Gost. Al be it so, that every synne is agayn the Holy Gost, yit natheles, for as moche as bounté aperteyneth proprely to the Holy Gost, and envye proprely is malice, therefore is it proprely agayns the bounté of the Holy Gost. Now hath malice tuo spices, that is to sayn, hardnes of hert in wickednes, or ellis the fleisch of man is so blynd, that he considereth not that he is in synne, or rekketh not that he is in synne; which is the hardnes of the devyl. That other spice of envye is, whan a man warieth trouthe, and wot that it is trouthe, and eek whan he warieth the grace that God hath geve to his neighebor; and al this is by envye. Certes than is envye the worste synne that is; for sothely alle other synnes ben somtyme oonly agayns oon special vertu; but certes envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns al goodnes; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighebor; and in this maner it is divers from all the synnes; for wel unnethe is ther any synne that it ne hath som delit in itself, sauf oonly envye, that ever hath

in itself anguisch and sorwe. The spices of envye ben these. Ther is first sorwe of other mennes goodnes and of her prosperité; and prosperité is kyndely matier of joye; thanne is envye a synne agayns kynde. The secounde spice of envye is joye of other mennes harm; and that is proprely lik to the devyl, that ever rejoyeth him of mennes harm. Of these tuo spices cometh bakbityng; and this synne of bakbityng or detraccioun hath certein spices, as thus; som man praisth his neighebor by a wicked entent, for he makith alway a wicked knotte atte last ende; alway he makith a *but* at the last ende, that is thing of more blame, than worth is al the praying. The secounde spice is, that if a man be good, and doth or saith a thing to good entent, the bakbiter wol torne al thilke goodnes up-so-down to his schrewed entent. The thridde is to amenuse the bounté of his neighebor. The ferthe spice of bakbityng is this, that if men speke goodnes of a man, than wil the bakbiter seyn, "Parfay, yit such a man is bet than he;" in dispraysyng of him that men praise. The fiftte spice is this, for to consente gladly and herken gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This synne is ful gret, and ay encesith after thentent of the bakbiter. After bakbityng cometh gruceching or murmuracioun, and som tyme it springith of impaciencie<sup>18</sup> agayns God, and somtyme agayns man. Agayns God is it whan a man grucechith agayn the pyne of helle, or agayns poverte, or of losse of catel, or agayns reyn or tempest, or elles grucechith that schrewes han prosperité, or ellis that goode men han adversité; and alle these thinges schulde men suffre patiently, for thay come by rightful juggement and ordinaunce of God. Som tyme cometh gruceching of avarice as Judas gruceched agens the Maudeleyn, whar sche anoynted the hed of oure Lord Jhesu Crist with hir precious oynement. This maner murmur is swich as whan man grucechith of goodnes that himself doth, or that other folk doon of here owne catel. Som tyme cometh murmur of pride, as whan Symon the Pharisé grucechid agayn the Maudeleyn, whan sche approachid to Jhesu Crist and wepte at his feet for hir synnes; and somtyme it sourdith of envye, whan men discoveren a mannes harm that was privé, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. Murmuryng eek is ofte among servauntz, that grucechen whan here soverayns bidden hem to doon leeful thinges; and for as moche as thay dar nought openly withstonde the comaundementz of here soverayns, yit wol thay sayn harm and gruceche and murmure prively for verray despit; whiche wordes men clepe the devels Pater noster, though so be that the devel hadde never Pater noster, but that lewed men calle it so. Som tyme it cometh of ire of privé hate, that norischeth rancour in herte, as after-ward I schal declare. Thanne cometh eek bitternes of herte, thurgh which bitternesse every good deede of his neighebor semeth to him bitter and unsavery. But thanne cometh discord that unbyndeth alle maner of frendschipec. Thanne cometh scornynge of his neighebor, al do he never so wel. Thanne cometh accusing, as whan man seketh occasioun

<sup>18</sup> *impatience*. The Harl. Ms. reads *insapiens*.

to annoyen his neighebores, which that is lik the craft of the devel, that waytith both night and day to accuse us alle. Thanne cometh malignité, thurgh which a man annoyeth his neighebor prively if he may, and if he may not, algate his wikkid wille schal nought wante, as for to brenne his hous prively, or empoyson him, or sleen his bestis prively, and semblable thinges.

*Remedium contra invidiam.*

Now wol I speke of the remedies agayns these foule thinges and this foule synne of envye. First is the love of God principal, and lovyng of his neighebor as himself; sothly that oon ne may nought ben withoute that other. And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebour thou schalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes alle we have oon fader fleisschly, and oon mooder, that is to sayn, Adam and Eva; and eek oon fader spirituel, and that is God of heven. Thy neighebor artow holden for to love, and wilne him al godenesse, and therefore saith God, love thy neighebor as thyself; that is to sayn, bothe to savacioun of lif and of soule. And moreover thou schalt love him in word, and in benigne amonestyng and chastising, and comforte him in his annoyes, and praye for him with al thin herte. And in dede thou schalt love him in such wise that thou schalt do to him in charité, as thou woldist it were doon to thin oughne persone; and therefore thou schalt doon him noon harme in wikkid word, ne damage him in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by wicked entising of ensample. Thou schalt nought desiren his wif, ne noone of his thinges. Understonde eek that in the name of neighebor is comprehendid his enemy; certes man schal love his enemy by the comandement of God, and sothly thy frend schalt thou love in God. I sayde thin enemy schaltow love for Goddes sake, by his comandement; for if it were resoun that man schulde hate his enemy, for sothe God nolde nought receyve us to his love that ben his enemyes. Agains thre maner of wronges that his enemy doth to him, he schal do thre thinges, as thus: agayns hate and rancour of herte, he schal love him in herte; agayns chydng and wikkid wordes, he schal pray for his enemy; agayns wikkid dede of his enemy, he schal doon him bounté. For Crist saith, loveth youre enemyes, and prayeth for hem that speke you harme, and for hem that yow chacen and pursen; and doth bounté to hem that yow haten. Lo, thus comoundeth us oure Lord Jhesu Crist to do to our enemyes; for sothly nature driveth us to love oure frendes, and parfay oure enemyes han more neede to love than oure frendes. For sothly to hem that more neede have, certis to hem schul men do goodnes. And certis in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jhesu Crist that dyed for his enemyes. And in als moche as thilke love is more grevous to parfome, so moche is the more gret remedye and myert, and therefore the lovyng of oure enemy hath confoundid the venym of the devel; for right as the devel is confoundid by humilité, right so is he woundid to the deth by love of oure enemy. Certes thanne is love the medicine that castith out the venym of envye fro

mannes hert. The spices of this part schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres followinge.

*De ira.*

After envye wol I descryven the synne of ire; for sothly who so hath envye upon his neighebor, anon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of wraththe in word or in dede agayns him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envye, for sothly he that is proud or envyous is lightly wroth. This synne of ire, after the descryvyng of seint Austyn, is wikkid wille to ben avengid by word or by dede. Ire, after the filosofer, is the fervent blood of man i-quiked in his hert, thurgh which he wolde harm to him that him hatith; for certes the hert of man by eschawfyng and moevyng of his blood waxith so trouble, that he is out of alle juggements of resoun. But ye schal understonde that ire is in tuo maneres, that oon of hem is good, that other is wikkid. The goode ire is by jealousy of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wroth with wikkidnes and agayn wikkidnesse. And therefore saith a wise man, that ire is bet than play. This ire is with deboneirte, and it is wroth without bitterness; not wroth with the man, but wroth with the mysdedes of the man; as saith the prophet David, *Iracimini, et nolite peccare, etc.* Now understonde that wikkid ire is in tuo maneres, that is to sayn, sodeyn ire or hastif ire withoute avysemment and consenting of resoun; the meynge and the sentence of this is, that the resoun of a man ne consentith not to thilke sodeyn ire, and thanne is it venial. Another ire is ful wikkid, that cometh of felony of herte, avysed and cast biforn, with wikkid wille to do vengeance, and therto his resoun consentith; and sothly this is deedly synne. This ire is so displeasaunt to God, that it troublith his hous, and chacech the holy Gost out of mannes soule, and wastith and destroyeth that liknes of God, that is to say, the vertu that is in mannes soule, and put in him the likenes of the devel, and bynymeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is a ful gret plesaunce to the devel, for it is the develes fornays that is eschaufid with the fuyr of helle. For certes right so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erthely thinges, than any other element, right so ire is mighty to destroye alle spirituel thinges. Loke how that fuyr of smale gledis, that ben almost dede under aschen, wolden quiken agayn whan thay ben touched with brimstone, right so ire wol evermore quiken agayn whan it is touched by pride that is covered in mannes herte. For certes myr may nought come out of no thing, but if it were first in the same thinge naturally; as fuyr is drawe out of flintes with steel. Right so as pride is often tyme mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as saith seint Isidor, that whan men maken fuyr of thilke tree, and cover the colis with aschen, sothly the fuyr of it wol lasten al a yer or more; and right so fareth it of rancour, whan it oones is conceyved in the hertis of som men, certein it wol lasten fro oon Estren day until another Ester day, and more. But certis thilke man is ful fer from the mercy of God al thilke while.



In this forsaiide deueles forneys ther forgen thre schrewes; pride, that ay blowith and encesith the fuyr by chidyng and wickid wordis; thanne stont enuye, and holdeth the hooite iren upon the hert of man, with a paire of longe tonges of rancour; and thanne stont the sinne of contumelie or strif and cheste, and baterith and forgeth by vileyns repreuynges. Certes this cursed synne annoyeth bothe to the man himself, and eek to his neighebor. For sothely almost al the harm that eny man doth to his neighebor cometh thurgh wraththe. For certis, outrageous wraththe doth al that ever the deuyll him commaundeth; for he ne spareth neyther for our Lord Jhesu Crist, ne his moodir; and in his outrageous anger and ire, allas! ful many oon at that tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist, and eek of alle his halwes. Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certis. It bynymeth for man his witte and his resoun, and al his deboneire lyf spiritual, that scholde kepen his soule. Certes it bynymeth eek Goddis dede lordschipe (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his neighebor; it stryvet eek alday agayns trouthe; it reueth him eek the quiete of his hert, and subvertith his herte and his soule.

Of ire cometh these stynkyng engendrures; first, hate, that is old wraththe; discord, thurgh which a man forsakith his olde frend that he hath loved ful longe; and thanne cometh werre, and every maner of wronge that man doth to his neighebor in body or in catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel that homicide (that is, manslaughter) is in divers wise. Som maner of homicide is spiritual, and som is bodily. Spiritual manslaughter is in sixe thinges. First, by hate, as saith seint Johan, he that hateth his brother, is an homicide. Homicide is eek by bakbytyng, of whiche bakbiters saith Salomon, that they have twaye swerdes with whiche they slen here neighebors; for sothely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as his lif. Homicidy is eek in geuyng of wikkid counsil by fraude, as for to geve counsil to areywe wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages; of whiche saith Salomon, a leoun roryng and bere hungry ben like to the cruel lordschipes, in withholding or abrigging of the schipe or the hyre or the wages of seruautes, or ellis in usure, or in withdrawyng of almes of pore folk. For whiche the wise man saith, feedith him that almost dyeth for hunger, for sothely but if thou feede him thou slest him. And eek these ben dedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is, when thou sleest him with thy tonge in other manere, as when thou commaundist to slen a man, or elles givest counsil to slee a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe, right as a justice dampnith him that is coupable to the deth; but let the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nought for delit to spille blood, but for kepyng of rightwisnes. Another homicidy is doon for necessite, as when a man sleth another him defendaunt, and that he ne may noon other wise eschape fro his owen deth; but certeynly, if he may eschape withoute slaughter of his adversarie, and sleth him, he doth synne, and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly synne. Eek if a man by

caas or adventure schete an arwe or cast a stoon with which he sleth a man, he is an homicide. Eke if a womman by negligence overlye hir child in hir sleping, it is homicide and dedly synne. Eke when man distourbith concepcioun of a child, and makith a womman outhere bareyn by drinke of venenous herbis, thurgh whiche sche may nought conceyve, or sleth hir child by drynkes, or elles putteth certeyn material thinges in hir seeré place to slee the child, or elles doth unkyndely synne, by which man, or womman, schedith here nature in manne or in place ther as the child may nought be conceyved; or ellis if a womman have conceyved, and hurt herself, and sleth the child, yit is it homycidy. What say we eek of women that mordren here children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, it is an horrible homicidy. Eek if a man approche to a womman by desir of lechery, thurgh the which the child is perischt; or elles smith a womman wytyngly, thurgh which sche sleth hir child; alle these ben homicides, and horrible dedly synnes. Yit cometh ther of ire many mo synnes, as wel in word, as in werk and thought; as he that arettith upon God, and blamith God of thing of which he is himself guilty, or despisith God and alle his halwes, as doon these cursed hasardours in divers cuntrees. This cursed synne don thay, when thay felen in here herte ful wikkidly of God and his halwes. Also when thay treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter, thilke synne is so gret, that unnethe may it be relested, but that the mercy of God passith alle his werkes, and is so gret and so benigne. Thanne cometh of ire attry anger, when a man is scharly amonested in his schrifte to forelete synne, thanne wol he be angry, and answer hokerly and angrily, to defenden or excusen his synne by unstedefastnesse of his fleisch; or elles he dede it to holde companye with his felawes; or ellis he saith the fend entised him; or elles he dide it for his youthe; or ellis his complexioun is so corraigeous that he may not forbere; or ellis it is desteny, as he saith, unto a certeyn age; or elles he saith it cometh him of gentilesce of his aunectrie, and semblable thinges. Alle these maner of folk so wrappen hem in here synnes, that thay wol nought deliver himself. For sothely, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his synne, may nought be delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne. After this thanne cometh sweryng, that is expres agayns the commaundementz of God; and this bifallith often of angir and of ire. God saith, thou schalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vayn or in ydil. Also, ourc Lord Jhesu Crist saith by the word of seint Mathew, ne schal ye not swere in alle manere, neither by heven, for it is Goddes trone, ne by the eorthe, for it is the benche of his feet, ne by Jerusalem, for it is the cité of a gret king, ne by thin heed, for thou may nought make an her whit ne blak; but sayeth, by youre word, ye, ye, and nay, nay; and what it is more, it is of evel. Thus saith Jhesu Crist. For Cristes sake, swereth not so synfully, in dismembring of Crist, by soule, herte, boones, and body; for certes it semeth, that ye thenke that cursed Jewes ne dismembrit nought y-nough the precious persone of Crist, but ye disembre



him more. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne reule yow after the lawe of God in youre swering, as saith Jeremie, c<sup>o</sup>. iiii<sup>o</sup>. Thou schalt kepe thre condicions, thou schalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwises. This is to sayn, thou schalt swere soth; for every lesyng is agayns Crist; for Crist is verray trouthe. And think wel this, that every gret swerer, not compellid lawfully to swere, the wounde<sup>19</sup> schal not depart from his hous, wil he useth such unlesful sweringe. Thou schalt eek swere in doom, whan thou art constreigned by thy domesman to witnesse the trouthe. Eek thou schalt not swere for envye, ne for favour, ne for meede, but oonly for rightwisesse, and for declaring of it to the worschip of God, and helping of thin even cristen. And therefore every man that takith Goddes name in ydil, or falsly swerith with his mouth, or elles takith on him the name of Crist, and callith himself a cristen man, and lyveth agayn Cristes lyyving and his teching, alle thay take Goddes name in ydel. Loke eek what saith seint Peter, *Act. c<sup>o</sup>. iiii<sup>o</sup>. Non est aliud nomen sub celo, etc.*; There is noon other name. saith seint Peter, under heaven ne geven to noon men, in which thay move be saved, that is to sayn, but in the name of Jhesu Crist. Tak heede eek how precious is the name of Crist, as saith seint Poule, *ad Philippenses ij<sup>o</sup>. In nomine Jhesu, etc.* that in the name of Jhesu every kne of heavenly creatures, or ethely, or of helle, schulde bowe; for it is so heigh and so worschipful, that the cursed feend in helle schulde tremble to heeren it nempned. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that thay despise it more boldely<sup>20</sup> than dede the cursed Jewes, or elles the devel, that tremblith whan he heerith his name.

Now certis, sith that swering (but if it be lawfully doon) is so heihly defendid, moche wors is forswering falsely, and yit needeles.

What say we eek of hem that deliten hem in swering, and holden it a gentry or manly dede to swere grete othis? And what of hem that of verray usage ne cessen nought to swere grete othis, al be the cause not worth a strawe? Certis this is horrible synne. Sweryng sodeynly without avysement is eek a gret synne. But let us now go to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuration and conjuracions, as doon these false enchauntours or nigromancians in bacines ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle,<sup>21</sup> or in a fuyr, or in the schulder bon of a scheep; I can not sayn, but that thay doon cursedly and dampnably agayns Crist, and the faith of holy chirche.

What say we of hem that bilieven on divinailes, as by flight or by nois of brides or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dorez or crakking of howses, by gnawing of rattis, and such mauer wrecehidnes? Certis, al this thing is defended by God and holy chirche, for whiche thay ben accursed, til thay come to amendement, that on such filthe bisetten here bileeve. Charmes for woundes or malady of men or of bestes, if thay take eny effect, it may be peradventure that God suffreth it, for

folk schulde geve the more faith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speke of lesyng, whiche generally is fals signifaunce of word, in entent to deceyven his even cristen. Som lesyng is, of whiche ther cometh noon avantage to noon wight; and som lesyng torneth to the ease or profit of som man, and to damage of another man. Another lesyng is, for to save his lif or his catel. Another lesyng cometh of delit for to lye, in which delit thay wol forge a long tale, and paynte it with alle circumstaunces, wher as the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesyng cometh, for he wolde susteyne his word. Som lesyng cometh of rechelesnes withoute avisement, and semblable thinges.

Lat us now touche the vice of flaterie, which cometh not gladly, but for drede, or for coiveitise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preysing. Flaterers ben the develes norices, that norissen his children with mylk of losingerie. For sothe Salomon saith, that flaterie is worse than detraccion; for som tyme detraccion makith an hawteyn man be the more humble, for he dredith detraccion, but certes flaterie makith a man to enhausen his hert and his countenance. Flaterers ben the develes enchauntours, for thay make man to wene of himself that he is like to that he is nought like. Thay ben like Judas, that bitraied God; and thise flaterers bitrayen a man to selle him to his enemy, that is the devel. Flaterers ben the develes chapeleyns, that singen ay *Placebo*. I rekene flaterie in the vices of ire; for ofte tyme if oon man be wroth with another, thanne wol he flaterer som man, to mayntene him in his querel.

Speke we now of such cursyng as cometh of irous hert. Malisoun generally may be said every maner power of harm; such cursyng birreveth man from the regne of God, as saith seint Poule. And ofte tyme such cursyng wrongfully retourneth agayn to hym that curseth, as a bird retourneth agayn to his owne nest. And over alle thinges men oughten eschewe to cursen here oughne children, and give to the devel here engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certis it is gret peril and gret synne.

Let us thanne speke of chydynge and reproche, whiche that ben ful grete woundes in mannes hert, for they unsewe the semes of frendschipe in mannes herte; for certis, unnethe may a man plainly ben accordid with him that him openly ryeyled, reproved, and disclaundrid; this is a ful grisly synne, as Crist saith in the Gospel. And takith keep now, that he that reprovet his neighebor, outhere he reprovet him by som harm of peyne, that he hath upon his body, as mesel, croked harlot; or by som synne that he doth. Now if he repreve him by harm of peyne, thanne tornith the reproof to Jhesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwis sonde of God, and by his suffraunce, be it meselrie, or many other maladies;<sup>22</sup> and if he repreve him uncharitably of synne, as, thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and so forth, thanne aperteyneth that to the rejoysing of the devel, that ever hath joye that men doon synne. And certis, chidying may nought come but out of a vileins herte, for after the abundaunce of the

<sup>19</sup> wounde. Tyrwhitt reads *plage*; the Harl. Ms. reads *wonder*.

<sup>20</sup> boldely. The Harl. Ms. reads *bodyly*.

<sup>21</sup> cercle. The Harl. Ms. reads *in a church*.

<sup>22</sup> many other maladies. Tyrwhitt reads *maine, or maladies*.

herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. And ye schal understonde, that loke by any way, when any man schal chastise another, that he be war fro chiding or reprevyng; for trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fyur of anger and of wraththe, which that he schulde quenchen; and peradventure sleth, that he mighte chaste with benignité. For, as sayth Salomon, the amiable tonge is the tree of lif; that is to sayn, of life espirituel. And sothely, a dislave tonge sleth the spirit of him that repreveth, and also of him which is reprevd. Lo, what saith seint Augustyn, there is no thing so lik the fendes child, as he that ofte chideth. Seint Poule seith eek, a servaunt of God bihoveth nought to chide. And though that chiding be a vileins thing bitwixe alle maner folk, yit is it certes more unconvenable bitwix a man and his wif, for ther is never rest. And therefore saith Salomon, an hous that is uncovered in rayn and droppynge, and a chiding wyf, ben like. A man, that is in a dropping hous in many partes, though he eschewe the dropping in oon place, it droppeth on him in another place; so farith it by a chydynge wyf, but sche chide him in oon place, sche wol chide him in another. And therefore better is a morsel of bred with joye, than an hous ful of delices with chydynge, seith Salomon. Seint Poul saith, o ye women, be ye sugettis to youre housbondes as bihovith in God; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.

After-ward speke we of scornynge, which is a wikkid thing, and sinful, and namely when he scornith a man for his goode werkes; for certes, suche scornors faren lik the foule toode, that may nought endure the soote smel of the vine roote, when it florischild. These scornors ben partyng felawes with the devel, for thay han joye when the devel wynneth, and sorwe when he leseth. Thay ben adversaries of Jhesu Crist, for thay haten that he loveth, that is to say, savacioun of soule.

Speke we now of wikkid counsel; for he that wikkid counsel giveth he is a traytour, for he deceyvet him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheles, yet is his wikkid counsel first agens himself. For, as saith the wise man, every fals lyyng hath this propreté in himself, that he that wil annoyne another man, he annoyeth first himself. And men schul understonde, that man schulde nought take his counsel of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to moche her oughne profyt, ne in to moche worldly folk, namely, in counselynge of mannes soule.

Now cometh the synne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a synne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wondir is, for God died for to make concord. And more schame do thay to Crist, than dede thay that him crucifide. For God loveth bettre, that frendschipe be amonges folk, thanne he dide his owne body, which that he gaf for unité. Therefore ben thay likned to the devel, that ever ben aboute to make discord.

Now comith the sinne of double tonge, suche as spoken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihynde; or elles thay make semblaunt as though thay speke of good entencioun, or ellis in game and play, and yit thay speke in wikkid entent.

Now cometh the wreying of counseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes unneth may he restore that damage. Now cometh manace, that is an open foly; for he that ofte manaceth, he threttith more than he may parfourme ful ofte tyme. Now cometh idel wordes, that is withoute profyt of him that spekith the wordes, and eek of him that herkeneth tho wordes; or elles ydel wordes ben tho that ben needeles, or withouten entent of naturel profyt. And al be it that ydil wordes ben som tyme venial synne, yit schulde men doute hem for we schuln give rekenynge of hem bifore God. Now comith jangling, that may nought be withoute synne; and, as saith Salomon, it is a signe of apert folie. And therefore a philosopre said, when men askid him how men schulde plesse the pople, and he answerde, do many goode werkes, and spek fewe jangeles. After this cometh the synne of japers, that ben the develes apes, for thay maken folk to laughen at here japes or japerie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape; suche japes defendith seint Poule. Loke how that vertuou and holy wordes conforten hem that travailen in the service of Crist, right so conforten the vileins<sup>23</sup> wordes and knakkis and japeries hem that travayle in the service of the devyl. These ben the synnes that cometh of ire, and of other synnes many mo.

#### *Remedium contra iram.*

Remedye agayns ire, is a vertue that men clepe mansuetude, that is deboneirté; and eek another vertue that men clepe pacience or sufferance. Debonaireté withdrawith and restreigneth the stiringes and the moevynges of manns corrage in his herte, in such manere, that thai ne skip not out by anger ne by ire. Suffraunce suffrieth swetely al the annoyaunce and the wronges that men doon to man out-ward. Seint Jerom saith thus of debonairté, that it doth noon harm to no wight, ne saith; ne for noon harm that men doon ne sayn, he ne eschaufith nought agayns resoun. This vertu comith som tyme of nature; for, as saith the philosopher, man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire, and tretable to goodness; but when debonairté is informed of grace, than is it the more worth.

Pacience that is another remedie agayns ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnes, and is not wroth for noon harm that is doon to him. The philosopher saith, that pacience is thilke vertue that sufferith deboneirly alle the outrages of adversité and every wikkid word. This vertue makith a man lik to God, and makith him Goddes oughne dere child, as saith Crist. This vertu destroyeth thin enemy. And therefore saith the wise man, if thou wolt venquish thin enemy lerne to suffre. And thou schalt understonde, that man suffrieth foure maners of grevaunces in out-ward thinges, agains whiche he moot have foure maners of pacience. The firste grevaunce is of wikkid wordes. Thilke suffred Jhesu Crist, withoute grueching, ful patiently, when the Jewes despised him and reproved him ful ofte. Suffre thou therefore patiently, for the wise man saith, if thou strive with a fool, though the fool be wroth, or though

<sup>23</sup> vileins. The Harl. Ms. reads *violent*.



he laughhe, algate thou schalt have no rest. That other grevaunce out-ward is to have damage of thi catel. Theragayn suffred Crist ful paciently, whan he was despaynid of al that he had in his lif, and that nas but his clothis. The thridde grevaunce is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful paciently in al his passioun. The ferthe grevaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis; wherfore I say, that folk that maken here servauntz to travaile to grevously, or out of tyme, as on haly dayes, sothely thay doon greet synne. Hereagainst suffred Crist ful paciently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar upon his blisful schulder the croys upon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. Here may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, nought onoly cristen men ben pacient for the love of Jhesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful life that is pardurable, but the olde paynymes, that never were cristen, comaundedin and useden the vertu of pacience. A philosopher upon a tyme, that wolde have bete his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was gretly amoved, and brought a yerde to scourge the child, and whan the child saugh the yerde, he sayde to his maister, "what thanke ye to do?" "I wolde bete the," quod the maister, "for thi correccioun." "Forsothe," quod the child, "ye oughte first correcte youreself, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child." "Forsothe," quod the maister al wepyng, "thou saist soth; have thou the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience." Of pacience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient in Crist. And understonde wel, that obedience is parfyt, whan a man doth gladly and hastily with good herte outrely al that he scholde do. Obedience is generally to parforme the doctrine of God, and of his soveraignes, to whiche him oughte to ben oveisant in alle rightwisnes.

#### *De accidia.*

After the synne of envye and ire, now wol I speke of accidie; for envye blendith the hert of a man, and ire troubleth a man, and accidie makith him hevvy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envye and ire maken bitternes in herte, which bitternesse is mooder of accidie, and bynimithe the love of alle goodnes; thanne is accidie the anguissche of a trouble hert. And saint Augustyn saith, it is annoye of goodnesse and annoye of harme. Certes this is a dampnable synne, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist, in as moche as it bynymeth the service that we ought to do to Crist with alle diligence, as saith Salomon; but accidie doth noon such diligence. He doth alle thing with anoy, and with wrawenesse,<sup>25</sup> slaknes, and excusacioun, and with ydelnes and unlust; for which the book saith, accursed be he that doth the service of God negligently. Thanne is accidie enemy to every astat of man. For certes thestat of man is in thre maners; either it is thestat of innocence, as was thatstate of Adam, bifore that he fel into synne, in which estate he is holden to worche, as in heryng and honouryng of God. Another astat is thestate of sinful man; in which estate men ben holden to labore in praying to

<sup>25</sup> *wrawenes.* The Harl. Ms. reads *dravennes.*

God for amendement of her synnes, and that he wolde graunte hem to rise out of here synnes. Another estaat is thestate of grace, in which he is holde to werkis of penitence; and certes, to alle these thinges is accidie enemy and contrarie, for it loveth no busynes at al. Now certes, this foule synne accidie is eek a ful gret enemy to the lifode of the body; for it hath no purveaunce agens temporel necessite, for it forslowthith, and forsluggith, and destroyeth alle goodes temporels by rechelesnes.

The ferthe thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peyne of helle, bycause of her slouthe and of her hevynes; for thay that ben dampned, ben so bounde, that thay may nought wel do ne wel thanke. Of accidie cometh first, that a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes and makith that God hath abhominacioun of such accidie, as saith saint Johan.

Now cometh slouthe, that wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce; for sothely, slouthe is so tendre and so delicat, as saith Salomon, that he wol suffre noon hardnes ne penaunce, and therefore he schendeth al that he doth. Agayns this roten bertid synne of accidie and of slouthe schulden men exercise himself to do goode werkis, and manly and vertuously cacchin corrage wel to doo, thinking that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quitheth every good dede, be it never so lyte. Usage of labour is a ful greet thing; for it makith, as saith saint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde synewes; and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne cometh drede to bygyne to werke eny goode deedes; for certes, who that is inclined to don synne,<sup>26</sup> him thinkith it is so gret emprise for to undertake to doon werkis of goodnes, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnes ben so grevous and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dare not undertake to doon werkis of goodnes,<sup>26</sup> as saith saint Gregory.

Now cometh wanhope, that is, despair of the mercy of God, that cometh som tyme of to moche outrageous sorwe, and som tyme of to moche drede, ymagynyng that he hath do so moche synne that it will not availe him, though he wolde repent him, and f rsake synne; thurgh which despair or drede, he abandounith al his herte to alle maner synne, as seith saint Augustin. Whiche dampnable synne, if ther it continue unto his lyves ende, it is cleped the synnyng of the holy gost. This horrible synne is so perillous, that he that is despaired, ther is no felonye, ne no synne, that he doutith for to do, as schewed wel by Judas. Certes, above alle synnes than is this synne most displeant to Crist, and most adversarie. Sothely, he that despeirith him, is like the coward champioun recreaunt, that flieth<sup>27</sup> withoute neede. Allas! allas! needeles is he recreaunt, and needeles despaired. Certes, the mercy of God is ever redy to the penitent, and is above alle his werkis. Allas! can not a man bythenk him on the Gospel of saint Luk, wheras

<sup>25</sup> *Who that is inclined to don synne.* Tyrwhitt reads *he that inclineth to sinne.*

<sup>26</sup> *and casteth . . . werkis of goodnes.* These words are neither in the Harl. nor Lansd. Ms.

<sup>27</sup> *flieth.* So Tyrwhitt; the Harl. reads *that seith recreaunt withoute neede.* The reading of the Lansd. Ms. is *scithe creant.*



Crist saith, that as wel schal ther be joye in heven upon a synful man that doth penitence, as upon nynety and nyne that ben rightful men that needen no penitence? Loke further in the same Gospel, the joye and the fest of the goode man that had lost his sone, whan the sone with repentaunce was turned to his fader. Can not thay remembre eek that as saith seint Luk, xxiiij, how that the thief that was hangid beside Jhesu Crist, sayde, Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne? For sothe saith Crist, to-day thou schalt be with me in paradis. Certis, ther is noon so horrible synne of man, that it ne may in his lif be destroyed with penitence, thorough vertue of the passioun of the deth of Crist. Allas! what needith it man thanne to be despairid, sith that his merey is so rely and large? Aske and have. Thanne cometh sompnolence, that is, sluggy slumbring, which makith a man ben hevy and dul in body and in soule, and this synne cometh of slouth; and certes, the tyme that by way of resoun man schulde nought slepe, that is by the morwe, but if ther were cause resonable. For sothely the morwe tyde is most covenable to a man to say his prayers, and for to thank upon his God, and to honour God, and to geve almes to the pore that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo what saith Salomon: who so wol by the morwe arise and seeke me, schal fynde me. Than cometh negligence that rekkith of nothing. And how that ignorance be moder of alle harm, certis, negligence is the norice. Negligence doth no force, whan he schal doon a thing, whethir he doo it wel or baddely.

Of the remedy of these tuo synnes, as saith the wise man, that he that dredith God, he sparith nought to do that him ought to don; and he that lovith God, wol do diligence to plesse God by his werkis and abounde himself, with alle his might, wel for to doon. Thanne comith ydelnes, that is the gate of alle harmes. An ydil man is like an hous that hath noone walles; the develes may entre on every syde or sehete at him at discovert by temptaciouns on every syde. This ydelnes is the thurrok of alle wickid vileyns thoughtes, and of alle jangles, tryfles, and of alle ordure. Certes the heven is geven to hem that wol labour and nought to ydil folk. Eke David saith, that thay ne ben not in the labour of men, ne thay schul not be wiped with men, that is to sain, in purgatorie. Certis thanne semeth it that thay schal be tormentid with the devel in helle, but if thay don penitence.

Thanne comith the synne that men clepe *tarditas*, as whan a man is so latrede or taryng er he wil torne to God; and certis, that is a gret foly. He is like him that fallith into the dieche, and wol not arise. And this vice cometh of a fals hope, that he thinkith he schal lyve longe; but that hope fayleth full ofte.

Thanne comith laches, that is, he that when he bigynneth any good werk, anon he wol forelete it and stynte, as doon thay that han eny wight to governe, and ne take of hem no more keep anon as thay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy. These ben the newe schepherdes, that leten her schep wityngely go renne to the wolf, that is in the breres, or don no force of her

oughne governaunce. Of this cometh povert and destruceioun, bothe of spirituel and of temporel thinges. Thanne cometh a maner coldenesse, that freseth al the hert of man. Thanne cometh undevoicioun thurgh which a man is so blunt, and as saith seint Bernard, he hath such a languour in soule, that he may neyther rede ne syng in holy chirche, ne heere ne thinke on devoicioun in holy chirche, ne travaile with his hondes in no good werk, that nys to him unsavory and al apalled. Thanne waxith he slowe and slombry, and soone wol he be wroth, and soone is enclined to hate and to envye. Thanne cometh the synne of worldly sorwe such as is clepid *tristitia*, that sleth man, as saith seint Poule. For certis such sorwe werkith to the deth of the soule and of the body also, for therof cometh, that a man is anoyed of his oughne lif, which sorwe schorteth ful ofte the lif of a man, or that his tyme is come by way of kynde.

#### *Remedium contra accidiam.*

Agains this horrible synne of accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is cleped *fortitudo* or strengthe, that is, an affectioun thurgh which a man despiseth alle noyous thinges. This vertu is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dar withstonde mightily the devel, and wisely kepe himself from perils that ben wickid, and wrastil agains the assautes of the devel; for it enhaunsith and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth it and makith it feble; for this *fortitudo* may endure with long sufferaunce the travailes that ben covenables. This vertu hath many spices; the first is cleped *magnanimitas*, that is to sayn gret courage. For certis ther bihoveth gret courage agains accidie, lest that it ne swolve not the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu makith folk undertake harde and grevous thinges by her owne wille, wilfully and resonably. And for als moche as the devel fighteth agaynst a man more by queyntise and by sleight than by strengthe, thicfore many a man schal ageinstonde him by witte, and by resoun, and by discrecioun. Thanne is ther the vertu of faith, and hope in God and in his seintes, to acheven<sup>23</sup> and to accomplice the goode werkes, in the whiche he purposith fermely to continue. Thanne cometh seurté or sikernes, and that is whan a man doutith no travaile in tyme comyng of good werk that a man hath bygonne. Thanne cometh magnificence, that is to say, whan a man doth and performith grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bygonne, and that is thend why that men schulden do goode werkes. For in the accomplisng of grete goode werkes lith the grete guerdoun. Thanne is ther constaunce, that is stableness of courage, and this schulde ben in herte by stedfast faith, and in mouthe and in beryng, and in cheer, and in deede. Eek ther ben mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyvers werkis, and in consideracioun of the peyne of helle and of the joye of heven, and in the trust of the hyhe grace of the holy gost, that wil geve him might to parforme his good entent.

<sup>23</sup> *acheven*. The Ha l. Ms. reads to *eschew*, which appears to be contrary to the sense.

*De avaritia.*

After accidie I wil speke of avarice, and of covetyse; of whiche synne saith seint Poule, that the roote of alle eveles and harmes is covetyse. For sothely whan the hert of man is confoundid in itself and troublid, and that the soule hath lost the comfort of God, thanne seekih he an ydel solas of worldly thinges. Avarice, after the descripcioun of seint Austyn, is a likerousnes in hert to have erthely thinges. Some other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthely thinges, and no thing geve to hem that han neede. And understonde, that avarice ne stont not only in lond ne in catel, but som tyme in science and in glorie, and eny maner<sup>29</sup> outrageous thinges is avarice. And the difference bytwixe avarice and covetyse is this: covetyse is for to coveyte suche thinges as thou hast not; and avarice is to withholde and kepe suche thinges as thou hast, withoute rightful neede. Sothely, this avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable, for al holy writ curseth it, and spekih agayn that vice, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist; for it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turnith it bakward agayns al resoun, and makith that the avarous man hath more hope in his catel than in Jhesu Crist, and doth more observance in keping of his tresour, than he doth in the service of Jhesu Crist. And therefore saith seint Poule, *ad Ephes.* that an avarous man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.

What difference is ther bitwen an ydolaster and an avarous man, but that an ydolaster per-adventure hadde but a mawmet or tuo, and the avarous man hath manye? for certes, every flo-reine in his coffre is his mawmet. And certes, the synne of mawmetrie is the firste thing that God defendith in the ten comaundementz, as berith witnes in *Exod. cap. xx.* Thou schalt have noone false goddes biforn me, ne thou schalt make to the no grave thing. Thus is he an averous man, that loveth his tresor toforn God, and an idolaster. Thurgh his cursed synne of avarice and covetyse comen these harde lordschipes, thurgh whiche men ben destreynd by tallages, custumes, and cariages, more than here duet of resoun is; and elles take thay of here bondemen amercimentes, whiche mighte more reasonably ben callid extorciouns than mercymentis. Of whiche mersyments and raunsoning of bondemen, some lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful, for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it nys his lordes, as thay sayn. But certes, these lordeschipes doon wrong, that bireven here bondemen thinges that thay never gave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei, libro ix.* Soth is the condicioun of thraldom, and the firste cause of thraldom is sinne. *Genes. v.*

Thus may ye seen, that the gilt deserved thraldom, but not nature. Wherefore these lordes schulden nought to moche glorie in here lordschipes, sith that by naturel condicioun thay ben nought lordes of here thralles, but for thraldom com first by the desert of synne. And furthermore, ther as the lawe sayth, that temporel goodes of bondefolk been the goodes of her lordes; ye, that is to understonde, the goodes of the em-

perour, to defende hem in here right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem. And therefore seith Seneca, thi prudence schulde live benignely with thi thrallis. Thiike that thay clepe thralles, ben Goddes poeple; for humble folk ben Cristes frendes; thay ben contubernially with the Lord. Think eek as of such seed as cherles springen of such seed springe lordes; as wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deth that takith the cherl, such deth takith the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thi cherl as thou woldist thi lord dide with the, if thou were in his plyt. Every sinful man is a cherl as to synne. I rede the certes, thou lord, that thou werke in such a wise with thi cherles that thay rather love the than drede the. I wot wel, ther is degré above degré, as resoun is and skil, that men don her devoir ther as it is dewe; but certes, extorciouns, and despit of oure undirlienges, is dampnable.

And furthermore understonde wel, that conquerours or tyrantes maken ful ofte thralles of hem that born ben of als royal blood as ben thay that hem conqueren. This name of thraldom<sup>30</sup> was never erst couth til Noe sayde that his sone Chanaan schulde be thral of his bretheren for his synne. What say we thanne of hem that pylen and doon extorciouns to holy chirche? Certis, the swerdes that men geven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbyd, signifieth faith, and that he schulde defende holy chirche, and not robbe it ne pyle it; and who so doth is traitour to Crist. And as seith seint Austin, thay ben the develes wolves, that stranglen the sheep of Jhesu Crist, and doon wors than wolves; for sothely, whan the wulf hath ful his wombe, he stintith to strangle scheep; but sothly, the pilours and the destroyers of the goodes of holy chirche ne doon nought so, for thai stinte never to pile. Now as I have sayd, sith so is, that synne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus, that ilke tyme that al this world was in synne, thanne was al this world in thraldom, and in subjeccioun; but certis, sith the tyme of grace com, God ordeyned that somme folk schulde be more heigh in estate and in degré, and somme folkes more lowe, and that everich schulde be served in here estate and in degree. And therefore in somme contrees there thay ben thralles, whan thay han turned hem to the faith, thay make here thralles free out of thraldom. And therfor certis the lord oweth to his man, that the man owith to the lord. The pope callith himself servaunt of servaunts of God. But for as moche as the staat of holy chirche ne might not have ben, ne the commune profit might nought have ben kepte, ne pees ne reste in erthe, but if God had ordeyned som man of heicher degré, and some men of lower, therefore was sovereignté ordeyned to kepe, and to mayntene, and defende her underlynges or her sub-jectis in resoun, as ferforth as it lith in her power, and not to destroye ne confounde hem. Wherefore I say, that thiike lordes that be like wolves, that devouren the possessioun or the catel of pore folk wrongfully withoute mercy or mesure, thay schul receyve by the same mesure that thay

<sup>29</sup> *eny maner.* Tyrwhitt reads in every maner.

<sup>30</sup> *thraldom.* The Harl. Ms. reads *cherldom.*



han mesured to pover folk the mercy of Jhesu Crist, but if it be amendid. Now cometh decept bitwixe marchaunt and marchaunt. And thou schalt understande that marchaundise is in tuo<sup>31</sup> maneres, that oon is bodily, and that other is gostly; that oon is honest and leful, and that other is dishonest and uneful. Of thilke bodily marchaundise that is honest and leful is this, that ther as God hath ordeyned that a regne or a cuntré is suffisant to himself, thanne is it honest and leful that of the abundaunce of this contré men helpe another cuntré that is more needy; and therefore ther moote be marchauntz to bringe fro that oon cuntré to that other her marchaundise. That other marchaundise, that men hauntyn with fraude, and treccherie, and decept, with lesynges and fals othis, is cursed and dampnable. Espirituel marchaundise is properly symonie, that is, ententyf desire to beye thing espirituel, that is, thing that apperteyneth to the seintuarie of God, and to the cure of the soule. This desire, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfome it, al be it that his desir take noon effect, yit is it to him a dedly synne; and if he be ordrid, he is irregular. Certis, symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han bought for temporel catel the gifte that God had given by the holy gost to seint Petir and to tha postlis; and therfor understande, that bothe he that sellith and he that bieth thinges spirituales ben cleped symonials, be it by catel, be it by procurement, or by fleishly prayere of his frendes, either fleishly frendes or spirituel frendes, fleishly in tuo maneres, as by kynrede or other frendes. Sothely, if thay pray for him that is not worthy and able, if he take the benefice it is symonie; and if he be worthy and able, it is non. That other maner is, whan man, or woman, prayen for folk to avance hem only for wikkid fleishly affeccion that thay have unto the persone, and that is ful symonye. But certis, in service, for whiche men given thinges spirituales unto her servautes, it moste ben understande, that the service moste be honest, and ellis not, and eek that it be withoute bargaynyng, and that the persone be able. For, as saith seint Damase, alle the synnes of this world, at the reward of this synne, is a thing of nought, for it is the gretteste synne that may be after the synne of Lucifer and of Antecrist; for by this synne God forlesith the chirche and the soule, that he bought with his precious blood, by hem that geven chirches to hem that ben not digne, for thay putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Jhesu Crist, and destroyen his patrimoygne. By suche undigne prestis and curates han lewed men lasse reverence of the sacrament of holy chirche; and suche geveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten into the chirche the develes ogghne sone; thay sellen soules that lambes schulde kepe to the wolf that stranglith hem; and therefore schal thay never have part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of heven.

Now cometh hasardrie with his appertenance, as tables and rafles, of whiche cometh decept, fals othis, chidynges, and alle raveynes, blas-

<sup>31</sup> tuo. The Harl. Ms. reads in many maneres, which seems by the context to be wrong.

phemying, and reneying of God and hate of his neighebers, wast of goodes, mispending of tyme, and som tyme manslaughter. Certes, hasardours ne mowe not be withoute gret synne, whil thay haunte that craft. Of avarice cometh eek lesynges, thefte, and fals witnessse and fals othes. And ye schul undirstonde that these ben grette synnes, and expresse agains the comaundementz of God, as I have sayd. Fals witnessse is in word and cek in dede; as for to bireve thin neighebor his good name by thy fals witnessinge, or bireve him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnessse, whan thou for ire, or for meede, or for envie, berest fals wites, or accusist him, or excusist him by thy fals wites, or ellis excusist thyself falsly. Ware yow, questemongers and notaries. Certis, for fals witnessyng was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. The synne of thefte is eek expresse agayns Goddes hestis, and that in tuo maners, corporel and spirituel; corporel, as for to take thy neighebers catel agayns his wille, be it by force or by sleight; be it by mette or by mesure; by stelyng eek of fals enditements upon him; and in borwyng of thin neghebores catelle in entent never to paye, and in semblable thinges. Espirituel thefte is sacrilege, that is to sayn, hurtyng of holy thinges, or of thing sacred to Crist. Sacrilege is in tuo maneres; that oon is by reassoun of holy place, as chirches or chirchewales; for whiche every vileins synne that men doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege, or every violence in semblable place; that other maner is as tho that withdrawn falsly the rentes and rightes that longen to holy chirche; and generally, sacrilege is to reve holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

*Remedium contra avariciam.*

Now schul ye understande that the relevyng of avarice is misericorde and pité largely taken. And men might axen, why that misericord and pité is relevyng of avarice; certes, the avaricious man schewith no pité ne misericorde to the needeful man. For he delith him in the keepyng of his tresor, and nought in the rescowynge ne relevyng of his even cristen. And therefore speke I first of misericord. Thanne is misericord, as saith the philosopher, a vertu, by which the corrage of a man is stired by the myseise of him that is myseised. Upon which misericorde folwith pité, in parfomyng of charitable werkis of mercie, helping and comforting him that is misised. And certes, these moeven men to the misericord of Jhesu Crist, that gaf himself for oure gult, and suffred deth for misericord, and forgaf us oure original synne, and therby relessid us fro peyne of helle, and amensid the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and geveth grace wel to do, and at the laste the joye of heven. The spics of misericorde ben for to love, and for to give, and eek for to forgive and for to resesse, and for to have pité in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his even cristen, and eek chastize ther as neede is. Another maner of remedye agayns avarice, is resonable largesse; but sothely here bihovith the consideracioun of the grace of Jhesu Crist, and of the temporel goodes, and eek



of the goodes perdurable that Crist gaf us, and eek to have remembrance of the deth that he schal reseeyve, he noot not whanne; and eke he schal forgon al that he hath, save only that he hath dispendid in goode werkes.

But for als moche as some folk ben unresonable, men oughte to eschiewe foly-largesse, the whiche men clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool-large, he giveth nought his catel, but he lesche his catel. Sothely, what thing that he giveth for vaynglorie, as to mynstrals, and to folk for to bere his renoun in the world, he hath synne therof, and noon almes; certes, he lesith foule his goodes, that sekith with the gift of his good no thing but synne. He is like to an hors that sekith rather to drynke drovy watir, and trouble, than for to drinke watir of the welle that is cleer. And for as moche as thay give ther as thay schuld not give, to hem appendith thilke malisoun that Crist schal give at the day of doom to hem that schal be dampned.

#### *De gula.*

After avarice cometh glotonye, which is expresse eke agayns the comaundment of God. Glotonye is unresonable and desordeyned covetyse to ete and to drynke. This synne corrupted al this world, as is wel schewed in the synne of Adam and of Eva. Loke eek what saith seint Poul of glotonys: many, saith he, gon, of whiche I have ofte said to yow, and now I say it wepyng, that thay ben thenemes of the cros of Crist, of whiche thende is deth, and of whiche here wombe is here God and here glorie; in confusoun of hem that so savenen ertlyhe thinges. He that is usaunt to this synne of glotonie, he ne may no synne withstonde, he moste be in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes horde, ther he hideth him inne and resteth. This synne hath many spices. The firste is dronkenes, that is horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therefore whan man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is dedly synne. But shortly, whan that a man is not wont to strong drinke, and peradventure ne knowith not the strengthe of the drynk, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travayled, thurgh whiche he drynkith the more, and be sodely caught with drynke, it is no dedly synne, but venial. The secounde spice of glotonie is, whan the spirit of a man wexith al trouble for drunkenesse, and bireveth him his witte and his discressioun. The thridde spice of glotonys is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The ferthe is, whan thurgh the grete abundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body ben distemprid. The fift is, forgetfulnes by to moche drinking, for which a man somtyme forgetith by the morwe what he dide at eve, or on the night bifore.

In other maner ben distinct the spices of glotonye, after seint Gregory. The firste is, for to ete or drynke byfore tyme to ete. The secound is, whan man giveth him to delicate mete or drinke. The thridde is, whanne man takith to moche therof over mesure. The ferthe is, curiosite, with gret entent to make and apparayle his mete. The fift is, for to ete to gredely. These ben the fyve fyngres of the develes hand, by whiche he drawith folk to synne.

#### *Remedium contra gulam.*

Agayns glotonye the remedie is abstinence, as saith Galien; but that hold I nought meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Austyn wol that abstinence be don for vertu, and with pacience. Abstinence, he saith, is hitil worth, but if a man have good wille therto, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charité, and that men doon it for Goddes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of heven. The felawes of abstinence ben attemperance, that holdith the mene in alle thinges; eek schame, that eschiewith al dishonesté; suffisaunce, that seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes, ne doth no force of to outrageous apparaylling of mete; mesure also, that restreyneth by reson the dislave appetit of etyng; sobernes also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke; sparing also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at mete, wherfore som folk stonden of here owne wille to ete, because they wol ete at lasse leysir.

#### *De luxuria.*

After glotonye thanne cometh lecherie, for these two synnes ben so neih cosyng, that ofte tyme thay wol not departe. *Unde Paulus ad Ephes., nolite inebriari vino in quo est luxuria, etc.* God wot this synne is full displeasunt thing to God, for he sayde himself, Do no lecherie. And therfore he putte gret peyne agayn this synne. For in the olde law, if a womman thral were take in this synne, sche scholde be beten with staves to the deth; and if sche were a gentilwomman, sche schulde be slayn with stoons; and if sche were a bisschoppis daughter, sche schulde be brent by Goddis comaundement. Fortherover, for the synne of lecherie God dreinte al the world at the diluive, and after that he brent fyve citees with thonder layt, and sonk hem into helle.

Now let us thanne speke of thilke stynkyng synne of lecherie, that men clepen advoutry, that is of weddid folk, that is to sayn, if that oon of hem be weddid, or elles bothe. Seint Johan saith, that advouterers schul be in helle in watir brennyng of fuyr and of brimston; in fuyr for the lecherie, in brimston for the stynk of her ordure. Certis the brekyng of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was makid of God himself in Paradis, and confermed of Jhesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew; a man schall lete fader and mooder, and take him to his wif, and thay schul ben two in oon fleisch. This sacrament bitokeneth the knytyng togider of Crist and of holy chirche. And nat only that God forbad advotrie in dede, but eek he comaunded, that thou scholdest not covetyse thy neyhebers wif. In this heste, seith seint Austyn, is forboden al maner covetyse to do lecherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the Gospel, that who so seth a womman, to covetyse of his lust, he hath doon lechery with hir in his herte. Here may ye se, that nought only the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to do that synne. This cursed synne annoyeth grevously hem that it haunten; and first to here soule, for he obligith it to synne and to pyne of the deth that is perdurable; unto the body annoyeth it grevously

also, for it dreyeth him and wastith him, and schent him, and of his blood he makith sacrifice to the devel of helle; it wastith eek his catel and his substaunce. And certes, if that it be a foul thing a man to waste his catel on women, yit is it a fouler thing, whan that for such ordure women dispende upon men here catel and here substaunce. This synne, as saith the prophete, byreveth man and womman her good fame and al here honour, and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for therby wynneth he the moste pray of this world. And right as a marchaunt deliteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avauntage of, right so deliteth the feend in this ordure.

This is the other hond of the devel, with fyve fyngres, to cacche the poeple to his vilonye. The firste fynger is the foule lokyng of the foule womman and of the foule man, that sleth right as a basiliskoc sleth folk by the venym of his sight; for the covetyse of eyen folwith the covetyse of the herte. The secounde fynger is the vileynes touching in wikkid manere. And therfore saith Salomon, that who so touchith and handelith a womman, he farith lik him that handelith the scorpion, that styngith and sodeinly sleeth thurgh his envenemyng; or as who so touchith warm picche, it schent his fyngres. The thridde is foule wordes, that farith lik fuyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. The ferthe is the kysyng; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brennyng oven or of a forneys; and more fooles ben thay that kysen in vilonye, for that mouth is the mouth of helle; and namely these olde dotard foolcs holours, yit wol thay kisse, and flikkere, and besien himself, though thay may nought do.<sup>32</sup> Certis thay ben like to houndes; for an hound whan he cometh to a roser, or by other bussches, though he may nought pisse, yet wil he heve up his leg and make a countenance to pisse. And for that many man weneth he may not synne for no licourousnes that he doth with his wif, certis that oppinioun is fals; God wot a man may sle himself with his owne knyf, and make himself dronke of his oughe tonne. Certis, be it wif, or child, or eny worldly thing, that he loveth biforn God, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. Man schulde love his wyf by discreccioun, patiently and attemperly, and thanne is sche as it were his suster. The fyfte fynger of the develes hond, is the styngyng dede of lecherie. Certes the fyve fyngres of glotonye the devel put in the wombe of a man; and his fyve fyngres of lechery bygripeth him by the reynes, for to throwe him into the fourneys of helle, there as they schuln have the fuyr and the wormes that ever schal lasten, and wepyng and wayling, and scharp hunger and thurst, and grislines of develes, that schul al to-tere hem withoute respit and withouten ende. Of lecherie, as I sayde, sounnren divers spices: as fornicacioun, that is bitwen man and womman that ben nought married, and this is dedly synne, and against nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature, is agayns nature. Par fay

<sup>32</sup> *kisse . . . nought do.* The Harl. Ms., supported by the Lansd. Ms., reads *kisse, though thay may nought do and smaler hem.* The reading in the text, which is that of Tyrwhitt, seems to me better.

the resoun of a man tellith him wel that it is dedly synne, for als moche as God forbad lecherie. And seint Poule gevith hem that regne that is due to no wight but hem that doon synne dedly. Another synne of lechery is, for to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhode; for he that so doth, certes he casteth a mayden out of the heighest degre that is in the present lif, and birevith hir thilke precious fruyt that the book clepith the hundrid fruyt,—I can geve it noon other name in Englisch, but in Latyn it is *i-clepid centesimus fructus (secundum Hieronymum contra Jovinianum)*. Certes he that so doth, is cause of many harmes and vilenyes, mo than eny man can rekene; right as he som tyme is cause of alle the damages that bestis doon in the feeld, that brekith the hegge of the closure, thurgh which he destroyeth that may not be restored; for certes no more may maydenhode be restored, than an arm, that is smyten fro the body, retourne agayn to waxe; sche may have mercy, this wot I wel, if sche have wille to do penitence, but never schal it be but that sche nas corrupt. And al be it so that I have spoke somwhat of advoutré, yit is it good to speke of mo perils that longen to advoutré, for to eschiewe that foule synne. Advoutrie, in Latyn, is for to sayn, approaching of other mannes bed, thourgh the which tho that whilom were oon fleisch, abandoned here bodyes to other persones. Of this synne, as saith the wise man, many harmes cometh thereof; first, brekyng of faith; and certes faith is the keye of cristendom, and whan that faith is broke and lorn, sothely cristendom is lorn, and stont veyn and withouten fruyt. This synne is eek a theef, for thefte is generally to speke to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certis, this is the foulest thefte that may be, whan a womman stelith hir body from hire housbonde, and geveth it to hire holour to defoule hire, and stelith hir soule fro Crist, and geveth it to the devel. This is a fouler thefte than for to breke a chireche and stele chalises, for these advouterers breke the temple of God spirituilly, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is the body and the soule; for which Jhesus Crist schal destroyen hem, as saith seint Poule. Sothely of this thefte doubtyd gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wyf prayde him of vilonye, whan he saide, "Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my ward al that he hath in this world, ne no thing of his power is oute of my power, but only ye that ben his wyf; and how schuld I do thanne this wikkidnes, and synne so horribly agayns God, and my Lord? God it forbede!" Alas! al to litel is such trouthe now i-founde. The thridde harm is the filthe, thurgh which thay breken the comaundement of God, and defoule the auctour of here matrimonye, that is Crist. For certis, in so moche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so moche is it the gretter synne for to breke it; for God makid mariage in Paradis in thestat of innocence, to multiple mankynde to the service of God, and therfore is the brekyng therof the more grevous, of which brekyng cometh fals heires ofte tymes, that wrongfully occupien mennes heritage; and therfore wolde Crist putte hem out of the regne of heven, that is heritage to good



folk. Of this breking cometh eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or synnen with her kynrede; and namely these harlottis, that haunten bordels of these foule women, that mowe be likened to a comune gonge, whereas men purgen her entrayles of her ordure. What say we eke of putours, that lyven by the orrible synne of putrie, and constryne wymmen, ye, som tyme his oughne wyf or his child, as don these baudes, to yelde hem a certeyn rente of here bodily putrie? certes, these ben cursede synnes. Understonde eek that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comaundements bitwixe manslaughter and thefte, for it is the grettest thefte that may be, for it is thefte of body and soule, and it is lik to homicidie, for it kerveth a-tuo hem that first were makid oon fleisch. And therefore by the olde lawe of God thay scholde be slayn, but natheles, by the lawe of Jhesu Crist, that is the lawe of pité, when he sayde to the woman that was founde in advoutrie, and schulde have ben slayn with stoones aftir the wille of the Jewes, as was her law, "Go," quod Jhesu Crist, "and wilne no more to do synne;" sothely, the vengeance of avoutrye is awardid to the peyne of helle, but if he be destourbed by penitence. Yit ben ther mo spes of this cursed synne, as when that oon of hem is religious, or ellis bothe, or for folk that ben entred into ordre, as sub-dekin, or dekin, or prest, or hospitalers; and ever the higher that he be in ordre, the gretter is the synne. The thinges that gretly aggregith her synne, is the brekyng of here avow of chastité, when thay receyved the ordre; and fortherover is soth, that holy ordre is chefe of alle the tresor of God, and is a special signe and mark of chastité, to schewe that thay ben joyned to chastité, which that is the moste precious lif that is. And eek these ordred folk ben specially tytled to God, and of the special meyné of God; of whiche when thay don dedly synne, thay ben the special traytours of God and of his poeple, for thay lyven of the poeple to praye for the poeple, and whil thay ben suche traytours here prayer avayleth not to the poeple. Prestis ben aungels, as by the dignité of here misterie; but for soth seint Poul saith, that Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light. Sothely, the prest that haunth dedly synne, he may be likened to the aungel of derknes, transformed into the aungel of light; and he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungel of derknes. Suche prestes ben the sones of Helie, as schewith in the book of Kinges, that thay were the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. Belial is to say, withoute juge, and so faren thay; thay thynke hem fre, and han no juge, no more than hath a fre bole, that takith which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren thay by women; for right as a fre bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked prest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parish, or for al a conyray. These prestes, as saith the book, ne conne not ministere the mistery of presthode to the poeple, ne God ne knowe thay not; thay holde hem nought apayed, as saith the book, of soden fleisch that was to hem offred, but thay tooke by force the fleisch that is raw. Certes, so these schrewes holde hem not appayed with rosted fleisch and sode fleisch, with whiche the poeple feeden hem

in gret reverence, but thay wil have raw fleisch of folkes wyves and here doughtres. And certes, these women that consenten to here harlotrie, don gret wrong to Crist and to holy chirche, and to alle halwes, and to alle soules, for thay bireven alle these hem that schulde worschipe Crist and holy chirche and praye for cristen soules. And therefore han suche prestis, and here lemmans eeke that consenten to here lecherie, the malisoun of al the court cristian, til thay come to amendement. The thridde spice of advoutrie is som tyme bitwix a man and his wif, and that is, when thay take noon reward in her assembling but only to the fleischly delit, as seith seint Jerom, and ne rekke of no thing but that thay be assemblid bycause that they ben maried; al is good y-nough as thinkith hem. But in suche folk hath the devel power, as saith the aungel Raphael to Thoby, for in here assembling, thay putten Jhesu Crist out of her herte, and given himself to alle ordure. The fertehe spice is the assemblé of hem that ben of here kynrede, or of hem that ben of oon affinité, or elles with hem with whiche here fadres or here kynrede han deded in the synne of lecherie; this synne makith hem like houndes, that taken noon heede of kynrede. And certes, parental is in tuo maneres, eyther gostly or fleischly. Gostly, as for to dele with her gossib; for right so as he that engendrieth a child, is his fleischly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel; for which a woman may in no laasse synne assemble with hir gossib, than with hire oughne fleischly fader or brother. The fifté spice is thilke abhominable synne, of which that no man unnethé oughte to speke ne write, natheles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt. But though that holy wryt speke of horrible synne, certes holy wryt may not be defouled, no more than the sonne that schyneth on a dongehul.<sup>33</sup> Another synne apperteneth to lechery, that cometh in sleping, and this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydenes, and eek to hem that ben corrupte; and this synne men clepen pollucioun, that cometh in foure maners; som tyme it cometh of languisschyng of the body, for the humours ben to ranke and to abundaunt in the body of man; som tyme of infirmité, for febleness of the vertu renteyf, as phisik maketh mencion; and som tyme for surfete of mete and drynke; som tyme of vileins thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes mynde when he gothe to slepe, which may not be withouten synne; for which man must kepe him wisely, or elles may men synne grevously.

*Remedium contra luxuriam.*

Now cometh the remedye agens lechery, and that is generally chastité of wikkedhede and continence that restreyneth alle the disordeigne moevynges that comen of fleischly talentes; and ever the gretter meryt schal he han that most restreyneth eschaufynges of ordure of this synne; and this is in tuo maneres; that is to sayn, chastité of mariage, and chastité of widewhede. Now schalt thou understonde, that matrimoigne is leful assemblinge of man and womman, tha

<sup>33</sup> a dongehul. The Lansd. Ms. reads *on a mezen*, or *Iyrwhitt, on the myzene*.

reseyven by vertu of this sacrament the boud thurgh which thay may not be departid in al here lif, that is to say, while thay lyven bothe. This, as saith the boke, is a ful gret sacrament: God makid it (as I have said) in Paradis, and wolde himself be born in mariage; and for to halven mariage he was at the weddyng wheras he turnede watir into wyn, which was the firste miracle that he wrought in erthe biforn his disciples. The trewe effect of mariage elensith fornicacioun, and replenischith holy chirche of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage, and it chaungith dedly synne into venyal synne bituixe hem that ben weddid, and maketh the hertes al one, as wel as the bodies. This is verray mariage that was first blessed by God, er that the synne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right poynt in Paradis; and it was ordeyned, that oon man schulde have but oon womman, and oon womman but oon man, as saith seint Augustyn, by many resouns. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche; another is, for a man is heed of a womman (algate by ordinaunce it schulde be so); for if a womman had mo men than oon, than schulde sche have mo hedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn God; and eek a womman myghte nought please many folk al at oones; and also ther ne schulde never be pees and rest among hem, for everich wolde aske his oughne thing. And fortherover, no man schulde knowe his oughne engendrure, ne who schulde have his heritage, and the womman scholde be the lasse loved fro the tyme that sche were joyned to many men.

Now cometh how that a man schulde bere him with his wif, and namely in tuo things, that is to sayn, in sufferance and in reverence, and that schewed Crist when he made first womman. For he ne made hire not of the heed of Adam, for sche schulde not to gret lordschipe have; for ther as the womman hath the maistry, sche makith to moche disaray; ther nedith noon ensample of this, the experience that we have day by day oughte suffice. Also certes, God ne made nought womman of the foot of Adam, for sche ne scholde nought be holden to lowe, for sche can not paciently suffre. But God made womman of the ribbe of Adam, for womman schulde be felawe unto man. Man schulde bere him to his wif in faith, in trouthe, and in love; as saith seint Poule, that a man schulde love his wif, as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyed for it; so schulde a man for his wif, if it were neede.

Now how that a womman schulde be subject to hir housbonde, that tellith seint Peter, iij<sup>o</sup> c<sup>o</sup>; first in obedience. And eek, as saith the decret, a womman that is a wif, as longe as sche is a wif, sche hath noon auctorite to swere ne to bere witness, without leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate he schulde be so by resoun. Sche schulde eek serve him in al honeste, and ben attempte of hir array. I wot wel that thay schulde sette here entent to please her housbondes, but nought by here queyntise of array. Seint Jerom saith, that wyves that ben arrayed in silk and in purple, ne mowe nought clothe hem in Jhesu Crist. Loke what saith saint Johan eek in the same matier. Seint Gregori saith

eek, that no wight sekith precious clothing ne array, but only for veynglorie to ben honoured the more biforn the poeple. It is a gret folly, a womman to have fair array out-ward, and hirsilf to ben foul in-ward. A wif schulde eek be mesurable in lokyng, and in beryng, and in laughyng, and discrete in alle hir wordes and hir dedes, and above alle worldly thynges sche schulde love hir housbonde with al hire herte, and to him to be trewe of hir body; so scholde an housbonde eeke ben trewe to his wif; for sith that al the body is the housbondes, so schulde here herte ben, or elles ther is bitwixe hem tuo, as in that, no parfyt mariage. Thanne schal men understonde, that for thre thynges a man and his wif mowe fleischly assemble. The firste is, in entent of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certis that is the cause fynal of matrimoyne. The secounde cause is, to yelden everych of hem his dette unto other of his body; for neyther of hem hath power of his oughne body. The thridde is, for to eschiewe lecherie and vilenye. The ferthe for sothe is dedly synne. As to the firste, it is meritory; the secounde also, for, as saith the decret, that sche hath merit of chastite, that yeldith to hir housbonde the dette of hir body, ye though it be agayn hir likyng and the lust of hir hert. The thridde maner is venial synne; and trewly, scarsly may eny of these be withoute venial synne, for the corrupcioun and for the delit. The ferthe maner is for to uderstonde, as if thay assemble only for amorous love, and for noon of the forsayde causes, but for to accomplishe thilke brennyng delyt, thay rekke never how ofte, sothely it is dedly synne; and yit, with sorwe, some folk wole more peyne hem for to doon, than to her appetit suffiseth.

The secounde maner of chastite is to ben a clene widewe, and to eschiewe the embrasynges of men, and desiren the embrasynges of Jhesu Crist. These ben tho that han ben wyves, and han forgon here housbondes, and eek wommen that han doon lecherie, and be relieved by penitence. And certis, if that a wif couthe kepe hir al chast, by licence of hir housbonde, so that sche geve non occasioun that he agilt, it were to hir a gret merit. These maner wymmen, that observen chastite, moste be clene in herte as wel as in body, and in thought, and mesurable in clothing and in countenance, abstinent in etyng and drynkyng, in speche and in dede, and thanne is sche the vessel or the boyst of the blessed Magdaleyne, that fulfillith holy chirche ful of good odour. The thridde maner of chastite is virginite, and it bihoveth that sche be holy in herte, and clene of body, and thanne is sche spouse of Jhesu Crist, and sche is the lif of aungels; sche is the preysyng of this world, and she is as these martires in egalite; sche hath in hir that tongue may nought telle. Virginite bar oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and virgine was himselve.

Another remedy agayns lecherie is specially to withdrawe suche thynges as given occasioun to thilke vilonye; as is ease, and etyng, and drynkyng; for certis, whan the pot boyllith strongly, the beste remedye is to withdrawe the fuyr. Slepyn eek longe in gret quiete is also a gret norice unto lecherie.

Another remedye agayns lecherie is, that a



man or a womman eschieve the companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted; for al be it so that the dede be withstonde, yit is ther gret temptacioun. Sothely a whit wal, although it brenne not fully by stikyng of a candel, yet is the wal blak of the leyte. Ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his oughe perfeccioun, but he be strengre than Sampson, or holiere than Davyd, or wiser than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared yow the seven dedly synnes as I can, and some of here braunches, and here remedies, sothely, if I couthe, I wolde telle yow the ten comaundementes, but so heigh a doctrine I leve to divines. But natheles, I hope to God thay ben touchid in this lital tretys everich of hem alle.

Now for as moche as the secoude part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the first chapitre, I say, seint Austyn saith, synne is every word and every dede, and al that men covetyen agayn the lawe of Jhesu Crist; and this is for to synne, in herte, in mouthe, and in dede, by thy fyve wittis, that ben sight, heeryng, smellyng, tasyng, or savoryng, or feylyng. Now it is good to understanden the circumstaunces that aggreggen moche to every synne. Thou schalt considere what thou art that dost the synne, whether that thou be mal or femal, old other yong, gentil or thral, fre or servaunt, hool or seek, weddid or sengle, ordrid or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer; if sche be of thy kyn, bodily or gostly, or noon; if eny of thy kynrede have synned with hire or noon, and many mo thinges.

That other circumstaunce is, whether it be don in fornicacioun or in advoutry, or incest or noon, or mayden or noon, in maner of homicide or non, horrible grete synne or smale, and how long thou hast continued in synne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place wher thou hast don synne, whether in other mennes houses, or in thin owne, in feld, or in chirche, or in chirchehave, in chirche dedicate, or noon. For if the chirche were halowed, and man or womman spillid his kynde within that place, by way of synne or by wykked temptacioun, it is enterdited til it be reconciled by the bischop; and the prest scholde be enterdyt that dede such a vilonye to terme of al his lyf, and scholde no more synge no masse; and if he dede, he schulde do dedly synne, at every tyme that he song masse. The ferthe circumstaunce is, by which mediators, as by messagers, or for entysement, or for consentement, to bere companye with felawship; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wol go to the devel of helle. For thay that eggyn or consentyn to the synne, ben parteneres of the synne, and of the dampnacioun of the synnere. The fyfte circumstaunce is, how many tymes that he hath synned, if it be in his mynde, and how ofte he hath falle. For he that ofte fallith in synne, despiseth the mercy of God, and encreseth his synne, and is unkynde to Crist, and he waxith the more feble to withstonde synne, and synneth the more lightly, and the latter arrisith, and is the more eschewe<sup>34</sup> to schrive him, and namely to him that hath ben his con-

fessor. For whiche that folk, whan thay falle agayn to here olde folies, eyther thay forletin her confessours al utterly, or ellis thay departen here schrifte in divers places; but sothely such departed schrifte hath no mercy of God of his synnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth, as by which temptacioun; and if himself procure thilke temptacioun, or by exciting of other folk; or if he synne with a womman by force or by hir owne assent; or if the womman maugré hir heed hath ben enforced or noon, this schal sche telle, and whether it were for covetytise or for poverté, and if it was hire procuryng or noon, and alle such maner harneys. The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what maner he hath don his synne, or how that sche hath suffred that folk han doon to hire. The same schal the man telle pleyntly, with alle the circumstaunces, and whether he have synned with commune bordeal womman or noon, or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon, in fastyng tyme or noon, or biforn his schrifte, or after his latter schrifte, and hath peradventure broken therby his penaunce joyoned therfor, by whos help or by whos conseil, by sorcery or by other crafte, al moste be told. Alle these thinges, after thay be grete or smale, engreggen the consciens of a man. And eek the prest that is the juggle, may the better ben avysed of his jugement in givyng of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. For understonde wel, that after the tyme that a man hath defouled his baptisme by synne, if he wol come to savacioun, ther is noon other way but penitence, and schrifte of mouthe, and by satisfacioun; and namely by tho tuo, if ther be a confessor to which he may schryve him, and the thridde if he have lif to performe it.

Thanne schal men loke it and considre, that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condiciouns. First, it moste ben in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as sayde the king Ezechiel to God, I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lif in bitternes of myn hert. This condicioun of bitternes hath fyve signes; the first is, that confessioun moste be schamefast, not for to covere ne hyde his synne, but for he hath aguldith his God and defouled his soule. And herof saith seint Augustyn, the herte tremblith for schame of his synne, and for he hath gret schamefastnes he is digne to have gret mercy of God. Such was the confessioun of the publican, that wolde nought heve up his eyghen to heven, for he had offendid God of heven; for which schamefastnes he had anon the mercy of God. And therefore seith seint Augustyn, that such schamefast folk ben next forgivenes of remissioun. The secoude signe is humilité of confessioun; of which saith seint Petre, humblith yow under the might of God; the hond of God is myghty in confessioun, for therby God forgiveth the thy synnes, for he alone hath the power. And this humilité schal ben in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilité to God in his herte, right so schulde he humble his body out-ward to the prest, that sittith in Goddes place. For which in no manere, sith that Crist is soverayn, and the prest is his mene and mediator betwix Crist and

<sup>34</sup> *eschewe*. Tyrwhitt reads *the more slow*.

the synnere, and the synner is the lasse as by way of resoun, thanne schulde nought the confessor sitte as lowe as the synnere, but the synnere schulde knele biforn him or at his feet, but if maladye disturbid it; for he schal take no keep who sitteth there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and cometh for to axe him of mercy and to maken his accord, and settith him down anon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy so soone for to have mercy ne remission. The thridde signe is, that thy schrifte schulde be ful of teeris, if men may wepe; and if he may not wepe with his bodily eyen, let him wepe with his herte. Such was the confessionioun of seint Peter; for after that he hadde forsake Jhesu Crist, he wente out and wepte ful bitterly. The ferthe signe is, that he lette nought for schame to schryve him and to schewen his confessioun. Such was the confessionioun of Magdaleyn, that spared for no schame of hem that were at the feste to go to oure Lord Jhesu Crist and byknowe to him hire synne. The fiftte signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to resceyve the penaunce that him is enjoyned. For certis Jhesu Crist for the gultes of oon man was obedient to his deth.

The other condicioun of verra confessionioun is, that it hastily be doon; for certes, if a man had a dedly wounde, ever the lenger that he tariet to warisch himself, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deth, and eek the wounde wolde be the worse to hele. And right so fareth synne, that long tyme is in a man unshewed. Certes a man oughte soone schewe his synne for many causes; as for drede of deth, that cometh sodeinly, and not certeyn what tyme it schal come, or ben in what place; and eek the drecchyng of oon synne draweth another; and eek the lenger he tarieth, the ferther is he from Crist. And if he abyde unto his laste day, skarsly may he schrive him or remembre him of his synnes, or repente for the grevous malady of his deth. And for as moche as he hath not in his lif herkened Jhesu Crist, when he hath spoken, he schal crien to Jhesu Crist at his laste day, and searsly wol he herken him. And understonde that this condicioun moste have foure thynges. First that thy schrifte moste ben purveyed byforn, and avysed, for wikked haste doth no profyt; and that a man can schryve him of his synnes, be it of pride or of envye, and so forth alle the spices and the circumstaunces; and that he have comprehendid in his mynde the nombre and the gretnes of his synne, and how longe he hath lyen in synne; and eek that he be contrit of his synnes, and in stedfast purpos (by the grace of God) never eft to falle in synne; and eek that he drede and countreynte himself, and that he flece the occasiouns of synne, to whiche he is enclyned. Also that thou schalt schrive the of alle thin synnes to oon man, and nat a parcel to oon man, and a parcel to another man; that is, understonde, in entent to parte thy confessioun as for schame or drede, for it nys but strangelyng of thy soule. For certes, Jhesu Crist is enterly al good, in him is noon imperfeccioun, and therefore outhere he forgiveth al parfityly, or elles never a del. I say nought, if thou be as-

signed to thy penitencere for certein synne, that thou art bounde to schewe him al the remenaunt of thy synnes, of whiche thou hast ben schryven of thy curate, but if it like the of thin humilité; this is no departyng of schrifte. Ne I ne say not, there as I speke of divisioun of confessioun, that if thou have licence to schryve the to a discret and to an honest prest, wher the likith, and eek by the licence of thy curate, that thou ne maist wel schrive the to him of alle thyn synnes; but let no synne be byhinde untold as fer as thou hast remembrance. And when thou schalt be schrive of thi curate, telle him eeke al thy synne that thou hast doon sith thou were last i-schryvne. This is no wikkid entent of divisioun of schrifte.

Also thy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condiciouns. First, that thou schrive the by thy fre wille, nought constreynd, ne for schame of folk, ne for maladye, or such thing; for it is resoun, that he that trespassith with his fre wille, that by his fre wille he confesse his trespass; and that noon other man schal telle his synne but himself; ne he schal not nayte or denye his synne, ne wraththe him with the prest for his amonestyng to lete synne. The secunde condicioun is, that thy schrifte be lawful, that is to sayn, that thou that schrivest the, and eek the prest that herith thy confessioun, ben verrayly in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man be nought despaired of the mercy of Jhesu Crist, as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accuse himself of his owne trespass and not another; but he schal blame and wite himself of his oughe malice of his synne, and noon other. But natheless, if that another man be occasioun or ellis enticer of his synne, or that the estate of a persone be such thurgh which his synne aggreggith, or elles that he may not playnly schryve hym but he telle the person with which he hath synned, thanne may he telle it, so that his entent be nought to bakbyte the persone, but oonly to declare his confessioun.

Thow schalt nought eke make no lesyng in thy confessioun for humilité, peradventure to sayn that thou hast don synnes of whiche thou were never gilty; as seint Augustyn saith, if thou bycause of humilité makest lesynges on thiself, though thou were not in synne biforn, yit art thou thanne in synne thurgh thy lesynges. Thou most also schewe thy synne by thyn oughe proper mouth, but thou woxe dombe, and not by no lettre; for thou that hast don the synne, thou schalt have the schame of the confessioun. Thou schalt nought peynte thy confessioun, by faire subtil wordes, to cover the more thy synne; for thanne biggist thou thiself, and not the prest; thou most telle it platly, be it never so foul ne so horrible. Thou schalt eek schrive the to a prest that is discrete to counsaile the; and thou schalt nought schryve the for veineglorie, ne for ypoocrisie, ne for no cause but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the hele of thy soul. Thou schalt not eek renne to the prest sodeinly, to telle him lightly thy synne, as who tellith a tale or a jape, but avysly and with gret devocioun; and generally schrive the ofte; if thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun. And though thou schryve the offer than oones of synne of which thou hast ben schreven, it is the more merite;



and, as saith seint Augustyn, thou schalt have the more lightly relesyng and grace of God, bothe of synne and of payne. And certes oones a yer atte lest way it is laweful to be houselyd, for sothely oones a yer alle thinges in the erthe renovelon.

*De tertiã parte penitentiã.*

Now have I told of verray confessioun, that is the secounde partye of penitence. The thridde partye of penitence is satisfacioun, and that stonðith generally in almesdede and bodily peyne. Now ben ther thre maner of almesdede; contricioun of herte, where a man offereth himself to God; the secounde is, to have pité of the defaute of his neighebor; the thridde is, in geving of good counsel and comfort, gostly and bodily, where men han neede, and namely in sustenance of mennes foode. And take keep that a man hath neede of these thinges generally, he hath neede of foode, of clothing, and of herberwe, he hath neede of charitable counsel and visityng in prison and malady, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thou may not visite the needeful with thy persone, visite by thy message and by thy giftes. These ben general almesses or werkes of charité, of hem that han temporal riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of these werkes schalt thou hieren at the day of doom.

This almes schalt thou doon of thin oughne proprur thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou maist; but natheles, if thou maist not do it prively, thou schalt nought forbere to do almes, though men se it, so that it be nought don for thank of the world, but oonly for thonk of Jhesu Crist. For, as witnessith seint Mathewe, c<sup>o</sup> v<sup>to</sup>, a cité may not ben hid that is set on a moontayn, ne men light not a lanterne and put it under a buisshel, but men sette it on a candel-stikke, to lighte the men in the hous; right so schal youre light lighten biforn men, that they may se youre goode werkes, and glorifien youre Fader that is in heven.

Now as to speke of bodily peyne, it is in prayere, in wakinges, in fastynges, in vertuos techinges. Of orisouns ye schul understonde, that orisouns or prayeres, is for to seyn, a pitous wil of herte, that redressith it in God, and expressith it by word out-ward, to remove harmes, and to have thinges spirituel and durable, and som tyme temporel thinges. Of whiche orisouns, certes in the orisoun of the Pater-noster hath oure Lord Jhesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certis it is privileged of thre thinges in his dignité, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer; for Jhesu Crist himself maketh it; and it is schort, for it schulde be coud the more lightly, and for to withhold it the more esily in herte, and helpe himselfe the oftere with this orisoun, and for a man schulde be the lasse wery to say it, and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it, it is so schort and so easy; and for it comprehendith in itself alle goode prayeres. The expositioun of this holy praier, that is so excellent and so digne, I bitake to these maystres of theology, save thus moche wol I sayn, when thou prayest that God schulde forgive the thy gultes as thou forgivest hem that they gulten to the, be ful wel ware that thou be not out of charité. This

holy orisoun amenisith eek venial synne, and therefore it appendith specially to penitence.

This praier moste be trewely sayd, and in verray faith, and that men pray to God ordinatly, discretly, and devoutly; and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subject to the wille of God. This orisoun moste eek be sayd with greet humblesse and ful pure, and honestly, and nought to the annoyaunce of eny man or womman. It most eek be continued with the werkis of charité. It avaylyth agayns the vices of the soule; for, as seith seint Jerom, by fastyng ben saved the vices of fleissch, and by prayere the vices of the soule.

After this thou schalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakyng. For Jhesu Crist saith, wakith and prayeth, that ye ne entre not into temptacioun. Ye schul understonde also, that fastyng stont in thre thinges, in forbering of bodily mete and drink, and in forberyng of worldly jolité, and in forbering of worldly synne; this is to sayn, that a man schal kepe him fro dedly synne in al that he may.

And thou schalt understonde eek, that God ordeyned fastyng, and to fastyng appurteynen foure thinges: largesse to pover folk; gladnes of hert spirituel; not to ben angry ne annoyed ne grucche for he fastith; and also resonable hour for to ete by mesure, that is to sayn, a man schulde not ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his mele, for he fastith.

Thanne schal thou understonde, that bodily peyne stant in discipline, or teching, by word, or by wrytyng, or by ensample. Also in weryng of heires or of stamyn or of haberjeons on her naked fleisch for Cristes sake, and suche maner penaunce; but ware the wel that such maner penaunce of thyn fleissch make nought thin herte bitter or angry, or annoyed of thiself; for better is to cast away thin hayre than for to caste away the swetes of oure Lord Jhesu Crist. And therefore seith seint Poule, clothe yow, as thay that ben chosen of God in herte, of misericorde. debonairéte, sufferance, and such maner of clothing, of the which Jhesu Crist is more appayed than of haieres or of hauberkis.<sup>35</sup>

Than is discipline eek in knocking on the brest, in scourgyng with yerdes, in knelynges, in tribulaciouns, in suffring paciently wronges that ben doon to him and eek in pacient sufferance of maledies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wif, or of child, or of othir frendes.

Thanne schalt thou understonde whiche thinges destourben penaunce, and this is in foure thinges; that is drede, schame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacioun. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce, ther agayns is remedye for to thinke that bodily penaunce is but schort and litel at the regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lastith withouten ende.

Now agains the schame that a man hath to schryve him, and namely these ypocrites, that wolde be holde so parfyt, that thay have no neede to schryve hem; agayns that schame schulde a man thinke, that by way of resoun he that hath not ben aschamed to do foule thinges, certis him oughte not be aschamed to doon faire thinges and goode thinges, and that is confessioun. A

<sup>35</sup> hauberkis. Tyrwhitt reads haberjeons.

man scholde eek thinke, that God seeth and knoweth alle thy thoughtes and thy werkes; to him may no thing be hyd ne covered. Men schulde eek remembre hem of the schame that is to come at the day of doom, to hem that ben nought penitent and schriven in this present lif; for alle the creatures in heven, and in erthe, and 'n helle, schuln seen apertly al that he lydith in this world.

Now for to speke of hem that ben so negligent and slowe to schryve hem; that stant in tuo maneres. That oon is, that he hopith for to lyve longe, and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt, and thanne he wol schryve him; and, as he saith, he may, as him semith, tymely y-nough come to schrifte; another is, the surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agains the firste vice, he schal thinke that oure lif is in no sikernesse, and eek that al the riches in this world ben in adventure, and passen as a shadowe on the wal; and, as saith seint Gregory, that it apperteyneth to the grete rightwises of God, that never schal the peyne stynte of hem, that never wolde withdrawe hem fro synne her thanks, but ay continue in synne; for thilke perpetual wille to doon synne schul they have perpetual peyne.

Wanhope is in tuo maneres. The firste wanhope is, in the mercy of Crist; that other is, that they thinke thay mighte wrought longe persever in goodnesse. The firste wanhope cometh of that he demyth that he synned so highly and so ofte, and so longe layn in synne, that he schal not be saved. Certis agens that cursed wanhope schulde he thenke, that the passioun of Jhesu Crist is more strong for to unbynde, than synne is strong for to bynde. Agains the secounde wanhope he schal thinke, that als ofte as he fallith, he may arise agayn by penitence; and though he never so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alway redy to resceyve him to mercy. Agains the wanhope that he thinkith he schulde not longe persevere in goodnesse, he schal thinke that the febles of the devel may no thing doon, but men wol suffre him; and eek he schal have strengthe of the help of God, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list.

Thanne schal men understonde, what is the fruyt of penaunce; and after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endeles blisse of heven, ther joye hath no contrarieté of wo ne of penaunce ne grevance; ther alle harmes ben passed of this present lif; ther as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; there as is the blisful compaignye, that rejoycen hem evermo everich of others joye; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derke, is more clere than the sonne; ther as the body of man that whilom was seek and frel, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool, that ther may no thing empire it; ther nys neyther hunger, ne thirst, ne colde, but every soule replenished with the sight of the

parfyt knowyng of God. This blisful regne may men purchace by poverte espirituel, and the glorie by lowenes, the plenté of joye by hunger and thirst, and reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortificacioun of synne; to which life he us bringe, that bought us with his precious blood. Amen.

*Preces de Chauceres.*<sup>36</sup>

Now pray I to yow alle that heren this litel tretis or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that likes hem, that therof thay thanke oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes; and if ther be eny thing that displeith hem, I pray hem that thay arette it to the defaute of myn unconnyng, and not to my wille, that wolde fayn have sayd better if I hadde connyng; for the book saith, al that is writen for oure doctrine is writen. Wherefore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that God have mercy on me and forgeve me my giltes, and nameliche my translaciouns and of endityng in worldly vanitees, whiche I revoke in my retracciouns, as is the book of Troyles, the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day and of the Parliamt of briddes, the Tales of Caunturbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if thay were in my mynde or remembrance, and many a song and many a leecherous lay, of the whiche Crist for his grete mercy forgive me the synnes. But of the translacioun of Boce de consolacioun, and other bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyves of seints, and *Omelies*, and moralitees, and devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his moder, and alle the seintes in heven, bisekyng hem that thay fro hennysforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to biwayle my gultes, and to studien to the savacioun of my soule, and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun, and satisfacioun, to don in this present lif, thurgh the benigne grace of him, that is king of kynges and prest of alle prestis, that bought us with his precious blood of his hert, so that I moote be oon of hem at the day of doom that schal be saved; *qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*

<sup>36</sup> *Preces de Chauceres.* I have printed the celebrated prayer which concludes the Canterbury Tales, exactly as it stands in the Harleian Manuscript. In some manuscripts it is given as though it were the conclusion of the tale or discourse of the Parson, but in others, as here, it is distinctly given to Chaucer himself. It varies much in the different manuscripts, and there are many circumstances about it which it seems impossible to explain satisfactorily. Tyrwhitt attempts to get over a part of the difficulty by supposing that the prayer was really the conclusion of the Parson's Tale, and that the middle portion, *Wherefore I beseke yow . . . the seintes in heven*, including the list of Chaucer's works, was added subsequently by a scribe who chose to put the prayer into Chaucer's own mouth, and wished to make the poet apologise for the looseness of some of his writings.





# GLOSSARY.

*A*, interj. ahl  
*Abaischi*, part. pa. (A.N.), abashed, ashamed.  
*Abate*, v. (A.N.), to beat down.  
*Abegge*, *abeje*, *abie*, v. (A.S.), to suffer for.  
*Abet*, n. (A.S.), help.  
*Abyde*, v. (A.S.), to stay; *abyden*, part. pa.; *abit*, abideth.  
*Able*, adj. (A.N.), fit, capable.  
*Abought*, part. pa. of *abegge*.  
*Abouten*, prep. (A.S.), about.  
*Abrayde*, v. (A.S.), to awake; to start. See *Braide*.  
*Abridge*, v. (A.N.) to shorten, to abridge.  
*Abroche*, v. (A.N.) to tap, to set abroach.  
*Abrououn*, n. (A.N.), abuse, impropriety.  
*Accidie*, n. (A.N., from *ακκidia*, Gr.), negligence; arising from discontent, melancholy, &c.  
*Acote*, n. (A.N.), purchase.  
*Achtour*, n. (A.N.), a purchaser; a caterer.  
*Acomberd*, part. pa. (A.N.), encumbered.  
*Acord*, n. (A.N.), agreement; to agree.  
*Adaue*, v. (A.S.), to awake.  
*Ado*, v. (A.S.), to do. To have *ado*, to have to do.  
*Adoun*, adv. (A.S.), downward, below.  
*Adrad*, part. pa. of *adrede*, v. (A.S.), afraid.  
*Adventayle*, see *Aventayle*.  
*Advertence*, n. (A.N.), attention.  
*Advocacs*, n. pl. (A.N.), lawyers, advocates.  
*Afered*, *aferde*, part. pa. (A.S.), afraid, frightened.  
*Affermed*, part. pa. (A.N.), confirmed.  
*Affye*, v. (A.N.), to trust.  
*Affraye*, v. (A.N.), to frighten.  
*Affray*, n. (A.N.), disturbance, fear.  
*Affye*, v. (A.N.), to file, polish.  
*Afscoren*, *aforse*, *afore*, adj. and prep. (A.S.), before.  
*Agains*, *agein*, prep. (A.S.), against, toward.  
*Agaste*, v. (A.S.), to terrify; *agast*, part. pa., terrified.  
*Agill*, v. (A.S.), to offend, to sin against; *agille*, part. t., sinned.  
*Agrege*, v. (A.N.), to aggravate.  
*Agrise*, v. (A.S.), to shudder, to make to shudder.  
*Agroled*, part. pa., cloyed, surfeited.  
*Agrove*, (A.S.), to confess.  
*Ather*, *aller*, gen. ca. pl., of all; frequently joined in composition with adjectives of the superlative degree.  
*Ather-first*, *ather-last*, *ather-ivest*, first, last, dearest of all.  
*Almiz*, n. pl. (A.N.), a species of dog.  
*Alaye*, n. (A.N.), alloy; a mixture of base metal.  
*Albification*, n. (Lat.), a chemical term for making white.  
*Alcally*, n. (Arab.), a chemical term for a species of salt.  
*Alchymistre*, n. (A.N.), alchemist.  
*Adrian*, pr. n., a star on the neck of the lion.  
*Alembikes*, n. pl. (Fr.), vessels for distilling; stills.  
*Aleye*, n. (A.N.), an alley.  
*Alpates*, *alpage*, adv. (A.S.), always; although.

*Allegue*, v. (A.N.), to allege.  
*Almesse*, n. (A.S., from *eleemosyna*), alms; *almesses*, pl.  
*Alnath*, pr. n., the first star in the horns of Aries, whence the first mansion of the moon takes its name.  
*Along*, prep. (A.S.). *Whereon it was along*, by what it was occasioned; *on me is nought along thine evil fare*, thy ill fare is not occasioned by me.  
*Aloue*, v. (A.N.), to allow, to approve. His dedes are to *aloue* for his hardynesse. Therefore lords *alou* him little, or lysten to his reason.  
*Aloue*, adv. (A.S.), low.  
*Als*, conj. (A.S.), also, as.  
*Amalgaming*, a chemical term for mixing of quicksilver with any metal.  
*Ambassatrye*, n. (A.N.), embassy.  
*Ambes aas*, (A.N.), two aces, at dice.  
*Amende*, v. (A.N.), to mend.  
*Amenus*, v. (A.N.), to lessen.  
*Amevyd*, part. pa. (A.N.), moved.  
*Amyddes*, prep. (A.S.), at or in the middle.  
*Amonste*, v. (A.N.), to admonish, to advise.  
*Amorlised*, part. pa. (A.N.), killed.  
*A morue*, on the millrow.  
*An*, for *on*, prep.  
*And*, conj. (A.S.), often used for if.  
*Aneloz*, n. (A.N.), a jagger, or wood-knife.  
*Anes*, adv. for ones, once.  
*Anhang*, v. (A.S.), to hang up.  
*Anker*, n. (A.S.), an anchoite or hermit.  
*Annuell*, n. (A.N.), secular.  
*Annucial*, part. pa. (Lat.), foretold.  
*Annoyes*, n. pl. (A.N.), annoyances, troubles.  
*Annoye*, *anoye*, *anuye*, v. (A.S.), to hurt, to trouble.  
*Anslets*, n. (A.N.) an article of dress, apparently breeches.  
*Antiphonere*, n., a book of antiphones, or anthems.  
*Anvelt*, n. (A.S.), an anvil.  
*Apayde*, part. pa. (A.N.), paid, satisfied.  
*Apeyre*, v. (A.N.), to impair, to detract from.  
*Apert*, adj. (A.N.), open, in public.  
*Appalled*, part. pa. (A.N.), made pale.  
*Apparail*, v. (A.N.), to prepare.  
*Apparence*, n. (A.N.), an appearance.  
*Apparceyne*, v. (A.N.), to perceive.  
*Apparceynages*, n. pl., perceptions.  
*Appose*, v. (A.N.), to object to, to question.  
*Approuer*, n. (A.N.), an informer.  
*Approvable*, adj. (A.N.), easy to be acquainted with.  
*Aquite*, v. (A.N.), to pay for.  
*Arace*, v. (A.N.), to draw away by force.  
*Arraye*, v. (A.N.), to dress, to dispose.  
*Archevuyves*, wives of a superior order.  
*Ardure*, n. (A.N.), burning.  
*Arade*, v. (A.N.), to interpret.  
*Aravage*, n. (A.N.), arrear.  
*Arceye*, v. (A.S.), to raise.  
*Arrest*, n. (A.N.), constraint, delay.  
*Arreste*, v. (A.N.), to stop.

*Arette*, v. (A.N.), to impute to.  
*Argoil*, n. (A.N.), potter's clay.  
*Arrivage*, n. (A.N.), arrival.  
*Arke*, n., a part of the circumference of a circle.  
*Arm-gret*, adj. (A.S.), as thick as a man's arm.  
*Armipotent*, adj., mighty in arms.  
*Armure*, n. (A.N.), armour.  
*Arn*, pl. n. of am, v. (A.S.), are.  
*Arismetrike*, n., arithmetic.  
*Artelries*, n. pl. (A.N.), artillery.  
*Artow*, for *art thou*.  
*Arwe*, n. (A.S.), an arrow.  
*Ascaunce*, as though, as if, as if to say.  
*Asschen*, n. pl. (A.S.), ashes.  
*Aslake*, v. (A.S.), to slacken, to abate.  
*Asp*, n. (A.S.), a sort of poplar.  
*Aspen*, adj., of an asp.  
*Aspie*, v. (A.N.), to espie.  
*Assaut*, n. (A.N.), assault.  
*Assolve*, v. (A.N.), to absolve, to answer.  
*Astaat*, n. (A.N.), estate, state.  
*Asterie*, v. (A.S.), to escape, to release.  
*Astoneyd*, part. pa. (A.N.), confounded, astonished.  
*Astryblabe*, n. (A.N.), the astrolabe, an astronomical instrument.  
*Astrologien*, n. (A.N.), astrologer.  
*Asswoone*, in a swoon.  
*Atte*, prep. (A.S.), at the.  
*Atake*, v. (A.S.), to overtake.  
*Attumad*, part. pa. (A.N.), opened, begun.  
*Attempre*, adj. (A.N.), temperate.  
*Attrempley*, adv. (A.N.), temperately.  
*Attry*, *attery*, adj. (A.S.), poisonous, pernicious.  
*A-toynne*, in two, asunder.  
*Avale*, v. (A.N.), to lower, to let down, to go down.  
*Avauce*, v. (A.N.), to advance, to profit.  
*Avaunte*, v. (A.N.), to boast.  
*Avaut*, adv. (A.N.), forward.  
*Avuctorit*, n. (A.N.), a text of Scripture, or of some respectable writer.  
*Auctour*, n. (A.N.), author.  
*Avenant*, adj. (A.N.), becoming.  
*Aventayle*, n. (A.N.), a part of the helmet.  
*Adventure*, n. (A.N.), adventure, chance.  
*Augrym*, a corruption of algorithm, or arithmetic.  
*Avis*, n. (A.N.), advice, opinion.  
*Avyse*, v. (A.N.), to observe; look to.  
*Avision*, n. (A.N.), a vision.  
*Auntre*, v. (A.N.), corruption of *aventure*; to adventure; *auntrous*, adj., adventurous.  
*Avouter*, *avouter*, n. (A.N.), an adulterer.  
*Avoutrie*, n. (A.N.), adultery.  
*Avou*, n. (A.N.), a vow.  
*Auter*, n. (A.N.), an altar.  
*Avayle*, n. (A.N.), watch.  
*Avayland*, part. pr., watching.  
*Avayward*, adv. (A.S.), away.  
*Awreke*, v. (A.N.), to revenge.  
*Aze*, v. (A.S.), to ask; *azyng*, request, asking.  
*Aye*, adv. (A.S.), ever.  
*Ayel*, n. (A.N.), grandfather.

*Ba* seems to be formed from *face*, v. (A.N.), to kiss.



*Bachelor*, n. (A.N.), an unmarried man; a knight; one who has taken his first degree in a university.

*Bachelorie*, n. (A.N.), knighthood; the *bachelorie*, the knights.

*Bade*, pa. t. of *bede*.

*Badder*, comp. d. of *bad*, adj., worse.

*Baite*, v. (A.S.), to feed, to stop to feed.

*Bale*, n. (A.S.), mischief, sorrow.

*Balkes*, n. pl. (A.S.), the timbers of the roof.

*Ballid*, adj., smooth as a ball, bald.

*Bane*, n. (A.S.), destruction.

*Barme*, n. (A.S.), the lap, bosom.

*Barm-cloth*, an apron.

*Bargein*, adj. (A.S.), barren.

*Beathe*, for *bothe*.

*Bauderie*, *baudrie*, n., pimping, keeping a bawdy-house.

*Baudy*, adj., dirty.

*Bayard*, pr. n. (A.N.), a bay-horse; a horse in general.

*Bekke*, v. (A.N.), to nod.

*Bede*, v. (A.S.), to order, to bid; to offer; to pray.

*Bedred*, adj. (A.S.), confined to bed.

*Been*, n. pl. (A.S.), bees.

*Beete*, v. (Sax.), to prepare, make ready: to *beete fyres*, to make fires: to mend; to heal: to *beete nettys*, to mend nets.

*Begon*, part. pa. (A.S.), gone; *we! begon*, in a good way; *wo begon*, far gone in woe.

*Begonne*, part. pa. (A.S.), begun.

*Bel amy*, (A.N.), good friend.

*Belle chere*, (A.N.), good cheer.

*Belle chose*, (A.N.), literally, beautiful thing.

*Belys*, *bely*, n. (A.S.), bellows.

*Bemes*, n. pl. (A.S.), trumpets.

*Ben*, inf. m. (A.S.), to be; pr. t. pl., are; part. pa., been.

*Bending*, n., striping; making of bands or stripes.

*Beke*, n. (A.S.), a bean.

*Benedicite*, (Lat.), bless us!

*Benigne*, adj. (A.N.), kind.

*Benime*, v. (A.S.), to take away.

*Benesous*, n. (A.N.), benediction.

*Bent*, n. (A.S.), the bending or declivity of a hill.

*Berd*, n. (A.S.), beard.

*Bere*, n. (A.S.), a bear.

*Bere*, v. (A.S.), to bear, to carry: to *bere in or on hand*, to accuse falsely; to persuade falsely: to *bere the belle*, to carry the prize.

*Bere*, n. (A.S.), a bier.

*Bering*, n. (A.S.), behaviour, bearing.

*Berne*, n. (A.S.), yeast.

*Berne*, n. (A.S.), a barn.

*Beseke*, v. (A.S.), to beseech.

*Beste*, n. (A.N.), a beast.

*Bet*, adv. comp. for *better*.

*Beteche*, v., as *betake*.

*Beth*, imperat., be ye.

*Bey*, v. (A.S.), to buy.

*Bibbad*, part. pa. (Lat.), drunk.

*Bibe*, n. (A.N.), any great book.

*Bi-bled*, part. pa. (A.S.), covered with blood.

*Bicchel bones*, dice.

*Byclappe*, v. (A.S.), to catch.

*Bydalded*, part. pa. (A.S.), made a fool of.

*Bydde*, v., as *bede*.

*Byfille*, v. (A.S.), befel.

*Bifore*, *byforn*, adv. and prep. (A.S.), before.

*Byforn*, (A.S.), before.

*Bygiled*, part. pa. (A.N.), beguiled.

*Bygon*, see *begon*.

*Bygyrne*, v. (A.S.), to begin.

*Byheste*, n. (A.S.), a promise.

*Dyghte*, v. (A.S.), to promise.

*Eyhote*, v. (A.S.), to promise.

*Byjaped*, part. pa. (A.S.), tricked, laughed at.

*Byknewe*, v. (A.S.), to confess.

*Bilewe*, n. (A.S.), belief, creed.

*Byleve*, v. (A.S.), to stay.

*Bille*, n., a letter.

*Byraft*, part. pa. of *byreve*, v. (A.S.), bereaved; taken away.

*Byschrewe*, v. (A.S.), to curse.

*Byset*, part. pa. (A.S.), placed, employed.

*Byseye*, part. pa. of *bese*, v. (Sax.), besen: *ille byseye*, ill besen, of a bad appearance (l. 8841); *richely byseye*, of a rich appearance (l. 8860).

*Biside*, prep. (A.S.), by the side of.

*Bysmoterud*, part. pa. (A.S.), smutted.

*Bissenare*, n. (A.S.), abusive speech.

*Bystad*, part. pa. (A.S.), situated, bested.

*Byt*, for *biddeth*.

*Eytake*, v. (A.S.), to give, deliver; to recommend to; *bytaught*, pa. t., recommended to.

*Bytid*, happened.

*Bytoke*, pa. t. of *bytake*, recommended.

*Eytoure*, n. (A.S.), a bitter.

*Bytraised*, part. pa. (A.S.), betrayed.

*Bytwisce*, prep. (A.S.), between.

*Bywerye*, v. (A.S.), to discover.

*Bywe*, v. (A.S.), to suffer; see *abegge*.

*Blend*, v. (A.S.), to blind, to deceive.

*Blent*, part., blinded, deceived.

*Bleynte*, pa. t. of *blech*, v. (A.S.), shrunk, started aside.

*Blered*, part. pa. (A.S.), in its common sense, is used to describe a particular disorder of the eye, attended with soreness and dimness of sight; but more commonly, in Chaucer, a man's eye is said to be *blered*, metaphorically, when he is any way imposed upon.

*Byrnye*, v. (A.S.), to cease.

*Byrce*, adv. (A.S.), quickly.

*Blosme*, *blossome*, n. (A.S.), blossom; v. to blossom.

*Blossemy*, adj., full of blossoms.

*Bobaunce*, n. (A.N.), boasting.

*Bode*, *boden*, part., hidden, commanded.

*Boydelyng*, n. (A.S.), a dagger.

*Boiste*, n. (A.N.), a box.

*Boistous*, adj. (A.S.), boisterous, rough.

*Boistrously*, adv., roughly.

*Bokelcr*, n. (A.N.), a buckler.

*Bokelyng*, part. pr. (A.N.), buckling.

*Boket*, n. (A.S.), a bucket.

*Bolt*, n. (A.S.), an arrow: *bolt upright*, straight as an arrow.

*Bonaireté*, n., for *debonaireté*.

*Boone*, n. (A.S.), a boon, petition: *he bad hem alle a boone*, he asked them all a boon.

*Boras*, n. (A.N.), borax.

*Boord*, *bord*, n. (Fr.), board; the deck of a ship; a table.

*Bordel*, n. (A.N.), a brothel: *bordel women*, whores.

*Borel*, n. (A.N.), coarse cloth of a brown colour; adj. made of plain coarse stuff: *borel folk*, *borel men*, laymen.

*Borwe*, n. (A.S.), a pledge.

*Bosard*, n. (A.N.), a buzzard, a species of hawk unfit for sporting.

*Bos*, n. (A.N.), a protuberance.

*Boost*, n. (A.S.), pride, boasting.

*Boost*, adv., aloud.

*Boote*, *bote*, n. (A.S.), remedy, help, profit; v., to help.

*Boote*, bit.

*Botel*, *botelle*, n. (A.N.), bottle.

*Bothe*, adj. (A.S.), two together: *our bothe labour*, the labour of us two together.

*Bouk*, n. (A.S.), the body.

*Boulte*, v. (A.S.), to sift, to separate the flour of wheat from the bran.

*Boun*, adj. (A.S.), ready.

*Bounté*, n. (A.S.), goodness.

*Bourde*, n. (A.N.), a jest; v., to jest.

*Boure*, n. (A.S.), a chamber.

*Bracer*, n. (A.N.), armour for the arm.

*Brayde*, n. (A.S.), a start; v., to awake, to start; to take off.

*Bragat*, n. (Welsh), a sweet drink made of the wort of ale, honey, and spice, said to be still in use in Wales.

*Brasit*, n., a wood used in dyeing, to give a red colour.

*Bratt*, n. (A.S.), a coarse mantle.

*Brech*, n. (A.S.), breeches.

*Brede*, n. (A.S.), breadth.

*Breme*, adv. (A.S.), furiously.

*Brenne*, v. (A.S.), to burn; *brenden*, they burnt; *brent*, burnt.

*Brennyngly*, adv., hotly.

*Breres*, n. pl. (A.N.), briars.

*Bret-ful*, adj., top-full.

*Briben*, v. (A.N.), to beg, or perhaps to steal.

*Briboues*, bribers.

*Bridale*, n. (A.S.), a marriage-feast.

*Bridles*, n. pl. (A.S.), birds.

*Brike*, n. (A.S.), breach, ruin.

*Broocage*, n. (A.N.), a treaty by a broker or agent.

*Broch*, n. (Fr.), a brooch, or clasp. It probably came by degrees to signify any sort of jewel.

*Broudid*, part. pa. (A.N.), braided, woven.

*Bronde*, n. (A.N.), a torch.

*Brosten*, burst.

*Brothered*, n. (A.S.), brotherly affection.

*Broudd*, part. pa. (A.N.); *brode*, embroidered.

*Brouken*, inf. m. (A.S.), to brook, to enjoy, use.

*Brutill*, adj. (A.S.), brittle.

*Brutinesse*, n., brittleness.

*Brukkes horn*, a buck's horn. To *blow the bukkes horne* is used to signify any useless employment.

*Buffette*, n. (A.N.), a blow.

*Bumble*, v. (A.S.), to make a humming noise. In l. 6554 it is used to describe the noise made by a bittern.

*Burdoun*, n. (A.N.), a humming noise, the bass in music.

*Buriels*, n. pl. (A.S.), burying-places.

*Burned*, part. pa. (A.N.), burnished.

*But*, conj. and prep. (A.S.), means not only but, or unless, but only, and without.

*Buzome*, adj. (A.S.), obedient, civil, bending.

*Buzomly*, adv. (A.S.), obediently.

*By*, prep. (Sax.), has sometimes the signification of *in*. *By the morwe*, in the morning, or day-time. It is sometimes used adverbially. *By and by*, near, hard by; severally, distinctly.

*Caas*, n. (A.N.), a case, quiver.

*Cacche*, v. (A.S.), to catch.

*Cadence*, n. (A.N.), a species of poetical composition distinct from rhyming verses.

*Caytif*, n. and adj. (A.N.), a wretch, wretched; coward.

*Calcinaoun*, n. (A.N.), a chemical process, by which bodies are reduced to a calx.

*Calculated*, pa. t. (A.N.), calculated.

*Calte*, n. (A.N.), a species of cap.

*Camois*, adj. (A.N.), flat-nosed.

*Camptoun*, n. (A.S.), a champion, fighting man.

*Can*, v. (A.S.), knows.

*Canevas*, n. (A.N.), canvas.

*Canon*, the title of Avicenne's great work.

*Canfel*, n. (A.S.), a fragment, part.

*Capel*, n. (A.N.), a horse.

*Capitaine*, n. (A.N.), a captain.

*Capitolie*, n., the Capitol at Rome.

*Carayn*, n. (A.N.), carrion.

- Cardiacle*, n., a pain about the heart.  
*Carf*, pa. t. (A.S.), cut.  
*Carl*, n. (A.S.), a churl, a hardy country fellow.  
*Carole*, n. (A.S.), a dance; v., to dance.  
*Carpe*, v. (A.S.), to talk.  
*Caroigne*, n. (A.S.), carrion, dead or putrified flesh.  
*Carrils*, n. (A.S.), a large ship  
*Cart*, n. (A.S.), a chariot.  
*Carter*, n., a charioteer.  
*Cas*, n. (A.S.), chance.  
*Cast*, v. (A.S.), a contrivance  
*Caste*, v., to contrive.  
*Casuel*, adj. (A.S.), accidental.  
*Catapuce*, n. (A.S.), a species of spurge.  
*Catel*, n. (A.S.), goods.  
*Caterwrawed*, to go a *caterwrawed* seems to signify the same as to go caterwawling, as it is called in modern times.  
*Cavillacious*, n. (A.S.), cavil.  
*Celerer*, n., the officer in a monastery who had the care of the provisions.  
*Celle*, n., a religious house.  
*Censing*, part. pr., fumigating with incense.  
*Centaurie*, n., a herb.  
*Cerial*, adj. (A.S.), belonging to a species of oak.  
*Ceruce*, n. (A.S.), white lead.  
*Chaffare*, n. (A.S.), merchandise; v., to merchandise, to talk loosely.  
*Chatalous*, blankets, or coverlets, made at Chalons.  
*Chamayle*, n. (A.S.), a camel.  
*Chamberere*, n. (A.S.), a chambermaid.  
*Champartye*, n. (A.S.), a share of land, a partnership in power.  
*Chapman*, n. (A.S.), a merchant, or trader.  
*Chapmanhed*, n. (A.S.), the condition of a chapman, or tradesman.  
*Chare*, n. (A.S.), a chariot.  
*Charge*, n. (A.S.), a load, burthen, business of weight: *it nere no charge*, it were no harm; of which *there is no charge*, from which there is no consequence to be expected; *of that no charge*, no matter for that.  
*Chargeant*, part., burthensome.  
*Chekere*, n. (A.S.), a chess-board.  
*Chekelatoun*, a corruption of ciclaton, from the Arabic), a rich cloth of gold.  
*Chepe*, v. (A.S.), to buy, to merchandise, to cheapen.  
*Chepe*, n., cheapness.  
*Cheri*, n. (A.S.), a man of mean birth and condition.  
*Cherish*, adj., churlish.  
*Ches*, pa. t., chose.  
*Ches*, n. (A.S.), the game of chess.  
*Chese*, v. (A.S.), to choose.  
*Chest*, n. (A.S.), a coffin.  
*Cheste*, n. (A.S.), debate.  
*Chesteyn*, n. (A.S.), the chestnut.  
*Cheve*, v. (A.S.), to come to an agreement, or conclusion.  
*Cheventen*, n. (A.S.), chieftain.  
*Chevisance*, n. (A.S.), an agreement for borrowing of money.  
*Chidester*, n. (A.S.), a female scold.  
*Chiereté*, n. (A.S.), tenderness, affection.  
*Chymbe*, n. (A.S.), the prominent part of the staves beyond the head of a barrel.  
*Chimbe*, v., to sound in consonance, like bells, to chime.  
*Chirche-reve*, n. (A.S.), a churchwarden.  
*Chirchhawe*, n. (A.S.), a churchyard.  
*Chirke*, v. (A.S.), to chirp, as a sparrow.  
*Chirkyng*, n., a chirping sound.  
*Chit*, chideth.  
*Chivaachie*, n. (A.S.), a military expedition.
- Chyvalrye*, n. (A.S.), knighthood.  
*Cité*, n. (A.S.), a city.  
*Citote*, n. (A.S.), a musical instrument.  
*Cytryne*, adj. (A.S.), of a pale yellow or citron colour.  
*Citrination*, n., a chemical term.  
*Clappe*, v. (A.S.), to knock repeatedly, to talk fast.  
*Clapsud*, clasped.  
*Clarré*, n. (A.S.), wine mixed with honey and spices, and afterwards strained till it is clear. It was otherwise called piment.  
*Clatereden*, pa. t. pl. of *clatter*.  
*Claw*, v. (A.S.), to stroke, to rub  
*Clennesse*, n. (A.S.), purity.  
*Clepe*, v. (A.S.), to call, to name.  
*Clergie*, n. (A.S.), the clerical profession.  
*Clergial*, adj., learned.  
*Clergion*, n., a young clerk.  
*Clerk*, n. (A.S.), one who has received school learning.  
*Clifte*, n. (A.S.), a cleft.  
*Clitke*, n. (A.S.), a latch-key.  
*Clitke*, v. (A.S.), to ring, to tinkle.  
*Clippe*, v. (A.S.), to cut hair; to embrace.  
*Clobbed*, adj. (A.S.), like a club.  
*Cloyster*, n. (A.S.), a cloister, an enclosure.  
*Clote-Jefe*, a leaf of the burdock, or clote-bur.  
*Clotered*, part. pa. (A.S.), clotted.  
*Cloutes*, n. pl. (A.S.), small pieces.  
*Clum*, this word seems to be equivalent to "silence."  
*Clumber*, pa. t. pl. of *climb*.  
*Coagulat*, part. pa. (Lat.), curdled.  
*Cockes bones*, a corruption of a then familiar oath, God's bones.  
*Cod*, n. (A.S.), a bag.  
*Cofre*, n. (A.S.), a chest.  
*Coltons*, n. pl. (A.S.), testicles.  
*Coke*, n., a cook.  
*Cokenay*, a diminutive cock; a puny, weakly fellow.  
*Cokebold*, n., a cuckold.  
*Colin* in composition is used in a bad sense, as colprophet, a false, lying prophet.  
*Coldé*, v. (A.S.), to grow or become cold.  
*Coler*, n. (A.S.), a collar.  
*Colerd*, part. pa. collared, wearing collars.  
*Collacioun*, n. (A.S.), a conference.  
*Coltisch*, adj. (A.S.), playful as a colt.  
*Columbine*, adj. (Lat.), belonging to a dove, doveslike.  
*Combust*, adj. (Lat.), burnt. A term in astrology, when a planet is not more than 30° distant from the sun.  
*Commune*, n. (A.S.), commonalty; *communes*, n. pl., commoners, common people.  
*Compaignable*, adj. (A.S.), soeiable.  
*Compame* for *compagne*, l. 3709. Put for the sake of the rhyme.  
*Compas*, n. (A.S.), a compass.  
*Compassing*, n., contrivance.  
*Compassse*, v., to contrive.  
*Comperé*, n. (A.S.), a gossip, a near friend.  
*Complin*, *complyng*, n. (A.S.), even-song, the last service of the day, singing in general.  
*Condescende*, v. (A.S.), to yield.  
*Confecture*, n. (A.S.), composition.  
*Confus*, adj. (A.S.), confounded.  
*Conjure*, v. (A.S.), to adjure.  
*Conne*, v. (A.S.), to know, to be able.  
*Conseil*, n. (A.S.), counsel.  
*Consentant*, part. pr., consenting to.  
*Conserve*, v. (A.S.), to preserve.  
*Consistory*, n. (A.S.), properly an ecclesiastical court, but sometimes any court of justice.  
*Contek*, n. (A.S.), contention.
- Contenance*, n. (A.S.), appearance, pretence.  
*Contract*, part. pa. (Lat.), contracted.  
*Contrarie*, v. (A.S.), to contradict.  
*Contrarious*, adj. (A.S.), opposite, perverse.  
*Contrary*, n. (A.S.), adversary.  
*Contrefete*, v. (A.S.), to counterfeit, imitate.  
*Contubernial*, adj. (Lat.), familiar.  
*Cope*, n. (A.S.), a cloak.  
*Cop*, n. (A.S.), the top of any thing; the head.  
*Corage*, n. (A.S.), heart, inclination, spirit, courage.  
*Cordewane*, n. (A.S.), Spanish leather, so called from Corduba.  
*Corniculere*, n. (Lat.), an officer in the Roman government.  
*Cornmuse*, n. (A.S.), a bagpipe.  
*Corny*, adj. (A.S.), strong of the corn, or malt.  
*Corone*, n. (A.S.), a crown, or garland.  
*Corps*, n. (A.S.), body.  
*Corpus*, n. (Lat.), body.  
*Corruptable*, adj. (A.S.), corruptible.  
*Corumpe*, v. (A.S.), to corrupt.  
*Corven*, part. pa. of *carve*, cut.  
*Cosyn*, v. (A.S.), a cousin.  
*Cosinage*, n. (A.S.), kindred.  
*Costage*, n. (A.S.), cost, expense.  
*Costlewe*, adj., costly.  
*Cote*, n. (A.S.), a cottage.  
*Cote*, n. (A.S.), a coat.  
*Cotidian*, adj. (A.S.), daily.  
*Couche*, v. (A.S.), to lay; *couched*, part. pa., laid; *couched* with pearls, laid, or trimmed with pearls.  
*Coede*, pa. t. of *conne*, (A.S.), knew, was able.  
*Covenable*, adj. (A.S.), convenient, suitable.  
*Coverit*, adj. (A.S.), secret, covered.  
*Covyne*, n. (A.S.), secret contrivance.  
*Cowpe*, n. (A.S.), a fault.  
*Counterwoyte*, v. (A.S.), to watch against.  
*Countour*, n. (A.S.), a counting-house; an arithmetician.  
*Countretaille*, n. (A.S.), a tally answering exactly to another. Hence echo is said to answer at the *countretaille*.  
*Courtepy*, a short cloak of coarse cloth.  
*Court-man*, a courtier.  
*Couthe*, pa. t. of *conne*, knew, was able; part. pa., known.  
*Crakke*, v. (A.S.), to crack.  
*Crake*, v. (A.S.), to quaver hoarsely in singing.  
*Cracklyng*, n. (A.S.), scratching.  
*Crased*, part. pa. (A.S.), broken.  
*Creuance*, n. (A.S.), faith, belief; v., to borrow money.  
*Crevasse*, n. (A.S.), a chink or crevice.  
*Crisp*, adj. (A.S.), curled.  
*Croce*, n., a cross.  
*Crois*, n. (A.S.), a cross.  
*Cromes*, n. pl. (A.S.), crumbs.  
*Crone*, n. (A.S.), an old woman.  
*Crope*, *cropen*, part. pa. of *crepe*, crept.  
*Croppes*, n. pl. (A.S.), the extremities of the shoots of vegetables: *now in the crop*, now at the top; *cropps and roots*, root and branch, the whole of a thing.  
*Crossete*, n. (A.S.), a crucible.  
*Crouche*, v. (A.S.), to sign with the cross.  
*Croude*, v. (A.S.), to shove together.  
*Crouke*, n. (A.S.), an earthen pitcher.  
*Crown*, n. (A.S.), the crown of the head.  
*Croupe*, n. (A.S.), the crupper.  
*Crul*, adj. (A.S.), curled.  
*Cucurbit*, n. (Lat.), a gourd, a vessel shaped like a gourd, used in distillation.  
*Cuirbouly*, n. (A.S.), leather prepared by boiling, used in making a variety of articles.



- Culpons*, n. pl. (A.N.), shreds, logs.  
*Curious*, adj. (A.N.), careful.  
*Courtesy*, adj. (A.N.), courteous.
- Daf*, n. (A.S.), a fool.  
*Dagged*, part. pa., cut into slips.  
*Dagging*, n., slitting, cutting into slips.  
*Dagoun*, n., a slip, or piece.  
*Dampne*, v. (A.N.), to condemn.  
*Dan*, n. (Lat. *dominus*), lord, a title commonly given to monks.  
*Danger*, n. (A.N.), a dangerous situation: *in a man's danger*, under liability to him.  
*Dangerous*, adj., difficult.  
*Dapple gray*, the colour which is called in Fr. *pommelé*.  
*Dare*, v. (A.S.), to stare.  
*Dereyne*, v. (A.N.), to contest.  
*Dart*, n. (A.S.), a spear or javelin.  
*Dase*, v. (A.S.), to grow dimighted.  
*Dauante*, v. (A.N.), to conquer.  
*Dawe*, v. (A.S.), to dawn.  
*Dawning*, n. (A.S.), daybreak.  
*Daws*, n. pl. for *Days*.  
*Debate*, v. (A.N.), to fight.  
*Debonaire*, adj. (A.N.), courteous, gentle.  
*Devily*, adj. (A.S.), devoted to death; fatal.  
*Dezuit*, n. (A.N.), pleasure.  
*Deed*, adj. (A.S.), dead.  
*Defame*, n. (A.N.), infamy; v., to make infamous.  
*Defautes*, n. pl. (A.N.), defects.  
*Defende*, v. (A.N.), to forbid.  
*Defence*, n. (A.N.), prohibition.  
*Degré*, n. (A.N.), a step.  
*Deinous*, adj. (A.N.), disdainful.  
*Deynité*, n. (A.N.), value, a thing of value; *had deynité*, valued highly; *tolde no deynité of*, set no value upon; *it was deynité*, it was a valuable thing.  
*Deynitevous*, adj., choice, valuable.  
*Deys*, n. (A.N.), the place of the high table in the hall, the high table itself.  
*Del*, n. (A.S.), a part, bit.  
*Dele*, v. (A.S.), to divide.  
*Delibere*, v. (A.N.), to deliberate.  
*Delices*, n. pl. (A.N.), delights.  
*Delit*, n. (A.N.), delight.  
*Delitable*, adj. (A.N.), delectable.  
*Deliver*, adj. (A.N.), nimble.  
*Deliverty*, adv., quickly.  
*Delivernes*, n., agility.  
*Demaine*, n. (A.N.), management.  
*Deme*, v. (A.S.), to judge.  
*Dyparte*, v. (A.N.), to part, to distribute.  
*Dypaint*, part. pa. (A.N.), painted.  
*Dere*, v. (A.S.), to hurt.  
*Dere*, adj. (A.S.), dear.  
*Dereling*, n., darling.  
*Dereworth*, adj. (A.S.), precious, valued at a high rate.  
*Derne*, adj. (A.S.), secret.  
*Derre*, comp. of *dere*, dearer.  
*Descensorie*, n. (A.N.), a vessel used in chemistry for the extraction of oils *per descensum*.  
*Descrive*, v. (A.N.), to describe.  
*Desirous*, adj. (A.N.), eager.  
*Despite*, n. (A.N.), malicious anger.  
*Despitous*, adj., angry to excess.  
*Despitously*, adv., angrily.  
*Despoite*, v. (A.N.), to undress.  
*Destreyne*, v. (A.S.), to vex, to constrain.  
*Destrer*, n. (A.N.), a war-horse.  
*Destruye*, v. (A.N.), to destroy.  
*D-titles*, adj., free from debt.  
*Deve*, adj. (A.S.), deaf.  
*Devynnyng*, n. (A.N.), divination.  
*Devys*, n. (A.N.), direction; v., to direct, to order, to relate: *at point deys*, with the greatest exactness.  
*Devoir*, n. (A.N.), duty.  
*Dey*, n., a species of labour, perhaps a day-labourer.
- Deye*, v. (A.S.), to die.  
*Deyer*, n. (A.S.), a dyer.  
*Dide*, pa. t. of *do*: *dider*, pl., did.  
*Diffame*, n. (A.N.), bad reputation.  
*Dight*, v. (A.S.), to dispose, to dress.  
*Digne*, adj. (A.N.), worthy, proud, disdainful.  
*Dike*, v. (Sax.), to dig, to make ditches.  
*Dilatacion*, n. (A.N.), enlargement.  
*Disarray*, n. (A.N.), disorder.  
*Discomfort*, n. (A.N.), displeasure.  
*Discomforten*, v. (A.N.), to discourage.  
*Discoverte*, adj. (A.N.), *at discoverte*, uncovered.  
*Disfigure*, n. (A.N.), deformity.  
*Dishevele*, part. pa. (A.N.), with hair hanging loose.  
*Disjoint*, n. (A.N.), a difficult situation.  
*Dislave*, adj. (A.N.), filthy, impure.  
*Disordened*, part. pa., disorderly.  
*Disordinate*, adj., disorderly.  
*Disparage*, n., a disparagement.  
*Disperce*, n., expense.  
*Dispitous*, adj., angry to excess.  
*Disport*, n., sport, diversion.  
*Disprelsing*, part. pa., undervaluing.  
*Disputisoun*, n. (A.N.), dispute.  
*Dissimule*, v. (A.N.), to dissemble.  
*Distreyne*, n., to constrain. See *Destreine*.  
*Distrouble*, v., to disturb.  
*Dyeynistr*, n. (A.N.), a divine.  
*Degerel*, adj., "derived," says Tyrwhitt, "I suppose, from dog; so that rime-dogel may be understood to mean what in French might be called *rime de chien*. See Cotgrave in v. *Chien*. *Chose de chien*, a paltrerie thing, a trifling, trash, trumperie."
- Dogge for the bove*, a dog used in shooting.  
*Doke*, v. (A.S.), a duck.  
*Dolven*, part. pa. of *delve*, buried, digged.  
*Domb*, adj. (A.S.), dumb.  
*Doma*, *doom*, n. (A.S.), judgment opinion.  
*Domesman*, n. (A.S.), a judge.  
*Donet*, n., a grammar, the elements of any art.  
*Donne*, *don*, adj. (A.S.), of a brown or dun colour.  
*Doon*, Sd p. pl. of the present, they do; part. pa., done; inf., to do.  
*Dormant*, part. pr. (Fr.), fixed: *table dormant*, l. 355, a stationary table in the hall, not one made for the occasion by placing a board on trestles.  
*Dortour*, n. (A.N.), a dormitory, or common sleeping-room.  
*Doseyn*, n. (A.N.), a dozen.  
*Dote*, v. (A.S.), to be foolish, through age or otherwise.  
*Doth*, do ye.  
*Doughtren*, n. pl. (A.S.), daughters.  
*Douts*, v. (A.N.), to fear.  
*Douteles*, adv., without doubt.  
*Dowayre*, n. (A.N.), dower.  
*Dradd*, *drad*, pa. t. and part. of *drade*, feared.  
*Draf*, n. (A.S.), things thrown away, as unfit for man's food: *dräf-sak*, a sack full of draf.  
*Draffy*, adj., of no more value than draf.  
*Draggas*, n. pl., drags.  
*Drade*, n. (A.S.), fear, doubt: *withouthen drade*, without doubt; *out of drade*, out of doubt.  
*Drude*, v. (A.S.), to fear.  
*Drudful*, adj., timorous.  
*Dryndt*, pa. t. and part. of *drenche*, drowned.  
*Drenche*, v. (A.S.), to drown; v. neut. to be drowned.  
*Dressa*, v. (A.N.), to address, apply.  
*Dronketeve*, adj. (A.S.), given to drink.  
*Dronke*, drunk.  
*Drough*, pa. t. of *draue*, drew.
- Droyv*, adj. (A.S.), dirty.  
*Druerie*, n. (A.N.), courtship, gallantry, love; a mistress.  
*Drugge*, v. (A.S.), to drag.  
*Dubbed*, part. pa. (A.S.), created a knight. The phrase is derived from the stroke, with a sword or otherwise, which was always a principal ceremony at the creation of a knight.  
*Duét*, n. (A.N.), duty; what is due to any one.  
*Dulle*, v. act. (A.S.), to make dull; v. neut., to grow dull.  
*Dure*, v. (A.N.), to endure.  
*Duske*, pa. t. (A.S.), to grow dark, or dim.  
*Dvale*, n. (A.S.), a sleeping-potion.
- Ebrayk*, adj., Hebrew.  
*Eche*, adj. (A.S.), each, every.  
*Effect*, n. (A.N.), substance.  
*Eft*, adv. (A.S.), again.  
*Eftsons*, *eftsons*, adv. (A.S.), soon after, presently.  
*Egalité*, n. (A.N.), equality.  
*Egr*, *egre*, adj. (A.N.), sharp.  
*EGge*, v. (A.S.), to incite.  
*Eggement*, n., incitement.  
*EGging*, n., inciting, incitement.  
*Egreinoie*, n. (A.N.), agrimony.  
*Eyghen*, *eyghne*, n. pl. (A.S.), eyes.  
*Eyr*, n. (A.N.), air.  
*Elat*, part. pa. (Lat.), elated.  
*Elde*, n. (A.S.), old age.  
*Elenge*, adj. (A.S.), strange; dull, cheerless; weighed down with care.  
*Elf*, n. (A.S.), a witch, a fairy.  
*Elles*, adv. (A.S.), else: *elles what*, any thing else.  
*Elvish*, adj. (Sax.), fairy-like, fantastic: sometimes it seems to signify shy, reserved.  
*Embosment*, n. (A.N.), ambush.  
*Embrouddid*, part. pa. (A.N.), embroidered.  
*Eme*, n. (A.S.), an uncle.  
*Empetre*, v. (A.N.), to impair, hurt.  
*Empiastre*, v. (A.N.), to plaster over.  
*Emprise*, n. (A.N.), an undertaking.  
*Embrace*, v. (A.N.), to take hold of.  
*Enchaufing*, n. (A.N.), heat.  
*Enchessou*, n. (A.N.), cause, occasion.  
*Encorporing*, part. pr. (A.N.), incorporating.  
*Endalong*, prep. (A.S.), along; *endlange*, adv., length-ways.  
*Emüte*, v. (A.N.), to dictate, relate.  
*Enforce*, v. (A.N.), to strengthen.  
*Enforced*, part. pa., constrained by force.  
*Engendrure*, n. (A.N.), generation.  
*Engined*, part. pa. (A.N.), racked, tortured.  
*Engregge*, v. (A.N.), to aggravate.  
*Engynn*, n. (A.N.), ingenuity, genius.  
*Enhaunse*, v. (A.N.), to raise.  
*Enhort*, v. (A.N.), to exhort.  
*Enteven*, (A.S.), eleven.  
*Eulumine*, v. (A.N.), to illuminate.  
*Enoynt*, part. pa. (A.N.), anointed.  
*Enspire*, v. (A.N.), to inspire.  
*Ensure*, v. (A.N.), to assure.  
*Entend*, v. (A.N.), to attend.  
*Entendement*, n., understanding.  
*Entente*, n. (A.N.), intention.  
*Ententif*, adj. (A.N.), attentive.  
*Entremet*, v. (A.N.), to interpose.  
*Entré*, n. (A.N.), entry.  
*Entuned*, part. pa., tuned.  
*Enweynne*, v. (A.N.), to poison.  
*Enwolved*, part. pa. (A.N.), wrapt up.  
*Enwynd*, stored with wine.  
*Eny*, adj., any.  
*Eorthe*, n. (A.S.), earth.  
*Er*, adv. (A.S.), before, before that.  
*Erche*, for *arch*, as *erchbischof*, &c.  
*Ere*, v. (A.S.), to plough.  
*Erme*, v. (A.S.), to grieve.

- Ermeful*, pitiful.  
*Ermin*, adj., Armenian.  
*Ernestful*, adj., serious.  
*Erraunt*, part. pr. (A.N.), strolling, applied to a thief.  
*Ers*, *erse*, n. (A.S.), the fundament.  
*Erst*, adv. superl. of *er*, first: *at erst*, for the first time.  
*Eschaufyng*, *eschaufyng*, part. (A.N.), heating.  
*Eschue*, *eschue*, v. (A.N.), to shun, to decline.  
*Ese*, n. (A.N.), pleasure.  
*Ese*, v., to accommodate; to ease, give pleasure.  
*Esement*, n., relief.  
*Espiaile*, n. (A.N.), spying, private watching.  
*Essoyne*, n. (A.N.), a legal excuse.  
*Estat*, *estaat*, n. (A.N.), state, condition, administration of government.  
*Estallich*, adj. (A.N.), stately.  
*Estres*, n. pl. (A.N.), the inward parts of a building.  
*Eterne*, adj. (Lat.), everlasting.  
*Evangeltes*, n. pl. (A.N.), gospels.  
*Even*, adj. (A.S.), equal: *an even-cristen*, a fellow-christian.  
*Ewerich*, adj. (A.S.), every one of many; each of two.  
*Ewrychou*, every one.  
*Eyo*, n. (A.S.), yew.  
*Eziatal*, part. pa. (Lat.), exalted.  
*Exametron* is explained by the context to signify a verse of six feet.  
*Executour*, n. (A.N.), executioner.  
*Ey*, n. (A.S.), an egg: *a grypes eye*, a griffin's egg.  
*Eyen*, pl., eyes.  
*Eneric*, n. (A.N.), the people of fairies, enchantment, the work of fairies.  
*Fain* (A.S.), glad.  
*Faine*, adv., gladly.  
*Faitour*, n. (A.N.), a lazy, idle fellow.  
*Faldyng*, n., a kind of coarse cloth.  
*Falsen*, v. (A.N.), to falsify, to deceive.  
*Falwe*, adj. (A.S.), yellow.  
*Falwos*, n. pl. (A.S.), fallow lands.  
*Famulere*, adj. (Lat.), domestic.  
*Fan*, n., a vane, the quintaine, or post with a movable top, which is called a fan or vane, from its turning round like a weathercock.  
*Fande*, pa. t. of *finde*, found.  
*Fane*, n., a weathercock.  
*Fantastie*, n. (A.N.), fancy.  
*Fantom*, n. (A.N.), any false imagination.  
*Fare*, v. (A.S.), to go; *to fare welle*, to speed, to be happy.  
*Fare*, n., seems to have been derived from the French *v. faire*, whenever it can be interpreted by the word *ado*. This hote *fare*; for which the warden chidde and made *fare*; what amounteth all this *fore*? bewixt us two nedeth no *strange fare*; and leve this nice *fare*.  
*Farse*, v. (A.N.), to stuff.  
*Faute*, n. (A.N.), want.  
*Fawe*, adj. (A.S.), glad.  
*Fay*, n. (A.N.), faith.  
*Fecche*, v. (A.S.), to fetch.  
*Fee*, n. (A.S.), money; goods.  
*Feyme*, v. (A.N.), to feign.  
*Fel*, adj. (A.S.), cruel, destructive.  
*Felawe*, n. (A.S.), fellow, companion.  
*Feld*, n. (A.S.), a field.  
*Fete*, adj. (A.S.), many.  
*Fete*, v. (A.S.), to feel, to have sense, to perceive.  
*Felonie*, n. (A.N.), all sorts of criminal violence.  
*Feminie*, pr. n., the country of Amazons.  
*Feminite*, n. (A.N.), womanhood.  
*Ferd*, n. (A.S.), an enemy, the devil.  
*Feendly*, adj., devilish.  
*Fer*, adv. (A.S.), far; *ferre*, further; *ferrest*, superl., furthest.  
*Ferd*, *fered*, part. pa. of *ferre*, terrified.  
*Ferd*, *ferde*, pl. *ferden*, pa. t. of *fare*, went.  
*Fere*, n. (A.S.), a companion, a mate; *in fere*, together, in company.  
*Fere*, n. (A.S.), fear; v., to terrify.  
*Ferforth*, *ferforthly*, adv. (A.S.), far forth.  
*Ferly*, adj. (A.S.), strange.  
*Fermacye*, for *pharmacie*, n. (A.N.), a medicine.  
*Ferms*, n. (A.N.), a farm.  
*Fermerere*, n. (Lat.), the officer in a religious house who had the care of the infirmary.  
*Fern*, adj. (A.S.), distant.  
*Ferne*, adv. (A.S.), before.  
*Fers*, adj. (A.N.), fierce.  
*Ferth*, fourth.  
*Ferthere*, adv. (A.S.), further.  
*Ferthing*, n. (A.S.), a farthing, *i. e.* fourthing; any very small thing, or quantity.  
*Feste*, n. (A.N.), feast.  
*Festying*, part. pr. (A.N.), feasting.  
*Festyng*, adj., used to feasts.  
*Fetine*, v. (A.S.), to fasten.  
*Fet*, n. (A.N.), work, performance.  
*Fetys*, adj., well made, neat.  
*Fetysly*, adv., neatly, properly.  
*Fet*, *fette*, part. pa. of *fecche*, fetched, brought.  
*Fey*, n. (A.N.), faith.  
*Feyne*, v. (A.N.), to make a pass in fencing, to fence.  
*Fil*, pa. t. of *fall*, fell.  
*Fynch*, n. (A.S.), a small bird. To pull a finch was a proverbial expression signifying to strip a man, by fraud, of his money, &c.  
*Fynt*, findeth.  
*Fyn*, n. (A.N.), end.  
*Fine*, v. (A.N.), to cease.  
*Fyt*, n. (A.S.), a division or short portion of a poem.  
*Fithul*, n. (A.S.), a fiddle.  
*Fize*, adj. (A.N.), fixed.  
*Flayne*, part. pa. of *flaye*, v. (A.S.), flayed  
*Flatour*, n. (A.N.), a flatterer.  
*Fleeked*, adj. (A.S.), spotted.  
*Fle*, v. neut. (A.S.), to fly.  
*Fleem*, n. pl. (A.S.), fleas.  
*Fleme*, v. (A.S.), to banish.  
*Flemer*, n., one who banishes.  
*Flete*, v. (A.S.), to float, to swim.  
*Flicker*, v. neut. (A.S.), to flutter.  
*Flit*, v. neut. (A.S.), to fly.  
*Flo*, n. (A.S.), an arrow; *flone*, pl.  
*Flokkel*, adv. (A.S.), in a flock.  
*Floyte*, n. (A.N.), a flute.  
*Florein*, pr. n., a species of gold coin.  
*Flotery*, adj. (A.S.), floating.  
*Flour-d*, v. (A.N.), flourished.  
*Flouting*, playing on the flute.  
*Foyne*, v. (A.N.), to make a pass in fencing; to push.  
*Foyssoun*, n. (A.N.), abundance.  
*Folid*, part. pa. (A.S.), foaled.  
*Fole-large*, adj., foolishly liberal.  
*Folye*, n. (A.N.), folly.  
*Folly*, adv., foolishly.  
*Folwe*, v. (A.S.), to follow.  
*Fond*, pa. t. of *finde*, found.  
*Fonde*, v. (A.S.), to try.  
*Fone*, n. pl., foes.  
*Fonge*, v. (A.S.), to take.  
*Fon*, n. (A.S.), a fool.  
*Foot-hoot*, immediately.  
*Foot-mantel*, probably a sort of riding-petticoat, such as is still used by market-women.  
*For*, in composition with verbs, answering to the German *ver-*, gives in some words an intensive, and in others a privative signification, and always communicates a destructive sense.  
*Forboden*, part. pa. of *forbede*, v. (A.S.), forbidden.  
*For-brused*, part. pa. (A.S.), sorely bruised.  
*Force*, n. (A.N.): *no force*, no matter; *I do no force*, I care not.  
*For-cutte*, v. (A.S.), to cut through.  
*For-do*, v. (A.S.), to do away, to ruin.  
*For-don*, *for-do*, part. pa., undone.  
*For-drunken*, part. pa. (A.S.), very drunken.  
*For-dry*, adj. (A.S.), very dry.  
*For-divined*, part. pa. (A.S.), wasted away.  
*Foreweting*, n. (A.S.), foreknowledge.  
*Forewete*, *forwote*, v., to foreknow.  
*Forfalte*, v. (A.N.), to misdo; to forfeit.  
*For-fare*, v. (A.N.), to fare ill.  
*For-fered*, part. pa. (A.S.), much afraid.  
*For-gon*, inf. v. (A.S.), to omit, to lose.  
*For-groven*, part. pa. (A.S.), overgrown.  
*For-kerve*, v. (A.S.), to carve or cut through.  
*For-laft*, part. pa. (A.S.), left off entirely.  
*For-lese*, v. (A.S.), to lose entirely.  
*For-lete*, v. (A.S.), to give over, to quit; to forsake.  
*For-lost*, part. pa. (A.S.), utterly lost.  
*Forme*, adj. (A.S.), first.  
*Forneys*, n. (A.N.), a furnace.  
*For-pyned*, part. pa. (A.S.), wasted away, tormented.  
*For-sleuthe*, *for-sleuthe*, *for-slugge*, v. (A.S.), to lose through sloth.  
*Forster*, n. (A.N.), a forester.  
*For-straight*, part. pa. (A.S.), distracted.  
*Forthy*, adv. (A.S.), forward by.  
*For-thinke*, v. (A.S.), to repent.  
*For-thought*, pa. t. of *for-thinke*.  
*Forthy*, conj. (A.S.), therefore.  
*For-troden*, part. pa. of *for-trede*, v. (A.S.), trodden down.  
*Fortune*, v. (A.N.), to make fortunate, to give good or bad fortune.  
*For-waked*, part. pa. (A.S.), weary with being awake.  
*For-wandred*, part. pa. (A.S.), having wandered long.  
*Forward*, n. (A.S.), a promise, or covenant.  
*For-wrapped*, part. pa., wrapped up.  
*For-yelde*, v. (A.S.), to repay.  
*Fostred*, part. pa. (A.S.), nourished.  
*Fostyng*, n., nutriment.  
*Fother*, n. (A.S.), a carriage-load, an indefinite large quantity.  
*Frule*, n. (A.S.), a bird.  
*Found*, pa. t. of *finde*, supplied.  
*Foundred*, pa. t. (A.S.), fell down.  
*Fowel*, n. (A.N.), a fowl, a bird.  
*Fra for fro*, prep. (A.S.), from: *til and fro*, to and fro.  
*Franchise*, n. (A.S.), frankness, generosity.  
*Frank*, n., a denomination of French money.  
*Frankleyn*, n. (A.N.). Fortescue, de L. L. Ang. e. 29. describes a frank-lain to be a pater familias—magnus ditatus possessionibus, a father of a family enriched with great possessions. He is classed with, but after, the Miles and Armiger; and is distinguished from the Libere tenentes, free tenants, and Valecti; though, as it would seem, the only real distinction between him and other freeholders consisted in the largeness of his estate.  
*Fraught*, v. (A.S.), to freight, load a ship.  
*Fre*, adj. (A.S.), willing, unconstrained, at liberty, liberal, bountiful.  
*Freknes*, n. pl. (A.S.), spots, freckles.  
*Frelit*, n. (A.N.), frailty.  
*Fremde*, *Fremed*, adj. (A.S.), strange.  
*Frere*, n. (A.N.), a friar.



*Frete*, v. (A.S.), to eat, devour; *frete*, part. pa., eaten.  
*Freyne*, v. (A.S.), to ask.  
*Frote*, v. (A.S.), to rub.  
*Fructuous*, adj. (A.S.), fruitful.  
*Fruitester*, n. (A.S.), a female seller of fruit.  
*Ful-drive*, part. pa., fully driven, completed.  
*Fulliche*, adv., fully.  
*Fulsomnes*, n. (A.S.), satiety.  
*Fumeter*, pr. n. of a plant; fumitory.  
*Fumosité*, n. (A.S.), fumes arising from excessive drinking.  
*Fundament*, n. (A.S.), foundation.  
*Furial*, adj. (A.S.), raging.  
*Fusible*, adj., capable of being melted.

*Gabbe*, v. (A.S.), to jest; to talk idly; to lie.  
*Gadling*, n. (A.S.), an idle vagabond.  
*Gadred*, part. pa. (A.S.), gathered.  
*Gaylard*, adj. (A.S.), gay, licentious.  
*Gaito-beries*, berries of the dog-wood tree.  
*Gale*, v. (A.S.), to crie, or sing.  
*Galyngale*, pr. n., sweet cyperus.  
*Galoche*, n. (A.S.), a shoe.  
*Galpe*, v. (A.S.), to gape, to yawn.  
*Gallows*, n. pl. (A.S.), the gallows.  
*Gan*, pa. t. (A.S.), began; *gannan*, pl.  
*Gane*, v. (A.S.), to yawn.  
*Gar*, v. (A.S.), to make.  
*Gargate*, n. (A.S.), the throat.  
*Garrison*, n. (A.S.), a guard, or garrison.  
*Gate*, n. (A.S.), a way.  
*Goatthud*, goat-toothed.  
*Gaude*, n. (A.S.), jest; *gaudes*, pl., ridiculous tricks.  
*Gaule*, v. (A.S.), to yell.  
*Gaure*, v. (A.S.), to stare.  
*Geant*, n. (A.S.), a giant.  
*Geat*, adj. (A.S.), neat, pretty.  
*Gentery*, n. (A.S.), gentility.  
*Gentily*, adj. (A.S.), civil, liberal, gentlemanlike.  
*Gentlines*, n., civility, gentility.  
*Gepoun*, n. (A.S.), a short cassock.  
*Gene*, n. (A.S.), all sorts of instruments of cookery, of war, of apparel, of chemistry; *In here kentynt geres*, l. 1533, in their strange fashions.  
*Gery*, *gerful*, (A.S.), changeable.  
*Gesse*, v. (A.S.), to guess.  
*Gest*, n. (A.S.), a guest.  
*Geste*, v. (A.S.), to relate gestes, or adventures.  
*Gestes*, n. pl., actions, adventures.  
*Gestour*, n., a relater of gestes.  
*Get*, n. (A.S.), fashion, behaviour; *With that false get*, with that cheating contrivance.  
*Gye*, v. (A.S.), to rule; to guide.  
*Gylour*, n. (A.S.), a deceiver.  
*Gilt*, n. (A.S.), guilt.  
*Giltles*, adj., free from guilt.  
*Giltif*, adj., guilty.  
*Gin*, n. (A.S.), engine, contrivance.  
*Gipser*, n. (A.S.), a pouch or purse.  
*Gypoun*, n.; see *gepoun*.  
*Girde*, v. (A.S.), to strike, to smite.  
*Girt*, part. pa. of *girde*; *thwyrh girt*, smitten through.  
*Gyse*, n. (A.S.), guise, fashion.  
*Gyte*, n. (A.S.), a gown.  
*Giterne*, n. (A.S.), a guitar.  
*Glade*, v. (A.S.), to make glad.  
*Gladson*, adj., pleasant.  
*Gle*, n. (A.S.), mirth, music; the performance of the minstrels or gleemen.  
*Gleede*, n. (A.S.), a burning coal; a spark of fire.  
*Gleypre*, n. (A.S.), the white of an egg.  
*Gliming*, n., glimmering.  
*Glitren*, pr. t. pl. of *gliter*, v. (A.S.), they glitter.  
*Glode*, pa. t. of *glide*.

*Glose*, n. (A.S.), a comment or interpretation; v., to comment, or interpret; to speak tenderly; to flatter.  
*Glowelen*, pa. t. pl. (A.S.), they glowed.  
*Gnarre*, n. (A.S.), a hard knot in a tree.  
*Gnat*, n. (A.S.), is put for any little worthless thing.  
*Gnuf*, n., an old cuff, a miser. Gloss. Ur.  
*Gnowe*, pa. t. (A.S.), gnawed.  
*Go*, v. (A.S.), means sometimes to walk, in contradistinction to riding.  
*Gobet*, n. (A.S.), a morsel, a bit.  
*Good-les*, adj., without money or goods.  
*Godsib*, n. (A.S.), a gossip, a godfather.  
*Gold-beten*, adj. (A.S.), of beaten gold.  
*Goldsmithry*, n. (A.S.), goldsmith's work.  
*Goliardeis*, n. (A.S.), a low class of society in the middle ages, who lived upon the superfluity of the richer.  
*Gon*, inf. m. (A.S.), to go; pr. t. pl., they go; part. pa., gone.  
*Gonge*, n. (A.S.), a jakes, a privy.  
*Gonnen*, *gonne*, pa. t. pl. of *ginne*, begun.  
*Gore*, n., a common name for a slip of cloth or linen wider at the bottom than at the top, which is inserted in order to widen a garment in any particular place.  
*Gossomer*, n., a thin cobweb-like substance which flies about in the air.  
*Cost*, n. (A.S.), spirit, mind.  
*Goth*, imp. m. 2d pers. pl., go ye.  
*Gourd*, n., a vessel to carry liquor; perhaps so called from its shape.  
*Governayle*, n. (A.S.), government, steerage.  
*Gowne-cloth*, cloth enough to make a gown.  
*Grace*, n. (A.S.), favour; *sory grace*, *harde grace*, misfortune.  
*Gracious*, adj. (A.S.), agreeable, graceful.  
*Grane*, n. (A.S.), grief, anger.  
*Graunge*, n. (A.S.), a farm-house.  
*Grave* (*graven*), part. pa., buried.  
*Gree*, n. (A.S.), pleasure, satisfactio; *to receyve in gree*, to take kindly; *the gree*, the prize; also, a step or degree, from the Latin *gradus*.  
*Grede*, v. (A.S.), to cry.  
*Greythe*, v. (A.S.), to prepare, make ready.  
*Grefhed*, n. (A.S.), grief.  
*Gres*, n. (A.S.), grease.  
*Grette*, n. pl. (A.S.), greeted, saluted.  
*Creves*, n. pl. (A.S.), groves.  
*Grint*, grindeth.  
*Grynte*, pa. t., ground; *grynte with his teeth*, gnashed with his teeth; *grynting*, n., grinding, gnashing.  
*Gryns*, n. (A.S.), a species of fur of the better sort.  
*Gristly*, adj. (A.S.), dreadful.  
*Grucche*, v. (A.S.), to grudge, to murmur.  
*Groine*, n. (A.S.), the snout of a swine, a hanging lip.  
*Grone*, v. (A.S.), to groan, to grunt; *gront*, pa. t., groaned.  
*Grope*, v. (A.S.), to search, to examine by feeling.  
*Grot*, n., a coin worth fourdenes.  
*Grounden*, part. pa. of *grind*.  
*Groyning*, n., discount.  
*Gruf*, adj. (A.S.), flat on the ground.  
*Guerdoun*, n. (A.S.), reward, recompense; v., to reward.  
*Gulde*, n., the flower commonly called a turnsol.  
*Guiltif*, adj. (A.S.), guilty.  
*Gurles*, n. pl. (A.S.), young persons, either male or female.  
*Haburpeon*, n. (A.S.), a diminutive of hanberg, a coat of mail.

*Hadden*, pa. t. pl., they had.  
*Haf*, pa. t. of *heve* (A.S.), heaved, raised.  
*Hail*, n. (A.S.), health, welfare.  
*Haire*, n. (A.S.), a hair-cloth.  
*Hakeney*, n. (A.S.), a hackney: an ambling horse, or pad.  
*Haketoun*, n. (A.S.), a short cassock without sleeves.  
*Hald*, part. pa., held.  
*Half*, n. (A.S.), a side, a part: a *Goddis half*, on God's part; with God's favour: *on the four halves*, on the four sides.  
*Halke*, n. (A.S.), a corner.  
*Halpe*, pa. t. (A.S.), helped.  
*Hals*, n. (A.S.), the neck.  
*Halse*, v. (A.S.), to embrace round the neck, to salute.  
*Halwes*, n. pl. (A.S.), saints.  
*Hann*, n. (A.S.), home.  
*Han*, inf. m., to have.  
*Hanselines*, a part of the dress, apparently a sort of breeches.  
*Happe*, or *hap*, n. (A.S.), chance; v., to happen.  
*Harde*, v. (A.S.), to make hard.  
*Hard-ly*, adv. (A.S.), boldly; adv. (A.S.), certainly.  
*Harding*, n. (A.S.), hardening.  
*Harie*, v. (A.S.), to hurry; to *harie and drawe*.  
*Harlot*, n. (A.S.), a low fellow, belonging to the same base class of society as the goliardeis and ribalds.  
*Harlotres*, n. pl., ribaldries.  
*Harneys*, n. (A.S.), armour, furniture.  
*Harneysse*, v. (A.S.), to dress, to furnish  
*Harow*, interj. (A.S.), an exclamation of alarm.  
*Harwed*, pa. t. v., (A.S.), harried, plundered.  
*Hasardour*, n. (A.S.), a player at hazard, a gamester.  
*Hasardrie*, n., gaming in general.  
*Hastifly*, adv. (A.S.), hastily.  
*Hate*, v. (A.S.), to be named.  
*Hauwerk*, n. (A.S.), a coat of mail.  
*Hawen*, inf. m. of *have*.  
*Haunt*, n. (A.S.), custom, practice.  
*Haunte*, v. (A.S.), to practise; *haunted*, pa. t. pl., they practised, frequented.  
*Hauteyn*, adj. (A.S.), haughty, high, loud; *a hauteyn faucon*, a high-flying hawk; *faucon hautain*.  
*Hawe*, n. (A.S.), a hawthorn-berry; a farmyard, churchyard.  
*Hawe-bake*, according to Urry, for *hauberk*.  
*He*, pron. (A.S.), is often prefixed in all its cases to proper names emphatically, according to the Saxon usage: He Moises: He Titus.  
*Heed*, n. (A.S.), a head.  
*Hegges*, n. pl. (A.S.), hedges.  
*Hele*, v. (A.S.), to hide; to heal, to help.  
*Hele*, n., health.  
*Hem*, obl. c. pl. of *he*, them.  
*Hen*, adv., hence.  
*Hende*, *hende*, *hendy*, adj. (A.S.), civil, courteous.  
*Henen*, *heune*, *hennes*, *hens*, adv. (A.S.), hence.  
*Heng*, pa. t., hung.  
*Hente*, v. (A.S.), to take hold of, to catch; *hent*, pa. t. and part.  
*Hepe*, n. (A.S.), a heap, a hip, the fruit of the dog-rose.  
*Herowd*, *heraud*, n. (A.S.), a herald.  
*Herverge*, n. (A.S.), lodging.  
*Herverjours*, n. pl., providers of lodgings, harbingers.  
*Herberwe*, n. (A.S.), an inn, a lodging; in astrology, the place of the sun: v., to lodge.  
*Herde*, *hierde*, n. (A.S.), a keeper; a herd.

*Here*, pron., their.

*Heere*, v. (A.S.), to hear; *herd*, *herde*, pa. t. and part.; *herden*, pa. t. pl.

*Heer*, n. (A.S.), hair; *heren*, adj., made of hair.

*Heris*, l. 7508, theirs.

*Herking*, part. pr. (A.S.), hearkening.

*Hern*, n. (A.S.), a corner.

*Heronswees*, n. pl. (A.N.), young herons. *Herse*, n. (A.S.), the heart; *herse-spon*, l. 2608, this part of the body is not named in the dictionaries. From a passage in Johnson's *Sad Shepherd*, Tyrrhitt suspects it may mean the concave part of the breast, where the lower ribs unite with the cartilago ensiformis.

*Herteles*, adj., without courage.

*Herly*, adj., hearty.

*Herie*, v. (A.S.), to praise.

*Herying*, n., praise.

*Heste*, n. (A.S.), command, promise.

*Hete*, v. (A.S.), to promise, to be called.

See *highte*.

*Hethenese*, n. (A.S.), the country of the heathens.

*Hethyng*, n. (A.S.), contempt.

*Heve*, v. (A.S.), to heave, to raise; v. neut., to labour.

*Hrovd*, n. (A.S.), the head.

*Heve*, v. (A.S.), to out, to hew.

*Heve*, n. (A.S.), colour, appearance.

*Heygh*, adj., high.

*Hidous*, adj. (A.N.), dreadful; *hidously*, adv., terribly.

*Hye*, n. (A.S.), haste, diligence; v. to hasten.

*Hight*, n. (A.S.), height.

*Hights*, v. (A.S.), called.

*Hilt*, pret., held.

*Him*, obj. of *he*, is often used alone in that reciprocal sense which is generally expressed by the addition of the *adj. self*. Than hath he don his frend, ne him, no shame, i. e. nor himself. As he him laid. And clad him. And bare him.

*Hinderest*, the hindmost.

*Hyne*, n. (A.S.), a servant in husbandry, a hind.

*Hir*, their.

*Hire*, obj. c. of *she*, is often, like *him*, put for herself, and without the usual preposition. See *him*.

*Hire*, pron. poss., her.

*Hockepot*, n. (A.N.), a mixture of various things shaken together in the same pot.

*Hoker*, n. (A.S.), forwardness; *hokerty*, adv., forwardly.

*Hold*, n. (A.S.), a fort or castle.

*Hold*, *holden*, part. pa., obliged.

*Hol*, *hole*, adj. (A.S.), whole, entire, sound.

*Holly*, adv., entirely, wholly.

*Holour*, n. (A.S.), a whoremonger.

*Holte*, n. (A.S.), a grove, or forest; *holte*, l. 4927, for *holde*, a fort or castle.

*Holt*, holdeth.

*Homly*, adj. (A.S.), domestic, plain, simple.

*Homlygnesse*, n. (A.S.), domestic management; familiarity.

*Honde*, n. (A.S.), a hand.

*Honest*, adj. (A.N.), means generally, according to the French usage, creditable, honourable; becoming a person of rank.

*Honesté*, *honesté*, n. (A.N.), virtue, decency, good manners.

*Hoor*, *hore*, adj. (A.S.), hoary, grey.

*Hoat*, adj. (A.S.), hot.

*Hope*, v. (A.S.), to expect; to hope.

*Hoppsteres*, n. pl. (A.S.), female dancers.

*Hor*, n. (A.S.), a treasure; a private place fit for the keeping of treasure.

*Horsly*, adj., is applied to a horse, as manly is to a man.

*Hospitalers*, n. pl., religious persons, of both sexes, who attended the sick in hospitals.

*Host*, n. (A.N.), an army.

*Hostel*, n. (A.N.), an inn, a dwelling-place.

*Hostyler*, n. (A.N.), an inn-keeper.

*Hostelry*, n. (A.N.), an inn, or lodging-house.

*Hot*, adv., hotly.

*Hote*, *hoten*, part. pa. of *hete*, called.

*Hourd-fisch*, n. (A.S.), the dog-fish.

*Houped*, pa. t. (A.N.), hooped, or hollowed; shoaled.

*Housbondrye*, n. (A.S.), thrift, economical management.

*Housbond-man*, n. (A.S.), the master of the family.

*Housel*, n. (A.S.), the Eucharist.

*Housete*, v., to administer the sacrament: to *ben houselyd*, to receive the sacrament.

*Houwe*, n. (A.S.), a cap, or hood.

*Humblehode*, n., humble state.

*Humblese*, n., humility.

*Hunte*, *hont*, n. (A.S.), a huntsman.

*Hurtle*, v. (A.N.), to push.

*Hylled*, part. pa. (A.S.), hidden. See *hete*.

*Ich*, pron. (A.S.), I: *so the ich*, so may I prosper.

*Idel*, adj. (A.S.), idle, fruitless; *in idel*, in vain.

*Idolater*, n. (A.N.), an idolater.

*Ik*, *yk*, pron. (A.S.), I.

*Ike*, adj. (A.S.), same.

*Imaginatif*, adj. (A.N.), suspicious.

*Imped*, part. pa. (A.S.), planted, grafted.

*Impes*, n. pl., shoot of trees, grafts.

*Importable*, adj. (A.N.), intolerable, impossible.

*Impossible*, n. (A.N.), an impossibility.

*In*, prep. (A.S.), upon.

*Indigne*, adj. (A.N.), unworthy.

*Ingot*, n., a mould for casting ingots.

*Inhabit*, part. pa. (A.N.), inhabited.

*Inly*, adv. (A.S.), inwardly, deeply, thoroughly.

*Inne*, adv. (A.S.), in.

*In*, *inne*, n. (A.S.), a house, habitation, lodging.

*Inned*, *ynned*, part. pa. (A.S.), lodged.

*Innocent*, adj. (A.N.), ignorant.

*Inwit*, n. (A.S.), understanding; conscience.

*Inwith*, prep. (A.S.), within.

*Irous*, adj., passionate.

*Itaille*, pr. n. (A.S.),

*Jambeuz*, n. pl. (A.N.), armour for the legs.

*Jane*, n., a coin of (Janua) Genoa; it is put for any small coin.

*Jangle*, v. (A.N.), to prate, to talk much or fast; n., prate, babble.

*Jangler*, *jangler*, n., a prater; *jangleres*, a female prater.

*Jope*, n. (A.N.), a trick, a jest.

*Jope*, v., to jest, to cheat, to laugh at; to put to shame.

*Joper*, n., a common jester or buffoon.

*Joperie*, n., buffoonery.

*Jestes*, n. pl. as *gestes*, deeds.

*Jewerie*, n. (A.N.), a district inhabited by Jews.

*Jeweise*, n. (A.N.), judgment, punishment.

*Jocunde*, adj. (A.N.), joyous, pleasant.

*Jogelour*, n. (A.N.), a minstrel, a juggler.

*Jolyf*, adj. (A.N.), joyful, jolly.

*Jordanes*, n. pl., chamber-pots.

*Jossa*, an exclamation.

*Journee*, n. (A.N.), a day's journey; a day's work.

*Jubalter*, pr. n., Gibraltar.

*Jubbe*, n., a vessel for holding ale or wine.

*Judicum*, the Book of Judges.

*Juyl*, n., the month of July.

*Jupartie*, n. (A.N.), jeopardy.

*Justice*, n. (A.N.), a judge.

*Juwysse*, n. (A.N.), judgment.

*Kaynard*; *caynard*, or *eaignard*, was a French term of reproach, which seems to have been originally derived from *canis*, dog.

*Kemelyn*, n. (A.S.), a tub.

*Kempt*, *kempt*, part. pa. (A.S.), combed.

*Keep*, n. (A.N.), care, attention; *take no keep*; to not mind it.

*Kepe*, v., to take care.

*Kers*, n. (A.S.), water-crests: of *paramours ne sette he nat a kers*, would now be expressed by, he cared not a rush for love.

*Kerver*, n. (A.S.), a carver.

*Kesse*, v., to kiss; *kest*, pa. t., kissed.

*Kevechef*, fr. (A.N.), a cover for the head, a kerchief.

*Kevere*, v. (A.N.), to cover, or recover.

*Kichil*, n. (A.S.), a little cake.

*Kid*, *kiddle*, (A.S.), made known, discovered.

*Kike*, v. (A.S.), to kick.

*Kind*, n. (A.S.), kindred.

*Kynd*, n. (A.S.), nature.

*Kyndely*, adv., naturally.

*Kinrede*, n., kindred.

*Kirtel*, n. (A.S.), a tunic or waistcoat.

*Kythe*, v. (A.S.), to show, to make known.

*Knakkes*, n. pl. (A.S.), trifling tricks.

*Knarre*, n. (A.S.), a knot in a tree.

*Knarry*, adj. (A.S.), full of knarres, or knots.

*Knave*, n. (A.S.), a servant, properly a boy-servant: a *knave-child*, a male child.

*Knight*, n. (A.S.), a servant, generally a servant in war; a soldier, a dubbed knight.

*Knighthode*, n., valour.

*Knit*, part. pa. (A.S.), joined, bound, agreed.

*Knobbes*, n. pl. (A.S.), excrescences in the shape of buds or buttons; pimples.

*Knove*, n. (A.S.), a knee.

*Knoveleche*, v. (A.S.), to acknowledge.

*Knoveleching*, n., knowledge.

*Knoute*, (A.S.), knew, known.

*Kyke*, v. (A.S.), to look steadfastly.

*Laas*, n. (A.N.), a lace, a snare.

*Labbe*, n., a blab, a great talker; *labbing*, blabbing.

*Lace*, n. (A.N.), a snare.

*Lacert*, n. (A.N.), a fleshy muscle.

*Lachesse*, n. (A.N.), slackness, negligence.

*Lad*, *ladde*, led, carried.

*Laf*, left.

*Layneres*, n. pl. (A.N.), straps or thongs.

*Lake*, n., a sort of cloth.

*Lakke*, (A.S.), a fault, a disgraceful action; want.

*Large*, adj. (A.N.), spacious, free, prodigal: *till that it was prime large*, till prime was for spent.

*Largely*, adv., fully.

*Lasse*, less.

*Latrede*, part. pa. (A.S.), delayed, tardy.

*Lathe*, n. (A.S.), a barn.

*Latoun*, n. (A.N.), a kind of mixed metal of the colour of brass.

*Laudes*, the service performed in the fourth, or last, watch of the night.

*Lavunde*, n. (A.N.), a plain not ploughed.

*Laurole*, n. (A.N.), spurge-laurel.

*Laver*, n. (A.N.), laurel.

*Laverock*, n. (A.S.), a lark.

*Launcegay*, n., a sort of lance.



- Lavours*, n. pl. (A.N.), lavers.  
*Laxatif*, n. (A.N.), a purging medicine.  
*Lay*, n. (A.S.), law, religious profession.  
*Layl*, n. (A.S.), lightning.  
*Lazer*, n. (A.N.), a leper.  
*Leche*, n. (A.S.), a physician; *lechecraft*, the skill of a physician, the practice of medicine.  
*Lecherous*, adj., provoking lechery.  
*Lechour*, n. (A.N.), a lecher.  
*Leden*, n. (A.S.), language.  
*Lees*, n. (A.N.), a leash by which dogs are held.  
*Leaf*, adj. (A.S.), pleasing, agreeable; beloved: *be him loth, or leaf*, though it be unpleasant to him, or pleasing; *for lefe ne lothe*, for friend nor enemy: it sometimes signifies pleased: *I am wrought leaf to gabbe*, I am not pleased to prate; *I take no pleasure in prating*.  
*Leafal*, adj. (A.S.), lawful.  
*Legge*, v. (A.S.), to lay.  
*Leysir*, n. (A.N.), leisure, opportunity.  
*Leite*, n. (A.S.), light; lightning.  
*Lemes*, n. pl. (A.S.), flames.  
*Lemman*, n. (A.S.), a lover, or gallant, a mistress.  
*Lendes*, n. pl. (A.S.), the loins.  
*Lene*, adj. (A.S.), lean.  
*Lene*, v. (A.S.), to lend, to grant.  
*Lenger*, longer.  
*Lenton*, n., the season of Lent.  
*Leconine*, adj., belonging to a lion.  
*Lepart*, n., a leopard.  
*Leep*, leaps; leapt.  
*Lere*, *lerne*, v. (A.S.), to learn, to teach; *leved*, learnt.  
*Lere*, n. (A.S.), the skin.  
*Lese*, v. (A.S.), to lose; *leseth*, imp., lose ye.  
*Lesing*, n. (A.S.), a lie, a falsity.  
*Lest*, *list*, *lust*, n. (A.S.), pleasure.  
*Leste*, *liste*, *luste*, v., to please; it is generally used as an impersonal in the third person only, for it pleases, or it pleased him to ride so; *wel to drynke us liste*, it pleases us well to drink; *if ye beste*, if it please you; *ne list not pleye*, it pleases me not to play.  
*Liste*, least.  
*Lette*, v. (A.S.), to leave, to omit; to leave, to permit; to hinder.  
*Let*, n., delay, hindrance.  
*Letturure*, *letterure*, n. (A.N.), literature.  
*Letuarie*, n. (A.N.), an electuary.  
*Leve*, n. (A.S.), desire, inclination.  
*Leve*, adj. (A.S.), dear.  
*Leve*, v. (A.S.), to believe; *leveth me*, believe me.  
*Levere*, n. (A.S.), lightning.  
*Lever*, comp. d. of *leaf*, more agreeable; *I hadde lever*, I had rather.  
*Levsel*, l. 4059, the meaning of this word is doubtful.  
*Levrd*, *levde*, adj. (A.S.), ignorant, unlearned; lay; lascivious.  
*Leyte*, n. (A.S.), flame.  
*Liard*, n. (A.N.), a name for a horse; belonging originally to a horse of a grey colour, as *layard*, from *loy*.  
*Lich-touke* (A.S.), the custom of watching with dead bodies.  
*Livis*, n. pl. (A.N.), subjects.  
*Lifhode*, n. (A.S.), living, existence.  
*Lifly*, adv. (A.S.), like the life.  
*Liflygh*, n. (A.N.), allegiance.  
*Ligge*, v. (A.S.), to lie down; *liggyng*, lying.  
*Lighte*, v. (A.S.), to enlighten, to make light, or pleasant; to descend, to alight.  
*Liken*, v. (A.S.), to compare.  
*Like*, v. (A.S.), to please: *it liketh hen*, it pleasesh them.  
*Licorous*, *licerous*, adj. (A.S.), Gluttonous, lascivious.
- Licorouses*, *likerousnes*, n., greediness; lechery.  
*Likyn*, n. (A.S.), pleasure.  
*Limayle*, n. (A.N.), filings of any metal.  
*Limed*, part. pa. (A.S.), caught, as with bird-fine.  
*Limed*, part. pa. (A.S.), polished, as with a file.  
*Lime-rod*, a twig with bird-lime.  
*Lymytacioun*, n., a certain precinct allowed to a limitour.  
*Lymytour*, n., a friar licensed to beg within a certain district.  
*Lynage*, n. (A.N.), family.  
*Lynde*, n. (A.S.), the lime-tree.  
*Lisse*, n. (A.S.), remission, abatement.  
*Lissid*, part. pa. (A.S.), eased, relieved.  
*Liste*, v. See *leste*.  
*Litarge*, n. (A.N.), white-lead.  
*Lyte*, adj. (A.S.), little.  
*Lith*, n. (A.S.), a limb.  
*Lither*, adj. (A.S.), wicked.  
*Litherly*, adv. (A.S.), ill, badly.  
*Lyve*, n. (A.S.), life; *on lyve*, in life, alive: *Lyves creatures*, living creatures.  
*Lodmenage*, *Loode-sterre*. See the statute 3 Geo. I. c. 13, where loadmenage is used repeatedly in the sense of pilotage; the north star is similarly called the lodestere, and hence also our name of loadstone for the magnet: *lodemen* occurs in other writings of Chaucer for pilots.  
*Loft* (A.S.), *on loft*, aloft, on high.  
*Loge*, n. (A.N.), a lodge, habitation; *loggid*, lodged; *logging*, n., a lodging.  
*Loken*, *loke*, part. pa. of *loke*, v. (A.S.), locked, shut close.  
*Lollar*, v., a Lollard.  
*Londe*, n. (A.S.), land.  
*Lone*, n. (A.S.), a lean, any thing lent.  
*Longe*, v. (A.S.), to belong, to desire.  
*Lony*, along.  
*Loos*, *los*, n. (A.N.), praise.  
*Lordynghes*, n. pl. (A.S.), sirs, masters; a diminutive of lords.  
*Loraschipe*, n. (A.S.), supreme power.  
*Lore*, n. (A.S.), knowledge, doctrine, advice.  
*Lorel*, n. (A.S.), a good-for-nothing fellow.  
*Lorne*, part. pa. of *lese*, (A.S.), lost, undone.  
*Losengeour*, n. (A.N.), a flatterer; *losen-gery*, n., flattery.  
*Loth*, adj. (A.S.), odious, disagreeable, more hateful; *lothy*, adj., loathsome.  
*Love-dayes*, days appointed for the amicable settlement of differences.  
*Love-drink*, n., a drink to excite love.  
*Love-longyn*, n., desire of love.  
*Lough*, laughed.  
*Louwe*, a lurking fellow.  
*Lowe*, v. (A.S.), to look discontented.  
*Loute*, v. (A.S.), to bow, to lurk.  
*Loonlyhede*, n. (A.S.), humility.  
*Luce*, n. (A.N.), the fish called a pike.  
*Luldr*, invited to sleep.  
*Lumbardes*, n. pl., bankers, remitters of money.  
*Luarie*, n., a herb, moonwort.  
*Lure*, n. (A.N.), a device used by falconers for calling their hawks.  
*Lure*, v., to bring to the lure.  
*Lust*, n., see *lest*.  
*Lust*, he desires.  
*Lustyhede*, n. (A.S.), pleasure, mirth.  
*Luzurie*, n. (A.N.), lechery.
- Maat*, (A.N.), dejected; struck dead.  
*Mace*, n. (A.N.), a club.  
*Made*, v. (A.S.), to become mad.  
*Mahoun*, pr. n., Mahomet.  
*Mayle*, n. (A.N.), a coat of mail.  
*Maintenance*, n. (A.N.), behaviour.  
*Maisterie*, *maistris*, n. (A.N.), skill, skillful management, power, superiority.
- Maistresse*, n. (A.N.), mistress, governess.  
*Maistrise*, n. (A.N.), masterly workmanship.  
*Mabe*, n. (A.S.), a fellow, a mate, a husband, a wife.  
*Make*, v. (A.S.), to compose or make verses: *to make a man's verbe*, to cheat him.  
*Maked*, part. pa., made.  
*Male*, n. (A.S.), a budget, or portmantau; (evn. ill.  
*Malfeic*, n. (A.N.), enchantment, witchcraft.  
*Maisoun*, n. (A.N.), malediction, curse.  
*Malvesie*, n., Malmsay wine.  
*Maaere*, n. (A.S.), a threat; v., to threaten.  
*Manciple*, n., an officer who had the care of purchasing victuals for an inn of court.  
*Mandement*, n. (A.N.), mandate.  
*Manere*, n. (A.N.), carriage, behaviour; kind, or sort.  
*Mayne*, n. (A.N.), madness.  
*Mannish*, adj. (A.S.), human, proper to the human species; masculine, proper to man, as distinguished from woman.  
*Maunor*, n. (A.N.), dwelling.  
*Mantlet*, n. (A.N.), a short mantle.  
*Marcian*, adj., martial, under the influence of Mars.  
*Marreys*, n. (A.N.), a marsh.  
*Mary*, n. (A.S.), marrow; *mary-bones*, marrow-bones.  
*Market-beter*, probably, one that endeavours to lower prices.  
*Markis*, n. (A.N.), a marquis.  
*Martyre*, v. (A.N.), to torment.  
*Mase*, n., a wild fancy; v., to doubt, to be confounded; *masednesse*, astonishment, confusion.  
*Masein*, n., a drinking-cup.  
*Mate*, n. (A.N.), dejected, struck dead.  
*Mauvement*, n. (A.N.), mandate.  
*Maugré*, (A.N.), in spite of.  
*Mavis*, n. (A.S.), a thrush.  
*Mauwet*, n., an idol.  
*Mauetrie*, n., the religion of Mahomet, idolatry.  
*Mawoc*, n. (A.S.), the stomach.  
*May*, n. (A.S.), a virgini; a young woman.  
*Maydenhode*, n. (A.S.), virginity.  
*Mele*, n. (A.S.), a meadow.  
*Meede*, n. (A.S.), reward.  
*Mele*, *meth*, n., mead, a liquor made of honey.  
*Medle*, v. (A.N.), to mix; *medled*, mixed.  
*Meyne*, *meigne*, *meisne*, (A.N.), household attendants, an army.  
*Meint*, (A.S.), mixed, mingled.  
*Melle*, n., a mill.  
*Memorie*, n. (A.N.), remembrance; v., to remember.  
*Mendinaunt*, n. pl. (A.N.), friars of the begging orders.  
*Meue*, v. (A.S.), to mean, to intend.  
*Mene*, n. (A.N.), a mean, or instrument.  
*Mene*, adj., middle.  
*Meuvere*, n. (A.N.), a sort of fur.  
*Merciable*, adj. (A.N.), capable of mercy, merciful.  
*Meritorie*, adj. (A.N.), meritorious.  
*Merk*, n. (A.S.), a mark, an image.  
*Merville*, n. (A.N.), wonder, marvel.  
*Mery*, adj. (A.S.), merry, pleasant.  
*Desaventure*, n. (A.N.), misfortune.  
*Mesal*, n. (A.N.), a leper.  
*Meserie*, n. (A.N.), leprosy.  
*Messagr*, n. (A.N.), a messenger.  
*Messe*, n. (A.N.), the service of the mass.  
*Mester*, n. (A.N.), trade, occupation: *what mestir men ye been*, what kind of men ye are; need.  
*Mesurable*, adj. (A.N.), moderate.

*Meschaunce*, n. (A.N.), misfortune.  
*Maschiefe*, n. (A.N.), misfortune.  
*Mesure*, n. (A.N.), moderation.  
*Meite*, adj. (A.S.), fitting, convenient.  
*Mele*, n. (A.S.), meat; *during the meles space*, during the time of eating.  
*Mele*, v. (A.S.), to meet; to dream.  
*Metyng*, dreaming.  
*Mele*, dreamed.  
*Meve*, n. (A.S.), a cage for hawks, while they mne, or change their feathers; a cage, in general, or any sort of confinement.  
*Might*, pa. t. of *May* (A.S.), was able: *nighthen*, pl.  
*Ministres*, n. pl. (A.N.), officers of justice, ministers, minstrels.  
*Mynour*, n. (A.N.), a miner.  
*Mynstralcey*, n. (A.N.), music, musical instruments.  
*Mis*, adv., ill, amiss. It is often to be supplied to a second verb, having been expressed in composition with a former. If *lifat* I mis-speke or say. That hire mis-doth or saith. There is nothing mis-saide nor do.  
*Mis*, n., a wrong.  
*Mysavise*, v., to advise wrongly.  
*Misboden*, injured.  
*Misborn*, misbeloved.  
*Mysderte*, v., to distribute wrongly.  
*Misericorde*, n. (A.N.), mercy, pity.  
*Misese*, n., uneasiness.  
*Misgyed*, misguided.  
*Mysgoon*, *mis-jo*, gone wrong.  
*Mistily*, adv. (A.S.), darkly.  
*Mitaine*, n. (A.N.), a glove.  
*Mite*, n. (A.S.), a small worm.  
*Mizen*, n. (A.S.), a dunghill.  
*Mo*, more.  
*Moche*, *mochel*, adj. (A.S.), great, in quantity, in number, in degree: adv., much, greatly.  
*Moder*, *mo tre*, *mo dre*, n. (A.S.), mother; the matrix, or principal plate of the astrolabe.  
*Moebils*, n. pl. (A.N.), movable goods.  
*Moist*, *moisty*, adj. (A.N.), soft.  
*Molte*, melted.  
*Mone*, n. (A.S.), the moon; lamentation.  
*Moneste*, v. (A.N.), to admonish.  
*Mood*, n. (A.S.), anger.  
*More* (A.S.), greater in quantity, in number, or in degree. It is usually joined to adjectives and adverbs, to express the comparative degree.  
*Mormal*, n., a cancer, or gangrene.  
*Mortifile*, v. (A.N.), to kill (speaking of quicksilver).  
*Mortreves*, n., a kind of broth, or soup, in the preparation of which the flesh was stamped, or beat, in a mortar.  
*Morwe*, n. (A.S.), the morning. *a-morwe*, in the morning of the following day.  
*Morwening*, n. (A.S.), the morning: *morweninges*, pl.  
*Musel*, n. (A.N.), the muzzle, mouth of a beast.  
*Moste* (A.S.), greatest.  
*Moste*, v. (A.S.), must: *mosten*, pl.  
*Mote*, v. (A.S.), must, may: *moten*, pl.  
*Mote*, n. (A.S.), an atom.  
*Mought* (A.S.), might.  
*Moule*, v. (A.S.), to grow mouldy.  
*Mountaunce*, n. (A.N.), amount, in value, or quantity.  
*Mowe*, v. (A.S.), to be able.  
*Mue*, v. (A.S.), to change.  
*Mullok*, n. (A.S.), dung, rubbish.  
*Multiplicacioun*, n. (A.N.), the art of making gold and silver.

*N*, for *ne*, not, is often joined to the beginning of the word to which it relates, as *nadde*, had not; *nam*, am not; *nas*, was not; *nerre*, were not;

*nil*, will not; *nis*, is not; *niste*, wiste not; *nalde*, would not, &c.  
*Na*, no.  
*Nakers*, n. pl. (A.N.), a kind of brazen drum used in the cavalry.  
*Nale*, n. (A.S.). This word probably, in those few passages in which it is found, should be considered, not an ale-house, as sometimes interpreted, but merely as a corruption, which has arisen from the mispronunciation and consequent miswriting of *atte nale* for *atten ale*. A similar corruption seems to have taken place in the name of that celebrated personage in our law, Mr. John Anoke, whose original appellation was John atten oke, as that of his constant antagonist was John atte stille.  
*Nam*, pa. t. of *nime* (A.S.), took.  
*Nappe*, v. (A.S.), to sleep.  
*Narwe*, adj. (A.S.), close, narrow.  
*Nat*, not.  
*Nath*, for *ne hath*, hath not.  
*Nathelses*, adv. (A.S.), not the less, nevertheless.  
*Naught*, *nought*, n. (A.S.), nothing.  
*Naught*, adv., not, not at all. It may more properly perhaps be considered as a noun used adverbially.  
*Nay*, adv. (A.S.); it seems to be used sometimes as a noun: *it is no nay*, it cannot be denied.  
*Ne* (A.S.), not, nor.  
*Needful*, adj., distressed, indigent.  
*Needely*, adv., necessarily.  
*Needes*, *neece*, adv., necessarily.  
*Nedder*, n. (A.S.), an adder.  
*Neighbore*, n. (A.S.), a neighbour.  
*Neighe*, adj. (A.S.), high; v., to approach, to come near.  
*Nempne*, v. (A.S.), to name.  
*Ner*, near: *nerre*, nigher.  
*Nesche*, adj. (A.S.), soft, tender.  
*Neet*, n. (A.S.), neat-cattle.  
*Nethir*, lower.  
*Neven*, v. (A.S.), to name.  
*Neuwe*, adv., newly.  
*Neuwe*, v., to renew: *newed*, renewed.  
*Newefangel*, adj., desirous of new things: *newfangelness*, n., inconstancy.  
*Nexte*, superl. d., highest.  
*Nice*, adj. (A.N.), foolish.  
*Nyctel*, n., folly.  
*Nyctes*, n. pl., trifles.  
*Nygard*, n. (A.N.), a stingy fellow; *nigardie*, n., stinginess.  
*Nightertale* (A.S.), night-time.  
*Night-spel*, n. (A.S.), a night-charm.  
*Noblesse*, n. (A.N.), dignity, splendour.  
*Nobley*, n., noblesse.  
*Noie*, n. (A.N.), hurt, trouble; v., to hurt, to trouble.  
*Nomen*, *nome*, part. pa. of *nime* (A.S.), taken.  
*Nomoo*, adv. (A.S.), no more.  
*Nones*: for the *nones*, i. e. for the occasion, for once.  
*Nonne*, n. (A.N.), a nun.  
*Noon*, n. (A.N.), the ninth hour of the natural day; nine o'clock in the morning; the hour of dinner.  
*Norice*, n. (A.N.), a nurse.  
*Nortelrey*, n. (A.N.), nurture, education.  
*Nose-thirles*, n. pl. (A.S.), nostrils.  
*Not*, for *ne wot*, know not.  
*Notabiliti*, n. (A.N.), a thing worthy of observation.  
*Note*, n. (A.S.), need, business.  
*Notmede*, n., a nntmeg.  
*Not-red*, a head like a nut.  
*Nother*, conj. (A.S.), nor, neither.  
*Nothing*, adv. (A.S.), not, not at all.  
*Nought*, n. and adv. (A.S.). See *naught*.  
*Nouthes*, adv. (A.S.), now.  
*Nouche*, n., a clasp or buckle.

*Now*, adv.: *now and now*, once and again.  
*Nowel*, n. (A.N.), Christmas.  
*O*, adj., for *on*, one.  
*Obyssaunce*, n. (A.N.), obedience.  
*Obyssant*, part. pr., obedient.  
*Observaunce*, n. (A.N.), respect.  
*Observe*, v. (A.N.), to respect, to pay regard to.  
*Offended*, part. pa. (A.N.), hurt.  
*Offensoun*, n., offence, damage.  
*Offryng*, n., offering at mass.  
*Ofensith*, offences.  
*Oynement*, n. (A.N.), ointment.  
*Olifaunt*, n. (A.N.), an elephant.  
*Oliveres*, n. pl. (A.N.), olive-trees.  
*On*, *oon*, adj. (A.S.), one: *after on*, alike: *they were at on*, they were agreed: *ever in on*, continually: *I mine on*, I single, I by myself.  
*Oned*, part. pa. (A.S.), made one, united.  
*Ones*, pl. of *on*: *we three ben alle ones*, we three are all one.  
*Ones*, adv. (A.S.), once: *at ones*, at once, at the same time.  
*Only*, adv. (A.S.), solely.  
*Open-ers*, n. (A.S.), the fruit of the medlar-tree.  
*Open-headed*, adj., bare-headed.  
*Oppe*, n. (A.N.), opium.  
*Oppresse*, v. (A.N.), to ravish; *oppressed*, part. pa.; *oppression*, n., rape.  
*Or*, adv. (A.S.), ere, before.  
*Oratory*, n. (A.N.), a chapel, a closet.  
*Ordered*, part. pa., ordained, in holy orders.  
*Ordres foure*, the four orders of mendicant friars.  
*Ordinance*, n. (A.N.), orderly disposition.  
*Ordinat*, part. pa., orderly, regular.  
*Ore*, n. (A.S.), grace, favour.  
*Orfryes*, n. (A.N.), gold embroidery.  
*Orison*, n. (A.N.), the horizon.  
*Orisoun*, n. (A.N.), a prayer.  
*Orolage*, n. (A.N.), a clock or dial.  
*Other*, adj. (A.S.), the other of two; *otheres*, gen. ca.  
*Other*, conj. (A.S.), or, either.  
*Oughte*, adj. (A.S.), own.  
*Over*, prep. (A.S.), above.  
*Over*, adj. (A.S.), upper; *overest*, superl., uppermost.  
*Over-gret*, adj. (A.S.), too great.  
*Over-ladde*, part. pa., overborne.  
*Over-lippe*, n., the upper lip.  
*Over-live*, v., to outlive.  
*Over-nome*, overtaken.  
*Over-thwart*, adv. (A.S.), across, over against.  
*Ought* (A.S.), anything.  
*Ought*, pa. t. of *owe*, owed: *ought* is also used as an impers. in the pr. and pa. t.: *wel ought us werke*, well behoveth it us to work.  
*Ounding*, n. (A.N.), waving, imitating waves.  
*Outre*, either.  
*Outrees*, n., outcry.  
*Outrage*, n. (A.N.), violence.  
*Outraye*, v. (A.N.), to fly out, to be outrageous.  
*Outrely*, adv. (A.N.), utterly, entirely.  
*Out-rydere*, n. (A.S.), a rider out.  
*Out-taken*, part. pa., taken out, excepted.  
*Owe*, v. (A.S.), I owe, I ought; *owen*, pl.  
*Oucher*, adv. (A.S.), anywhere.  
*Faas*, n. (A.N.), a foot-pace.  
*Face*, v. (A.N.), to pass; to surpass.  
*Payd*, part. pa., pleased, contented.  
*Paindemaie*, a sort of white bread. Skinner derives it from *panis matutinus*, *pain de matin*, morning bread. Tyrwhitt thinks it derived from



- the province of Maine, where it was perhaps made in the greatest perfection.
- Paleys*, n. (A.N.), a palace.
- Paling*, n. (A.N.), imitating pales.
- Palled*, part. pa. (A.N.), made pale.
- Palmers*, n. pl., pilgrims.
- Pan*, n. (A.S.), the skull, the head.
- Panade*, n. (A.N.), a knife, or dagger.
- Papinjay*, n. (A.N.), a parrot.
- Par*, prep. (A.N.), *par amour*, with or by love; *par compagnie*, for company; *par chance*, by chance; *par cuer*, by heart, in memory.
- Parage*, n. (A.N.), kindred.
- Paramour*, *paramours*, n. (A.N.), love, gallantry; a lover of either sex.
- Paraventure*, adv. (A.N.), haply, by chance.
- Parcel-méle*, adv. (A.S.), by parcels, or parts.
- Pardé* (A.N.), a common oath, literally, by God.
- Pardoner*, n. (A.N.), a seller of pardons or indulgences.
- Paréments*, n. pl. (A.N.), ornamental furniture, or clothes; *chambre de parément* is translated by Cotgrave, the presence-chamber; and *lit de parément*, a bed of state.
- Parentele*, *parental*, n. (A.N.), kindred.
- Parjay* (A.N.), by my faith.
- Parjit*, *perjight*, adj. (A.N.), perfect.
- Parjourme*, v. (A.N.), to perform.
- Parischens*, n. pl. (A.N.), parishioners.
- Paritorie*, n. (A.N.), the herb *parietaria*, or pellitory of the wall.
- Parlement*, n. (A.N.), an assembly for consultation.
- Parten*, inf. m. (A.N.), to take part.
- Partie*, n. (A.N.), a part, a party in a dispute.
- Parvis*, n. (A.N.), a portico before a church.
- Passe*, v. (A.N.), to surpass, to excel; to judge, to pass sentence.
- Pax*, to kiss the pax; a religious ceremony.
- Pagen*, adj. (A.N.), pagan; *payenes*, n. pl., heathens; *paynymes*, n. pl. pagans.
- Pecunial*, adj. (A.N.), pecuniary, paid in money.
- Pees*, n. (A.N.), peace.
- Peonaut*, n. (A.N.), a person doing penance.
- Penible*, adj. (A.N.), industrious, painstaking.
- Penitencer*, n. (A.N.), a priest who enjoins penance in extraordinary cases.
- Penner*, n., a pen-case.
- Penoun*, *pynoun*, n. (A.N.), a streamer, or ensign.
- Perel*, n. (A.N.), apparel.
- Peere*, n. (A.N.), a peer, an equal.
- Peregrine*, adj. (A.S.), wandering.
- Perjonette*, n., a young pear.
- Perrye*, n. (A.N.), jewels, precious stones.
- Pers*, adj. (A.N.), sky-coloured, of a bluish grey.
- Persly*, n., parsley.
- Persone*, n. (A.N.), a man; a parson, or rector of a church.
- Pert*, adj. (A.N.), open.
- Pertourbe*, v. (A.N.), to trouble; *pertourbing*, n., disturbance.
- Pery*, n. (A.N.), a pear-tree.
- Peyne*, n. (A.N.), penalty; grief, torment, labour; v., to torture, to put to pain; to give oneself trouble.
- Peyrel*, n. (A.N.), the breast-plate of a horse.
- Pisik*, n. (A.N.), medicine; doctour of phisike.
- Picche*, n. (A.S.), pitch.
- Pie*, n. (A.S.), a magpie, a prating gossip, or tell-tale.
- Pierrie*, n. (A.N.), jewels, precious stones.
- Figgessneyghe*, a term of endearment.
- Pight*, part. t. of *pique*, v. (A.S.), pitched.
- Pike*, v. (A.S.), to pitch; to pick, as a hawk does his feathers; to steal.
- Pikerel*, n. (A.S.), a young pike.
- Piler*, n. (A.S.), a pillar.
- Pile*, *pyle*, v. (A.N.), to rob, to plunder.
- Piled*, adj., bald.
- Pilours*, n. pl. (A.N.), plunderers.
- Piluebeer*, n. (A.S.), the covering of a pillow.
- Piment*, n., spiced wine, wine mixed with honey.
- Pynche*, v. (A.N.), to pinch: *ther couthe no man pynche at his writingyn*, not one could lay hold of any flaw in his writings.
- Pyne*, n. (A.N.), pain, grief; v., to torment; *pyned*, part. pa., tortured.
- Pistel*, n., an epistle, a short lesson.
- Pitaunce*, n. (A.N.), a mess of victuals; it properly means an extraordinary allowance of victuals, given to monastics, in addition to their usual commons.
- Pith*, n. (A.S.), marrow, strength.
- Pitous*, adj. (A.N.), merciful, compassionate, exciting compassion; *pitously*, pitifully.
- Pleyn*, v. (A.N.), to complain.
- Plat*, *platte*, adj. (A.N.), flat, plain; it is often used as an adverb.
- Platly*, adv., flatly, directly.
- Pleyn*, adj. (A.N.), full, perfect.
- Pleasance*, n. (A.N.), pleasure.
- Plesynges*, n. pl., pleasures.
- Plete*, v. (A.N.), to plead.
- Pletyng*, n., pleading, arguing.
- Plye*, v. (A.N.), to bend, or mould.
- Plight*, n., condition.
- Plight*, part. t. and part. of *pluck* (A.S.), pulled, plucked.
- Plighte*, v. (A.S.), to engage, to promise.
- Plyt*, plight, condition.
- People*, n. (A.N.), people.
- Poynt*, n. (A.N.), the principal business, a stop, or full point: *in good poynt*, in good case, or condition; *at poynt devys*, with the greatest exactness.
- Pointel*, n. (A.N.), a style, or pencil, for writing.
- Poke*, n. (A.N.), a pocket, a bag.
- Polype*, n., a pulley.
- Pollaz*, n. (A.N.), a halberd.
- Pomel*, n. (A.N.), any ball, or round thing, the top of the head.
- Pomelece*, adj. (A.N.), spotted with round spots like apples, dappled: *pomelece gris*, of a dapple-grey colour.
- Popillot*, n., this word may either be considered as a diminutive from *poppee*, a puppet; or as a corruption of *papillot*, a young butterfly.
- Popet*, n. (A.N.), a puppet.
- Popper*, n., a bodkin; a dagger.
- Pore*, v., to look earnestly.
- Pore*, adj., poor.
- Porphurie*, pr. n., of a species of marble, porphyry.
- Port*, n. (A.N.), carriage, behaviour.
- Portos*, n. (A.N.), a breviary, portiforium.
- Pose*, n., a rheum, or defluxion, obstructing the voice.
- Pose*, v. (A.N.), to suppose, to put a case.
- Possessioners*, n. pl., an invidious name for such religious communities as were endowed with lands, &c. The mendicant orders professed to live entirely upon alms.
- Posté*, n. (A.N.), power.
- Potent*, n. (A.N.), a staff, a walking-stick.
- Potestate*, n. (A.N.), a principal magistrato.
- Pouche*, n. (A.N.), pocket, pouch.
- Poverte*, n. (A.N.), poverty.
- Pounsomed*, part. pa. (A.N.), punched with a bodkin.
- Poupe*, v., to make a noise with a horn.
- Pover*, adj. (A.N.), poor.
- Povre*, to pore.
- Practice*, n. (A.N.), practice.
- Preambulation*, n., preamble.
- Precious*, adj. (A.N.), over-nice.
- Predicacioun*, n. (A.N.), preaching, a sermon.
- Press*, n. (A.N.), a press, or crowd.
- Prentys*, n. (A.N.), an apprentice
- prentyshood*, n., apprenticeship.
- Preparat*, part. pa. (A.N.), prepared.
- Prese*, v. (A.N.), to press, or crowd.
- Present*, v. (A.N.), to offer, to make a present of.
- Prest*, adj. (A.N.), ready.
- Preve*, v. (A.N.), to try, to demonstrate by trial; to turn out upon trial.
- Prick*, n. (A.S.), a point, a pointed weapon; v. to wound, to spur a horse, to ride hard; *prikyng*, n., hard riding.
- Pricasour*, n., a hard rider.
- Prideles*, adj., without pride.
- Prye*, v., to look curiously.
- Prime*, adj. (A.N.), first.
- Prime*, n., the first quarter of the artificial day: *half way prime*, prime half spent; *prime large*, prime far advanced. In l. 10387, it seems to be used metaphorically for the season of action or business.
- Primerole*, n. (A.S.), a primrose.
- Prys*, n. (A.N.), price, value, praise.
- Privé*, adj. (A.N.), private: *privé man*, a man entrusted with private business.
- Pryvily*, adv., privately.
- Pryvyle*, n., private business.
- Process*, n. (A.N.), progress.
- Professioun*, n. (A.N.), the monastic profession.
- Proheme*, a preface.
- Prolle*, v., to go about in search of a thing.
- Proverbe*, n. (A.N.), a prudential maxim; v. to speak proverbially.
- Prou*, n. (A.S.), profit, advantage.
- Pultaille*, n. (A.N.), poultry.
- Pulled hen*. It is said that a hen whose feathers are pulled, or plucked off, will not lay any eggs.
- Pure*, adj. (A.N.), mere, very.
- Pured*, part. pa., purified.
- Purified*, part. pa., guarded, or fringed.
- Purpos*, n. (A.N.), purpose, design, proposition in discourse.
- Putraye*, v. (A.N.), to draw a picture.
- Putreyour*, n., a drawer of pictures.
- Putretre*, n., a picture, or drawing.
- Purveyance*, n. (A.N.), foresight, providence, provision.
- Purveye*, v., to foresee, to provide.
- Putrie*, n. (A.N.), whoredom.
- Putours*, n. pl., whoremongers.
- Quad*, *quade*, adj. (A.S.), bad.
- Quakke*, n., seems to be put for an inarticulate noise, occasioned by any obstruction in the throat.
- Qualme*, n. (A.S.), sickness; the noise made by a raven.
- Quarels*, n. pl. (A.N.), square arrows.
- Queynt*, n. (A.N.), the sexual parts of a woman.
- Queynt*, adj. (A.N.), strange; cunning, artful; trim, neat.
- Queynt*, part. t. and part. of *quench* (A.S.), quenched.
- Queyntise*, n. (A.N.), trimness, neatness, excessive trimness; cunning.
- Quelle*, v. (A.S.), to kill, to destroy.

- Querne*, n. (A.S.), a hand-mill.  
*Queste-mongers*, n. pl., packers of inquests, or juries.  
*Quyky*, adj. (A.S.), alive.  
*Quyken*, v., to make alive: *quyked*, part. pa., made alive.  
*Quiked*, pa. t. of the same v. used in a neutral sense; became alive.  
*Quynnyble*, n., a musical instrument, the exact description of which seems not to be ascertained.  
*Quyte*, adj. (A.N.), free, quiet; v., to requite, to pay for, to acquit.  
*Quytyly*, adv., freely, at liberty.  
*Quod*, pa. t. of *quethe*, said.  
*Quook*, pa. t. of *quake*, (A.S.), trembled, shook.  
*Quoth*, pres. t. of *quethe*, says.
- Ra*, n. (A.S.), a roe-deer.  
*Rad*, *radde*, pa. t. of *rede* (A.S.), advised, explained.  
*Rafles*, n. pl. (A.N.), plays with dice.  
*Rafte*, pa. t. of *reve* (A.S.), took away.  
*Rage*, v. (A.N.), to toy wantonly.  
*Ragrie*, n., wantonness.  
*Rakel*, adj., hasty, rash; *rakelnesse*, n., rashness.  
*Rammish*, adj. (A.S.), rank, like a ram.  
*Rampe*, v. (A.N.), to climb.  
*Rape*, adv. (A.S.), quickly, speedily.  
*Rape*, v. (A.S.), to seize and plunder, to take captive.  
*Ratyd*, part. pa., chidden.  
*Rathe*, adv. (A.S.), soon, early, speedily; *rather*, sooner; former; *rathest*, soonest.  
*Ratouns*, n. pl. (A.N.), rats.  
*Raught*, pa. t. (A.S.), reached.  
*Raught* (A.S.), from *reche*, cared, recked.  
*Raunson*, n. (A.N.), ransom.  
*Real*, adj. (A.N.), royal; *realler*, more royal; *reallich*, adv., royally.  
*Realte*, n., royalty.  
*Rebekke*, n. (A.N.), a musical instrument.  
*Rechased*, pa. t. (A.N.), a term in hunting.  
*Reche*, *rekte*, v. (A.S.), to care.  
*Rocheles*, adj., careless.  
*Rochelesnes*, n., carelessness.  
*Reclame*, v. (A.N.), a term in falconry, for bringing the hawk to the fist, by a certain call.  
*Recomforte*, v. (A.N.), to comfort.  
*Recorde*, v. (A.N.), to remember; to enter upon record in judicial proceedings.  
*Recreant*, adj. (A.N.), one who yields himself to his adversary in single combat.  
*Redde*, *red*, pa. t. of *rede*.  
*Rede*, v. (A.S.), to advise, to read, to explain; n. advice, counsel; a read.  
*Redoute*, v. (A.N.), to fear; *redoutyng*, n., reverence.  
*Redr-isse*, v. (A.N.), to make amends for.  
*Red*, adj. (A.S.), red.  
*Refte*, *rifte*, n. (A.S.), a chirk, or crevice.  
*Refute*, n. (A.N.), refuge.  
*Regals*, n. pl. (A.N.), royalties.  
*Regard*, n. (A.N.), at regard of, with respect to, in comparison of.  
*Regne*, n. (A.N.), a kingdom.  
*Rehete*, v. (A.S.), to revive, to cheer.  
*Reken*, v. (A.N.), to reckon, to come to a reckoning.  
*Reless*, n. (A.N.), release.  
*Relike*, n. (A.N.), a relic; *relikes*, pl.  
*Rememrunt*, n. (A.N.), a remnant, a remaining part.  
*Remes*, n. pl. (A.N.), realms.  
*Remuable*, adj. (A.N.), movable, changeable, inconstant.  
*Remue*, *renewe*, *remove*, v. (A.N.), to remove.
- Renable*, adj. (A.N.), reasonable; *renably*, adv., reasonably.  
*Reneye*, v. (A.N.), to renounce, to abjure.  
*Renges*, n. pl., ranks, the steps of a ladder.  
*Renne*, v. (A.S.), to run.  
*Renom-é*, n. (A.N.), renown.  
*Renouvelle*, v. (A.N.), to renew.  
*Repaire*, v. (A.N.), resort.  
*Repaire*, v. (A.N.), to return.  
*Repreffe*, *repreve*, n. (A.N.), reproof.  
*Rescous*, n. (A.N.), rescue.  
*Respien*, inf. m. (A.N.), to grant a respite, to excuse.  
*Retenne*, n. (A.N.), retinue; at his retinue, retained by him.  
*Reeve*, n. (A.S.), a steward, or bailiff.  
*Reve*, v. (A.S.), to take away.  
*Revel*, n. (A.N.), entertainment, properly during the night; sport, festivity.  
*Revelour*, n., a reveller.  
*Revsrie*, n., pleasure.  
*Revo*, n., a row, or line; *en a rew*, in a line.  
*Reward*, n. (A.N.), regard, respect: *take reward of thine owen value*, have regard to; *in reward of*, in comparison with.  
*Reve*, v. (A.S.), to have compassion; to suffer; to have cause to repent.  
*Revyced*, made military expeditions; journeyed.  
*Ribaude*, *ribald*, n. (A.N.), a low, profligate man; a base class in mediæval society.  
*Ribaudyng*, n., ribaldry, indecent words or actions.  
*Ribibe*, n., a musical instrument; the same as *rebekke*.  
*Ribible*, n., a small ribibe.  
*Richesse*, n. (A.N.), wealth; *richesses*, pl., riches.  
*Rimydén*, part. pa. (A.N.), composed in rhyme or verse.  
*Rys*, n. (A.S.), small twigs of trees or bushes.  
*Rystr*, riseth.  
*Ryt*, rideth.  
*Rive*, v. (A.S.), to thrust through; to split.  
*Roche*, n. (A.N.), a rock.  
*Rode*, n. (A.S.), complexion.  
*Rody*, adj. (A.S.), ruddy.  
*Rombel*, n., a rumbling noise, a rumour.  
*Rome*, v. (A.S.), to walk about.  
*Rood*, n. (A.S.), the cross; *roode-bem*, the beam of the cross.  
*Roser*, n. (A.N.), a rose-bush.  
*Rote*, n. (A.S.), a root; a musical instrument; n. (A.N.), practice; *by rote*, by heart.  
*Rought*, for raught.  
*Rouke*, v. (A.S.), to lie close.  
*Route*, v. (A.S.), to roll, to stroll, to stray.  
*Roume*, adj., wide, spacious; *roumer*, wider.  
*Rouncy*, n. (A.N.), a common hackney horse.  
*Roundel*, n. (A.N.), a sort of song.  
*Route*, n. (A.N.), a company.  
*Route*, v. (A.N.), to snore, to roar; to assemble in a company.  
*Routhe*, n. (A.S.), compassion, the object of compassion; *routhes*, adj., without compassion.  
*Rou*, adj. (A.S.), rough.  
*Rowne*, v. (A.S.), to whisper.  
*Rubus*, n. pl. (A.N.), rubies.  
*Rude*, n. (A.S.), complexion. See *rode*.  
*Ruggy*, adj., rough.  
*Russel*, pr. n. The fox is called Dan Russel from his red colour.
- Sad*, adj. (A.S.), grave, steady, seriously, repentant.  
*Sadly*, adv., steadily, carefully, seriously.
- Sadness*, n., gravity, steadiness.  
*Salute*, v. (A.N.), to salute.  
*Sanguin*, adj. (A.N.), of a blood-red colour.  
*Save*, n., the herb sage.  
*Sauf*, adj. (A.N.), safe; saved, or expected.  
*Savour*, v. (A.N.), to taste, to relish.  
*Savouryng*, n., the sense of tasting.  
*Savourous*, adj., sweet, pleasant.  
*Sauns*, prep. (A.N.), without.  
*Saucoysem*, pimpled; or, perhaps, scabbed.  
*Sautrie*, n. (A.N.), a musical string-instrument.  
*Sawe*, n. (A.S.), speech, diacourse; a proverb, or wise saying.  
*Say*, saw.  
*Seathe*, *skathe*, n. (A.S.), harm, damage.  
*Scatheful*, *scatheliche*, adj., pernicious.  
*Schadde*, pa. t. of *schede*, v. (A.S.), fell in drops.  
*Schaft*, n. (A.S.), an arrow.  
*Schaltow*, for *schalt thou*.  
*Schapelj*, adj. (A.S.), fit, likely.  
*Schawe*, n. (A.S.), a shade of trees, a grove.  
*Schende*, v. (A.S.), to ruin, destroy.  
*Schenship*, n., ruin, punishment.  
*Schene*, adj. (A.S.), bright, shining.  
*Schent*, part. pa. of *schende*, ruined, destroyed.  
*Schippe*, *schepne*, n. (A.S.), a stable.  
*Schere*, v. (A.S.), to cut, to shave.  
*Schete*, v. (A.S.), to shoot.  
*Schette*, v. (A.S.), to close, or shut.  
*Schilder*, v. (A.S.), to shield: *God schildel*! God shield, or forbid!  
*Schivere*, n. (A.S.), a small slice.  
*Schood*, n. (A.S.), the hair of a man's head.  
*Schonde*, n. (A.S.), harm.  
*Schope*, pa. t., shaped.  
*Schore*, part. pa. of *schere*, cut.  
*Schorte*, v. (A.S.), to make short.  
*Schot*, part. pa. of *shette*, shut.  
*Schouwe*, v. (A.S.), to push.  
*Schreue*, v. (A.S.), to curse; n., an ill-tempered, cursed man, or woman.  
*Schrawde*, adj., wrinkled, ill-nature.  
*Schrift*, n. (A.S.), confession: *schrift-faders*, father confessors.  
*Schriue*, v. (A.S.), to make confession.  
*Schriuen*, part. pa., confessed.  
*Schulde*, *schulden*, should.  
*Schullen*, they shall.  
*Sclaudre*, n. (A.N.), slander.  
*Scolay*, v. (A.N.), to attend school, to study.  
*Scripte*, n. (A.N.), a writing.  
*Scriptures*, n. pl. (A.N.), writings, books.  
*Secré*, adj. (A.N.), secret.  
*Seculer*, adj. (A.N.), of the laity, in opposition to clerical.  
*See*, n. (A.N.), a scat; *sees*, pl.; *see*, n. (A.S.), the sea.  
*Seeten*, sat.  
*Sege*, n. (A.N.), a siege.  
*Seye*, *sey*, pa. t. of *see*, saw, part. pa. seen.  
*Seignorie*, n. (A.N.), power.  
*Seyn*, part. pa. of *see*, seen.  
*Seynde*, singed.  
*Seynt*, n. (A.N.), a girdle.  
*Seke*, v. (A.S.), to seek.  
*Seke*, adj. (A.S.), sick.  
*Selden*, adv. (A.S.), seldom.  
*Sele*, n. (A.N.), a seal.  
*Self selue*, adj. (A.S.) same.  
*Selle*, n. (A.N.), a cell.  
*Selle*, n. (A.S.), a door-sill or threshold.  
*Sely*, adj. (A.S.), silly, simple, harmless.  
*Semblaible*, adj. (A.N.), like, resembling.  
*Semblaunt*, n. (A.N.), seeming, appearance.



- Semeliche, semgly*, adj. (A.S.), seemly, comely; *semeliste*, superl.
- Semeljhede*, n., seemliness, comeliness.
- Semysoun*, n., a low or broken tone.
- Semycope*, n., a half or short cloak.
- Send*, sendeth.
- Sendal*, n., a thin silk.
- Senge*, v. (A.S.), to singe.
- Sentence*, n. (A.N.), sense, meaning, judgment.
- Sergeant*, n. (A.N.), a squire attendant upon a prince or nobleman.
- Serie*, n. (A.N.), series.
- Servage*, n. (A.N.), servitude, slavery.
- Setewale*, n. (A.N.), the herb valerian.
- Sethe*, v. (A.S.), to boil.
- Sethe*, pa. t. boiled.
- Seurement*, n. (A.N.), security in a legal sense.
- Seuerté*, n. (A.N.), certainty, surety, in a legal sense.
- Sewes*, n. pl. (A.N.), dishes of victuals.
- Seyn*, v. (A.S.), to say.
- Shef*, n. (A.S.), a bundle, a sheaf of arrows.
- Shright*, shrieketh; shrieked.
- Shibe*, adj. (A.S.), related, allied.
- Sigh*, saw.
- Sike*, adj. (A.S.), sick.
- Sike*, v. (A.S.), to sigh; n. a sigh.
- Syker*, adj. (A.S.), sure.
- Sykerde*, assured.
- Sykerresse*, n., security.
- Sykerly*, adv., surely.
- Syn*, adv. (A.S.), since.
- Synamome*, n. (A.N.), cinnamon.
- Sys*, n. (A.N.), the cast of six, the highest cast upon a die.
- Syt*, sitteth.
- Sithe*, n. pl. (A.S.), times.
- Sythen*, *syth*, adv. (A.S.), since.
- Skalled*, adj., scabby, scurfy.
- Skil*, n. (A.S.), reason.
- Skinke*, v. (A.S.), to pour out, to serve with drink.
- Slake*, adj. (A.S.), slow.
- Slake*, v. (A.S.), to appease, to make slack; to fail, to desist.
- Sle*, *slen*, v. (A.S.), to kill, to slay.
- Sler*, n. (A.S.), a killer.
- Sleightly*, adv. (A.S.), cunningly.
- Sleight*, n., a contrivance.
- Slen*, they slay.
- Slider*, adj. (A.S.), slippery.
- Sliding*, part. pr., uncertain.
- Slye*, *stigh*, adj. (A.S.), cunning.
- Slih*, such.
- Slih*, he slides.
- Slogardie*, n., sloth.
- Sloppe*, n. (A.S.), a sort of breeches.
- Slow*, slow.
- Sluggy*, adj. (A.S.), sluggish.
- Smerte*, v. (A.S.), to smart, to suffer pain.
- Smerte*, adv., smartly.
- Smyt*, smites.
- Smiteth*, smite ye.
- Smythes*, v. (A.S.), to forge, as a smith.
- Smoldes*, adj. (A.S.), without a smock.
- Smoterlich*, adj., dirty.
- Sneve*, v. (A.S.), to snow.
- Snybbe*, v. (A.S.), to snubb, to reprove.
- Soken*, n. (A.S.), toll.
- Solas*, n. (A.N.), mirth, sport.
- Solempne*, adj. (A.N.), solemn.
- Somdel*, adv. (A.S.), somewhat, in some measure.
- Sompne*, v. (A.N.), to summon.
- Sompnour*, n., an officer employed to summon delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts.
- Sonde*, n. (A.S.), a message; a thing sent.
- Sonnish*, adj., like the sun.
- Sophime*, n., a sophism, a subtle fallacy.
- Sort*, n. (A.N.), chance, destiny.
- Sorwe*, n. (A.S.), sorrow.
- Sory*, adj. (A.S.), sorrowful; *sory grace*, misfortune.
- Sote*, n. (A.S.), soot.
- Sote*, *soote*, *swote*, adj. (A.S.), sweet.
- Soted*, part. pa. (A.N.), fooled, besotted.
- Sotil*, adj. (A.N.), subtle, artfully contrived.
- Soth*, adj. (A.S.), true, certain; *sothly*, adv., truly; *sothe*, n., truth.
- Sothfastnes*, n. (A.S.), truth.
- Soudan*, n., a sultan; *soudannesse*, the wife of a sultan.
- Souded*, part. pa., consolidated, fastened together.
- Soveraine*, adj. (A.N.), excellent, in high degree.
- Soverainly*, adv., above all.
- Souke*, v. (A.N.), to suck.
- Soun*, n. (A.N.), sound, noise.
- Sounde*, v. (A.S.), to make sound, to heal; v. neut., to grow sound.
- Soune*, v. (A.N.), to sound.
- Soupe*, v. (A.N.), to sup, to take the evening meal; *souper*, n., supper.
- Souple*, adj., supple, pliant.
- Sourde*, v. (A.N.), to rise.
- Sours*, n., a rise, a rapid ascent; the source of a stream of water.
- Souter*, n., a cobbler.
- Spare*, v. (A.S.), to refrain.
- Sparre*, n. (A.S.), a wooden bar.
- Sparred*, barred, bolted.
- Spectacle*, n. (A.N.), a spying-glass.
- Spel*, n. (A.S.), sport, play; tale, or history.
- Spence*, n. (A.N.), a store-room for wine or victuals.
- Spere*, n. (A.S.), a spur; a spear.
- Sperme*, n. (A.N.), seed.
- Spices*, n. pl., sorts, or kinds.
- Spille*, v. (A.S.), to waste, to throw away, to destroy; v. neut., to perish.
- Spired*, inquired.
- Spitous*, adj. (A.N.), angry, spiteful.
- Spitously*, adv., angrily.
- Spousaile*, n. (A.N.), marriage.
- Spreynd*, sprinkled.
- Squames*, n. pl., scales.
- Staf-sling*, a sling fastened to a staff.
- Stalke*, v. (A.S.), to step slowly.
- Stalkes*, n. pl. (A.S.), the upright pieces of a ladder.
- Stanen* (A.N.), a sort of woollen cloth.
- Stant*, stands.
- Starf*, pa. t. of *sterve*, died.
- Stark*, adj. (A.S.), stiff, stout.
- Stele*, n. (A.S.), a handle; *rakes stele*, the handle of a rake.
- Stente*, v. (A.S.), to cease, to desist.
- Steep*, sense, adj., seems to be used in the sense of deep, so that *eyen steep* may signify eyes sunk deep in the head.
- Stere*, n. (A.S.), a young bullock; a rudder of a ship.
- Stereles*, adj., without a rudder.
- Sterresnan*, n., a pilot.
- Sterne*, n. (A.S.), a star.
- Stert*, n. (A.S.), a leap.
- Sterte*, pa. t. of *sterte*, leaped, escaped, ran away.
- Sterve*, v. (A.S.), to die, to perish.
- Steven*, n. (A.S.), voice, sound; a time of performing any action, previously fixed by message, order, summons, &c.: at *unset steven*, without any previous appointment; *they setten steven*, they appointed a time.
- Stewe*, n. (A.N.), a pond for fish.
- Stewes*, pl., stews, bawdy-houses.
- Stillatorie*, n. (A.N.), a still.
- Stith*, n. (A.S.), an unwill.
- Stocked*, confined.
- Stole*, n., part of the ecclesiastical habit, worn about the neck.
- Stole*, n. (A.S.), a stool.
- Stonden*, they stood.
- Stont*, stands.
- Stopen*, stepped, advanced.
- Storial*, adj. (A.N.), historical, true.
- Storven*, they perished.
- Stot*, n. (A.S.), a stallion.
- Stote*, n. (A.S.), a species of weasel, a pole-cat.
- Stound*, n. (A.S.), a moment, a short space of time; *stoundes*, pl., times, seasons.
- Stoure*, n. (A.S.), fight, battle.
- Strange*, adj. (A.N.), foreign, uncommon; *he made it strange*, he made it a matter of difficulty, or nicety.
- Straighte*, stretched.
- Stre*, n. (A.S.), straw.
- Streight*, stretched.
- Streyne*, v. (A.N.), to constrain, to press closely.
- Streyt*, adj. (A.N.), strait.
- Stremes*, n. (A.S.), the rays of the sun.
- Strene*, n. (A.S.), stock, race, progeny.
- Strike*, n. (A.S.), a lue, a streak; a strike of flax.
- Strof*, strove, contended.
- Stronde*, n. (A.S.), a shore.
- Strouete*, v., to strut.
- Sublimatorie*, n., a vessel used by chemists in sublimation, i.e. separating certain parts of a body, and driving them to the top of the vessel, in the form of a very fine powder.
- Substance*, n. (A.N.), the material part of a thing.
- Sue*, v. (A.N.), to follow.
- Suffisance*, n. (A.N.), sufficiency, satisfaction.
- Suffisaut*, adj., sufficient.
- Surcite*, n. (A.N.), an upper coat, or kirtle.
- Surplis*, n. (A.N.), a surplice.
- Surquedre*, n. (A.N.), presumption, overweening conceit.
- Sursanure*, n. (A.N.), a wound healed outwardly only.
- Surveance*, n. (A.N.), superintendence.
- Suspect*, n., suspicious.
- Swa*, adj. (A.S.), so.
- Swaal*, swelled.
- Swappe*, v. (A.S.), to throw down, to strike off; v. neut. to fall down.
- Swaite*, sweated.
- Swegh*, n. (A.S.), a violent motion.
- Swelte*, v. (A.S.), to die, to faint; *swelt*, pa. t.
- Sweven*, n. (A.S.), a dream.
- Swich*, adj., such.
- Swaynke*, n. (A.S.), labour; v. to labour.
- Swire*, n. (A.S.), the neck.
- Swithe*, adv. (A.S.), quickly, immediately.
- Suyve*, v. (A.S.), to have sexual intercourse.
- Swoolwe*, v. (A.S.), to swallow.
- Swoonken*, part. pa. of *swinke*, laboured.
- Swoote*, adj. (A.S.), sweet.
- Swough*, n. (A.S.), sound, noise; a swoon.
- Tables*, n. pl. (A.N.), a game so called.
- Taille*, n. (A.N.), a tally, an account scored on a piece of wood.
- Take*, v. (A.S.), to give, to deliver a thing to another person.
- Takel*, n. (A.S.), an arrow.
- Tale*, n. (A.S.), reckoning, account.
- litel tale hath he told of any dream*, he made little account of any dream.
- Talent*, n. (A.N.), desire, affection.
- Talyng*, n., story-telling.
- Tapnage*, n. (A.N.), lurking, skulking about.
- Tapicer*, n. (A.N.), a maker of tapestry.
- Tapstere*, n. (A.S.), a woman who has the care of the tap in a public-house.
- Targe*, n. (A.N.), a small shield.
- Tas*, *taas*, n. (A.N.), a heap.
- Taste*, v. (A.N.), to feel, to examine.
- Tuerner*, n. (A.N.), the keeper of a tavern.

*Teche*, v. (A.S.), to teach.  
*Teine*, n., seems to signify a narrow, thin plate of metal.  
*Temps*, n. (A.S.), time.  
*Tent*, n. (A.S.), grief; v., to grieve, to afflict.  
*Tercelet, tercel*, n. (A.S.), the male hawk, the male eagle.  
*Terrestre*, n. (A.S.), earthly.  
*Testors*, n. pl. (A.S.), head-pieces.  
*Test-s*, n. pl., vessels for assaying metals.  
*Testyff*, adj. (A.S.), headstrong.  
*Textual*, adj. (A.S.), ready at citing texts.  
*Thacke*, v., to thump, to thwack, to slap.  
*Thanne*, adv. (A.S.), then.  
*Thar*, v. impers. (A.S.), behoveth; needs.  
*The*, v. (A.S.), to thrive.  
*Theodome*, n. (A.S.), thrift, success.  
*Thence*, *thenne*, adv. (A.S.), thence.  
*Thewes*, n. pl. (A.S.), manners, qualities.  
*Thilke*, adj. (A.S.), this same, that same.  
*Thynke*, v., to consider, to seem.  
*Thynne*, adj. (A.S.), slender, small.  
*Thyrl*, v. (A.S.), to pierce through.  
*Thise*, pl., these.  
*Tho*, those.  
*Tho*, adv., then.  
*Thole*, v. (A.S.), to suffer.  
*Thorpe, thropo*, n. (A.S.), a village.  
*Threpe*, v. (A.S.), to call.  
*Threste*, v. (A.S.), to thrust.  
*Threischfold*, n. (A.S.), a threshold.  
*Threttene* (A.S.), thirteen.  
*Thridde*, adj. (A.S.), third.  
*Thrie*, thrif, thrif, adv. (A.S.), thrice.  
*Thronge*, thrust.  
*Throstel*, n. (A.S.), a thrush.  
*Throu*, n. (A.S.), time: *but a throu*, but a little while.  
*Thurgh*, prep. (A.S.), through, by means of.  
*Thurrok*, n. (A.S.), the hold of a ship.  
*Thwitel*, n. (A.S.), a whittle, a little knife.  
*Tidde*, part. pa. of *tide* (A.S.), happened.  
*Tyk-l*, adj. (A.S.), uncertain.  
*Tyl*, prep. (A.S.), to.  
*Timbesterre*, n., perhaps a woman who played tricks with timbres, or basins of some sort or other, by throwing them up into the air, and catching them upon a single finger; a kind of balance-mistress.  
*Timbres*, n. pl. (A.S.), basins.  
*Tiptoon*, n. pl. (A.S.), tiptoes, the extremities of the toes.  
*Tilleles*, adj. (A.S.), without title.  
*To*, adv. (A.S.), too.  
 —, in composition with verbs, is augmentative: *the helmes they to-heven and to-shrede*, heve and cut to pieces: the bones they *to-breste*, break in pieces; *to-dashed*, much bruised; *to-rent*, rent in pieces; *to-swynke*, labour greatly.  
*Tofore*, *toforen*, prep. (A.S.), before.  
*Told*, accounted.  
*Tombesterre*, n. (A.S.), a dancing-woman.  
*Tone*, n. pl. (A.S.), toes.  
*Tonne-grest*, adj., of the circumference of a tun.  
*Toos*, toes.  
*Torettes*, n. pl. (A.S.), rings.  
*Totty*, adj. (A.S.), dizzy.  
*Tough*, adj. (A.S.), difficult: *to make it tough*, to take a great deal of pains.  
*Tought*, adj. (A.S.), tight.  
*Towr*, n. (A.S.), a tower.  
*Towe*, n., the backside.  
*Towel*, *tewel*, n., a pipe, the fundament.

*Trace*, n. (A.S.), a track or path.  
*Trails*, n. pl. (A.S.), the traces by which horses draw.  
*Transmue*, v. (A.S.), to transform.  
*Trappures*, n. pl., the cloths with which horses were covered for parade.  
*Trave*, n. (A.S.), a frame in which farriers put unruly horses.  
*Tre*, n. (A.S.), a tree, wood.  
*Trey-tour*, n. (A.S.), a juggler.  
*Trental*, n., a service of thirty masses, which were usually celebrated, upon as many different days, for the dead.  
*Tresse*, n. (A.S.), an artificial lock, or gathering of hair.  
*Tressed*, gathered in a tress, or tresses.  
*Tretable*, adj. (A.S.), tractable.  
*Tretis*, adj. (A.S.), long and well proportioned.  
*Triacle*, n. (A.S.), a remedy in general.  
*Trice*, v. (A.S.), to thrust.  
*Trie*, adj., tried or refined; chosen.  
*Trille*, v. (A.S.), to twirl, to turn round; to roll, to trickle.  
*Trine*, adj. (A.S.), triple.  
*Trip*, n., a small piece of cheese.  
*Tripe*, n. (A.S.), a trumpet.  
*Trompou*, n., a trumpeter.  
*Troncloun*, n. (A.S.), a spear without a head.  
*Trouble*, adj. (A.S.), dark, gloomy.  
*Trouve*, v. (A.S.), to believe.  
*Truanlise*, n. (A.S.), begging; wandering abroad.  
*Tulle*, v. (A.S.), to allure.  
*Turmentise*, n. (A.S.), torment.  
*Tweifold*, adj. (A.S.), double.  
*Twight*, pulled, plucked.  
*Twiana*, v. (A.S.), to depart from a place, or thing; to separate; *twinned*, separated.  
*Twist*, n. (A.S.), a twig.  
*Twiste*, v. (A.S.), to twitch, to pull hard.  
*Twy*, adv., twice.  
*Ugly*, adj. (A.S.), horrid, frightful.  
*Unce*, n., ounce.  
*Uncoming*, part. pr., ignorant; n., ignorance.  
*Uncouth*, part. pa., unknown, uncommon, not vulgar, elegant.  
*Undergroue*, part. pa., underground, of a low stature.  
*Underling*, n. (A.S.), an inferior.  
*Undermele*, n. (A.S.), the time after the meal of dinner; the afternoon.  
*Undern*, n. (A.S.), the third hour of the artificial day; nine o'clock, A.M.  
*Undernome*, took up, received.  
*Underpight*: *he drank, and well he's girdel underpight*, he drank, and stuffed his girdle well.  
*Underspore*, v. (A.S.), to raise a thing by putting a spear, or pole, under it.  
*Understande*, part. pa., understood.  
*Unfsliche*, adj., not suitable to a feast.  
*Unhele*, n. (A.S.), misfortune.  
*Unkindly*, adv., unnaturally.  
*Unlust*, n. (A.S.), dislike.  
*Unnethe, unnetthes*, adv. (A.S.), scarcely, not easily, never.  
*Unrest*, n., want of rest, uneasiness, trouble.  
*Unright*, n., wrong.  
*Unsed*, adj., unsteady.  
*Unselly*, adj., unhappy.  
*Unset*, part. pa., not appointed.  
*Unshelte*, pa. t., opened.  
*Unshleked*, part. pa., unslaked.  
*Unsoft*, adj., hard.  
*Unsuufficient*, adj., insufficient.  
*Unthank*, n., no thanks, ill-will.  
*Until*, prep. (A.S.), to, unto.  
*Untrue*, n., an unseasonable time.  
*Unwressed*, part. pa., not tied in a tress, or tresses.  
*Untruste*, v., to mistrust.

*Untrust*, n., distrust.  
*Unvoore*, part. pa., unforeseen.  
*Unweld*, adj., unwieldy.  
*Unworned*, part. pa., unspotted.  
*Unwotting*, part. pr., not knowing.  
*Unwottingly*, adv., ignorantly.  
*Unwot*, part. pa., unknown.  
*Unwit*, n., want of wit.  
*Unyolden*, part. pa., not having yielded.  
*Up*, prep. (A.S.), upon: *up on land*, up in the country; *up so down*, upside down.  
*Upper*, higher.  
*Uphaf*, pa. t. of *upheve*, heaved up.  
*Upon*, adv., *he had upon*, he had on.  
*Upright*, adj. (A.S.), straight.  
*Usage*, n. (A.S.), experience, practice.  
*Usant*, part. pr. (A.S.), using, accustomed.  
*Utter*, adv. (A.S.), outward, more out.  
*Ut-reste*, uttermost.  
*Utren*, v. (A.S.), to publish; to give out, sell.  
  
*Vaine*, n. (A.S.), vein.  
*Valure*, n. (A.S.), value.  
*Variant* (A.S.), changeable.  
*Vassalage*, n. (A.S.), valour, courage.  
*Vausour*, n. The precise import of this word is often as obscure as its original. Perhaps it should be understood to mean the whole class of middling landholders.  
*Venary*, n. (A.S.), hunting; the chase.  
*Ventsyng*, n. (A.S.), cupping, a surgical term.  
*Verament*, adv. (A.S.), truly.  
*Verray*, adj. (A.S.), true.  
*Verdegresse*, n. (A.S.), the rust of brass.  
*Veryer*, n. (A.S.), a garden.  
*Vernage* (A.S.), a species of wine.  
*Vernicle*, n., diminutive of *ronike* (A.S.) A copy in miniature of the picture of Christ, which is supposed to have been miraculously imprinted upon a handkerchief, preserved in the church of St. Peter at Rome. It was usual for persons returning from pilgrimages to bring with them certain tokens of the several places which they had visited; and therefore the pardoner, who is just arrived from Rome, is represented with a vernicle sewed upon his cappe.  
*Vertuous*, adj. (A.S.), active, efficacious.  
*Vessel*, n. (A.S.), plate.  
*Viage*, n. (A.S.), a journey.  
*Vicary*, n., a vicar.  
*Vigile*, *vigilie*, n. (A.S.), the eve of a festival; the wake, or watching, of a dead body.  
*Vyltanie*, n. (A.S.), any thing unbecoming a gentleman.  
*Violent*, adj., full of wine.  
*Virelay*, n. (A.S.), "a round; freeman's song." Cotgrave.  
*Visage*, v. (A.S.), to front, to face a thing.  
*Voyde*, v. (A.S.), to remove, to quit, to make empty, to depart, to go away.  
*Volage*, adj. (A.S.), light, giddy.  
*Volatie*, n. (A.S.), wild fowls, game.  
*Volunté*, n. (A.S.), will.  
*Volupere*, n., a woman's cap; a night-cap.  
*Vouche*, v. (A.S.): *vouchen sauf*, to vouchsafe; *voucheth sauf*, vouchsafe ye; *the king vouches it save*, the king vouchsafes it.  
  
*Waar*, adj. (A.S.), aware.  
*Waferrers*, n. pl., sellers of wafers.  
*Wafours*, n. pl., wafers, a sort of cakes.



- Waget*, 3321: a light waget is supposed to mean a light blue colour.
- Waymenting*, n. (A.S.), lamentation.
- Wayne*, n. (A.S.), a wagon.
- Waite*, v. (A.S.), to watch.
- Wake*, v. (A.S.), to watch.
- Wala wa*, or *Wa la wa*, interj. (A.S.), "Woe! alas!"
- Walse*, v. (A.S.), to tumble about, to wallow.
- Wane*, v. (A.S.), to decrease.
- Wang*, n. (A.S.), a cluck-tooth.
- Wangr*, n. (A.S.), a support for the cheek, a pillow.
- Wanhope*, n. (A.S.), despair.
- Wantrust*, n. (A.S.), distrust.
- Wardcoeps*, n. (A.S.), body-guard.
- Wardeyn*, n. (A.S.), a warden of a college, a guard, a keeper of a gate: *wardeyns*, pl., guards, watchmen.
- Wardrobes*, n. (A.S.), a privy.
- Wariangles*, a small woodpecker, black and white of colour, and but half as big as the ordinary green one.
- Warice*, *warish*, v. (A.S.), to heal; v. neut., to recover from sickness.
- Warisoun*, n. reward.
- Warne*, v. (A.S.), to caution, to apprise, to refuse.
- Warnestore*, v. (A.S.), to furnish, to store.
- Warrie*, v. (A.S.), to abuse, to speak evil of.
- Wastel-breed*, cake-bread, bread made of the finest flour; from the Fr. *gâteau*, a cake.
- Wastour*, n. (A.S.), a spoiler.
- Wave*, n. (A.S.), a wave.
- Way*, adv., away; *do way*, do away, put away.
- Webbe*, n. (A.S.), a weaver.
- Wedde*, n. (A.S.), a pawn, or pledge.
- Wede*, n. (A.S.), clothing, apparel.
- Weyve*, v. (A.S.), to forsake, to decline, to refuse, to depart.
- Welde*, v. (A.S.), to govern, to wield.
- Welle*, n. (A.S.), wealth, prosperity.
- Welfare*, adj., productive of happiness.
- Welked* (A.S.), withered, mouldy.
- Welkin*, n. (A.S.), the sky.
- Welle*, v. (A.S.), to flow.
- Welte*, pa. t. of *welde*, governed.
- Wemme*, n. (A.S.), a spot, a fault.
- Wenche*, n. (A.S.), a young woman. It is sometimes used in an opprobrious sense: *I am a gentil woman, and no wenche*.
- Wend*, for *wened*, pa. t. of *wene*, thought, intended.
- Wende*, *wenden*, v. (A.S.), to go.
- Wene*, v. (A.S.), to think, to suppose.
- Went*, part. pa. of *wende*, gone.
- Wepen*, n. (A.S.), a weapon.
- Werke*, n. (A.S.), work; v., to work.
- Werne*, v., to warn.
- Werre*, n. (A.S.), war.
- Werreye*, v. (A.S.), to make war against.
- Wery*, adj. (A.S.), weary.
- Wesh*, pa. t. of *wash*, washed.
- Wete*, adj. (A.S.), wet; v., to wet.
- Wete*, v. (A.S.), to know.
- Wether*, n. (A.S.), the weather; a castrated ram.
- Wetyng*, n. (A.S.), knowledge.
- Wex*, pa. t. of *waxe* or *wexen*, v. (A.S.), waxed, grew.
- Wexing*, part. pa., increasing.
- Weye*, n. (A.S.), a way.
- What*, pron. indef., something: *a little what; what for love and for distress*, partly for love, and partly for distress.
- Whennes*, adv., whence.
- Whether*, adj. (A.S.), which of two.
- Whik*, adj. (A.S.), which.
- Wide-where*, adv. (A.S.), widely, far and near.
- Wif*, n. (A.S.), a wife, a woman.
- Wifhote*, n. (A.S.), the state of a wife.
- Wifles*, adj., unmarried.
- Wifly*, adj., becoming a wife.
- Wight*, n. (A.S.), a creature; a person, male or female; a small space of time; a witch: adj., active, swift: *wightes*, n. pl., witches.
- Wicket*, n. (A.S.), a wicket.
- Wicke*, adj. (A.S.), wicked.
- Wila*, for *willen*, they will.
- Wilde*, v. (A.S.), to desire.
- Wymple*, n. (A.S.), a covering for the neck.
- Windas*, n. (A.S.), an engine to raise stones, &c.
- Winde*, v. (A.S.), to turn round.
- Wisly*, adv. (A.S.), certainly.
- Wisse*, v. (A.S.), to teach, to direct.
- Wiste*, knew.
- Wite*, v. (A.S.), to know, to blame, to impute to; n., blame.
- Withholde*, v. (A.S.), to stop, retain, detain.
- Withsayn*, *withsaye*, *withseye*, v. (A.S.), to contradict, to deny.
- Witte*, n. (A.S.), understanding, capacity.
- Wittes*, n. pl., the senses of man.
- Wlatsom*, adj. (A.S.), loathsome.
- Wode*, *wood*, adj. (A.S.), mad, violent; v., to grow mad.
- Wod-wale*, n, a bird, a sort of woodpecker.
- Wolde*, *wolden*, would.
- Wold*, part. pa., willed, being willed.
- Womanhede*, n., womanhood, the virtue of a woman.
- Wond*, dwelled.
- Wone*, n. (A.S.), custom, usage, habitation; a heap, an assembly.
- Wone*, v. (A.S.), to dwell.
- Woned*, part. pa., wout, accustomed.
- Woning*, n. (A.S.), a dwelling.
- Wout*, part. pa. of *wone*, accustomed.
- Woodness*, n., madness.
- Wordles*, adj., speechless.
- Worldes*, the gen. c. of *world*, is used in the sense of the adj. *worldly*: *every worldis sore; my worldis blisse*.
- Wort*, n. (A.S.), a plant, a cabbage; new beer in a state of fermentation.
- Wost*, knewest.
- Wote*, v. (A.S.), to know
- Wot*, pa. t., knew.
- Wozz*, grew.
- Wozz*, grown.
- Wrathen*, v. (A.S.), to make angry.
- Wrawe*, adj. (A.S.), peevish, angry.
- Wraunes*, n., peevishness.
- Wreche*, n. (A.S.), revenge.
- Wrenches*, n. pl. (A.S.), frauds, stratagems.
- Wrest*, v. (A.S.), to twist, to turn forcibly.
- Wreye*, v. (A.S.), to betray.
- Wrye*, v. (A.S.), to cover, to turn, to incline.
- Wright*, n. (A.S.), a workman, an artisan.
- Wrote*, v. (A.S.), to dig with the snout as swine do.
- Wrought*, made.
- Wys*, adj. (A.S.), wise.

Y at the beginning of many words, especially verbs and particles, is a corruption of the Saxon *Ge*: in Chaucer it does not appear to have any effect upon the sense of a word, so that there seems to be no necessity for inserting in a glossary such words as *yblessed*, *ygranted*, &c., which differ not in signification from *blessed*, *granted*, &c.

- Ya*, adv. (A.S.), yea.
- Yare*, adj. (A.S.), ready.
- Yate*, n. (A.S.), gate.
- Ye*, adj. (A.S.), yea.
- Yeddinges*, feasts, or perhaps story-tellings.
- Yede* (A.S.), went.
- Yefte*, n. (A.S.), a gift.
- Yelde*, v. (A.S.), to yield, to give, to pay.
- Yelpe*, v. (A.S.), to prate, to boast.
- Yelte*, yields.
- Yeman*, n. (A.S.), a servant of middling rank, a bailiff.
- Yemanrie*, n., the rank of a yeoman.
- Yen*, the eyes.
- Yerde*, n. (A.S.), a rod or staff: *under the yerde*, properly said of children under discipline.
- Yerne*, adj. (A.S.), brisk, eager; adv., briskly, eagerly, early, soon, immediately.
- Yerne*, v., to desire, to seek eagerly.
- Ynowgh*, *ynow*, adv. (A.S.), enough.
- Yolden*, given, yielded, repaid.
- Yore*, adv. (A.S.), of a long time, a little before.
- Yoze*, v. (A.S.), to hiccup.







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