

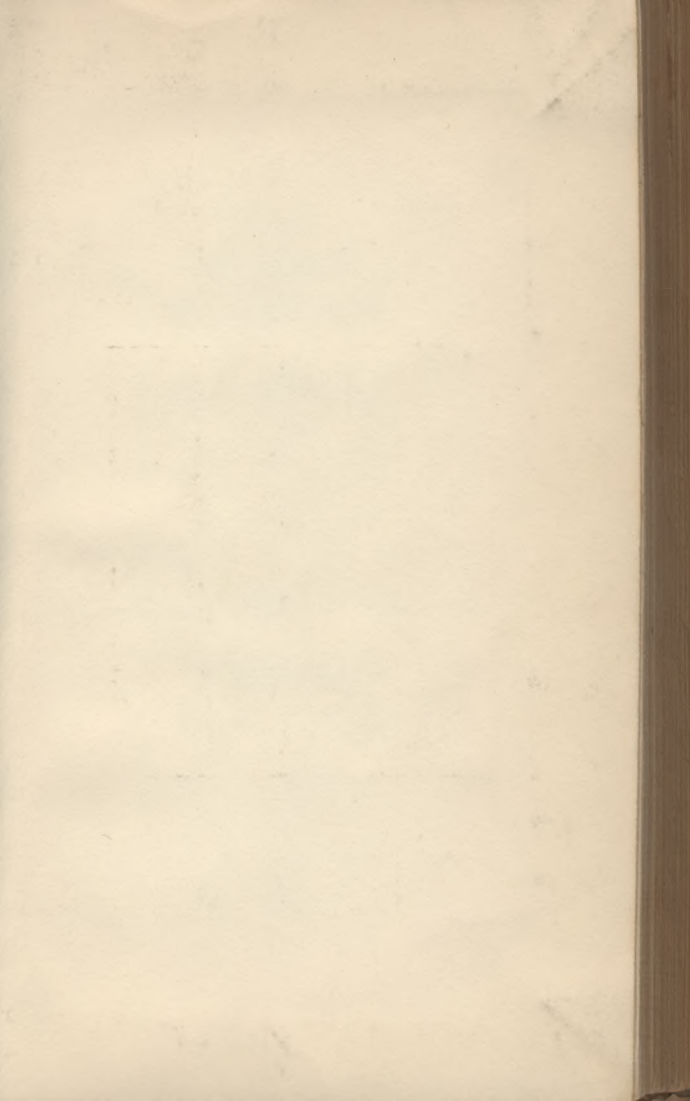
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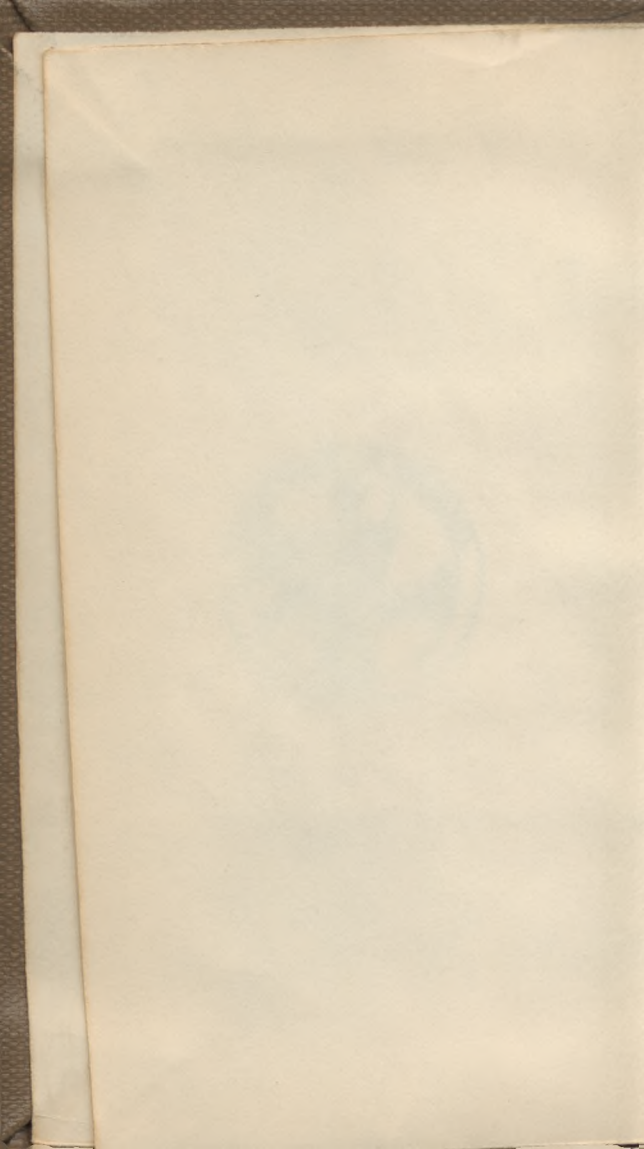
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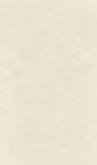
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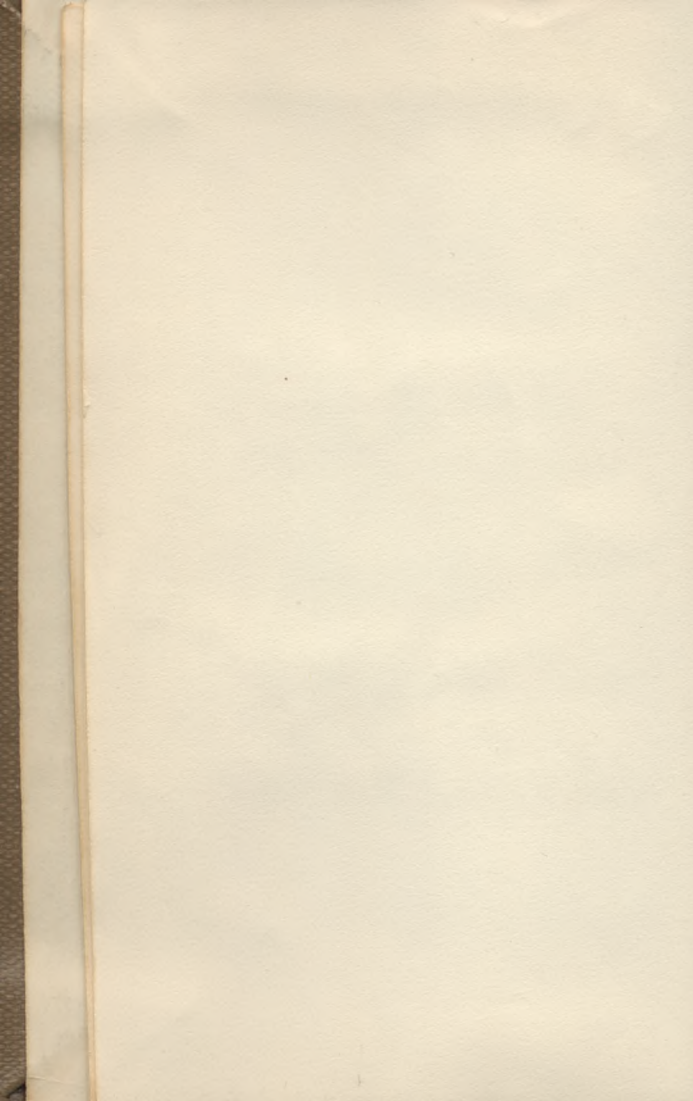


THE  
TEMPLE  
CLASSICS



THE ROMANCE OF THE POSE

F. S. ELLIS



THE  
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THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

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F. S. ELLIS

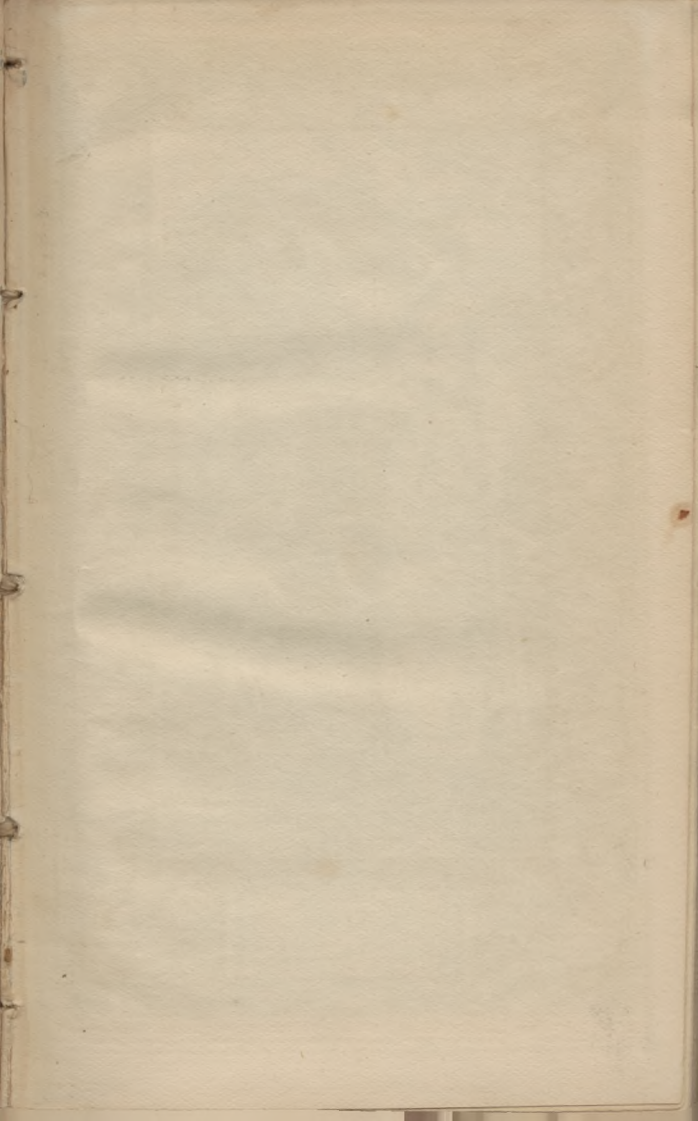
THE  
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THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Edited by

F. S. ELLIS







DAME  
RICHESSE



THE **ROSE**  
ROMANCE

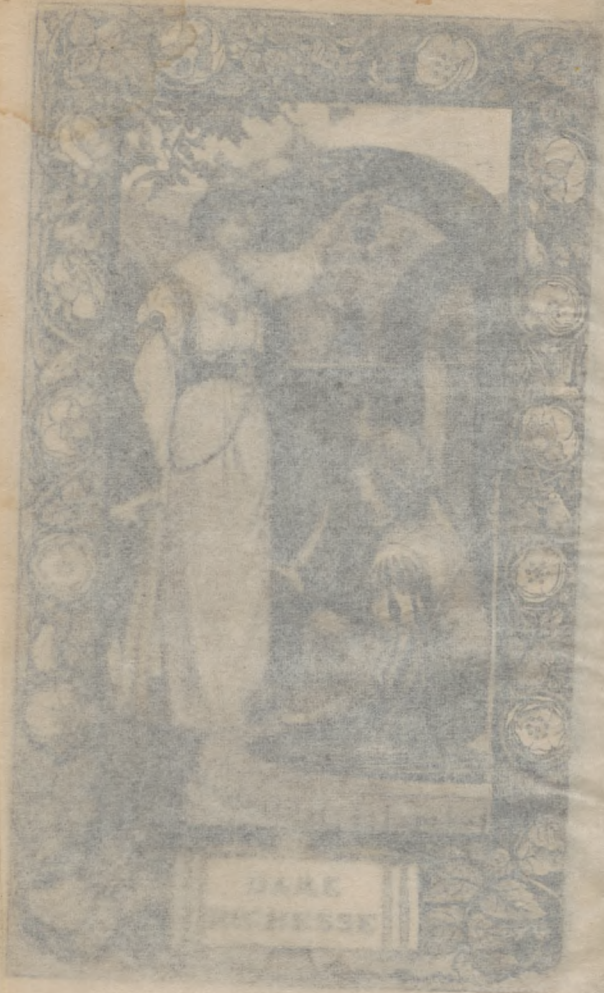
Of the **ROSE**  
by W LORRIS

& J CLOPINEL

ENGLISHED

by **F SELLIS**

VOL TWO





THE   
ROMANCE

Of the ROSE

by W LORRIS

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VOL TWO

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS IN VOLUME II

Reason now abandons the Lover, leaving him all disconsolate, and he determines to seek the friend who had ere this given him comfort and advice. Suddenly, however, his friend appears and inquires the cause of his grief and desolation. He tells how that Fair-Welcome is imprisoned for no other crime than that he had helped him to snatch a kiss from the Rose. Hereupon his friend at considerable length instructs him how he may by various arts corrupt and deceive the gaolers who guard Fair-Welcome, and set him at liberty.

Cap. XLIII.  
F. 7527-8096.

The Lover recoils, horrified and shocked, at the loose code of morality propounded by his friend. Never, he exclaims, will he be guilty of hypocrisy and deception, but is anxious to be permitted to defy Evil-Tongue face to face. His friend assures him that this would be the extreme of folly; Evil-Tongue would overwhelm Fair-Welcome, and his grief and misery would be more profound than that which fell upon Charlemagne when Roland lost his life at Roncesvalles through the treachery of Genelon. But, exclaims the Lover, I should like to hang

Cap. XLIV.  
F. 8097-8266.

Evil-Tongue. To what purpose? says his friend, since it were much easier to overcome him by ruse and deceit. But, says the Lover, can you not point out some better mode of taking the castle? Well, yes, says the friend, there is the path of Mad-Largess, constructed by Free-Giving. He who treads this path in the company of Richesse will certainly gain entry to the fort, but she will desert him there, and it is Poverty who will be his associate on the return journey.

Cap. XLV.  
F. 8267-8374.

The friend then holds discourse on the hardships and miseries of poverty. But Poverty it is that reveals to a man the true friend who is ever ready to succour him in his distress.

Cap. XLVI.  
F. 8375-8712.

The true friend gives to him whom he loves all that he hath, himself and his goods, nay, he will consent to be imprisoned or given in pledge to supply his friend's needs. Above all things is poverty to be dreaded, and Solomon's proverbs thereon are quoted to enforce the argument. But, says the friend, if you are rich, and desire to win the hearts of dames and damosels, be careful to be ready with pretty presents, fruits, ribbons, and small gifts, which do not embarrass your purse, according to the counsel of Ovid. But after all, he continues, this was needless in those good days when folk lived simply. The natural fruits of the earth supplied their wants, they drank of the water of the brook, and sheepskins sufficed for clothing, while the hollows of



the rocks, and bowers formed of the branches of trees, afforded them all the shelter they required.

When the people of the Golden Age would take their rest, they looked for no more than a couch of moss or leaves, for they enjoyed a climate of perpetual spring, and men and women lived a life of peace and love. Jealousy was unknown, for all men were equal, unembarrassed by kings, judges, or rulers of any sort. Marriage, among other evils, was not yet devised.

C. XLVII.  
F. 8713-8772.

To illustrate the evils that ensued on the institution of marriage, the author draws a picture of the domestic tyranny endured by a woman cursed with a jealous husband, who reproaches her for permitting and encouraging the attentions of other men.

Cap.  
XLVIII.  
F. 8773-8848.

The jealous husband continues his tirade against his wife and against women generally. If women are fair, all men follow them; if ill-favoured, they are ready to throw themselves at those who will have them. He relates the story of Lucretia.

Cap. XLIX.  
F. 8849-8967.

The story of Lucretia concluded. But alas! he exclaims, how many women are there in all the world to be compared with Penelope and Lucretia? An honest woman, he declares, is more rare than a phœnix, a white crow, or a black swan. He relates the history of Abelard

Cap. L.  
F. 8968-9307.

and Heloïse, and pursues his invective against women and marriage. As well, he says, might one praise a dunghill for its beauty, beholding it overlaid with a rich silken coverlet, as admire a woman tricked out with jewels and finery. Beauty is the mortal enemy of Chastity; and Ugliness, who by nature is her servant, hates and detests her.

C. LI.  
F.9308-9696.

The jealous husband continues his accusations against his wife, and heaps insults and reproaches on all women, quoting Virgil, Juvenal, Ovid, and King Solomon to support his argument.

C. LII.  
F.9697-9842.

The enraged husband ends his complaints by seizing his wife by the hair of her head and laying violent hands on her person, until the neighbours, alarmed by her cries, rush in to separate them. Think you, says the friend, that there can be any love betwixt such a pair as I have described to you? Then he contrasts the relative positions of a man and woman before and after marriage. She was then the mistress, now is she the slave. The ancients, says the author, who enjoyed simple lives, knew no such vexations, but all lived peaceably and happily together. None desired to leave the places of their birth.

C. LIII.  
F.9843-9948.

Till Jason built a ship and went forth in quest of the Golden Fleece. Ere this, crime was unknown upon the earth. But when Poverty arrived she brought her son Theft with her, and then were born Avarice and Covetousness and

other evils, so that men deemed it needful to set over them some one to do justice and punish malefactors.

So they chose from among themselves a strong and sturdy peasant, whom they agreed to call their king, and who should be allowed to live by the labour of others, but who, in his turn, swore to defend them. Then the malefactors grew too strong for the king, and he had to appoint sergeants and bailiffs, and to impose taxes for their sustenance. Gold and silver was coined into money, and arms were forged.

C. LIV.  
F. 9949-  
10,358.

Love was once free, but now women sell themselves for gold. The friend concludes by counselling the Lover never to oppose a woman's will if he would please her, for women believe that they know everything by nature, as surely as a cat knows how to catch mice without instruction or teaching. When the friend has finished his discourse, Sweet-Speech and Sweet-Thought reappear, but alas! they are unaccompanied by Sweet-Looks.

The Lover takes leave of his friend, and wanders awhile in the garden. But he is cast down by the advice given him by his friend, that he shall keep clear of the castle. He bends his steps towards it, however, in the hope of delivering Fair-Welcome. If he should find its walls no stronger than a well-baked cake he would attack it. But for the present he thinks it advisable to keep at a safe distance.

Cap. LV.  
F. 10,359-  
10,398.

C. LVI.  
F. 10,399-  
10,662.

The Lover turns towards the path of Much-Giving, the entry to which he finds guarded by a fair dame named Richesse, who disclaims his acquaintance, and forbids him entrance to her domain. At the same time that she draws an enticing picture of the delights and pleasures enjoyed by those who find their way thither, she warns him on the other hand that her votaries fall into the toils of Poverty, who in her turn introduces them to Hunger, of whom she draws a terrible picture. Hunger's dwelling is described as being situated in the farthest region of Scotland. Ceres, the Goddess of Plenty, and Triptolemus, the God of Agriculture, never visit that inhospitable spot. Hunger is the servant of Poverty, and the mother of Theft.

Dismissed scornfully by Richesse, the Lover wanders about the garden, soliloquising on his resolution to be faithful to his vow.

Cap. LVII.  
F. 10,663-  
10,764.

The God of Love appears, and demands how he has been keeping his commandments. He confesses that he has been tempted to despair, but declares his repentance. His master pardons him, and desires that he will recapitulate the articles of his creed, both as to things forbidden and commanded.

Cap. LVIII.  
F. 10,765-  
10,806.

The Lover recites his creed in a summary of ten lines to his master's full satisfaction, who then questions his liegeman on the state of his mind, his hopes and fears, and asks where are the Rose and Fair-Welcome. The former, he

replies, is lost to him for the present, and the latter imprisoned. The God bids him be of good cheer, and declares that he will summon his barons to lay siege to the castle.

The God of Love summons his barons to assemble in parliament under his banner. They include Dame Idleness, Nobleness of Heart, Richesse, Franchise, Pity, Largess, Courage, Honour, Courtesy, Delight, Simplicity, Company, Surety, Pleasure, Gallantry, Beauty, Youth, Humility, Patience, Hide-Well, Constrained-Abstinence, and False-Seeming.

Cap. LIX.  
F 10,087-  
10,864.

The God harangues his followers, and urges them to combat. He tells them that he has lost his servants Tibullus, Gallus, Catullus, and Ovid. But his servant William Lorris must not be allowed to perish, for he is not only one of his most faithful adherents, but is engaged in writing the "Romance of the Rose," which will instruct men fully in the art of love, and this will be carried on and completed at a later date by Jean Clopinel of Meun-sur-Loire. The barons of the host declare that, with the exception of Richesse, they are all ready and anxious for the fray, and explain their plan of attack. Constrained-Abstinence and False-Seeming will deal with Evil-Tongue; Courtesy and Largess will make account of the Duenna who mounts guard over Fair-Welcome; Pleasure and Hide-Well will attack Shame; Courage and Safety will overcome Fear; while Franchise and Pity will

Cap. LX.  
F. 10,865-  
11,312.  
C. 5811  
(corresponding  
with l.  
11,061 of F.)  
-6060.

make naught of Danger; but they ask that they may have the aid of Venus.

The God of Love replies that the Goddess Venus, his mother, is not under his command, but that he owes to her respect and reverence. He further explains wherein lies the difference between the service due to him and to his mother. This explanation affords us a clear view of the distinction made by the poets of the Middle Ages between the sentiment inspired by Venus, the Goddess of sensual pleasure, and that inspired by her son, who ruled the hearts of men. Oftentimes it haps that Venus and her son use their influence in concert, but as often also they act independently.

Richesse having refused to take part in the siege, or aid the Lover, since he is not numbered among her friends, Cupid declares that he will avenge himself upon her by reducing to poverty the rich men who fall into his snares. He much objects to the presence of False-Seeming in his host, but the barons declare that it is absolutely necessary to ensure the success of their enterprise.

The God agrees to his remaining among the host, but proposes that he shall declare at full who and what he is. To this False-Seeming makes demur, on the ground that if he discovers himself his revelation will bring down upon him the wrath of his companions, but at the command of Love he speaks out. He avows that he is the son of Fraud by Hypocrisy; he makes

Cap. LXI.  
F. 11,313-  
11,576.  
C.6061-6324.

his dwelling alike in the cloister and in the world. He appears sometimes in religious, sometimes in secular habit, but it is not by his habit that he may be known. He proclaims himself capable of any wickedness that may suit his purpose. The God of Love interrupts his discourse by asking: Who is this impudent and unblushing devil? Is religion to be looked for among the laity? Most assuredly, replies False-Seeming. Because a man does not wear a religious habit that is no reason that he leads an evil life. He then begins a denunciation of the brethren of the mendicant orders, of whom the secular clergy were jealous to a degree, on account of the special privileges they enjoyed. False-Seeming declares, moreover, that he has as many different shapes as Proteus himself.

He knows well how to change his disguise. Now is he a knight, now a monk, now a prelate, now a canon, or whatever other character pleases him. He now holds forth as a preaching friar, and describes how the powers accorded to him by the Pope in that capacity enable him to gain the confidence of the people, and set at nought the secular clergy. He makes a general attack on the mendicants, following the arguments of William of S. Amour, who wrote in the twelfth century in defence of the University of Paris, when it denounced the Begging Friars. At the request of the God of Love he undertakes to specify what people may reasonably gain a livelihood by mendicancy.

Cap. LXII.  
F. 11,577-  
11,984.  
C. 6325-6714.

- Cap. LXIII. False-Seeming pursues his invective against the friars, and denounces the book put forth by the Franciscans (whom he stigmatises as Anti-Christ) under the name of the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. When he has brought his harangue to an end, Love divides his host into four battles, which are appointed to attack the four gates of the castle.
- Cap. LXIV. False-Seeming and Constrained-Abstinence, in the habits of a Friar and a Beguine, approach the tower, and meet with Evil-Tongue.
- Cap. LXV. The pair salute Evil-Tongue, and demand of him a lodging and food, promising him a fair discourse or sermon in return for his hospitality. He receives the pretended pilgrims, courteously assuring them that his house is theirs, and that he shall be pleased to hear what they have to say.
- Cap. LXVI. Dame Abstinence holds forth to Evil-Tongue on the wickedness of evil-speaking, lying, and slandering, and tells him that, unless he repents, he will certainly go to hell. He replies that she is a liar, that the Lover had kissed the Rose, and that he will blow his trumpet and let all the world hear of it.
- Cap. LXVII. False-Seeming takes up the word, and assures Evil-Tongue that notwithstanding all he may do the Lover will secure the Rose. Overcome by the exhortations of False-Seeming, Evil-Tongue declares himself penitent, and agrees to make his confession.

Cap.  
LXVII.  
F. 12,847-  
12,932.  
C. 7608-7698  
(where the  
translation  
breaks off).



He kneels down to make his shrift, when the pair of false pilgrims spring upon him, strangle him, cut his throat, and throw him into the ditch, and finding the Norman guards in drunken sleep, cut their throats likewise.

Cap. LXVIII.  
F. 12,933-56.

The pair are suddenly joined by Courtesy and Largess, and they enter together into the courtyard of the tower. Here they meet the Duenna, and after some discourse, assisted with promises and gifts, she agrees to deliver to Fair-Welcome a chaplet of fresh flowers as coming from the Lover, together with his affectionate salutations, and even agrees to admit the Lover to an interview with her prisoner.

Cap. LXIX.  
F. 12,957-  
13,164.

Fair-Welcome having feigned an affectionate regard for the Duenna, inquires from whom comes the fair chaplet, and she informs him that he owes it to the Lover. Fair-Welcome is coy of receiving the gift, fearing what Jealousy will say; but the Duenna persists in forcing it upon him, and says that if he should be asked from whom he had it, he can say that 'twas she who had presented it, to which no one is likely to make objection.

Cap. LXX.  
F. 13,165-  
13,310.

Fair-Welcome sets the chaplet on his head. The Duenna then declares an extreme affection for him, and proposes to give him a history of her life since the days when she was young and beautiful and surrounded by admirers. She calls down vengeance on those who had ill-treated her,

Cap. LXXI.  
F. 13,311-  
13,598.

and declares her intention of so instructing Fair-Welcome that he may avenge her. [But it seems strange that while her complaint is against men, her instructions tend to teach her pupil how he may overcome the opposite sex.]

Cap.  
LXXII.  
F. 13,599-  
13,765.

The Duenna relates the history of her amours, and draws a picture of the follies of women.

Cap.  
LXXIII.  
F. 13,766-  
14,444.

She relates the stories of Dido and Æneas, Phillis and Demophoon, Paris and CEnone, and Jason and Medea, and then proceeds to disclose the wiles used by some women to entrap men, and describes the various adventitious aids for waning beauty. Incidentally occurs here the mode in which a lady should comport herself at table, of which Chaucer has made such effective use in his description of the Prioress. The picture drawn by the author of a certain phase of mediæval life is vivid indeed. He censures the folly of husbands who watch their wives too narrowly.

Cap.  
LXXIV.  
F. 14,445-  
14,542.

This is illustrated by a humorous version of the story of Vulcan, Mars, and Venus. The Duenna then proceeds to give her views on the relations between men and women as ordained by Nature, but interfered with by human laws and regulations.

Cap.  
LXXV.  
F. 14,543-  
15,307.

Examples are adduced of the teachings of Nature alike to birds in the woods, fish in the river, and all other creatures unsubdued by man.

Though they may be constrained and confined for a time, they will, if they get the chance, take up their freedom of action. It is equally futile to keep watch over the freedom of women. The worthy dame relates her own infatuation with a lover who treated her most cruelly. She ends by recommending Fair-Welcome to profit by the experience her tale affords. He asks her whether she cannot now admit the Lover without Jealousy being aware thereof. She replies that she can conceal him in such a manner that it would be easier to find an ant's egg in a truss of straw than for Jealousy to discover him. She consents to admit the Lover, who promises her many a fair gift for her complaisance.

Though they may be constrained and confined for a time, they will, if they get the chance, take up their freedom of action. It is equally false to keep watch over the freedom of women. The worthy dame relates her own relation with a lover who treated her most cruelly. She ends by recommending Fair-Wellcome to profit by the experience her tale affords. He asks her whether she cannot now admit the Lover without jealousy being aware thereof. She replies that she can conceal him in such a manner that it would be easier to find an eye in a trust of straw than for jealousy to discover him. She consents to admit the Lover who promises her many a fair gift for her com-

plaisance.

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

## XLIII

Herein is told how Reason left  
The 'wildered Lover all bereft  
Of comfort, but straightway a Friend,  
He finds, whose words his woes amend. 7610

**W**HEN Reason heard my words she went  
Her ways and left me worn and spent **Reason**  
With grief, till of my friend I thought, **departs**  
And, pain and trouble scorning, sought  
To find him, but, by God's hand led,  
He came, beheld my woe, and said:

*The Friend.*

Fair friend, I pray you say amain  
What misery doth your soul enchain;  
For all too plainly writ, your pale  
And careworn visage tells a tale 7620  
Of new-born grief. Say then, what news?

*The Lover.*

God help me! gloom my soul bedews.

A friend's  
advice Speak on.

*The Friend.*

*The Lover.*

And straightway every word  
I told him, as you erst have heard ;  
It needs not to retread that sod.

*The Friend.*

Exclaimed he : By the Body of God !  
Rude Danger you have clean dismissed,  
And the sweet Rosebud safely kissed,  
And now Fair-Welcome's prisonment  
A dagger through your heart hath sent !  
If he account him yours so far  
As win for you in love's sweet war  
A kiss, no gaol will hold his feet.  
Unless you have desire to cheat  
Yourself of good success, let cheer  
Wake in your face, and cast forth fear ;  
Fair-Welcome will, for your dear sake,  
Whate'er it cost, the dungeon break,  
Wherein for love of you he lies.

*The Lover.*

Alas ! his cruel enemies  
Are strong ; but saving Evil-Tongue,  
Who vile suspicion raised among  
His minions, none had noticed me  
Approach the longed-for Rosebud tree.  
Had not that villain raised alarm,  
Believe I well that little harm

How to  
free Fair-  
Welcome

From Shame and Fear had I received,  
And e'en o'er Danger had achieved  
A triumph and been safe. All three  
Past doubt had left me tranquilly, 7650  
Had not those reptiles raised their heads  
From slumbering on their drowsy beds,  
Whom this base wretch to help him called,  
When he beheld Fair-Welcome palled  
With fear, as Jealousy cried out  
(The old crone makes a fearful rout)  
That she was overcome with dread:  
I stayed me not, but thenceward fled  
In haste.

Forthwith was raised a tower,  
Where lies Fair-Welcome 'neath their power  
A prisoner. Friend, to thee I fly 7661  
For aid: O help me ere I die.

Then spake the friend, and sagely gave  
Advice, with kindly voice and suave:

*The Friend.*

Dear friend, give not yourself to grief,  
But let sweet love be still your chief  
Delight, and let the God of Love  
Your loyal service have, above  
All else both night and day; be free  
And frank with him whate'er may be; 7670  
For perjured word or thought unkind  
From you would well-nigh wreck his mind,  
Since he your homage hath received;  
Truth's self is he, and ne'er deceived

Follow A loyal heart. I counsel you  
 Love's Truly and faithfully to do  
 behests All his commandments; for the wight  
 Who in his service finds delight  
 Shall ne'er repent him, though distress  
 Be his through Fortune's fickleness. 7680

And would you serve him as you ought,  
 Then must unendingly your thought  
 Be given to him, and folly great  
 Were yours if you should prove ingrate.

Moreover, Love your heart doth hold  
 In leash, and you were overbold  
 Should you forsake him. Lend quick ear  
 To friendly counselling; forbear,  
 At least some little while, to go  
 Anigh the tower, and let none know 7690  
 Your presence, or by sight or sound,  
 If you should dare to tread that ground,  
 Before the storm has died away  
 Which round your head of late made play.  
 Have special care you are not seen,  
 More often than you erst have been,  
 Beneath the walls or near the gate;  
 And if you are by chance or fate  
 Led thither, let no creature wot  
 You heed one bit Fair-Welcome's lot. 7700  
 But should you spy him from afar,  
 At crenelet or window bar,  
 Regard his form with eye discreet,  
 Though your heart die his glance to meet.



And if he see you, great delight  
 He'll feel, yet all precautions dight,  
 Nor, save in secret, dare to make  
 A finger signal, or to shake  
 His head; and should he see you speak  
 To those about, at once he'll seek 7710  
 To close the shutter and espy  
 Your form both long and lovingly  
 Athwart the chinks, unless from thence  
 He's torn by brutal violence.

Deceivers  
 must be  
 deceived

Have special care that near the spot  
 Vile Evil-Tongue perceive you not;  
 Salute him, if you chance to meet,  
 Politely, but in nowise greet  
 His glance with anger or despite—  
 With such an one 'twere ill to fight. 7720  
 A wise man ne'er displays his wrath,  
 But hides it 'neath his vest's broad-cloth,  
 For fair and good it is a cheat  
 With tools he fashions to entreat,  
 And every liege of Love should do  
 Thuswise, who hath the wit thereto.

To Evil-Tongue and all his race  
 'Tis well to show a pleasant face,  
 Although they'd turn you inside out.  
 Offer (so sweetly that no doubt 7730  
 His mind can have) your body and soul  
 To serve him.

If you first the goal  
 Would reach, in racing with a sharp,  
 Sing him a tune that suits his harp.

Evil-Tongue  
deserves  
hanging

To trap a rascal is no sin,  
And well one does to snare him in  
His proper net.

A caitiff-wretch  
Is Evil-Tongue; although you stretch  
Him till in half he falls, there still  
A wretch remains, that style ne'er will 7740  
Be lost to him. No other name  
Ought he to bear, for nought of shame  
Hath he men's good repute to steal,  
Causing deep wounds no balm can heal.  
Better were he on gibbet strung  
Than half the wretched creatures hung  
For filching dirty pence. The thieves  
Who steal a farmer's golden sheaves,  
Or rob a clothes-line, being ta'en  
Red hand, the law makes pay again 7750  
Four times the worth. But Evil-Tongue  
So spreads his injuries among  
All people, that, the harm once done,  
A good name cannot back be won  
From him to salve the wound, or stay  
The poisonous flood for many a day.

One needs this miscreant to appease,  
As men must sometimes, on their knees,  
Touch with their lips a hand that well  
Deserves the cleansing fires of hell. 7760  
Wherefore should not the wretch be sent  
To Tarsus, where he might invent  
Lies that no lovers need to fear?  
'Twere well from off the earth to clear  
So vile a scoundrel.

Evil-Tongue  
 And all his cursèd crew are sprung  
 From Satan, and of Heaven despised,  
 Therefore are men right well advised  
 By every guile to cheat the cheat,  
 His cozenage and lies to beat 7770  
 With greater lies, and e'en caress  
 And trick the knave with treacherousness,  
 Fooling the fellow to his bent  
 With fulsome praise and compliment,  
 Silencing thus the yelping hound  
 Till fair and clear the road be found.

Jealousy  
 to be  
 flattered

Before all else your care should be  
 To lull to false security  
 This slanderer, by persuading him  
 That you are reft of power to nimme 7780  
 Or steal the Rose he lives to guard;  
 That done, the pathway lies unbarred.

Treat in likewise the hag on watch  
 (God grant hell's fiend her soul may catch),  
 And flatter also Jealousy  
 (May she of God accursèd be),  
 To still her rancorous, spiteful heart,  
 That joy of others makes to smart  
 With sour disdain, such venomèd spleen  
 And greed within her rage, I ween; 7790  
 For sure it is, though many taste  
 Of happiness, it nought need waste.  
 It is as though a lantern's light  
 One grudged to other men anight;

Gaolers  
must be  
bribed

Though thousands light thereat, no less  
The holder sees its radiantness.  
The simile is plain enough  
For all but minds ill-bred and rough.

But should these villain folk demand  
Some service, lend a ready hand 7800  
Thereto, for gentle courtesy  
Is soothing, yet let men not see  
That you but make-believe the while,  
With after purpose to beguile  
Their watchfulness; pursue this rule,  
And many a foe may you befool.

Whoso would see his foeman drowned  
Or hanged should lovingly around  
His neck embrace him, if he nought  
Can otherwise be lightly brought 7810  
Beneath his will; but wherefore thus  
Explain a thing so obvious?  
These foes so subtle are and keen,  
That open war would simply mean  
Your good cause lost.

Then next, with care,  
For other gaolers gifts prepare,  
If you can reach them; seek to learn  
What bribes will best their kindness earn:  
A hat, or wicker bandelet,  
With gay fresh-gathered flowers beset, 7820  
A broidered purse, a simple veil,  
Some pretty trinkets, which, if frail  
And little worth, are ne'ertheless  
Of dainty taste and comeliness,

For e'en though presents be despised,  
 No lover who is well advised  
 Will bring down ruin on his head  
 By gifts inordinate, but, led  
 By prudence, know how so to give,  
 That hate may die and goodwill live. 7830  
 And then lament you that love's pain  
 You fear is labour spent in vain.  
 And if your slender purse affords  
 Sparse gifts, let plenteous honied words  
 And promises their place supply,  
 And dream of payment—by-and-by;  
 But swear with such effrontery,  
 That none can doubt you'll faithful be.  
 Humbly demand their kindly aid;  
 And even while your suit is made, 7840  
 Adown your cheeks let streamlets flow,  
 Therefrom great benefit will grow  
 To your design. Weep—would you please  
 These gaolers—on your bended knees,  
 Hands clasped together, eyelids wet  
 With tears enough to wear and fret  
 Your face with seams, which, seeing fall  
 So freely, must their hearts recall  
 To pity.

But if nought to weep  
 Your eyes incline, 'tis well to steep 7850  
 The lids with moisture from the tongue;  
 Or surer still, they may be stung  
 With garlic or fresh onion juice;  
 Effectively will that unloose  
 Of scalding tears a plenteous rain,  
 As grief might do, or poignant pain.

Tears  
some-  
times  
useful

Thuswise have lovers often done,  
And thereby many a conflict won  
Beneath Love's banner, knowing well  
O'er women's hearts to cast a spell 7860  
In suchwise, that they tenderly  
Loosen the bonds they hold them by.

But many a caitiff wretch hath shown  
Moist eyes whose heart hath never known  
True love, and damsels oft have fared  
But ill, by treacherous weeping snared.

E'en gaolers' hearts may sometimes be  
Softened by tears, unless they see  
They are but false, for they'll resent  
It rudely if a trick they scent; 7870  
Then may you vainly beg and pray,  
Fast closed you'll find each entry way.  
But if you fail to come to speech  
Through those who watch, you yet may reach  
Your object through a trusty friend,  
Or otherwise effect your end  
By means of an impassioned letter,  
But doing so 'tis vastly better  
To set thereon a feignèd name,  
Call her, Fair sir, or him, Sweet dame, 7880  
With hope more fully to conceal  
The secrets hid beneath the seal.  
For many a rascal thief hath read  
A lover's letters, and ill sped  
The plot thereby, all labour lost  
And hopes and aspirations crossed.

Children  
bad  
messen-  
gers

Employ not children, great the chance  
Will be they fail through ignorance,  
And sorry messengers they make  
Through trifling, idling, or mistake. 7890  
They oft miscarry, or will show  
Your missive wheresoe'er they go,  
And bungle, not through lack of sense  
Alone, but inexperience.  
You must with great discretion choose  
Your messengers, unless you'd lose  
The fruit of all your pains, and see  
Your intrigue common property.

These gaolers you will surely find  
Of heart so piteous, sweet and kind, 7900  
That, once your money they have ta'en,  
Your faithful friends will they remain.  
E'en as the sparrow-hawk is sure  
To flutter to the well-known lure  
At morn, or eve, or any hour,  
So surely gifts possess the power  
The surliest gaolers to appease  
So far, that freely as they please  
May lovers use them; once made tame  
With vails, their service they may claim. 7910

But should they hold their heads so high  
That they regard disdainfully  
Your sighs and tears, your gifts and prayers,  
Seeing through all your best-laid snares,  
And treat your courtesy with lewd  
Unseemly acts and voicing rude,

**Devices** Answer their scoffs with courtesy,  
**should be** And leave them in their fat to fry.  
**varied** Believe me, never autumn cheese  
 Was made more speedily than these 7920  
 Good folk will bite their nails. Right soon  
 They'll come to seek some gift or boon,  
 And merrily your plot will go ;  
 You'll gather, though you cease to sow.

Rude churlish hearts are often filled  
 With arrogance, and though one spilled  
 Buckets of tears thereon, the more  
 Their gentle kindness you implore,  
 The harder will they grow ; but leave 7930  
 Them all alone, nor seem to grieve  
 One jot, and suddenly their pride  
 And insolence is cast aside,  
 For nought doth more such hearts impress,  
 Than proud and studied scornfulness.

The mariner who steers his bark  
 Through unknown seas, when night falls dark  
 Regardeth not one only star  
 To guide his course, nor would he far  
 Entrust his ship with one poor sail,  
 But try what others might avail 7940  
 'Mid storm and tempest. Even so  
 He that with Love would hunting go  
 Must follow, not a single track,  
 But now pursue, and now fall back,  
 If Love's full joyance he would taste.  
 I warrant me I need not waste



My time in glossing this, past doubt  
Or question doth the sense stand out.

Words  
cost little

'Twere well these gaolers then to ply  
With prayers ; he little risks thereby  
Who spends his words, e'en though they be  
Cast back with scorn and contumely ;  
And if they're crowned with good success,  
They pave the path to happiness.  
One of two things 'tis plain must hap,  
Either success one's prayers will cap,  
Or of their object must they fail ;  
And if 'tis so, small cause to wail  
A lover hath, for all the cost

Is but that he his time hath lost.

Nor need one fear lest he hath made  
The gaolers wroth because he prayed  
Their kindness ; that will rather please  
Their dignity when they at ease  
Shall muse thereon. Rude boors aye feel  
Strange satisfaction when appeal  
Is made to them ; within themselves  
They think what most important elves  
They needs must be—how grand ! how  
great !

That thus are folk importunate  
For their goodwill.

They must refuse,  
Or grant your prayer, or make excuse.  
If all goes well, you then succeed ;  
If ill, why then you do but need  
Comfort to take, and try again.  
If, failing, you conceal your pain,

Affect  
 indifference  
 By far the better chance have you  
 Later to press your suit anew.  
 But look you, be not so unwise  
 By any means to ope the eyes 7980  
 Of those you bribe to your intent  
 Of gaining, through their means, your bent.  
 To win the Rosebud make it seem  
 That love platonic is your dream,  
 For rest assured, beyond all doubt,  
 That were your purpose once found out,  
 Your chance were lost ; but if with skill  
 Your snare be laid, at last it will  
 Debauch their hearts, and you will see  
 They're traitors all. If cleverly 7990  
 You treat them, then you need not fear  
 But what they'll lend a willing ear  
 To your entreaties. But I yet  
 Give counsel that you never let  
 Your prayers be made too freely if  
 They seem immovable and stiff ;  
 For if they yield not, then they cry  
 Aloud to vaunt their probity.  
 But if as traitors they behave,  
 They're mum, and silent as the grave. 8000

These gaoler folk are all alike :  
 Although unbending as a pike  
 They show themselves, if no advance  
 You make towards them, likely chance  
 It is you'll find they may be bought  
 (Offering themselves) for next to nought.  
 But sometimes dolts with gifts and praise  
 Ill timed, the pride of gaolers raise

In suchwise that, their avarice  
 Excited, they exalt the price 8010 **Use gold sparingly**  
 Of Roses.

These rich dullards dream  
 To gain advantage, but extreme  
 Of damage do themselves. Much gold  
 They pay for that which else were sold  
 At vilest price. 'Twere much the best  
 If each awhile forbore request  
 To such-like scum, right cheaply then  
 Were bought and sold these gaoler men.  
 If only suitors would arrange  
 Among themselves that no exchange 8020  
 Of gifts go on or prayers be made  
 To watch-dogs, then ere long were  
 stayed

Traffic in roses, which must die  
 If none were found to bribe or buy.  
 Assuredly I love not well  
 Men who abase themselves to sell  
 Their faith for filthy lucre, and  
 Not willingly would set my hand  
 To such-like business. Yet delay  
 Must you avoid, and smooth the way 8030  
 Through them for that you're bent to do,  
 Setting the nets to win for you  
 The game you follow.

Should you stay,  
 Rivals may gather day by day,  
 Not one or two, but many a score,  
 Aye, and perchance some hundreds more  
 In two-and-fifty weeks, till last  
 You'll find your chances spent and past.

Heed not  
scorn

An honourable man doth ne'er  
A woman leave to crave a share 8040  
In his affections ; doth he wait  
For that, his self-esteem's too great.  
But whosoe'er would fain attack  
A damsel's heart, although no lack  
He finds at first of haughty scorn  
(Which needs must patiently be borne),  
If only he will wisely steer  
His bark, the rocks and sands he'll clear  
At last.

From this advice a page  
You well may take if you engage 8050  
With watch-dogs ; but attempt them not  
If they ill-humoured be or hot  
With anger.

When they're light of heart  
Approach them, but if they should smart  
'Neath grievance, keep away, unless  
You choose to brave the bitterness  
They feel if Jealousy perchance  
Mistreat them to despite your chance.

But if you with consummate art  
Can get these tiresome folk apart, 8060  
Safe from intrusion of all men,  
Fair-Welcome might break prison then,  
Where he, in suffering drear, for you,  
Lies now, close kept as hawk in mew,  
And aid you with Fair-Seeming's power,  
As well he knows to do ; your hour  
Will then be ripe to pluck the Rose.

And if rude Danger should oppose

Your deed, and Shame and Fear should  
 wake  
 And feign defence—though all aquake 8070  
 With will, while struggling, to give way,  
 Then will you understand their play.  
 If tremulous Fear turn deadly pale,  
 Shame flush bright red, while 'neath him fail  
 Rude Danger's knees, and all the three  
 Shriek and lament them woefully,  
 Care not for them an empty shuck,  
 But grasp the Rose and thank your luck,  
 Showing yourself a man of nerve  
 When place and good occasion serve, 8080  
 For nothing gives them more delight  
 Than to be vanquished in a fight  
 By major force.

Reluct-  
 ance  
 often  
 feigned

At different times

Their moods will vary e'en as climes  
 And seasons change; if you appealed  
 Their will, they ne'er would dare to yield  
 That which they love to give by force,  
 But feign their joy to be the source  
 Of bitterest grief, although they sighed  
 And longed for that which lips denied. 8090  
 It is, forsooth, their full intent  
 To gain the end they most resent;  
 And disappointment were intense,  
 To say the truth, if their defence  
 Succeeded, and all unappeased  
 Would be their wrath, while wondrous  
 pleased  
 They vaunted them of their escape.  
 But if resistance take the shape

Neglect Of unfeigned hate, and they defend  
 not The castle vigorously, then lend 8100  
 sympathy An ear to Prudence and give in,  
 With hope that later you may win  
 The fort ; crave pardon and await  
 Till those three spies that militate  
 Against you disappear, and leave  
 Fair-Welcome with you, free to weave  
 New plans and schemes.

A cheery face  
 Should you assume, endued with grace  
 And grave demeanour.

Heed the while  
 Fair-Welcome ; if he seem to smile, 8110  
 Smile too ; or if you note his mien  
 For solemn, then be solemn seen  
 Likewise ; if he a guileless air  
 Affect, your countenance should wear  
 The same sweet innocence—each way  
 Or mood he shows throughout the day  
 'Tis yours to counterfeit ; if bright  
 His visage be, show then a light  
 And merry heart ; if he be sad,  
 Then look as though some grievance  
 had 8120

Fast hold on you ; let that thing fire  
 Your heart whereto he hath desire ;  
 And if some other thing he blame,  
 Declare abhorrence of the same  
 With vigour ; or if he should praise  
 Or this or that, cease not to raise  
 Your voice in laud thereof. Thus do,  
 And throughly will he trust in you.

Think you a gracious dame forsooth  
 Cares for a hare-brained, half-fledged youth <sup>8180</sup>  
 Who, like an idiot, half the night  
 Singeth the pleasure and delight  
 He hath, through her kind grace,  
     enjoyed,  
 And how her love for him destroyed  
 Her peace? With reason might she  
     dread  
 'Twould bring down scandal on her  
     head:  
 Love passages are quickly known  
 When all around the streets they're  
     thrown  
 In balladings unheedingly,  
 Who such man loves, a fool is she. <sup>8140</sup>  
 Whene'er a wise man takes a fool  
 For mistress, 'tis a golden rule  
 Folly alone to talk with her:  
 As well might he on empty air  
 Expend wise words and rarest wit,  
 They nought will profit him one bit.  
 Whoso would win a woman's love  
 Should ne'er converse with her above  
 Her small intelligence, for she  
 Will straightway deem her man to be <sup>8150</sup>  
 A fox, a cozener, or a cheat;  
 And deeming kindest words deceit,  
 Will leave his loving care and go  
 To seek some other, and right low  
 Perchance may fall—from out the heap  
 She's bound to pick some scabious sheep.

Courtesy      She'll brood fierce passion in her breast,  
 indis-      E'en as a wild she-wolf possessed  
 pensable      By madness, who with rage accurst  
                  From all he-wolves picks out the worst.

                 And if Fair-Welcome comes your  
                  way,  
 And you with him at chess should  
                  play,  
 Or dice, or tables, or what not,  
 Let him aye find that he hath got  
 Advantage of you ; when you lose,  
 Laugh heartily, and ne'er refuse  
 To play again, thereat will he  
 Rejoice him most contentedly.  
 Praise his behaviour, manners, dress,  
 His manly port and nobleness ;  
 And let his comfort be your care,  
 Offering a settle, stool, or chair.  
 Saith Ovid : If a speck of dust  
 You see fall on your love you must  
 Remove it, though 'twere next to naught.  
 So, if his costly cloak hath caught  
 The ground, uplift it.

                 Do forsooth  
 Whate'er may please the gentle youth.  
 And if but carefully you move  
 By my instructions, you shall prove  
 Them fire-tried gold, and ne'er be left  
 In evil case, of love bereft,  
 But be fulfilled of that desire  
 Towards which your heart and soul  
                  aspire.



## XLIV

Herein the Lover tells how he  
 Misdoubts his triple enemy,  
 But hopeth still beneath the brand  
 To bring them of stern Justice' hand.

*The Lover.*

**D**EEM you, fair friend, I've changed my wit?  
 No man, save some base hypocrite,  
 Would do such loathsome work ; shall I  
 Put hand to such-like devilry ?  
 Think you I'd strain and bend each nerve  
 These villain folk to please and serve ?  
 Except Fair-Welcome, slaves forsooth  
 Are they, to honour lost and truth.  
 Do you this fatal counsel give,  
 Which following, I should basely live  
 A scoundrel ? Whensoe'er across  
 Such folk I come I boldly toss  
 My gauntlet at them. 8200

*Suffer first*

That I this Evil-Tongue accurst  
 Defy, ere cozenage or deceit  
 I use, his schemes to overwit,  
 Demanding boldly he abate  
 The storm that he hath raised of hate  
 And slander, or by heaven shall he  
 Suffer assault and battery.  
 Or if he love not that I take  
 Vengeance, he then amends must make ; 8210  
 Or lastly, if he will, a judge  
 Shall hear my plaint, and salve my grudge.

The  
 Lover's  
 indigna-  
 tion

*The Friend.*

Trick- Fair friend! fair friend! right good were this  
 sters Against an open foe, ywis,  
 must be But Evil-Tongue is too occult  
 tricked And sly for war, and poor result  
 You'd have with him; when'er some carl  
 Or dame he'd injure, with a snarl  
 Behind their backs he speaks. His base  
 And traitorous head may God disgrace! 8220  
 Most poisonous is he when most fair  
 He shows, and in his heart doth bear  
 Cruel deception hid beneath  
 The smile that's born of lips and teeth,  
 Not of the heart. Ne'er for a friend  
 A traitor takes me, nor expend  
 I love on him; and if perchance  
 His treachery fall to Treason's lance,  
 For lack of time and means whereby  
 To venge oneself more honourably, 8230  
 'Tis his desert, and small regret  
 Were mine whatever fate he met.  
 If you 'gainst Evil-Tongue should plead,  
 Dream you by such means you'd succeed  
 To stay his prattling lies? You'd find,  
 Alas! you could in no wise bind  
 The slanderous wretch. Although you brought  
 A hundred witnesses, they nought  
 Could stay his cackle; more thy proof,  
 The more he'd talk, and less behoof 8240  
 You'd gain therefor. More widely known  
 Would be the slander, though 'twere shown

All false. For whosoe'er doth try  
 To wipe out shame, or kill a lie  
 By Justice' help, will find no jot  
 Hath he decreased foul Slander's blot.  
 The man who hath an ill deed done,  
 I swear, 'fore God, is not the one  
 To purge it. To anticipate  
 Amends from one who's reprobate  
 Were fond and foolish. E'en should he  
 Offer amends, 'twould wiser be  
 To grant free pardon.

Vain to  
 contra-  
 dict lies

If so rash

You were as join with him in clash  
 Of arms, by all the saints, I vow,  
 You'd shortly see Fair-Welcome bow  
 'Neath heavy manacles, and swung  
 Over a furnace, or else flung  
 Within a swirling tide and drowned,  
 Or in a dungeon's depths profound  
 Buried from sight for evermore :  
 Then were your heart more sick and sore  
 Than Charlemagne's when Roland died  
 At Roncesvalles through the pride  
 And treachery of Genelon,  
 Whom Satan had set seal upon.

8250

8260

*The Lover.*

Nay, nay, thereto I've no desire,  
 I wish the knave may feed hell-fire!  
 Good Lord! my wrath grows hot as  
 pepper,  
 How gladly would I hang the leper!

8270

*The Friend.*

Another path Fair friend, 'twere well to curb your haste.  
 Instead of hanging, you may taste  
 A deeper vengeance ; not for you  
 Is it the hangman's work to do.  
 A traitor foul 'tis fair to cheat  
 With treason—hear me, I entreat.

*The Lover.*

Kind friend, in you will I confide  
 Alone, nor turn my heart aside.  
 And if you will but point the way  
 Of most effect by which to lay  
 Siege to the castle, gladly hear  
 Will I, whilst you the plan make clear.

8280

*The Friend.*

I know a pleasant path and sure,  
 Though somewhat dangerous to poor  
 And needy men. To take the fort  
 There is a plan both safe and short  
 (Though in it hath no lot or part  
 My doctrine, that revolts your heart)  
 By which you may the walls displace,  
 Shaking each stone from tower to base,  
 While gates and doors will open fly,  
 Swung on their hinges suddenly.  
 All those who guard it would allow  
 Themselves beneath your yoke to bow  
 As prisoners, while no single word  
 Were spoken, nor a finger stirred.

8290

The plan that hath this magic touch  
 Mad-Largess thought of, and Give-Much  
 It hight, but many a man, I ween,  
 In following it hath ruined been. 8300  
 I know the route right well, for I  
 But two days since returned thereby :  
 In summer's heat and winter's rage,  
 Thither I've made my pilgrimage.

The path  
 of riches

Leave Largess on the right, and turn  
 Off to the left, beside a burn ;  
 So far as carrieth a cross-bow,  
 Follow the beaten path and go  
 Straight on, the road you scarce can lose,  
 And ere you much have worn your shoes, 8310  
 You'll see the towers and turrets shiver,  
 As aspens in a wind-flaw quiver,  
 And every portal open fly,  
 While guards fall dead all suddenly :  
 Nor are these walls more hard to break  
 Than 'tis a well-baked Christmas cake  
 To cut in equal parts of four,  
 While fewer soldiers for the stour  
 You'll need than erst great Charlemagne  
 Led forth to conquer wide Almaine. 8320

Along this path, which well I know,  
 No needy man hath power to go.  
 Alone, he can in nowise fare,  
 Nor other poor man lead him there.  
 But if perchance he find a guide  
 Who hath himself aforetime tried

Riches and poverty The route, he soon shall know it well  
 As I do, who in youth-tide fell  
 Therein. And you shall likewise learn  
 Its ways, if you have lust to turn 8330  
 Your footsteps thither, seen that you  
 Command such wealth as may pursue  
 Unbounded Largess, but to me  
 That path is barred by Poverty.  
 My patrimony I dispersed;  
 And now, in heavy debt immersed,  
 Without one penny to restore  
 To creditors I filched of yore,  
 I best had hang or drown myself.  
 Quoth she: If you are bare of pelf, 8340  
 Hither return no more.

## Richesse

Alone can gain for you ingress,  
 But from her guidance, as I trow,  
 Much ill and little good doth grow;  
 In going will she use much care  
 To please you, but her pains will spare  
 To help you back, and if your way  
 You make therein, through night and day  
 You there must bide, until you be  
 Thrust thence by stern-hand Poverty, 8350  
 Who oft on lovers brings distress.  
 Within remaineth Mad-Largess,  
 Who hath no thought except of play  
 And riot through the livelong day,  
 And scattereth coin around as she  
 Possessed thereof a granary.  
 No count she keepeth, doubting never  
 But what her wealth will dure for ever.

## XLV

How Poverty doth make her plea  
 To Dame Richesse most ruefully, 8360  
 Who listeth not her piteous word,  
 But turns away as nought she heard.

ALAS! drear Poverty must be  
 The shamefaced spouse of Misery;  
 Her heart with sore affliction bruised,  
 Her eyes with scalding tears suffused,  
 While answering her sad plaint is heard  
 No sweet response, no pitying word,  
 To heal the wounds that tear her heart.  
 Her wretched fate it is to smart 8370  
 With blame for every worthy deed,  
 How great soe'er her grief and need.  
 O ne'er consort with Poverty,  
 For nothing than her grip can be  
 More direful, as those find who get  
 Entangled in the coils of debt,  
 Through scattering wide in youthful days  
 Their substance, for old age oft pays  
 A heavy score, and many have stood  
 Therethrough beneath the gallows' wood. 8380  
 What pains untold those wretches know  
 Who driven by Poverty must go  
 Hither and thither to obtain  
 The little ease whereof they're fain!  
 The lover nowise should forget  
 That Poverty doth sorely let  
 And hinder love, as Ovid saith:  
 With poor men love scant pastureth.

The  
 miseries  
 of poverty

A spend-  
thrift  
pictured

Poverty weds a man to hate,  
Maddens and makes him desperate,  
Until well-nigh he's reft of sense.  
Alas! fair friend, experience  
Hath taught me this; too well have I  
Tried it and found its misery  
In proper person: I have known  
What 'tis 'neath Poverty to groan,  
And therefore can set forth to you,  
As scarce another man could do,  
The vengeance it hath in store;  
Therefrom, God guard you evermore!  
Fair friend, that you may suffer ne'er  
The woes it hath been mine to bear,  
List well the fair advice I give,  
And, warned by my example, live  
A joyous life.

In days long past,  
Among a merry crew was cast  
My lot, and I the foremost shone  
(As he who ne'er would be out-done)  
Among a hundred, whilst that I  
Scattered my substance recklessly,  
As, all unheeded, sped along  
Sweet amorous days, 'mid wine and song,  
Esteemed of lordly wealth by all:  
Alack! from wealth to need, my fall  
Was lightly wrought by Mad-Largess,  
Whose hand hath plunged me in distress  
To that degree that meat and drink  
I oft-times lack, and tread the brink  
Of dire starvation. Weed and shoes!  
Alas! my needs their state excuse;



And worst of all, my friends are gone,  
 Grim Poverty hath spared not one.  
 Ah yes! dear friend, when Fortune spent  
 Her spite on me, my friends all went,  
 Nay, all went not, one still remained,  
 Whereof my woe-worn heart was fained.

Friends  
 flee  
 poverty

When Fortune chose my goods to take,  
 Poverty followed in her wake :  
 I lie—nought Fortune took from me,  
 All that she took most certainly 8430  
 Was hers ; for had those friends been mine,  
 I had not seen them all decline  
 Acquaintance when she left ; thus she  
 In nowise acted wrongfully,  
 For hers were they, and, like a fool,  
 I thought I'd bought them, and could rule  
 Their hearts as they were mine. Alas !  
 All suddenly beheld I pass  
 Those worthy friends, whene'er they found  
 That of my coin, bright, smooth, and round, 8440  
 No piece remained. Each well-known face  
 Departed with a wry grimace  
 Soon as a-top of Fortune's wheel  
 My head they saw not, but my heel.  
 An ingrate were I should I scold  
 Her who hath shown me good untold  
 And undeserved.

She now, forsooth,  
 With tender care and loving ruth  
 Hath on mine eyes bestowed a calm  
 And perfect vision ; gentle balm 8450  
 Hath she prepared to salve my sight  
 And if some twenty friends took flight

A faithful friend  
 When Poverty arrived, I now,  
 Unless I lie, can see, I trow,  
 Four hundred and a half. Ne'er lynx  
 (Whose piercing eyesight never blinks)  
 Could see more clear. In my disgrace  
 Kind Fortune hath revealed the face  
 Of perfect love in one dear friend  
 Through Poverty. I ne'er had kened  
 His sweet and gentle tenderness  
 Had he not spied my deep distress;  
 But forthwith busy haste he made  
 To bring me kindly help and aid,  
 And proffered without hope of gain  
 His all, my woe-worn heart to fain.

8400

## XLVI

The Friend the Lover doth remind  
 That one man only did he find  
 Faithful in poverty, but he  
 Gave all he had, unstintingly.

8470

I COME, dear friend, quoth he, to make  
 An offering free, for friendship's sake,  
 Alike of life and goods, fear not  
 To share with me in common lot.  
 How much then? Nay, no part, but all,  
 If for the whole your need doth call.

Of Fortune's gifts, the entire sum  
 With me weighs not one worthless plum  
 As 'gainst a friend, nor e'en would I  
 To you those precious gifts deny

8480

Friend-  
ship  
unfeigned

Kind nature gave me: since the day  
 That first we met, not once astray  
 Have gone our hearts, but many a proof  
 Have had that, like the web with woof,  
 Are they conjoined in friendship true,  
 And proof alone assurance due  
 Affordeth of a friendship's worth.  
 If all that I possess on earth  
 You deigned to take, my heart would be  
 Grateful to you exceedingly, 8490  
 So powerful are the cords that bind  
 Two men whose bodies hold one mind.  
 For I, quoth he, to heal your woe  
 To prison, light of heart, would go  
 As borrow, pawn, or hostage plight,  
 While all my goods were sold outright  
 For your behoof.

But this dear friend

Permitted not his work to end  
 With offering, but would take no rest  
 Until he generously had pressed 8500  
 His having on me, who, for shame,  
 Stood silently, as one who'd blame  
 Himself, yet dares not ope his lips  
 To tell the wretchedness that grips  
 His inmost heart, but tries to hide  
 The poverty that like a tide  
 O'erwhelms him, and with cheerful face  
 Would fain conceal his dire disgrace.

Far different is the case, I doubt,  
 With monkish mendicants, those stout 8510

Of And thriving blades, the begging friars,  
 begging Who show themselves as rough as briars  
 friars In open street, but love to win,  
 With oily tongues, their way within  
 The goodmen's houses whom they cheat  
 With lying words, while drink and meat  
 They batten on; and though they sing  
 Their poverty, they're gathering  
 Fat livelihood, and many a heap  
 Of deniers have they dolven deep 8520  
 Beneath the earth.

Much more could I  
 Relate of this fraternity,  
 But thereby should from bad to worse  
 Be thrust, and fear their spiteful curse,  
 For none these hypocrites, forsooth,  
 So hate as those who speak the truth.

Alas then! I must count me mad  
 That such blind confidence I had  
 In treacherous friends, from whom I got  
 No help, but all alone to rot 8530  
 Was left, rejected and despised  
 Of all the crowd which erst had prized  
 My friendship mightily. Alone  
 You stood my friend when all were gone,  
 Your heart with mine fast intertwined,  
 And both, please God, shall stand combined  
 In constant love.

But out, alas!  
 One day our mortal forms must pass  
 From this terrestrial life, and we  
 Forego each other's company, 8540

When comes the last and dreadful day,  
 And all our bodies 'neath the sway  
 Of death must fall; but even then  
 Death, nought, dear friend, can snatch from  
 men

Friend-  
 ship  
 outlasts  
 death

Except their bodies and recall  
 To earth their substance corporal.

Death's iron hand will seize us both  
 Ere long, however much we're loth  
 To meet him.

Rarely doth Death take

Two friends together, yet I make 8550  
 No question if I first am ta'en,  
 I still shall in your heart remain  
 Embalmed; or if 'tis yours to die  
 Before me, rest assured that I  
 Shall keep your memory green.

E'en so

The records of past ages show  
 How bitterly great Theseus grieved  
 When Peirithous from him was reived  
 By death, and sought his friend in hell.

But Poverty is far more fell 8560  
 And cruel than grim Death: to soul  
 And body both it bringeth dole,  
 Without the respite of an hour,  
 And urgeth men to actions dour,  
 Of murder, theft, and perjury,  
 And whatso other vice may be  
 Wherewith man's race is pesterèd,  
 While oftentimes doth Death bestead

**Beware of poverty** Men in their woes, which, howso great  
 They be, his hand will dissipate. 8570  
 And therefore, dear companion, now  
 Remember Solomon, whose brow  
 Of old bore Israel's diadem,  
 And left us many an apophthegm,  
 Whereof one saith : Beware, my son,  
 Of poverty whilst living on  
 The earth : and in another breath  
 He furthereth this good word, and saith :  
 Better it is, by far, to die  
 Than live on earth in poverty, 8580  
 Since, against those who own them poor,  
 Their very brethren shut the door ;  
 And of poor caitiffs speaking still,  
 Whose lot it is to bear the ill  
 Of indigence, he shows how they  
 In woeful wise wear through their day.  
 Scarce can a man's estate be worse  
 Than when stark bare he finds his purse ;  
 For those who on the laws have writ  
 Declare the indigent unfit 8590  
 To testify as witnesses ;  
 And in the statute book it says,  
 That poor, impoverished men must lie  
 In the same bed with infamy.

Of beauty, poverty is bare ;  
 But I with full assurance dare  
 Affirm, that if good store of gold,  
 And jewels rich, your coffers hold,  
 Then may you have fair hope to gain  
 Such wealth of roses as may fain 8600

Your heart : they ne'er shall be fast closed  
 Against you, if you're well disposed  
 To lavish gifts, as you have been  
 Profuse of promises, I ween.  
 It needs not to be over-rich,  
 But have a care you do not stitch  
 Your purse too closely ; give with care  
 Such presents as, though choice and fair,  
 Are small of cost and leave you still  
 Some coin to line your purse, for ill 8610  
 You'd surely fare if you were left  
 Penniless ; of all wealth bereft  
 But little sympathy you'd find,  
 While many a one would mock behind  
 His back at him who, like a fool,  
 Let fond desire o'er reason rule,  
 Paying the favours that he got  
 With ruin of his life, God wot.

Presents  
 avail  
 much

In my esteem there's nought more sweet  
 Than some belovèd face to greet 8620  
 With pretty presents choicely set  
 In dainty cloth or wicker net :  
 Sweet figs, or gooseberries or cherries,  
 Black bramble fruit, or huckleberries,  
 A luscious peach with velvet skin,  
 Or rosy, smooth-faced nectarine,  
 Berries of service tree or lote,  
 Or medlars soft with russet coat,  
 Dark plums or grapes with silvery bloom,  
 Or strawberries, which through all the room 8630  
 Cast fragrance, almonds, hard of shell,  
 But whose sweet kernel payeth well

Gifts  
more than  
words

The pains to force it, or the rud  
Rich mulberries which fair Thisbe's blood  
Distained: and if perchance you are  
Compelled to buy them, say from far  
Your pains have brought them, though they come  
From nearest market; mingle some  
Sweet flowers with fruits, fair roses pink  
And white, and violets, and pervinke 8640  
Of sapphire hue, and other flowers  
That gladden spring and summer hours.

A dainty gift will often reach  
Rough hearts and modify rude speech.  
And if perchance some ill men know  
Concerning you, they'll be more slow  
To blurt it forth. Oft gifts have made  
Heroes of those who in the shade  
Had lain without them. Delicate meats  
And wines have often won fat seats 8650  
For prebendaries. How men live  
Matters but little if they give  
Freely, for oft a handsome gift  
Hath had the power to fill a rift  
In honesty or virtue, and  
While praise the giver gains, a band  
'Twill put on the receiver, who  
His freedom thereby sells to you,  
And soul and body puts to price,  
Drawn on thereto by avarice. 8660  
With what word shall I finish then?  
Good gifts are loved of Gods and men.

If you but lend a willing ear  
To that I say, you need not fear



But what the God of Love will show  
 You grace and favour when you go  
 To seize the fort; whatever he  
 Hath promised shall accomplished be.  
 For so will Love and Venus fight  
 The gaolers, that in their despite 8670  
 The Rosebud you your own may call,  
 Though hemmed around by rampart wall.  
 But when at last you have attained  
 Your end, and heart and soul are fained  
 Therewith, wise prudence it demands  
 To hold the prize; for when with hands  
 And brain we painfully have wrought  
 To win, experience dire hath taught  
 That harder 'tis to hold. He well  
 May rail at Fortune's cruel spell 8680  
 Who loses her on whom was placed  
 His tenderest love, although were traced  
 The cause to his misdeed. No pains  
 A man should spare, when once he  
 gains  
 A gracious woman's love, to keep  
 The treasure to himself, nor cheap  
 Esteem God's gift, more specially  
 If virtuous, wise, and fair she be,  
 Yet lays no scheme or plot from whence  
 Guerdon to seek or recompense, 8690  
 For ne'er was love yet put to price,  
 Except by those in whom foul vice  
 Had made its wonting. Ne'er in dames  
 Who sell them have the gentle flames  
 Of true love burned; keep thou away  
 From such—foul-fire doth in them play.

Hold love  
 when  
 won

**Women** But mostly women are, forsooth,  
**are** Exacting, void of pitying ruth,  
**coquets** 'Fore all, alas! towards those who  
 prove  
 Loyal and faithful in their love, 8700  
 Ready to raven and devour  
 Whate'er may fall within their power.  
 And Juvenal hath said, I ween,  
 Speaking of one hight Iberine,  
 That sooner would she lose an eye  
 Than trust one man to satisfy  
 Her burning lusts, for like hell-fire  
 Raged her insatiable desire.  
 No woman, saith he, e'er was known  
 Who loved a man for love alone 8710  
 In suchwise that her heart were not  
 Mindful what goods or gold he'd got.  
 Judge what she is then who herself  
 Body and soul will sell for pelf.  
 Never, he saith, was woman found,  
 Who did not love to prove and sound  
 Her lover's faith by coquetry;  
 Although to him she subject be,  
 This passion is ingrained. Such is  
 Juvenal's sentence, but to this 8720  
 Exceptions bright there are, I trow,  
 As he, I doubt not, would allow,  
 While censuring women void of grace.  
 Yet, if the mistress that hath place  
 Within your soul be soft and sweet,  
 Faithful and gentle, then 'twere meet  
 True love to give for love. The kind  
 And courteous lover looks to find

Not beauty only in the form Mind  
 Of her towards whom his heart-strings warm, more than  
 But will those virtues rather prize beauty  
 Which live when outward beauty dies ;  
 A mind enlightened with fair store  
 Of art and science, and the lore  
 That housewives need ; for those who know  
 The worth of wit will count the show  
 Of outward beauty for a thing  
 Unstable, frail, and perishing  
 As flowerets that bedeck the lawn,  
 Faded at eve, though blown at dawn. 8740  
 Fairer a woman's face, alas !  
 More quickly doth her beauty pass.  
 But fine intelligence and wit  
 Maketh a woman helpmeet fit  
 For man in suchwise, that life's end  
 Will find her still the cherished friend  
 Of him who loved her youth. A spouse  
 Courteous and gentle should arouse  
 A woman's tender love, and she,  
 Mingling goodwill with courtesy, 8750  
 Will see her love returned.

If one

Should ask if much I set upon  
 The power or worth of canzonettes,  
 Ballads, and songs, and rhymed motets,  
 A mistress' heart to captivate,  
 I needs must say, dear friend, that prate  
 Is much less worth than gifts, but yet  
 Such things some grateful praise beget.  
 More lightly women's hearts are thrilled  
 To see a good-sized purse well filled 8760

The golden age  
 With golden chinking bezants, then  
 They'll run with open arms towards men,  
 For they—for better or for worse—  
 Most dearly love a well-lined purse.  
 Far different once was man's estate,  
 But now the world's degenerate.

How pleasant were earth's simpler ways  
 In our progenitors' first days!  
 Old legends tell us how the fires  
 Of love burned bright amongst our sires; 8770  
 No man called this or that his own,  
 And lust and rapine nought were known.  
 While 'dured that glorious golden age,  
 No man could boast of seigniorage,  
 No man affected robes of state,  
 No man e'er craved for delicate  
 Spiced meats, but simple woodland fruits,  
 Beech mast, or nuts, or wholesome roots  
 From out the earth all needs supplied;  
 While fish and flesh were left aside 8780  
 As needless, 'mid the coverts wild  
 Men sought kind Nature's store of mild  
 And bloodless food; the wilding vine  
 Gave berries though they knew not wine,  
 Apples and pears, and mulberries,  
 Rich plums and chestnuts, beans and peas,  
 And herbs and mushrooms from the field,  
 While valleys, plains, and heights would yield  
 Due sustenance from day to day.  
 From ears of corn they rubbed away 8790  
 The chaff betwixt their palms; they sipped  
 The brown bees' store which plenteous dripped

From ancient oak-tree boles, they drank  
 Clear water kneeling on the bank  
 Of crystal streams, nor dreamed to dight  
 Piment therein for appetite ;  
 Nor longed for wine grown old in tun,  
 With weary treading hardly won.  
 The fruitful earth no need to ear  
 Had they, it foisoned 'neath God's care. 8800  
 Thus amply fed, they had no wish  
 For salmons, pikes, or aught of fish.  
 They sheepskins wore against the harm  
 Of winter, or thence wove them warm  
 And simple vesture, which no dye  
 Of grain or herb e'er came anigh.  
 Green broom or rushes roofed their cots,  
 Or sheltered they in hillside grots  
 Fenced in with boughs, or hollow oaks  
 Gave shelter 'gainst rude winter's strokes. 8810

Simpli-  
city of  
life

### XLVII

This telleth how in days gone by  
 Earth's children had no treasury  
 Or store of goods, but everything  
 Was common, free of prince or king,

**AND** when a-nights they sought their rest,  
 No beds of down their bodies pressed,  
 But scattered they fresh fragrant leaves,  
 Or moss in heaps, or fresh cut sheaves  
 Of grass or reeds, and heaven's sweet air  
 Was ever soft and gentle there, 8820  
 In one unvarying tide of spring,  
 While tuneful birds made morning ring

Old-time freedom With the sweet latin of their lay  
 That welcome cried to dawning day.  
 Soft Zephirus, and eke his wife,  
 Dame Flora, queen of flowers, new life  
 Gave to the meads where'er they went,  
 And every verdant laund besprent  
 With opening buds, which gladly her  
 Worshipped as dame and verderer. 8830  
 For these, to speed young lovers, go  
 Across the teeming earth and sow  
 Sweet flowers a-tint with varied hues,  
 Which amorous swains and maidens use  
 To twine amid their flowing hair  
 In chaplets fragrant, fresh and fair,  
 And 'tis for such they love to spread  
 Gay counterpanes right well bestead  
 With countless flowrets in such wise  
 As seems, forsooth, to mock the skies, 8840  
 With stars all gloriously beseen.

On couches thus bedecked I ween,  
 From jealousy and envy free  
 They mingled in felicity  
 Secure, with soft embrace and kiss,  
 'Neath sheltering boughs in heaven-like bliss.  
 The branches joined above them made  
 A fretted roof of cooling shade.  
 And there right joyously they spent  
 The jolly time in merriment 8850  
 And carolling and amorous play,  
 As simple men for whom the day  
 Was ne'er too long, nor sad nor dull,  
 For all the world was beautiful.

'Neath tyranny did no man wince,  
 For not as yet had king or prince  
 Claimed others having, but all shared  
 Earth's gifts in common lot, and fared  
 One as another ; none possessed,  
 Therefore were none by lack distressed. 8860  
 Though Ovid's saying nought they knew,  
 Which none but fools would doubt for true :  
 Never can love and seigniory  
 Travel together, nor can they be  
 In any case fit spouse and bride,  
 High rule sets equal love aside.

Seigniory  
 kills love

## XLVIII

*omit* ( This notes how ill-bred men will cry  
 "Out" on their wives through jealousy,  
 Calling them names I scarce dare tell,  
 As minx, jade, harlot, Jezebel. 8870

AND thus 'tis seen that strange conceit  
 Of wisdom eggs fools on to treat  
 Their spouses ill, to such degree  
 That they misuse them brutally,  
 Saying that too much time they spend  
 In dancing, or too often wend  
 In company with some young blade  
 With whom they've assignation made,  
 And ask them how they love expect  
 From husbands if they dare reject — 8880  
 Their counsels, deeming they alone,  
 Their wives, both body and goods, should own.  
 Cries one : Your air is far too gay,  
 And why this mincing mien, I pray ?

A husband's woes  
 Soon as I sally forth to work,  
 Away you start, with smile and smirk,  
 Ready for some wild prank or game,  
 Whereat your cheeks should burn for shame,  
 Singing aloud like siren sleek—  
 God curse you with an evil week. 8890

When business drags me far from home  
 To Frisia's shores, or e'en to Rome,  
 At once you mount coquettish dress,  
 That leaves but little room to guess  
 My lot, till neighbours talk thereon.  
 And when they ask wherefore you don  
 Such gay attire while I'm away,  
 With brazen impudence you'll say  
 In mocking tones: Oho! oho!  
 'Tis that I love my husband so. 8900  
 But I, poor wretch, may mope and grieve,  
 Who careth, whether I forge or weave,  
 Or whether alive or dead am I?  
 Then one would hit me in the eye  
 With bladder reft from goat or sheep,  
 And all the world but holds me cheap.  
 Because to beat you I've forborne,  
 Whilst nought I win from you but scorn,  
 You brag! though well 'tis known you lie.  
 Alack! alack! a fool was I 8910  
 With such a pair of gloves to cramp  
 My hands—but I the bit may champ.  
 Alas! a fool's cap 'twas I wore  
 That day when you obedience swore  
 In church, and I, poor idiot, dreamed  
 You'd later prove what then you seemed.



How could it be supposed that e'er  
 A bold and brazen face you'd bear  
 Towards the lecherous wanton wights  
 Who follow loose-lived girls o' nights? 8920  
 For whom, I ask, do you prepare  
 The chestnuts I'm not asked to share?  
 'Twould seem indeed that you are fain  
 Of me as shield against the rain,  
 And pose you as a ring-dove simple  
 And soft, beneath your modest wimple.  
 But how about that ample cloak  
 'Neath which fine gallants know to poke  
 Themselves in tête-à-tête? I swear,  
 Except for shame and kindness 'twere, 8930  
 I'd not for bezants four of gold,  
 Your trouncing, well deserved, withhold,  
 But use my stick to bate your pride,  
 Which sorely hath my patience tried.  
 For know that vastly 'tis to me  
 Displeasing that you decked should be  
 To join in carol, song, or dance,  
 Without my leave and countenance.

A wanton  
 wife

## XLIX

*smid* (The jealous husband scolds his wife,  
 Remonstrates, blames her course of life, 8940  
 And setteth forth his dire distress  
 At that he calls her wantonness.)

**M**OREOVER, nought can I conceal  
 The righteous anger that I feel  
 When Robichon, with head-gear green,  
 Aye ready at your beck is seen.

The wife  
threat-  
ened

Is there some land that he and you  
Should share, and hence this fine ado?  
You sit and list his fluting tales  
With heads close set till daylight fails; 8950  
My blood nigh boils with rage to see  
You carry on so shamelessly.

I swear 'fore God, who lieth never,  
That either you your friendship sever  
With him, or else from forth my door  
You go with face of blackamoor,  
For, help me God, unless you chase  
From out your heart all track and trace  
Of this loose love, your features I  
Will beat and batter till you cry 8960  
For mercy, and agree to drop  
That cackle I'm resolved to stop.  
Alone, you ne'er the public way  
Shall tread, but serve me night and day  
At home, made sure with iron-chained hands.  
Think you a woman e'er commands  
Her husband's love who gads about  
With dangling men, week in, week out?  
And if they follow you, 'tis plain  
That you encourage them amain, 8970  
For they'd not dare to make pretence  
Of love, but for your impudence.  
The devil's prompting 'twas that made  
Me marry such a wanton jade.

Ha! would I'd Theophrastus read  
Ere, like a fool, I thrust my head  
In wedlock's noose: No man; saith he,  
Who's blest with fair sagacity

Will take a wife, or poor or rich,  
 As goddess fair, or like a witch  
 Bewrinkled—he hath writ the whole  
 Within his book hight “Aureole,”  
 Which treats of marriage: Ha! he cries,  
 Man’s life is filled with miseries,  
 Troubles, and ills, on every side,  
 Induced by the insensate pride  
 Of women, their demands and plaints  
 Such trouble cause as life attaints  
 With miseries manifold; alack!  
 Hard task hath he who striveth back  
 To call them to a decent sense  
 Of modesty and reverence.

Marital  
 miseries

Whoso will take one indigent  
 To wife, must wonder not if spent  
 His substance be in gowns and shoes;  
 And if a wealthy wife one choose,  
 He need not marvel if disdain  
 She showeth towards him, or if vain  
 And proud she prove, and not a fly  
 She valueth his authority,  
 And further, will perhaps engage  
 To vilify his lineage;  
 Till he to madness will be stung,  
 Through clack of her unbridled tongue.

Or is she fair? At once a cloud  
 Of suitors round her footsteps crowd,  
 Hustle and bustle, push, dispute,  
 While each one strives to press his suit,  
 And find out what may please her best,  
 Here anxious prayer, there love confessed,

Penelope and Lucretia They loiter round, and strange it were  
 If no man conquest made of her,  
 For when on every side a fort  
 Is pressed, resistance is but short.

If plain she be, she'll welcome all:  
 And when a tower prepares to fall,  
 And those within its gates betray,  
 Who shall defend it or upstay?  
 For if with all the world he fights,  
 A man would scarce dare sleep o' nights, 9020  
 And after all were said and done,  
 By first assault the prize were won.

The best of wives who lived in Greece,  
 Penelope, alas! small peace  
 Enjoyed—yet saved her fame at last.  
 Lucretia, she whose name hath passed  
 Into a proverb, was seduced  
 Through brutal force, by Tarquin used  
 Most shamefully, and then she killed  
 Herself, with grief and horror filled. 9030  
 Nowise, as Titus Livius saith,  
 Could sire or husband save from death  
 This matron chaste; whate'er they said,  
 Herself she boldly poignarded  
 Before their eyes.

To calm her grief  
 They spake wise words, but no relief  
 She took therefrom, e'en though her spouse  
 Avowed that she her marriage vows  
 Had straightly kept, and nothing blamed  
 Her for the deed which so had shamed 9040

Her spirit, but declared that she  
Lived spotless in her chastity.

No sin  
without  
consent

For though the body may endure  
Befoulment forced, the soul is pure,  
And never sin hath body shent,  
When lacked thereto the heart's consent.

But she, disdainful of her life  
Through grief, snatched suddenly a knife  
From out her bosom's folds, then cried  
To those who, weeping, stood beside 9050  
Her couch: Fair sirs, though nobly ye  
Declare me innocent to be  
In this foul deed which I deplore,  
Lucrece forgives it not, nor more  
Can lift her face to meet the shame  
She suffers, though absolved from blame.

**L**  
How fair Lucrece, through wrath she bare  
At heart, her noble bosom tare  
With murderous knife, and death did win  
In face of husband, sire, and kin. 9060

**T**HEN through her heart, with anguish filled,  
She drove the cruel steel and spilled  
Her life blood, but her friends charged first,  
To venge her on her foe accurst.  
From this example, through all time,  
It is that whoso such foul crime  
Commits, is doomed the death to die.  
Proud Tarquin and his family

Wives Were straightway driven forth from Rome,  
 chosen Dying in exile, and no home 9070  
 blindly Found kingship there again. Alas!  
 Through all the world one now might pass,  
 But no Penelope in Greece  
 Discover, nor in Rome Lucrece,  
 Nor such-like women elsewhere:  
 Seek not—your pains ye well may spare.

In pagan days too well 'tis known  
 That women many a time have thrown  
 Themselves at men who sought them not,  
 As many a one doth now, God wot! 9080

Those who in wedlock would engage,  
 A custom have which neither sage  
 Nor good I reckon, but bizarre  
 And strange in each particular,  
 And oft I marvel what should press  
 Men on to such fond foolishness.

What man soe'er would buy a horse  
 Examines him, in common course,  
 With greatest pains, and carefully  
 Notes each defect that meets his eye. 9090  
 But women skilfully conceal  
 All faults from those with whom they deal,  
 And nought men know of good or ill  
 Concerning those they wed until  
 The knot is tied, but that once done,  
 Good Lord! such pranks 'neath heaven's high sun  
 They play, as show all plain and clear  
 Their inborn vice; nought then they fear,

But let the wretched dupe perceive  
 That nought his folly can retrieve ; 9100  
 Repentance comes alas ! too late.  
 Nay, even though a kindly fate  
 Procure for him a wife both good  
 And gentle, in all likelihood,  
 Unless a fool, will he repent  
 His folly ere a year be spent.

Good  
 women  
 are rare

A virtuous woman ! Nay, I swear  
 By good St. Denis, that's more rare  
 Than is a phoenix.

Thus hath said  
 Valerius : Whosoe'er will wed 9110  
 Or love a woman finds much pain  
 And many troubles, while his gain  
 Is nought. More rare than phoenix ? Nay  
 'Twere apter simile to say  
 Rarer by far than snow-white crow,  
 How fine soe'er their bodies show.

But natheless am I free to say  
 (Lest that the women of to-day  
 Should count me neither just nor fair),  
 I've no intention to declare 9120  
 All womankind alike, but eyes  
 Of lynx the man need have who tries  
 So fair a bird on earth to find  
 As any one of womankind  
 Who's faultless—secular or nun—  
 Black swans are commoner 'neath the sun.  
 Such birds on earth are sparsely sown,  
 As lightly may, pardee, be known.

Juvenal's  
sayings

And Juvenal supporteth this.  
 He saith : If e'er thy luck it is 9130  
 To find an honest woman, go  
 Straight to the temple, fall alow  
 To Jupiter on bended knees,  
 And Goddess Juno strive to please  
 With sacrificial cow, whose horns  
 A film of precious gold adorns.  
 For never while thou liv'st will be  
 A rarer sight vouchsafed to thee.  
 Valerius moreover saith :  
 (Sans shame for that he uttereth) 9140  
 That either at home or over-sea  
 Would one affect the company  
 Of vicious women, they are found  
 Plenty as bees when swarms fly round.  
 What deem you then shall be the fate  
 Of such a fool? 'Twere desperate—  
 He who a branch so frail doth choose  
 To trust, shall soul and body lose.

Valerius, when 'twas plainly seen  
 That young Rufinus, who had been 9150  
 His friend from youth, would bend the knee  
 To Hymen, cried : What's come to thee  
 In name of all the Gods! dost set  
 Thy foot within the treacherous net  
 Designing women spread for men?  
 And Juvenal these words wrote when  
 Young Postumus would take a wife :  
 'Twere better far to end thy life!  
 Doth no man now stout halters sell?  
 Or can'st thou nowhere find a well 9160



To drown thee in, or dizzy height  
 From whence thou may'st take headlong flight?  
 Were not swift exit better far  
 Than all thy happiness to mar  
 By wedlock's chains?

Abelard  
 and  
 Heloise

Phoroneus, who  
 The use of laws first taught unto  
 The Greeks, when lying on his bed  
 A-dying, to his brother said,  
 The young Leontius: Brother dear,  
 Calm were my death could I but hear 9170  
 Thee promise that thou ne'er wilt take  
 A wife—this vow I prithee make.  
 And when Leontius sought the why,  
 He spake him thuswise: Verily,  
 Cruel experience all have found  
 Whose feet within the snares are bound  
 Of marriage, and if thou a wife  
 Shouldst take—alas! woe worth thy life!

Likewise did Heloise entreat  
 (The abbess of the Paraclete) 9180  
 Her lover Peter Abelard,  
 That he would utterly discard  
 All thought of marriage from his mind.

This lady, noble and refined,  
 Of genius bright and learning great,  
 Loving, and loved with passionate  
 Strong love, implored him not to wed,  
 And many a well-wrought reason sped  
 To him in letters, where she showed  
 That hard and troublous is the code 9190

**Heloïse refused marriage** Of marriage, howsoever true  
 Are those who bind themselves thereto ;  
 For not alone had she in books  
 Studied, but all the closest nooks  
 Of woman's heart explored, and she  
 Love's throes had suffered bitterly.  
 Therefore she begged they might atwain,  
 Though dying each for each, remain,  
 Bound by no bonds but those of love,  
 Whose gentle ties are strong above 9200  
 All marriage laws, yet frank and free  
 Leave lovers—in sweet amity—  
 To follow learning, and she said,  
 Moreover, that long absence bred  
 'Twixt lovers unexpressed delight,  
 Most poignant when they're lost to sight.

But Peter, as himself hath writ  
 In burning letters, so was smit  
 With passion, that nought else would  
 serve  
 Till Heloïse he drew to swerve 9210  
 From her sage counsel, and thence fell  
 On him mischance most dire to tell ;  
 For little more their course was run  
 Ere she at Argenteuil as nun  
 Was close immured, while he was reft  
 Of manhood by his foes, who deft  
 As cruel were in his despite,  
 Seizing him as he lay one night  
 At Paris.

After this mischance  
 Saint Denis, patron saint of France, 9220

Gave shelter to him as a monk ;  
 And when this bitter cup he'd drunk  
 Down to the dregs, an abbey meet  
 He founded, hight the Paraclete,  
 For Heloïse, and there with good  
 Success she ruled the sisterhood.  
 Her love-lorn story hath she told  
 In letters which she penned with bold  
 Unshamed assurance ; therein she  
 Declares monk Abelard to be 9230  
 Her lord and master ; and some say  
 These far-famed letters but betray  
 Delirious love. When first the dress  
 She donned of abbess, her distress  
 Broke forth in these wild words :

Heloïse  
 un-  
 paralleled

If he

Who rules Rome's Empire courteously  
 Deigned to demand that I, as wife,  
 To him would dedicate my life,  
 In proud estate, I should reply :  
 Much rather would I live and die 9240  
 Thy mistress, wrapped in shame pro-  
 found,  
 Than empress of the world be crowned.  
 But never since that day till now  
 Hath such a woman lived, I trow.

I doubt not 'twas her reading wide  
 Had taught her wisely to decide  
 All questions wherein woman's heart  
 Is bound to bear so great a part,  
 And so when love she felt disturb  
 Her soul, she knew his power to curb ; 9250

A wife's  
deckings

And had her lover Abelard  
Listened to her, he had not marred  
His life through marriage ties, but well  
Had passed his days in learned cell.

Marriage is but an evil bond :  
Help me, St. Julian, who so fond  
Hast been of aiding travellers,  
And Leonard, saint whom prisoners  
Invoke to give them timely aid  
When they repentant are ; I made 9260  
Worse bargain when I took a wife  
Than if I had, to end my life,  
A halter bought, for chose I one  
So fine and fair to look upon  
That through her coquetry I'm dead.  
But, Son of Mary ! by my head,  
What comes of all this bravery ?  
What benefit accrues to me  
From costly gowns and quaint-cut gear,  
Your flirting tricks and mincing cheer ? 9270  
The more with wasteful train you sweep  
The ground, the more my flesh doth creep  
With rage, and when I see you clad  
Thus foolishly it drives me mad.  
What profits it, I ask again,  
That you should take such toiling pain  
To pleasure others, while to me  
It brings but grief and misery ?  
If I attempt some sportive play  
With you, 'tis always in the way, 9280  
For this vile muffling up prevents  
And baffles all my fond intents.

And then as cold as clay you turn,  
 And all my efforts fail to earn  
 Your kind accord ; you do but shake  
 And twist your legs and thighs, and make  
 Awkward excuses, till I see  
 Most clearly that my gallantry  
 You find distasteful.

A hus-  
 band's  
 grievance

When abed  
 I seek with you to lay my head,  
 As worthy spouse should do at night,  
 My dues to claim, my debt to quite,  
 Your dizenments you cast aside,  
 And both for head and neck provide  
 White shrouds of linen, and from view  
 Hide ribbons, red and green and blue,  
 While all your robes of tissues fair  
 And costly on a rail in air  
 Are hung all night.

9290

I pray you, tell  
 What use such things are but to sell  
 Or pawn? and if so be you do  
 Nor one nor t'other with them, you  
 May then expect such storms to break  
 Around your head as cause you shake  
 With terror: if your trash annoy  
 Me day-long through, and nought of joy  
 Gives me at night, what benefit  
 Or pleasure do I gain from it  
 More than a truss of river sedge,  
 Unless it be to sell or pledge?

9300

9310

And for yourself—to make an end—  
 If you have witting to attend

Beauty To reason, know that nought you gain  
needs Of credit through behaviour vain  
not art And frivolous, nor do you one bit  
Better your looks, poor foolish chit.

And if some man should quote a throng  
Of mouldy saws to prove me wrong,  
And show the folly of my words,  
Saying: Fine feathers make fine birds, 9320  
And that good garniture sits well  
Alike on dame and damosel;  
I should not trouble to reply  
At length, but simply say: You lie.

For all the beauty of fair things,  
Whether it be delightful spring's  
Sweet fleur-de-lis, as white as milk,  
Roses, or violets, or silk,  
Or other tissues fair (as I  
Have read in many a book) doth lie 9330  
Within themselves, and not in those  
Who wear them.

Happy she who knows  
That all the choicest things 'neath heaven  
Can ne'er improve, but oft may leaven  
The beauty Nature gives.  
The heart  
In this same quality hath part.

To make my meaning stand out clear:  
Suppose a dunghill disappear  
From sight beneath a coverlet  
Of silk, with fragrant flowers beset 9340  
Of brightest hues, 'twould still remain  
A dunghill, and would stink amain

E'en as before it was bedeckt.

And if some dotard should affect  
 To say that, though all foul within,  
 Fair is the dungheap for its skin  
 Of silk and flowers, in same-like way  
 As ladies who themselves array  
 To help their beauty, and conceal  
 Their ugliness, I could but feel  
 Amazed, nor dare to make reply,  
 Except I said that probably  
 Such strange delusion must arise  
 From some wild vision of the eyes,  
 Which see alone the outward show,  
 And ne'er the heart's vagaries know,  
 By seeming-sweet imaginings  
 Led to forget the depth of things  
 In suchwise that they nought can see  
 How to distinguish verity  
 From falsehood, nor with ease unknit  
 A fallacy, through lack of wit.

Fair  
 deckings  
 vain

But if they had the eyes of lynx,  
 Men would not find a jade or minx  
 Better because she chanced to wear  
 Rich mantles trimmed around with rare  
 And fine Siberian marten fur,  
 Nor think one atom more of her  
 For heaps of diamonds and laces,  
 Set off with mincing airs and graces,  
 Nor frillings, furbelows, and stays,  
 Arranged a dozen different ways,  
 Nor hats with gayest flowers bedeckt.

None could be fairer in respect

Chas- Of form than Alcibiades,  
 tity's evil Whose beauteous shape perforce must  
 plight please

All who beheld it, so the hand  
 Of Nature had in seeming planned  
 A godlike man, but who within  
 Should look would find him foul with  
 sin. 9380

And thus hath great Boethius said,  
 Whose wit was with fair virtue wed.  
 And he doth Aristotle call  
 To witness, as a man whom all  
 Put faith in, forasmuch as he  
 Declares a lynx may clearly see  
 Whate'er he will, right through and  
 through.

Past doubt it must be owned for true  
 That Beauty is to Chastity  
 In nowise friendly, as we see 9390  
 In many a legend, tale and song  
 Related, but unending wrong  
 Will do to her. War to the death  
 They wage so long as each draws breath,  
 And neither one will yield a foot,  
 Striving the other to uproot:  
 But all unequal is the fight,  
 And, whether in assault or flight,  
 Cold Chastity is overcome,  
 And lastly falling, worn and glum, 9400  
 Throws down her arms. E'en Ugliness,  
 Her handmaid, seeing her distress,  
 Forbears to help her, but doth strive  
 The damsel forth her house to drive,



LI

Beauty and Ugliness assail  
 Fair Chastity with such avail,  
 That they subject her to their dame,  
 Who loves to put chaste maids to shame.

AND followeth her with ponderous mace,  
 Uplifted, round about the place 9410  
 So fiercely, that 'twould seem as though  
 Her mistress she must overthrow  
 Within an hour.

Ugliness  
 turns  
 traitor

O frail and weak  
 Is Chastity when both sides seek  
 Her death, and none appear to aid  
 Or help her; then, of all afraid,  
 She takes to flight.

If under oath  
 She were to fight, she yet were loth,  
 Knowing so little of the way  
 Of combat, to contest the day 9420  
 Alone, for scarcely could she hope  
 With friend and foe alike to cope.

Alas! for traitorous Ugliness,  
 Whose duty 'twas and business  
 Frail Chastity to guard. I ween  
 Could she have hidden her between  
 Her skin and smock, she surely ought  
 Have popped her there as quick as thought.  
 Beauty, moreover, is to blame,  
 For Chastity may justly claim 9430  
 Her love and reverence, and her peace  
 She ought to make with her, and cease

Cumæan Sibyl's saying  
 From bickering strife, nor only so,  
 But 'neath her rule should bend alow.  
 If she but wise and courteous were,  
 With gentle kindliness she'd bear  
 Herself towards her, all despite  
 Foregone, for so doth Virgil write  
 Within the Æneid's sixth book :  
 (The word Cumæan Sibyl took),  
 That whoso chastely lives may well  
 Hope to escape the nether hell.  
 But swear I by the Lord who made  
 The heavens, that when some saucy jade  
 Doth impudently set about  
 To paint her face, and trick her out  
 In finery, 'tis plain that she  
 Makes war on saintly Chastity.  
 Alas ! Poor Chastity hath got,  
 I fear me, many a foe red-hot  
 In convent cell and abbey cloister,  
 Who would not hesitate to hoist her  
 Over their walls ; they should be built  
 Right high—'twould inmates save from  
 guilt.

Homage to Venus all dames pay,  
 And daintily their forms array  
 To draw on those by whom they're seen  
 About the ways with mincing mien,  
 And round them wanton glances fling,  
 Men to incite to dallying.  
 All equally they set their snares,  
 Whether at dances, or when prayers  
 Call them to church, and safe and sure  
 It is to say that such allure

They'd ne'er affect, except with wish  
 Immodest, vile, and devilish,  
 To dazzle foolish men, and draw  
 Them on to break God's holy law.

God's  
 creation  
 perfect

But those who look with equal eye  
 Will see that women woefully 9470  
 Put God to shame, when in their fits  
 Of folly, so beside their wits  
 Are they as not to be content  
 With fairness such as God hath sent,  
 But each one on her head must set  
 Fine gear with many a gay floweret  
 Of silk or gold adorned, whene'er  
 She marches forth to take the air.  
 Alas! the silly fool succeeds  
 Only in proving that she needs 9480  
 Good sense and modesty, when thus  
 She strives to make her beauteous  
 With foolish gewgaws (which e'en less  
 Of worth than her poor self possess),  
 Beyond the point that God saw good,  
 As though He had not understood  
 His handicraft, but such a whelp  
 As she must needs consult for help  
 To perfect that His hand begun.  
 So, from all creatures 'neath the sun 9490  
 That God created, she doth ask  
 Assistance in her foolish task,  
 Metals and minerals, and flowers,  
 O'er which she idly wasteth hours.

But for that matter, truth to speak,  
 Men oft are foolish, vain, and weak

**Simple** As women are, for they likewise  
**vesture** Oft seek the beauty to despise  
**enough** That God hath given them, and bedeck  
 With chains and chaplets head and neck 9500  
 That His right hand hath wrought: despite  
 We do His wisdom when delight  
 We take to render yet more fair  
 His matchless work, as those who dare  
 Find fault with it. Away, I cry,  
 With all such vain frivolity,  
 I ask alone for raiment meet,  
 To shield from summer's scorching heat  
 And winter's frost. By God's help sped,  
 Can I protect my limbs and head 9510  
 Against rude tempest, wind and rain,  
 With cloth and woollen; nowise fain  
 Am I of outland squirrel fur,  
 Nor love the cost such things incur.  
 My wants supplied—I ask no more.

Too much, for you, I waste my store  
 Of deniers on fine robes of blue  
 Or scarlet, or fair tinting due  
 To outland dyes, or fine Brunette,  
 With costly furs around beset, 9520  
 Which you disport in public places,  
 With leering smiles and wanton graces,  
 Dragging the while your costly train  
 Through dust in drought, through mud, 'neath  
 rain,  
 Giving small thanks to God or me.

And when you lie all nakedly

In bed a-night-time, nought discreet  
 You show you when I fain would greet  
 Your lips or cheek with loving kiss,  
 And win the while sweet nuptial bliss 9530  
 With kindly word and fond caress,  
 And every show of tenderness,  
 But all the more I press my love  
 Upon you, all the more you prove  
 Recalcitrant, and quite snuff out  
 My purpose with ill-tempered pout,  
 Nor even show the common grace  
 Of turning towards me, face to face,  
 But feign you sick, and sob and sigh,  
 And lie all limp and languorously. 9540  
 So that at last I'm forced to beat,  
 For fear of failure, glum retreat.

A hus-  
 band's  
 grievance

And oft I watch the day-dawn break,  
 And wonder as I lie awake  
 Whether you wrangle in such sort  
 When you with other men disport  
 And fondle, and in what way a-paid  
 These rufflers are when all arrayed  
 And muffled up with gallant dress  
 You're dizened out for wantonness ; 9550  
 Or if you practise such despite  
 Towards them by day as me by night.  
 But ne'er with gay sparks you consume  
 The time, I doubt, in fret and fume,  
 But dance and sing where'er you go,  
 Your face all wreathed in smiles to show  
 Your dazzling pearly teeth, and thus  
 Through meads and gardens amorous

**Women** Do you, my church-wed wife, make play  
**will have** With worthless spendthrifts, day by day, 9560  
**their way** While I by no means am exempt  
 From handling rude; with fine contempt  
 They cry: Ha! ha! may wolves devour  
 The jealous dotard with his sour  
 Curmudgeon's grin, and may his bones  
 Be dragged by hounds across the stones!

By whom am I thus put to shame?  
 Baggage! by you, who bear my name,  
 Vile, common quean of ribald heart;  
 With ruffians well you play your part, 9570  
 Foul bitch at heat! base spawn of hell!  
 False libertine! curst Jezebel!  
 Since thus you give yourself to crime,  
 God grant a year may fill your time,  
 For while you join in this wild race,  
 Your lecherous life is my disgrace,  
 And I through you shall surely be  
 One of the base fraternity  
 Of Saint Arnould accounted, and  
 A member of that cuckold band, 9580  
 Wherein each man must spend his life  
 Who's fool enough to take a wife,  
 For though one had a million eyes,  
 A woman will their watch surprise.  
 No guard can keep a wanton chaste,  
 And though she fail Eve's fruit to taste  
 At first, if she thereto hath will,  
 Her purpose she'll at last fulfil.

But Juvenal of yore spake thus,  
 As he were fain to comfort us: 9590

Stupration is the least offence  
 Of women, saith he, for prepense  
 Are they to greater crimes ; he tells  
 How mothers-in-law wrought poison spells  
 For daughters' husbands, and with charms,  
 On those they loved not, worked dire harms  
 And devilish tricks, and more of crime,  
 That to set forth would waste all time.  
 Whoso takes pains to peel the rind  
 From woman will the harlot find, 9600  
 And taking heed will prove women all  
 Fallen or ready-ripe to fall.  
 And this advantage over men  
 Have women as to will, that when  
 They've settled what they're fain to do,  
 They'll do it, though the world should rue,  
 Or perish : none can change the heart  
 Of woman, though her body smart ;  
 Could one a woman's spirit quell,  
 Her body might he rule as well. 9610

Women's  
 will unal-  
 terable

Now leave we that which ne'er can be ;  
 But, Lord of Heaven ! give help to me !  
 What can I 'gainst this ribald crew,  
 Who put my life to shame and do  
 Me wrongs untold ? Whatever threat  
 I use against them is but met  
 With laughing gibe ; if open war  
 I make upon them, then they are  
 Prepared to kill me. Brutal, proud,  
 And strong are they, right well endowed 9620  
 For any crime ; they spurn the law,  
 Nor care for me one single straw ;

Hercules For in their spirits burneth bright  
 and The fire of youth, and maketh light  
 Samson And bold their hearts in such degree  
 As cometh nigh insanity,  
 And causeth every one of these  
 To deem himself a Hercules,  
 Samson or Roland; 'twixt the two  
 First named, if records tell us true, 9680  
 Corporal strength was equal, for  
 Hercules, saith Solinus, more  
 Than seven feet was of height, and this  
 Exceeds all other men, ywis.  
 Labours immense he undertook,  
 And fearsome monsters twelve he strook  
 With death, and then a thirteenth tried  
 To overcome, but failed, and died  
 By Dejanira's act, who sent  
 To him a shirt, in which was pent 9640  
 A poisonous, deadly fire, and thus  
 This Hercules, so valorous  
 And strong, was utterly subdued  
 And conquered by vicissitude,  
 Beneath a woman's treacherous hand.  
 And this she did because the brand  
 Of Love towards Iole had turned  
 The heart of him for whom she burned.  
 And Samson—he a half-score men  
 Had scorned in fight as they were ten 9650  
 Ripe apples while his locks grew, but  
 By Delilah those locks were cut.  
 A sot am I these things to say,  
 Which you'll repeat, when once away,



To all the rascal friends you meet,  
 Who will with scorn and laughter greet  
 The tale you tell, and thus through you  
 May I win blows, nor light nor few,  
 My head to bruise, my legs to break,  
 And jelly of my back to make, 9660  
 Should I permit you hence to go.  
 But if perchance I come to know  
 That you have blabbed one word, I'll let  
 You hear of it. Unless they get  
 Hold of my arm and from me take  
 This club, such play with it I'll make  
 That neither neighbour, friend, nor sire,  
 Nor gallant, shall abate my ire.  
 Alas! that e'er we should have met!  
 'Neath what unhappy star was set, 9670  
 My birth, that you on me should bring  
 Such shame, disgrace, and suffering?  
 But to these scoundrel villain curs,  
 Because they're smooth-tongued flatterers,  
 Do you accord full signiory,  
 While I it is who ought to be  
 Your well-loved lord, by whom you've  
 been  
 Fed, clothed, and shod long years, I ween.  
 All shamelessly am I by you  
 Associate made with this base crew, 9680  
 Of scurvy scoundrels, villain scum,  
 From whom nought else to you can come  
 But shame, dishonour, and disgrace;  
 For while they praise you to your face,  
 But cheaply they esteem your charms,  
 E'en while they revel in your arms.

Threats  
 of  
 violence

**Back-** Before your face they all declare  
**biting** That you're an angel, but beware!  
 For when your back is turned they pull  
 You all to pieces for a trull, 9690  
 And laugh and jeer, and tell the mad  
 And merry sportive times they've had  
 With you, and throughly well such fate  
 Do you deserve, when dedicate  
 You are to vice, and men at will  
 May have you as a common gill.

And when by all this jolly rout  
 I see you mauled and pulled about,  
 I frankly own, I sometimes feel  
 An envy I can scarce conceal; 9700  
 But don't deceive yourself, 'tis not  
 For fairness of your face, God wot!  
 That men pursue you, nor for sense  
 Or lively wit or eloquence  
 That you display; it is alone  
 By your fine feathers that they're won,  
 Your rich spun robes and jewels bright,  
 Your clasps of gold, and rings that  
 dight  
 Your fingers, all of which you got  
 From me by wheedling, and a sot 9710  
 Therefor I own me.

When to balls  
 And dances, as your fancy calls,  
 With gallants you betake yourself,  
 I'm left at home upon the shelf  
 As one who's drunk or mad, whilst bold  
 And brave you go, bedeckt with gold,

Silver and gems, on neck and head,  
 Whose value might be safely said  
 Above five hundred pounds, and ask  
 That I your worthless body mask 9720  
 With silks and satins to your taste,  
 While I may fret, and pine, and waste  
 (So much it wears and vexes me)  
 With angry spleen and jealousy.

What for these orfrees do I care  
 With which you twist and bind your hair,  
 Entwined with threads of gold? and why  
 Must you have set in ivory  
 Enamelled mirrors, sprinkled o'er  
 With golden circlets? (Nothing more 9730  
 Enrages me), and why these gems  
 Befitting kingly diadems,  
 Rubies and pearls, and sapphires fair,  
 Which cause you to assume an air  
 Of mad conceit?

These costly stuffs,  
 And plaited furbelows and ruffs,  
 And cinctures to set off your waist,  
 With pearls bedeckt and richly chased,  
 And morses and rich fastenings;  
 What use to me are all such things? 9740  
 And wherefore, say then, do you choose  
 To fit your feet with gaudy shoes,  
 Except you have a lust to show  
 Your shapely legs?

By St. Thibaud,  
 Ere yet three days are past I'll sell  
 This trash, and trample you pell-mell;

Plain  
gear  
suffices

I'll give you nothing else to wear,  
By Body of God, but simple gear,  
A woollen kirtle, and a gown  
Of hempen woof to fall adown  
About your heels, nought delicate,  
But coarse and rude, and in a state  
Of rags and slits, howe'er you fret;  
And round about your waist I'll set  
A girdle, of what sort, think ye?  
No tricked and tinselled trumpery,  
But plain white skin, undecked with  
gold,

9750

While for your shoes shall serve my old  
Worn gaiter leggings; soon I'll thrash  
From mind and body all this trash  
Of dress and mincing ways, which draw  
You on to break the marriage law.  
No longer shall this ribald crew  
Unhindered have their will of you.

9760

I charge you that you tell me now,  
Without a lie, from whom and how  
Did you obtain that rich silk dress  
Which at the ball you wore? Confess!  
For well I know it was not I  
Who gave it you.

Unblushingly  
You swore by God the Father and  
St. Denis, who protects this land,  
And holy Philibert, that you  
Received it from your mother, who,  
According to your tale, so well  
Loves me, that readily she'd sell

9770

Her goods to spare my purse, or give  
 All she calls hers that I might live  
 Untouched by want or care. I'd see  
 Her burnt alive, most joyfully

The  
 mother-  
 in-law

9780

(The vile whoremongering old cat),  
 And you along with her, if that  
 Be not the very thing you said!  
 I'll surely ask her, by my head,  
 But no, alas! it were but vain,  
 Great the vexation, nought the gain;  
 Past doubt you've talked to one another,  
 Like as two marbles—child and mother,  
 Two bells with self-same clapper rung,  
 Two weeds from one vile root upsprung.

9790

Right well ye hop and step together,  
 Two evil birds of equal feather.  
 She in her youth days was as vile  
 As you are now, and every wile  
 That then she learned she taught to you,  
 Apt pupil for her devil's brew!  
 And doubt I not that she, forsooth,  
 Of many a dog hath proved the tooth,  
 And hath but ceased to trip the dance,  
 Because right well she knows her  
 chance

9800

Therein is past and gone. Her face,  
 Besmeared with paint, hath lost all trace  
 Of beauty, and the harridan  
 Employs her short remaining span  
 Of life to sell her child. Therefor  
 It is she comes three times or four  
 Each week, pretending to engage  
 You to set forth on pilgrimage

Personal  
violence

According to the ancient use ;  
But well I know she makes excuse  
Thereof to trot you forth for sale  
Like any nag, nor doth she fail  
To snare while teaching you to snare.  
Deem you that I am unaware  
Of these vile tricks? I scarce restrain  
My arm from laying on amain  
With this good stick, until you lie  
All in a heap, like pullet pie.

9810

## LII

The jealous husband, all a-heat,  
From scolding next proceeds to beat  
His wretched wife, and robe and hair  
Doth in his rage from off her tear.

9820

**F**ORTHWITH as one whose every pore  
With rage and passion boileth o'er,  
His wife he seizes by the hair,  
Shakes her as rudely as a bear  
Is shaken by a lion, then,  
E'en as it were a wild beast's den,  
He drags her madly round the room,  
With frantic threats of direst doom,  
While to her vows of innocence  
He's deaf, as one devoid of sense  
Or hearing, foams, and rolls his eyes,  
Regardless of the piteous cries  
And shrieks with which she fills the air,  
Piercing and shrill as trumpet blare,  
Pours forth each brutal epithet  
To which he in his wrath can set

9830

His savage tongue, till neighbours haste  
 To separate the fools who waste Estrange-  
ment  
 Their days in strife, and save from death  
 The wife, for nought but outworn breath  
 Can stay the husband's rage.

When o'er

This scene of turmoil and uproar  
 She thinketh, and the ballading  
 Her jongleur made doth loudly ring  
 Within her ears, imagine you  
 The wife more faithfully will do  
 Her duty towards her spouse?

Nay, nay!

She will but wish him right away 9850  
 In far Roumania or at Meaux.  
 Nor should I very widely go  
 From truth were I to say she ne'er  
 Will love him more, although that air  
 She may assume: could he but fly,  
 And get a bird's-eye view on high  
 In safety, and from thence behold  
 What men are doing in this old  
 Worn world, and calmly muse thereon,  
 He'd see what misery he hath won, 9860  
 And how his vision hath been blind  
 To all the ruses womenkind  
 Use to defend them, and to be  
 Safe-harboured from men's tyranny.

If with his wife he shares his bed,  
 Much risk he runneth, by my head,  
 For if he sleep or if he wake,  
 Great fear pursues him lest she take

**Miseries** Swift vengeance on him, and his life  
**of** By poison cup or murderous knife 9870  
**jealousy** He lose, or else the victim be  
 From year to year of trickery ;  
 Or if indeed she's baffled quite  
 Of that she loves, she takes to flight.  
 Honour, and faith, and truth are spurned  
 By women when their heads are turned ;  
 And truth it is, beyond all doubt,  
 That every woman is without  
 Conscience, who either loves or hates.  
 Valerius saith : She hesitates, 9880  
 In such a case, at nought at all,  
 Nor recketh whatsoe'er befall.

My friend, the wretched man, turned sour,  
 By jealousy, may wolves devour,  
 Who thus, as painted to the life,  
 Ill-treats and vilifies his wife,  
 And o'er her gets the mastery  
 With brutal hand ; nor should she be  
 Supreme in rule, but each in awe  
 Of other stand, as saith God's law, 9890  
 Dwelling together, mate and mate ;  
 But if in spirit separate  
 They live, their days are past and spent  
 In strife, and dead is sweet content.  
 Think you a man gains woman's love  
 Who sets himself as lord above  
 Her will and ways ? fair love falls dead  
 When seigniori exalts its head  
 Above affection, ne'er can dure  
 Love but in hearts, free, frank, and pure. 9900



And verily, 'tis rarely seen  
 With those who lovers long have been  
 Ere wedlock joined them, that doth last  
 Fond nuptial love, for in the past  
 The lover would avow him for  
 The lady's bounden servitor,  
 But after marriage doth declare  
 His lordship, which right hard to bear  
 She finds from him who late did waive  
 All right and vowed himself her slave. 9910

Courtship  
 v.  
 marriage

Her slave ?

*The Lover.*

*The Friend.*

Past doubt.

*The Lover.*

And prithee why ?

*The Friend.*

Because he willingly would fly  
 At her command ; if she but said :  
 Dear friend, my purse ; away he sped,  
 Nothing could vex him, nought could tire,  
 To satisfy her least desire ;  
 To speak, indeed, were scarce worth while,  
 He read each frown, and knew each smile,  
 His only thought was to obey  
 Her every wish in every way. 9920

But when they're once by wedlock tied,  
 This courtesy is cast aside,

**Primitive simplicity** The wheel is turned, and he who late  
 Before her will would fall prostrate  
 Doth now command, as though he might  
 From her claim service as of right,  
 Holds her in check, and makes her feel  
 That she from him hath no appeal ;  
 She, who but yesterday he named  
 His mistress, and was nought ashamed 9930  
 To serve, must now serve him, alas !  
 And many a rude experience pass.  
 Ah, then she plains her evil case,  
 Seeing the husband doth displace  
 The lover, and her closest friend  
 To friendship puts a bitter end  
 By contrariety ; now no more  
 He worships her as heretofore.  
 But dead is joyousness, she dare  
 Scarce laugh so 'whelmed is she with care. 9940  
 Nor knows she where to turn for aid  
 When on her neck he looks, afraid  
 Lest, as erewhile he ne'er took heed  
 Thereof, he now some ill may speed.  
 Obedience is her only choice,  
 For if in plaint she raise her voice,  
 Woe worth the day ! it wakes his rage,  
 With threats wild war on her to wage.

My friend, the earliest men were free  
 From bondage, yoke, and slavery, 9950  
 And peaceably they shared their good  
 In perfect love and brotherhood.  
 Nor had they freedom's joyance sold  
 For Araby's or Frisia's gold ;

Jason's  
journey-  
ing

And if men once that treasure lack,  
 No gold on earth can win it back.  
 Then no man toiled in pilgrimage,  
 But lived from infancy to age  
 At home, nor cared to cross the wave  
 Of ocean for an outland grave. 9960

## LIII

How Jason erstwhile ploughed the sea,  
 To seek the gold-fleece bravery,  
 And by the folk where'er he went,  
 Was seen with fear and wonderment.

PRINCE Jason 'twas who first of all  
 Built on the waves a vessel tall,  
 And voyaged therein to seek the fleece  
 Of gold, but Neptune deemed his peace  
 Invaded, and great Triton too,  
 And Doris with her daughters grew 9970  
 Alarmed, and feared themselves betrayed,  
 Beholding these first men who made  
 Their road across the acres they  
 Had held with undisputed sway.

For earth's first dwellers were content  
 To stay a-land, nor ever went  
 To plough the sea; enough they found  
 For all their needs on solid ground.  
 Where each man had what each required,  
 For none as yet ambition fired. 9980

O happy men, of simple life—  
 Love reigned, and all unknown was strife

Earth's Till Fraud arose, his lance in rest,  
 curses And Crime and Evil-Hap confessed  
 Stood, foes of sweet sufficiency.  
 Then Pride, who scorns to equal be  
 With others, came in grand estate  
 With Covetousness, and hideous Hate,  
 And Envy dire, and Avarice,  
 And many another foul-faced vice. 9990  
 And Poverty from hell they brought,  
 Who there had long-time lived, and nought  
 Men knew her on the happy earth,  
 Till now new-born, ah! woeful birth!  
 Wherefore, alas! came she at all?  
 Worst evil that can man befall.

Drear Poverty, of wit bereft,  
 Led by the hand her infant, Theft,  
 Who to the gibbet goes straightway,  
 Seeking his mother's needs to stay. 10000  
 All powerless she to take his part,  
 As eke his sire, y'clept Faint-Heart;  
 Nor doth for him aught good provide  
 Laverna, of all thieves the guide  
 And goddess, who with cloud and night  
 Conceals their evil deeds, till light  
 At last discovers them; and when  
 They're haled before their fellow-men,  
 No pitying eye doth she afford,  
 Seeing around their necks the cord 10010  
 Fast tied, but gaily pulls it tight  
 When penitence they've made aright.

Suddenly these mad fiends accurst  
 (When once they hell's dread bounds had burst),

Their hearts aflame with envious rage  
 'Gainst dwellers in this golden age  
 Of peace, o'erran the pleasant earth,  
 Sowing ill will and murdering mirth,  
 While envy, malice, spite, and hate  
 They strove to spread and propagate. 10020

Longing the ruddy gold to win  
 From mother earth, her very skin  
 Men tore, and then for treasures stored  
 Beneath her breast deep caverns bored,  
 And precious stones and metals sought,  
 With life and labour dearly bought.  
 For Avarice and Covetousness  
 Torment the minds of men, and press  
 Them on, e'en while they curse and ban  
 Their lot, to win whate'er they can. 10080

This strives to gain, and that to keep,  
 For ne'er from out his useless heap  
 The miser will one denier spend  
 The while he lives, but when the end  
 Falls on him, to his heir it goes,  
 Unless God otherwise dispose  
 Thereof; and if he lost it all,  
 Pity therefor need be but small.

Ere long the unhappy human race ✓  
 Corrupted grew, and every trace 10040  
 Of simple living lost, they came  
 To be false tricksters, void of shame;  
 The land they set about to share  
 In seignories, and here and there  
 Fixed lines and limitations, but  
 Thereout full many a man was shut.

The lust  
 of gain

Kings And next they fell to war thereon,  
   first And each man kept whate'er he won  
 chosen By force and fraud, and thus the strong  
 Beat back the weak—if right or wrong. 10050  
 But if awhile they left their lands,  
 Arose some idle roving bands  
 Of rascals, who would forge within  
 Their dwellings, and their warnestore win.  
 And so among them 'twas agreed  
 To choose out one who might give heed  
 To all men's surety, and adjudge  
 Each plaint of fraud, misdeed, or grudge  
 With upright, fair, impartial voice;  
 So gathered they to fix their choice. 10060

## LIV

Herein behold the manner how  
 Men first agreed their necks to bow  
 Beneath a king, and how he sware  
 The sceptre loyally to bear.

**T**HEN from the host men set apart  
 A sturdy peasant, bold of heart,  
 Of mighty strength, and towering height,  
 Called him their lord, and gave him right  
 Above the rest. He stoutly sware  
 To guard them all with watchful care; 10070  
 But each of ye, quoth he, must give  
 Dimes of your goods that I may live.  
 E'en as he asked it so befell,  
 As ancient books and records tell,  
 And many a year this compact he  
 Fulfilled, but robbers presently

Assembled, seeing him alone,  
 And fell on him with stick and stone,  
 With will his goods to rob and steal.  
 And then men met and made appeal, Man's  
avarice  
 Each unto each, a tax to pay, 10080  
 Whereby their king from disarray  
 To guard, and all the people vowed  
 From out their lands should be allowed  
 A fair and wide domain, and thus  
 Began the burden onerous  
 Of kings and princes, as ye see  
 Writ plain in many a history.  
 And in these scriptures are we told  
 The ways and works of men of old, 10090  
 And unto those through whom we get  
 Such knowledge, owe we deepest debt  
 Of thanks and praise.

With toil past measure

Men then began to heap up treasure,  
 Winning, from out the rich stored earth,  
 Silver and gold and stones of worth,  
 And soon thereof with toil they coined  
 Round pieces, and of metals, joined  
 With gems, they fairest jewels made,  
 Vessels, and rings; and many a blade 10100  
 For sword and dagger of bright steel,  
 And arms and axes wrought, to deal  
 Death blows, and well-knit coat and helm  
 'Neath which to fight and overwhelm  
 Their fellows, and then towers they placed  
 Around with high-built walls encased,  
 And cities fair, and palaces,  
 Wherein they looked to dwell at ease,

**Wealth** And crenelated castles barred  
**breeds** With strong portcullises to guard 10110  
**strife** The heaped up treasures they amassed ;  
 For many a fearsome hour they passed,  
 Lest others reft away their gains,  
 The fruit of labour's toilsome pains,  
 Or war, fought out with hardy hands  
 O'er perilous seas in far-off lands.  
 And thus did they around them heap  
 Troubles and cares, which murder sleep.

Nought knew they more of soft-eyed  
 peace,  
 For growth of wealth but brought increase 10120  
 Of woes, and things that late were free  
 As sun and wind and unchained sea,  
 Through avarice of wealth were set  
 Apart, each strove good share to get.  
 Oft one man more than twenty had,  
 Which doth but shadow forth a bad  
 And selfish heart.

Such cruel gluttons  
 I count not worth a deuce of buttons.  
 What care I if their souls possess  
 Of faith and love, or more or less ? 10130  
 If they betwixt them buy and sell  
 Their love or hate, nor ill or well  
 I count it, but 'tis damage great  
 When damsels fair and delicate,  
 Fitted for gentle love and true,  
 Abase their souls and bodies through  
 The love of gold ; a sight it is  
 To tear one's heart to shreds, ywis.



Before whatever else may be,  
 A gallant should full mastery  
 Gain of love's science, so that ne'er  
 It be his evil lot to bear  
 His love's abandonment, or let  
 It happen that she e'er forget  
 His faithfulness. This art may gain  
 A man much good unmixed with bane.

Women  
 hate to be  
 chidden

Well shall it be with him who minds  
 The counsel that herein he finds :  
 Whether his flame be old or young,  
 If he suspect new love hath sprung  
 Within her heart in preference,  
 Let him beware that no offence  
 He give to her by chiding, but  
 To anger keep his heart's door shut,  
 And nowise modulate or change  
 His amorous words, lest he estrange  
 Her heart still more. If in the act  
 He catch her, he must blink the fact,  
 As he were dull as horse or ox,  
 And blind and senseless as the rocks. 10160  
 And if perchance a billet-doux  
 He light on, the wise thing to do  
 Is not to read it, or e'en ope  
 Its folds, her liaison to grope.  
 Nor should he suffer aught to fire  
 His heart to traverse her desire ;  
 When she returns from out the street,  
 Let him salute with smile as sweet  
 As April morn, and even so  
 Permit her where she will to go ; 10170

Heed not scandal For women hate above all things,  
 That men should hold their leading strings ;  
 Forget not this ; and what I next  
 Relate to thee, in golden text  
 Of fairest script might well be writ  
 For great behoof and benefit  
 Of lovers.

Whatso man would get  
 Grace in a woman's heart should let  
 Her go her ways, where'er she will,  
 For seek to check her, and you spill 10180  
 All love betwixt you, whether she  
 Or spouse or mistress chance to be.  
 Though 'gainst his mistress one receive  
 Clear witness, let him not believe  
 Or hearken it, but say to those  
 Who bring the tale, they but disclose  
 Their want of wit, and words they waste ;  
 To tell base tales of one so chaste  
 Argues a fool. Her vices e'en  
 Should he let pass as though unseen 10190  
 And unsuspect. For those who treat  
 A woman ill, with hope the heat  
 Of love to raise in her, will find  
 That when again she's wooed with kind  
 And loving words, 'tis like to that  
 Experience that sometimes a cat  
 Affords us, which men beat, then call  
 To come again beneath their thrall,  
 But if puss once gets loose, O rare  
 And deft his skill who caught her were. 10200  
 But if the lady 'tis doth trim  
 Her lover's beard, 'tis not for him

To take her wrath in evil part,  
 Or anywise to change his heart  
 Towards her ; even though she catch  
 Her nails within his cheek and scratch  
 His face till blood flow down, he should  
 Make no reply except with good  
 And kindly loving words, and say  
 He counted it a perfect way 10210  
 Of life if only he were sure  
 Her love for him would aye endure,  
 And sooner 'neath her hand would die  
 Than live from her sweet company  
 Divorced. But if 'tis he begins  
 The storm, and from her haply wins  
 Return of wrath and violence,  
 'Twere well, to cover the offence,  
 That he should lead her on to play  
 The game of love, ere yet away 10220  
 He goes from her, especially  
 If cursed with poverty he be ;  
 For lacking gold he runs the chance  
 She oust him from the merry dance  
 Of love, unless he humble him  
 Before her.

Poor men fain must swim

Which way a mistress wills, nor show  
 A spark of wrath, howe'er things go,  
 The while that rich men not a bean  
 Need take to heart disdainful mien, 10230  
 For insult is a luxury  
 Of wealthy men.

But if so be

A gallant seeketh to beguile  
 A second fair, yet keep the while

Bear with  
women

A jealous mistress His former love, and choose to make,  
 While yet the first love is awake,  
 Some presents to his later flame,  
 Such as may please a gentle dame,  
 Fair kerchief, buckle, chaplet, ring,  
 Jewel or other dainty thing, 10240  
 'Twere wise to hide it from the first,  
 For nought could salve her rage accurst  
 If she thereof became aware.  
 Moreover, should he have great care  
 That ne'er the two in self-same place  
 Should meet, and one the other face ;  
 For if the former should discover  
 ✓ The latter with her faithless lover,  
 Never wild boar with bristles set,  
 When yelping hounds are round him met, 10250  
 Were fiercer ; never lioness  
 Who hears the hunt when cublings press  
 Her teats, sprang forth more wild and mad ;  
 No viper when some traveller had  
 Set foot upon its tail, and thus  
 Alarmed it, were more venomous  
 Than is a woman who beholds  
 Her rival while her lover folds  
 His arms around her ; fire and flame  
 Flash from her eyes, and scorn and  
 blame 10200  
 Her lips exhale, until for breath  
 She pants, as one 'neath stroke of death.  
 And e'en though she should ne'er surprise  
 The two together, but surmise  
 Alone doth move her, jealousy  
 Within her heart as fire will be.

Then he unblushingly should say  
 To all her questions, Nay, nay, nay,  
 And oath on oath pile up of truth  
 And constancy, and if forsooth 10270  
 He can with blandishment and kiss  
 Entice her on to amorous bliss,  
 The storm is laid. But if in vain  
 He plead with her, and she amain  
 So presses him that he can see  
 No loophole, then all hardily  
 Let him avow his crime, but tell  
 A subtle tale of how he fell  
 A victim to the rival, who  
 Assailed him, so that he could do 10280  
 Nought else but yield to her—and this  
 Was but his one sad lapse, ywis.  
 And then a solemn oath he swears,  
 That 'tis for her alone he cares,  
 And if he e'er again forsake,  
 Betray, or dupe her, may she take  
 Such vengeance on him as she will;  
 Nor shall her rival see him till  
 His dying day, and rather drowned  
 He'd see her than again be found 10290  
 Her paramour, a creature vile  
 He nameth her, whose treacherous wile  
 Drew him aside, and then should he  
 Enfold his mistress tenderly,  
 With many a kiss and fond embrace,  
 And solemn vow, that, once her  
     grace  
 She deigns to grant, he nevermore  
 Will vex her heart as heretofore,

Forswear  
 infidelity

Love should be sacred  
 But towards her loyally behave,  
 And may she as a dog or slave 10300  
 To death condemn him if again  
 He break from her most gentle chain.  
 And then in love's fond war entwined  
 He pardon gains, soft, sweet, and kind. ✓

By no means should a lover dare  
 To boast new conquest if he care  
 To keep his mistress' love.

Vile shame  
 It is when gallants dare make claim,  
 With lying tongue, that they've deceived  
 Ladies, who ne'er their vows received. 10310  
 Such men are curst with souls debased,  
 On whom 'twere idle words to waste,  
 For only fools and idiots flaunt  
 Their dreams for deeds, with empty vaunt,  
 In all men's ears, and he who most  
 Successful is, forbears to boast.  
 Love's habitude it is to hide  
 His jewels from all else beside  
 His closest friends, who know to keep  
 A silent tongue.

He'll sigh and weep 10320  
 Most woefully if sickness seize  
 His mistress, and will strive to please  
 Her every whim, nor let her guess  
 How much of pain and weariness  
 Such work imposeth. He should sit  
 Beside her couch, and ere from it  
 He goes oft kiss her, and a tear  
 Let fall, the while he seeks to cheer

And comfort her. A pilgrimage  
 He vows to God will He assuage 10330  
 Her malady, and lets her know  
 Thereof—though nought he means to go.  
 The food she loves doth he aver  
 Is good, and nought besiegeth her  
 With nauseous draughts, nor aught,  
 ywis,

But what right sweet and grateful is.  
 Then pleasant fictions he'll invent,  
 Of how the night foregone he spent,  
 Vowing that drearily it sped,  
 No sweet companion in his bed 10340  
 To solace him, and how awake  
 He restless lay, for her sweet sake,  
 Then sleeping, dreamed that in his arms,  
 Disrobed, beheld he all her charms,  
 To glowing health once more restored,  
 Able and willing to afford  
 The joys he longs for: doubt not such  
 Fair fictions will console her much.

Thus have I striven in verse to tell  
 How should a lover, sick or well, 10350  
 His mistress treat if he desire  
 To keep alive the sacred fire  
 Of ardent love, whose flame may be  
 Snuffed out and quenched right easily  
 By any wight, who selfish ease  
 Prefers, nor troubleth him to please  
 Her fancy.

Framed and meddled so  
 Is woman's heart that man can know

Be true in  
 sickness

A good  
woman  
should be  
prized

Never if it be false or true,  
No matter what he say or do. 10360  
To hold it fast is task as vain  
As though an eel from out the Seine  
One should 'twixt thumb and finger grip,  
Which will not fail to slide and slip  
From out the grasp howe'er one try  
To hold it, for so slippery  
It is of skin, and eke so quick  
Of movement, that its every trick  
No man can fathom.

Nought I would  
Speak thus of all, for some both good 10370  
And virtuous are, but deep regret  
Is mine to own I ne'er have met  
With any such, although from queen  
To jade full many a one I've seen.  
And wise King Solomon declared  
That, as through life's dark maze he fared,  
No woman e'er by him was found  
Faithful and true.

If through the round  
Of life you find one, tarry not,  
But, joyful for your happy lot, 10380  
Give Fortune thanks that you possess  
One faithful love your life to bless.  
If nought a woman gads about  
The street, nor lovers seek her out,  
She chaste remains.

Just one word more  
To perfect what I've said before  
Of love's fair art. Whene'er a maid,  
Fair or ill-favoured, you'd invade,



Remember this, which certainly  
 Will prove to women's hearts a key. 10890  
 Fail not upon her to impress  
 That 'tis her passing loveliness  
 And worth that takes by storm your heart—  
 Than this Love's quiver holds no dart  
 More deadly; whether old or young,  
 Bred in the world, or reared among  
 Religious sisters, pure and chaste,  
 Fine flattering words will run not waste.  
 A woman's fairness laud, and she  
 Will listen most contentedly. 10400

Women  
 hate  
 censure

E'en though no beauty she possess,  
 By Nature stamped with ugliness,  
 Fear not, but praise her fairy face,  
 Her perfect form and angel grace,  
 And lightly she'll believe your word,  
 For never yet hath woman heard  
 Her beauty praised without delight,  
 Or doubted she with justice might  
 Be loved, however plain she were,  
 For gladly she believes her fair. 10410  
 To please their ladies gallants ought  
 To give full praise, and censure nought.

That man I reckon most unwise  
 Who rashly dares to criticise  
 Or disapprove a lady's ways,  
 For every woman thinks she plays  
 Her part by nature perfectly,  
 And interference hateth she.  
 E'en as a cat ne'er goes to school,  
 But learns by Nature's golden rule 10420

Prize To leap, and bound, and pounce, and  
highly spring,  
the Rose So woman deems that everything  
She knows in self-same way, nor aught  
Believes she needeth to be taught,  
But acts as she is led by will,  
And right or wrong, or good or ill  
Doth, as it entereth her head,  
By foolish whim and fancy led ;  
Rarely it haps she doeth right,  
But woe betide the witless wight 10480  
Who counsels her.

This habit she  
Learned of no master, naturally  
'Twas born in her, and those who choose  
To blame or 'monish women, lose  
Their love outright.

And thus it goes,  
It seems to me, with your sweet Rose,  
Dear friend, you freely would resign  
All that you have without repine  
To win possession.

When at last  
Into your loving care hath past 10440  
This precious gem, and happiness  
Smileth upon you and doth bless  
Your soul in perfect wise, the flower  
Kind Heaven hath placed within your  
power  
Guard tenderly, and you therein  
Such joy shall have as few men win,  
For though through fourteen cities ye  
Should search, you ne'er its peer shall see.

*The Lover answers his friend.*

'Fore Heaven, you speak good truth, I cried,  
 In all the world there's nought beside 10450  
 To equal it, so pure, so sweet!  
 Happy am I a friend to meet  
 Whose words of wisdom so much aid  
 And comfort give me; nor afraid  
 Am I to say that better far  
 Your redes than those of Reason are.

The  
 friend  
 departs

But ere my shrewd and kindly friend  
 Had brought his parlance to an end,  
 Sweet-Speech and Gentle-Thought, who nigh  
 Had stood the while, all suddenly 10460  
 Appeared in view from out their nooks,  
 But with them brought they not Sweet-Looks.  
 Alas! no man on earth, I wot,  
 Can give the thing he owneth not.

LV

The Lover makes no more delay,  
 But leaves his friend, and seeks the way  
 To where Fair-Welcome lies, for fain  
 Is he to find him once again.

THEN to my friend I bade adieu,  
 And with a merry heart withdrew 10470  
 From thence across the mead, lit up  
 With daisy bright and buttercup,  
 And hearkened how the echoes rang,  
 With joyous notes the small fowl sang;

The approach  
to the  
tower

Ah! how my spirit with delight  
O'erflowed at such sweet sound and sight.

But one thing that my friend had said  
Lay on my heart like weight of lead,  
Which was, that I should go not near  
The tower accursed, but keep me clear 10480  
Of all the roads that led thereto,  
A thing my will rebelled to do.

Then wandering heedless I forsook  
The right-hand path, and straightway took  
The left, in hope the shortest road  
To find, for in my soul abode  
Earnest desire the goal to gain,  
Of danger careless, and of pain  
Unmindful, could I only get  
Thither ere one more strong should let 10490  
Or hinder my attempt to free  
Fair-Welcome, friend most dear to me.  
Soon as I see the stronghold break  
Before me like a baked-up cake,  
And the strong gates wide open fly,  
Then none shall stay my valiancy.  
And may the devil be within  
My belly if I fail to win  
The fortress; for I promise you  
If once I get within near view 10500  
Thereof, Fair-Welcome shall its bounds  
O'erleap, I wage a million pounds.  
But from the fort itself I'll stay,  
For prudence' sake, some little way.

## LVI

The Lover findeth Dame Richesse,  
 Who guards the path with carefulness  
 By which the fortress may be ta'en  
 Of those who scatter golden rain.

**H**ARD by a fountain fresh and clear  
 (While musing on my Rosebud dear) 10510

I found a sweet sequestered spot  
 Where sat a dame, whom all would wot  
 Of lovely form and joyous face,  
 Beneath a leafy elm her place.  
 A gallant stood beside the dame,  
 (Of whom I wist nor rank nor name)  
 But her I knew for Dame Richesse,  
 By all men held of great noblesse,  
 And o'er a pleasant pathway guard  
 She kept, and all intrusion barred. 10520

The  
**Lover**  
**finds**  
**Richesse**

Soon as I saw them I inclined  
 My head, and well was pleased to find  
 Return thereof, but that was all  
 My welcoming. In accent small  
 And soft I gently asked if they  
 Could to Much-Giving point the way ;  
 And Richesse, speaking first, replied,  
 In tones that savoured scorn and pride :

*Richesse.*

Behold the path, I hold the way.

*The Lover.*

The  
woning of  
Richesse

Ah! lady, God preserve, I pray,  
Your life, but prithee suffer me  
To wend towards that high fort I see  
Yonder, which Jealousy hath reared  
For purpose that my heart hath seared.

10530

*Richesse.*

Not yet, O vassal, to that spot  
May you approach, I know you not;  
Those only by this path can go  
Who know me, and I please to know.  
As stranger you must ten years wait  
Ere, as my friend, you pass this gate;  
Although from Paris straight one came  
Or Amiens, 'twere to me the same.  
My friends may freely enter here  
To dance and sing throughout the year,  
And live a joyous life and free,  
Whereof no sage need envious be,  
Nought passeth here but frolic play  
Wherewith to wile the time away,  
Light dances set to glesome tunes,  
On viols, tambours, and bassoons,  
Sweet songs that savour amorousness,  
And games of tables, dice and chess,  
And many another for delight  
Of merry hearts. And there are dight  
Delicious meats that never cloy,  
And soft amours fulfilled of joy.  
There loving swains with ladies sweet,  
By schemes of skilled duennas meet,

10540

10550

And wandering stroll 'neath shady groves  
 And gardens, where they tell their loves, 10560  
 Gaily attired as popinjays,  
 And leisure-footed wend their ways  
 Towards dulcet baths right well prepared  
 For soft delight, and having shared  
 This joyance, then hard by are found  
 Luxurious chambers, where they, crowned  
 With flower-twined chaplets, idly lie  
 Within Mad-Largess' hostelry,  
 Where they at every pore are bled,  
 And long 'tis ere their cure is sped. 10570  
 Right dearly do they pay for what  
 Their host affordeth them; so hot  
 And ruthless his rapacity,  
 That all their goods and lands must be  
 To him made o'er.

The  
 home of  
 Richesse

I lead men in  
 That they a joyous time may win,  
 But Poverty doth drive them thence,  
 Naked and shivering, reft of pence.  
 I guard the entry, she the gate  
 Of exit: men of all estate 10580  
 Accept I, ignorant and wise  
 May enter, but when they arise  
 To travel forth, they're paupers. Yet  
 I will not say but they may get  
 Permission to return (but this  
 No small or light won favour is)  
 If they with good provision come,  
 To make with me once more their home,  
 Nor that I would not many a time  
 Receive them till they had no dime 10590

Scat-  
terlings  
fall to  
Poverty

Of that great wealth they once possessed.  
But know thou, ever more distressed  
Are they the oftener they return  
New store of bitter woe to earn,  
Till that they shun my gaze for shame  
And, taking on their heads the blame,  
Cast off their lives of misery.  
I flee from those who flee from me.  
I warn you well, ere yet you pass  
This barrier, you will cry, alas! 10600  
When you return, for never Bear,  
Hand-led, and muzzle doomed to wear,  
Was wretcheder than you will be  
At going hence. If Poverty  
Cast you on bed of hay or straw,  
You there 'mid sighs and groans must draw  
Your breath till you of hunger die.

Hunger, who unto Poverty  
Was chamberer, by her bitterness  
Reduced her dame to dire distress, 10610  
And then corrupted her, till she  
Became the nurse of Knavery;  
From her own breast with milk she fed  
The varlet, who no other bread  
E'er tasted. And if ye desire  
To hear of her, this caitiff dire,  
Fierce Hunger, dwells on stone-strewn ground,  
Where nought of herb or grain is found,  
A land which north of Scotland lies,  
Whose frozen atmosphere outvies 10620  
The marble's coldness. Hunger, who  
Wones where no tree or grain e'er grew,



Digs from the earth roots crude and raw,  
 With pointed tooth and long-grown claw.  
 But sparsely roots and herbage strow  
 Those rugged rocks where wild winds  
 blow.

Hunger  
 portrayed

Should I the crone describe to you,  
 My words forsooth need be but few,  
 Her body long, dry-boned, and bent,  
 With lack of food shows worn and spent ; 10630  
 Ragged her locks ; blear eyes deep-set ;  
 Face livid ; lips, so thin, they let  
 Long teeth protrude ; her wrinkled skin  
 Scarce hides the wretched bones wherein  
 Nor sap nor marrow flows, while she  
 For belly hath a cavity,  
 And not more flesh, as I opine,  
 Hangs on her dugs than on her chine.  
 Her knees resemble jagged points  
 Of rock, and all her finger joints 10640  
 Rude knots deform ; such misery lean  
 Holds her in grip. And ne'er, I ween,  
 Doth Ceres, foison's Goddess, come  
 Anigh this heaven-forgotten home ;  
 Nor doth Triptolemus e'er fly  
 His dragons through this sunless sky,  
 For Destiny decrees that ne'er  
 Shall here be joined that welcome pair.  
 The fruitful Goddess could not dwell  
 With Famine in her dreary hell, 10650  
 For foison can in nowise be  
 Allied with direful Poverty.  
 But she it is, forsooth, will lead  
 You on to curst estate of need

**Hunger  
and  
Poverty**

If you through slothfulness once get  
Your feet within her close-meshed net,  
And unto Poverty's dim den  
A man as surely cometh when  
That path he takes, as though he trod  
This road, of which I guard the sod; 10660  
For men of idle life and base  
Soon meet the beldame face to face.  
And if you deem that well 'twill suit  
Your turn to follow out the route  
Towards treacherous Poverty accurst  
In hope thereby the gates to burst  
Of this strong fort, you easily  
May fail. But Hunger, credit me,  
Will be your fellow and bedmate  
Soon as you fall to poor estate, 10670  
For better Poverty by heart  
The road knows than by parchment  
chart.

And wretched Hunger doth expend  
Such pains and carefulness to tend  
Her dam (for though she loves her not,  
Yet through her only hath she got  
Wherewith to live, though she herself  
Is naked, and devoid of pelf),  
That ever comes she day by day,  
And sits beside her in the way, 10680  
And kisseth her with much misese.  
Theft's ear she suddenly doth seize,  
And wakes him if she sees him sleep,  
Inclines her towards him in her deep  
Distress, consulting how they may  
By some means Hunger's pangs allay.

Faint-Heart with Hunger doth agree,  
 Who of the rope thinks tremblingly,  
 And on her body every hair  
 Stands stiff and straight with mortal fear 10690  
 And dread, lest Theft, her child, amain  
 Red-handed in the deed be ta'en.  
 By this path seek then not to go,  
 But find some other road, for lo!  
 If you should persevere to choose  
 This way, you all your wealth must lose,  
 And have not served me so that I  
 Should love you unreservedly.

**Richesse  
 warns the  
 Lover**

*The Lover speaks to Richesse.*

Lady, I swear by God above  
 That gladly would I win your love, 10700  
 And by your grace would fain essay  
 Along your path to make my way,  
 And rescue from his durance dire  
 Fair-Welcome—grant my one desire.

*Richesse.*

I understand, quoth she, that all  
 Your store of wood both great and small  
 You've sold not, but one stick kept back;  
 'Tis well, and ne'er the world will lack  
 Of folly till men rise above  
 The thraldom known to fools as love, 10710  
 But each who in this madness lies,  
 Deems himself nathless wondrous wise.

The mad-  
ness of  
lovers

'Tis foolishness to call that life  
Which is but fury, rage and strife.  
Reason saw well your folly, but  
To all her wisdom did you shut  
Your ears, and madly you deceived  
Yourself when nowise you believed  
Her words. Before Dame Reason came,  
No power could you from Love reclaim, 10720  
And now, forsooth, you still despise  
My words, since Love alone you prize.  
From lovers gain I small esteem,  
Meseemeth that alone they dream  
Of scattering wide my goods, but whence  
Can come the wealth that fools dispense,  
When, slaves to Love, they play his game?  
That rede you, in the devil's name!  
But hence, and leave me here in peace.

*The Lover.*

I saw 'twere well my prayers to cease, 10730  
And sadly thence betook my way.  
But, though I went, with her did stay  
Her friend arrayed in raiment rich.

I took a path, scarce noting which,  
Across that close past all compare,  
Filled with delights most heavenly fair,  
The tale whereof ye erst have heard.  
But now, alas! no more it stirred  
Joy in my heart. I dreamed alone  
What manner way might best be done 10740

That service whereto I was bound.  
Not of freewill would I be found  
False to my word and solemn oath,  
And, into crime so base, were loth  
To be betrayed. My heart was filled  
With thought of that my friend instilled  
Therein with so great care: That I  
By every mode and means should try  
To honour Evil-Tongue, nor swerve  
From his advice to please and serve  
My cruel foes.

The  
Lover's  
perplexi-  
ties

Should I get aught  
Of thanks thereby? That knew I nought,  
Yet wist I not what else to do,  
Not daring to approach unto  
The enclosure, as I quickly should  
If I but wrought the thing I would.  
And thus, God knows, did I debate  
These doubts, with conscience desolate.  
For one course duty sternly bid,  
The while another thing I did,  
And so towards the course of right  
A traitor was I (though despite  
Of sore temptation up till now  
Had I been faithful), and did throw  
My lot with treason, seen I could  
No other way attain that good  
My being longed for—I who ne'er  
Ere this the cloak of leasings ware.

10750

10760

The  
Lover  
ques-  
tioned

I know not, since—  
Not'er willingly I've gone away,  
and to deal in

## LVII

With will to ease the Lover's grief  
 Appeared to him his mighty chief, 10770  
 The God of Love, who pardoned him  
 That he awhile had deigned to trim  
 His ear to Reason, and, quoth he,  
 Unreason shalt thou henceforth be.

The  
 Lover  
 ques-  
 tioned

WHEN Love thus clearly saw that I  
 Preserved towards him my loyalty,  
 (A loyalty not lightly worn,  
 For by a solemn oath 'twas sworn),  
 He came, smiled at my grief, and said,  
 His soft hand laid upon my head : 10780  
 Hast thou then followed my command?  
 And in what case dost thou now stand  
 Towards that fair Rose that caused thy heart  
 To writhe beneath love's bitter smart?  
 But of a truth all this he knew,  
 For Gods divine whate'er men do.

*Love speaks.*

Quoth he : These hests I lay alone  
 On faithful lovers, and on none  
 Besides, hast thou all utterly  
 Pursued them? Frankly answer me. 10790

*The Lover.*

I know not, sire—but this I say,  
 Ne'er wittingly I've gone astray.

*Love.*

Too fond art thou, forsooth, of change,  
 And let'st thy heart too often range  
 And waver, cursed with fickle doubt,  
 I know thee thoroughly—in and out.  
 The other day thou had'st the mind  
 To quit my service, and unkind  
 Complaints thou mad'st 'gainst Idleness,  
 And blamed my yoke, and did'st confess 10800  
 Thee doubtful if fair Hope might be  
 Of good effect and aid to thee.  
 Thou said'st 'twas but a foolish whim,  
 That thou to my commands should'st trim  
 Thy life, and homage paid to Reason:  
 Was not then this foul act of treason?

The folly  
 of fickle-  
 ness

*The Lover.*

Pardon! great master, I the crime  
 Confess, yet was I through the time  
 Your bounden liege, and often good  
 Assurance gave of trustihood, 10810  
 As those should do who love thy rule.  
 Reason but held me for a fool;  
 Nor failed she sorely to reprove  
 My full surrender unto Love  
 When held she converse with me, but  
 With all her reasoning failed to cut  
 The bond between us, though 'tis true  
 She doubt inspired. But unto you  
 I promise that no more mine ear  
 I'll lend to her, should I be near 10820

Reason  
renounced

When she her voice doth 'gainst you raise,  
 Or lesser folk bestints of praise,  
 For so entirely doth mine heart  
 To you belong that nought shall part  
 Our love, unless is torn away  
 That heart from out my body—nay,  
 I'm yours till death. 'Twas folly great,  
 And grievous wrong 'gainst you, to prate  
 With her, or list her futile speech,  
 But your forgiveness I beseech ; 10830  
 And whatso'er of penalty  
 Account you well to lay on me  
 I'll welcome, and will nevermore  
 Listen to Reason, but your lore  
 Shall be my guide for life and death ;  
 In you I'll live so long as breath  
 Remains to me, and nowise loss  
 It were to me if Atropos  
 Should cut life's thread while I engage  
 In that sweet war that mortals wage 10840  
 For Venus' sake, nought else doth bless  
 Man's life with so great happiness.  
 And those who for my death should weep,  
 When thus they see me fallen to sleep  
 So sweetly, might with reason cry :  
 Oh well art thou thuswise to die !  
 Thy death doth with that life agree,  
 Thou liv'dst ere soul from flesh was free.

*The God of Love speaks.*

Now, by my head, thou speakest well,  
 For, hearing thee, 'tis light to tell 10850



That thou due homage dost to me ;  
 No faithless wretch I find in thee  
 Or caitiff, that would dare deny  
 My service, having gained thereby  
 All that he longed for. Sound and pure  
 I find thy heart, therefore secure  
 And safe thy vessel shalt thou bring  
 To port. Thou hast full pardoning,  
 Dear friend, straightway, by simple prayer,  
 Of ransom free, for I will spare 10860  
 Thy silver or thy gold to take,  
 Nor even ask that thou should'st make  
 Confession, but propose instead  
 That we again take up the thread  
 Of those sweet lessons that to thee  
 I gave, and thou repeat to me  
 The prohibitions and commands,  
 In number ten, that at my hands  
 Thou didst receive. If faithfully  
 Thou keep'st them in thy memory, 10870  
 One day thou'lt be in better case  
 Than he who, dicing, casts deuce ace :  
 Repeat them.

Love's  
 behests

### LVIII

Repeats, the Lover, word for word  
 The lesson he from Cupid heard.

#### *The Lover.*

Gladly : Evil deed  
 Must I forego ; no scandal speed ;

A lover's  
maxims To aid and honour ladies ought  
To be through life my foremost thought ;  
Foul speech my lips should never soil ;  
For others' weal my strength should toil ; 10880  
Though scorning pride, tend well my dress,  
Behave with grace and gentleness ;  
With fair large heartedness to live,  
And to one love my heart to give.

*Love.*

I'faith, thou hast thy lesson got  
Right well, unstained by fault or blot.  
What sufferest thou ?

*The Lover.*

A grief so dread,  
That thereof is my heart nigh dead.

*Love.*

Hast thou not my three comforts ?

*The Lover.*

No ;

Soft-Looks, alas ! doth never show 10890  
His longed-for face, by which might be  
Assuaged my grief and misery.  
All three took flight, but two amain  
Returned, with will to ease my pain.

*Love.*

Is Hope not left to thee ?

*The Lover.*

Ah, yes!

She will not leave me comfortless,  
For when within our hearts she makes  
Her home, that home she ne'er forsakes.

Fair-  
Welcome  
must be  
freed

*Love.*

Where is the Rose?

*The Lover.*

Alas! she's lost,

To Jealousy hath she been tost 10900  
For gold by Evil-Tongue, and nought  
I see how rescue may be wrought.

*Love.*

What of Fair-Welcome hath become?

*The Lover.*

Alas! beneath his prison dome  
He weeps—my friend, whom loved I so.

*Love.*

Take heart, and let thy bosom glow  
With hope, for by mine eyes I swear  
That thou more joyously shalt fare  
Than heretofore hath been thy lot.  
Since thou so well my laws dost wot 10910  
And keep, I will my lieges call  
To burst and break the prison wall  
That holds Fair-Welcome; soon shall he  
Before thee stand, at liberty.

## LIX

Herein his barons, one and all,  
 Doth Love to stalwart battle call  
 By letter, which an envoy takes,  
 Who no account of danger makes.

The  
 barons  
 sum-  
 moned

**T**HE God of Love, without or place  
 Or time affixed where face to face  
 He'd meet his barons, letters sent  
 Bidding them all to parliament;  
 These he commanded, those besought,  
 And all appeared, misdoubting nought,  
 Ready to do whate'er they could  
 To serve the end their liege lord would.  
 I name them all pell-mell as I  
 May rhyme them most commodiously.

Dame Idlesse first of all I name,  
 Who with the largest banner came,  
 Then Noble-Heart, and Dame Richesse,  
 Franchise, and Pity, and Largess,  
 Bright Honour, Boldness, Courtesy,  
 Sir Mirth and young Simplicity,  
 And Glee, and Sport, and Youthfulness,  
 And Joyousness, and Good-Success,  
 And Gaiety, and quick Desire,  
 And Beauty with her heart afire,  
 Sweet Patience, and bold Confidence,  
 Hide-Close, and Constrained-Abstinence,  
 Who near False-Seeming ever goes,  
 And all his ways and wishes knows;  
 And all of these their lieges brought,  
 Joyous of face, of bearing haught.

Abstinence only and False-Seeming  
 Looked evil, should I speak my deeming.  
 Whatever air assumed those two,  
 Fraud peeped from out their hearts untrue.

False-  
 Seeming  
 appears

False-Seeming was of Fraud the son,  
 Hypocrisy begotten on, 10950  
 That shameful traitress, foul and base,  
 Who ever, 'neath Religion's face,  
 Deceiveth men; when she in view  
 Appeared, his breath in gasps Love drew,

*Love.*

And cried: How now! do I then dream?  
 Speak out, False-Seeming, dost thou deem  
 That thou by me wert summoned here?

*The Lover.*

Forced-Abstinence, who stood anear,  
 Sprang forth, and seized her friend's right hand:

*Constrained-Abstinence.*

Quoth she, I pray you understand 10960  
 That I, an't please you, hither led  
 False-Seeming; oft hath he bestead  
 My need, and done me kindly act,  
 Saving my life by hunger wracked.  
 Let him among your lieges wait,  
 Though each and all have earned his hate,  
 For greatly I desire that he  
 Win praise for worth and sanctity.  
 He is my friend, and I his dear,  
 As faithful comrades wend we here. 10970

## LX

To all the host doth Love explain  
 His purpose to assault and gain  
 The castle, and Fair-Welcome free  
 From out his bonds and slavery.

Love  
 harangues  
 his host

SO let it be, quoth Love; and then  
 He thus addressed his faithful men:

That we may Jealousy defeat,  
 At whose fell hands our gallants meet  
 Such cruel fate, I've summoned ye.  
 'Tis her intention strenuously 10980  
 To hold the fort she dared to build,  
 Which with distress my heart hath filled.  
 A potent garrison therein  
 Is set, and, ere we entry win,  
 They'll fight with desperation rude,  
 And great is my inquietude;  
 For there Fair-Welcome is immured,  
 Whose loving kindness oft hath cured  
 Our woes, and if he's rescued not  
 From thence—oh, hard and evil lot! 10990

Dead is Tibullus, who so well  
 Knew me, that, when 'neath death he fell,  
 My bow and arrows did I shiver  
 In shards, and tare my goatskin quiver,  
 While on his tomb my broken wings  
 Fell heaped, as worn and worthless things,  
 Shattered and spent, and through his death  
 My gentle mother's fragrant breath

Love's  
orators

Came nigh to ending. Not so great  
 Her grief was at the cruel fate 11000  
 Of her Adonis, when the boar  
 His ivory thigh with death-wound tore.  
 Nought then could comfort or assuage  
 Her grief, yet fiercer did it rage  
 When died Tibullus; nought can stay  
 Our tears, till time hath passed away.  
 Catullus, Gallus, Ovid sweet,  
 How perfectly they knew to treat  
 Of Love's fair science, well bestead  
 Were we of them—alas! they're dead. 11010  
 William of Lorris next regard,  
 Who certainly must meet a hard  
 And cruel fate through Jealousy,  
 Did he not chance to find in me  
 A saving hand. With loving heart  
 Doth he sweet counselling impart  
 To help our need, which is but right;  
 For he is mine, and I have dight  
 For him the mote assembled here  
 Of barons, who, despising fear, 11020  
 Will save Fair-Welcome from the  
 He lieth in: he doth declare  
 Himself all powerless, but 'twould be  
 Disgrace and injury to me  
 To lose a liegeman who hath served  
 Me loyally, nor ever swerved  
 From duty's path. To him I owe  
 Right worthy recompense, and so  
 Have now invoked your mighty power  
 To ruin and lay low the tower. 11030

Of Jean de Meun      E'en yet will he promote my cause,  
 For, to deserve my grace, Love's laws  
 He in that fair Romance shall write,  
 Which he begins, and shall indite  
 The tale so far, before his death,  
 As where he to Fair-Welcome saith :  
 (Who, languishing, doth wear through time  
 In prison, though unstained by crime)  
 "Hear me confess that darkest fear  
 Invades me lest it should appear 11040  
 That you forget me quite ; what woe  
 Untold would fall on me to know  
 That I had lost your friendship, then  
 Were I unhappiest of men. . . ."   
 Behold we William here expire :  
 Upon his tomb may sacred fire  
 Burn aloes, cinnamon, and myrrh,  
 In honour of my worshipper.

Then shall appear John Clopinel,  
 Joyous of heart, of body well 11050  
 And fairly built : at Meun shall he  
 Be born where Loire flows peacefully,  
 Who, whether he keepeth feast or fast,  
 Will never while his life-days last  
 Forget my service, but without  
 Envy or avarice go about  
 To honour me, untouched by care  
 How he at Reason's hands may fare,  
 Who all my precious balms doth scorn,  
 Which salve sad hearts with love o'erworn. 11060  
 And if it happen that he make  
 Some error, failure, or mistake,



(For no man woman-born may win  
His way to heaven unscathed by sin)  
Towards me his heart shall be so true  
That, in the end, whate'er he do,  
With tearful eyes and head low bent,  
Sorely will he his crime repent,  
And vow henceforth to keep him clear.

This fair Romance he'll hold so dear, 11070  
That to its ending will he trace  
The tale, God give him time and place,  
When death shall snatch Dan William, then  
Dan John in hand shall take the pen  
When forty years are passed, and say :  
(O'ercome with grief to think he may  
Fair-Welcome's help and comfort lose,  
Prisoned by Jealousy's vile ruse)  
" If he no more may bless my sight,  
O'er me will fall despair's black night ! " 11080  
And every other word that he  
Hath wisely said or foolishly,  
Repeat, until he shall have gained  
The Rose from its fair stem and fained  
His heart thereby, and once more day  
May dawn, and dreaming pass away ;  
And every point will make so sure  
And clear, that nought remains obscure.

Doubt not, if in their power it lay,  
These both would lend their aid this day. 11090  
But while of one the life is worn,  
The other hath not yet been born,  
And therefore cannot help our cause,  
Or set before the world my laws ;

Love's tender care  
 But of such moment are these things,  
 That well behoves it that my wings  
 I spread so soon as he the light  
 Beholds, and let him hear aright  
 Our judgment, else I warrant you  
 That ne'er the work he'll carry through. 11100  
 And lest it happed, as well might be,  
 By unforeseen calamity,  
 That this good Clopinel, whose birth  
 We look for, ne'er should tread the  
 earth,  
 It were irreparable loss  
 To lovers that thus fate should cross  
 A man whose keen and worthy wit  
 Should do their cause such benefit.  
 I therefore dame Lucina prayed,  
 Goddess of birth, to give her aid, 11110  
 That to the world he safe might come,  
 And long therein find hearth and home;  
 And whensoever he weaned shall be,  
 Then Jupiter, most tenderly,  
 Shall take him up and give to him  
 A draught from out his tuns, which brim  
 With virtue twofold, this one bright,  
 That, turbid, thick, and black as night;  
 This one right pleasant, soft and sweet,  
 That, bitter as soot or waves that beat 11120  
 The ocean shore; and when in cot  
 He lies, it then shall be his lot  
 That I enshroud him 'neath my wings,  
 And teach him such sweet carollings,  
 That even in his early youth,  
 With my soft science filled, forsooth,

Our songs in hall and market-place  
 Shall he chant forth with tuneful grace,  
 Couched in the tongue men use in

Jealousy  
 shall be  
 overcome

France,

And all the world therewith entrance. 11130

And those who list him willingly,

Of Love's soft woes shall never die ;

For if they do but read aright

The precious book his pen shall dight,

They may therein find plainly writ

All Love's commands, and draw from it

Such counsels, that it well may pass

Henceforward as the looking-glass

For lovers, but therein no part

Shall bear dull Reason's caitiff heart. 11140

Therefore it is of you I ask

Good counselling to ease my task,

Beseeching you, palm joined to palm,

To pour on William Lorris balm

Of comfort in his loneliness,

Since well did he my faith confess ;

And if for him I made no prayer,

Yet would I ask that John might share

Your powerful aid, that he may be

A wise, true servant unto me. 11150

That he'll be born I dare avow

As prophet ; and moreover now

Pray ye for future lovers, who

Shall learn my full commandments through

His lore, and that by them may be

O'ercome all-hateful Jealousy,

And every fort she dares to raise

They may to bare foundations raze.

Richesse Give me your counsel then, and say  
 despises At which points were it best to lay 11160  
 love The siege, that we may quickly crown  
 Our work, and beat the stronghold down.

*The Author.*

Thus spake the God of Love; right well  
 The lords approved his words, and fell  
 Straightway to counsel and debate,  
 With reasoning most elaborate,  
 And many a diverse word is said  
 Ere yet the arguments are sped,  
 And all their discords they accord;  
 Then bending low before their lord, 11170

*The Barons.*

Sire, they exclaimed, we all agree  
 Your faithful servitors to be,  
 Save Richesse, who thereto is loth,  
 And sweareth by a solemn oath  
 That ne'er will she attack the fort  
 In any manner, way, or sort,  
 With engine, axe, winged dart or sword,  
 Or other arm of thrust and ward,  
 But saith that all your emprise she  
 Scorns and despises utterly. 11180  
 Therefore in dudgeon is she gone  
 From out the host till this be done,  
 So much doth she the Lover hate:  
 Declaring he nor rathe nor late  
 Hath loved her, but her treasured gold  
 Despiset, and but cheap doth hold.

Behold the crime that he hath wrought,  
 And thus her mortal hatred bought.  
 She saith, the day ere yesterday  
 He sought to pass along the way 11190  
 Which Too-Great-Giving is yclept,  
 But, seeing he was poor, she kept  
 The path against him: seen that he  
 Ne'er strove to win the mastery  
 Of one poor wretched penny piece  
 Whereby his having to increase—  
 So spake Richesse, therefore without  
 Her help at once we'll set about  
 Your high behest.

Plan of  
 attack

Our plan is, hence  
 False-Seeming and Forced-Abstinence 11200  
 To send, with all of those who fight  
 Beneath their flag, that they their might  
 May spend against the postern door  
 Which Evil-Tongue with many a score  
 Of Normans keeps (may hell-fire burn  
 These runagates), and then may earn  
 Largess and Courtesy great praise  
 If 'gainst the hag they take their ways,  
 Who on Fair-Welcome's head doth pile  
 Unheard-of woes and insults vile. 11210

And then Sir Hide-Well and Delight  
 Shall lightly put weak Shame to flight,  
 When they their host, against her gate,  
 Lead on with cries importunate.  
 Surety and Courage with their train  
 'Gainst trembling Fear shall march amain,  
 Who never yet have known defeat;  
 And Pity shall with Franchise meet

Venus' help needed In arms 'gainst Danger. Surely then  
The fort must yield to suchlike men 11220  
Banded together, if but they  
Their strength and valiancy display.

Above all else right well it were  
Your mother Venus should be there,  
Who understandeth better far  
Than many another how Love's war  
Is wrought and won. Without her aid  
Some error lightly might be made  
In word or deed. Let thy command  
Ensure to us her mighty hand. 11230

*Love.*

Venus, great lords, whom I confess  
As mother, lady, and mistress,  
I may not at my pleasure bend  
To serve my will. Yet oft-times wend  
Will she to succour me when I  
Beseech her powerful ministry,  
Fearing the while to ask too much.  
She is my mother, and as such,  
E'en from my childhood's days, a sense  
I feel of humble reverence 11240  
Towards her, for if sons no fear  
Have of their parents, they but rear  
A baleful seed-crop. Natheless we  
May ask her aid if need should be,  
And e'en though far away, she'd speed  
Hither hot-foot, nor hindrance heed.

My mother is of high renown,  
 And many a fortress hath cast down  
 That cost a thousand bezants, though  
 Within the precincts ne'er did go 11250  
 My footsteps; often men declare  
 Some conquest mine, when I no share  
 Or part have had therein—no doit  
 I love or value such exploit.  
 Such victories in my ears but ring  
 Of merchandise and bargaining.

Love not  
 to be  
 bought

Who for a hundred pounds doth buy  
 A steed, and pays it presently,  
 Is of the bargain free and quit,  
 As he likewise who sold him it. 11260  
 A bargain is apart from love,  
 And none should guerdon seek above  
 A price agreed that is to be—  
 That paid, the bargainers are free.

Love bought and sold is worse affair;  
 For when a man his horse with care  
 Hath stabled, he can sell amain  
 His purchase, maybe at a gain,  
 If so he will, nor doth he lose  
 Wholly the price, for he can use 11270  
 The skin for leather, and therefrom  
 Recover somewhat of the sum  
 He paid. Or if he hold it dear,  
 Mount it he may, as cavalier,  
 Full master of the steed is he.  
 But far worse the affair must be

Venus is  
not mer-  
cenary

When Venus doth a bargain make,  
For, whatsoever care he take,  
A man may never get what's sold,  
Yet lose past all return his gold, 11280  
For tightly may the vendor keep  
The wares, and then no price were cheap,  
Nay, e'en though all he had one set  
Thereon, he might no guerdon get;  
Whate'er he did, whate'er he said,  
It nowise could be hinderèd,  
But what the very first who can  
(Roman, Breton, or Englishman)  
Open the purse more widely may,  
The thing you paid for bear away, 11290  
Or e'en obtain it as a gift,  
If he but knows his voice to lift  
In flattering words. Account ye wise  
Merchants who deal in suchlike guise?  
Nay, but mere fools and caitiffs they,  
Who bargains make in such a way  
That for their outlay nought remain  
Of pleasure, benefit, or gain,  
Whate'er the cost.

'Tis true that she  
Who gave me birth not usually 11300  
Dispenseth gold, for hath she more  
Of wit than thus to waste her store,  
But know ye well, that man shall yet  
Pay her, who doth his gold regret,  
When Poverty in dire distress  
Doth hold him, though of Dame Richesse  
Fast friend were he, who, when I will,  
Loseth her power to work me ill.



But hear me by Saint Venus swear,  
 And Saturn who engendered her, 11310  
 Not through his wife, but in her sweet  
 And perfect beauteousness complete.  
 But yet a stronger oath I swear,  
 To clench more firmly the affair.  
 I swear by all the faith I owe  
 My brothers, though no man doth know  
 Who were their sires (for many have dared  
 Avow my mother's couch they shared),  
 I swear by Styx, hell's river black;  
 And if my words plain truth should lack, 11320  
 May I, until a year flits o'er,  
 Of luscious piment drink no more;  
 (For by the Gods it is ordained  
 That no one who his lips hath stained  
 With falsehood, through a year drinks wine,)  
 I've sworn enough, as I opine;  
 If false, may I accursèd be,  
 But I'll commit no perjury.

Love's  
 oath  
 lovers

Dame Richesse doth desert us! hey!  
 But thereof shall she smartly pay, 11330  
 Yea, dear enough, unless she arm  
 Herself with sword, or piked guisarme.  
 And since for me she doth not burn  
 With love, whene'er I overturn  
 The castle and the tower accurst,  
 An evil dawn shall on her burst.  
 And if some wealthy carle I net,  
 I'll squeeze and twist him till I get  
 Each golden mark from out his purse,  
 And drain it to its very source, 11340

Poor men Till no more deniers can he show,  
 true Unless within his barns they grow;  
 lovers His plumes our maids will so pluck out,  
 That bare he'll walk till new ones sprout,  
 And make him sell his lands, unless  
 He drive them off with fearlessness.

Poor men have made of me their lord,  
 And though they oft can scarce afford  
 To pasture me, I scorn them not,  
 Nor do good men do so, I wot. 11350  
 Towards them is Richesse hard and rude,  
 With selfish love alone imbued;  
 But poor men truer lovers are  
 Than rich, whose wealth doth but debar  
 True love, and, by my father's soul,  
 Better is loyalty than dole.  
 Ever on me their thought is spent,  
 And thereof is my heart content,  
 And they so doing, oft mine eye  
 Looks on their service kindly; 11360  
 And if instead of God of Love  
 God Plutus were I, then above  
 Their hopes I'd give poor lovers all  
 Great wealth, for in mine ear their call  
 And plaint resounds, and specially  
 That of one faithful unto me;  
 For if he died for love, small then  
 Were Love esteemed 'mong mortal men.

*The Barons of the Host.*

Great sir, the Barons cried, we find  
 Your speech wise, bountiful, and kind; 11370

Well may you keep the solemn vow  
 You made against rich men but now :  
 We deem it nought but right and just.  
 And e'en if rich men put their trust  
 In you, and bow them 'neath your rules  
 And laws, they will but prove them fools.  
 Great lord, you shall in nowise break  
 Your solemn oath, nor cease to take  
 With others of the host divine  
 Your wonted draughts of piment wine. 11380  
 And ladies shall for rich men brew  
 Such well-spiced drink, both sweet and new,  
 If they within their nets but fall,  
 That thence they ne'er shall 'scape at all.  
 So courteously their work they'll do,  
 That you need nowise trouble you.  
 To triumph o'er them spare your care,  
 The ladies so will speak them fair,  
 That they will do your work although  
 Anigh them you forbear to go. 11390  
 Discourse will they right pleasant tales,  
 And fool them till the daylight fails  
 With many a gentle coo and bill,  
 And secret clip and kiss, and fill  
 The time up so with blandishments,  
 That they shall work their full intents  
 Upon them, and delude them so,  
 That they of goods and lands shall go  
 Naked as needles. Speak forth then,  
 And, whether right or wrong, your men 11400  
 Will your behests obey.  
 Great fear  
 False-Seeming hath to come anear,

Rich men  
befooled

False-  
Seeming  
accepted

And mix him in this great emprise,  
For much he fears that you despise  
And hate him.

We beseech, O sire,  
That you abate some deal your ire,  
And give consent that he may be  
Accounted of the barony,  
With Abstinence, his loving friend.

*Love.*

Thereto, quoth Love, my will I bend, 11410  
Henceforth shall he be called my man,  
Let him approach.

*The Author.*

He thither ran.

LXI

Herein the God of Love retains  
False-Seeming as his man, and gains  
Applause thereby, the host doth ring  
With shouts to crown him Ribalds' King.

'TIS thus agreed, False-Seeming then,  
That thou should'st join my loyal men,  
To give our friends thy powerful aid,  
And guard them lest they be betrayed. 11420  
'Tis thine, so far as in thee lies,  
To help them, and their enemies  
To grieve and injure, thou shalt be  
The King of Ribalds under me ;

'Tis thus our chapter hath decreed.  
 Most surely thou in thought and deed  
 Art but a rogue, a common thief,  
 A villain almost past belief,  
 A hundred thousand times forsworn,  
 Held of all honest men in scorn; 11430  
 Speak out I charge thee, have no fear,  
 Make all thy ways and doings clear,  
 And let the assembly know amain  
 Where they may find thee, since they fain  
 Would learn thy wonting: say also  
 What sign there is by which to know  
 Where thou may'st commonly be found.

False-  
 Seem-  
 ing's de-  
 claration

*False-Seeming.*

In truth, great lord, I shift my ground  
 So often that 'tis hard to say  
 Where 'tis I dwell from day to day, 11440  
 And should I all my mansions name,  
 Alack! it would but bring me shame,  
 For if my vile companions knew  
 That I had told this thing to you,  
 Good lord! on my devoted head  
 A thousand cruelties were sped.  
 Their wickedness I know too well,  
 And how they'd treat me should I tell  
 The truth, which hate they of all things;  
 And grievous pains and sufferings 11450  
 Were put upon me, dared I say  
 One word about their evil way  
 Of life, or had the hardihood  
 To speak of them aught else but good,

False- For that 'tis wounds them to the quick,  
Seem- Excites their anger, and doth prick  
ing's Them on to vengeance.  
fears

If they heard  
Their condemnation through the word  
Of holy Scripture, I'll engage  
'Twould rouse them into furious rage, 11400  
For mad are they in their despite,  
With bitter wrath and venom dight.  
And well I ken that should I bring  
Before you the most trifling thing,  
How close soe'er your court may be,  
These men would know it presently.  
But among good men none would take  
To heart whatever words I spake  
As touching them; for if one took  
My words in evil part, 'twould look 11470  
As though his life must mingled be  
With Falsehood and Hypocrisy,  
Who gave me life and nourriture.

*Love.*

A fair performance to be sure,  
Cried Love, their work was on a level  
With that of nurturing the devil.  
But howsoe'er that be, straightway  
'Tis needful thou before us lay,  
Without a lie, where thou dost dwell,  
And also thou at full may'st tell 11480  
Thy way of life with nimble tongue;  
The mischief wrought since thou wert young  
Discover, nor thy evil work,  
Now thou art with us, seek to shirk.

And if perchance it comes about  
That thou receivest cuff and clout  
To recompense thy deeds accurst,  
I doubt they scarce will be the first.

False-  
Seem-  
ing's con-  
fession

*False-Seeming.*

Great lord, if 'twere your pleasure I  
Should shortly be condemned to die, 11490  
I'd calmly lay my head upon  
The block and cry: 'Tis rightly done.

*The Author.*

False-Seeming then delayed no more,  
But, standing forth, thus spake before  
The great assembly:

*False-Seeming.*

All and each

Of ye, O barons, list my speech:  
Whoso False-Seeming would behold,  
Must seek him in the cloistered fold  
As much as in the open street,  
And trow I ye will scarcely meet 11500  
With me elsewhere, but far above  
The world the convent hath my love.  
In short, I much prefer to be  
Where I may work most secretly;  
And 'neath a simple vesture find  
That I most readily may blind  
Men's eyes, more secret is the way  
Of holy cloister folk than lay.

Monks  
good and  
bad

But think ye not I would defame  
Religion, or its votaries blame, 11510  
For nought it matters what they wear  
By way of habit, I will spare  
All faithful ones, but fain confess  
I do not love them ne'ertheless.

I speak of worthless monks and nuns,  
Felonious and malicious ones,  
Who care alone for holy dress,  
And clothe their hearts with wickedness.  
Good cloisterers are with pity fraught  
And kindliness, and harbour nought 11520  
Of evil, far from them is pride,  
And love they humbly to abide  
In peace. If I with these should stay,  
My cue it were false cards to play.  
Their habits well could I assume,  
But 'neath them should but fret and fume,  
And sooner hang would than forego  
My ends, whate'er my outward show.

I live with rascals puffed with pride,  
From out whose hearts, 'twould seem, hath  
died 11530  
All virtue; schemers, whose desire  
Before all else is to acquire  
Honour and wrath, and therefore set  
Themselves to plot how they may get  
Great folks' acquaintance; men who make  
Themselves bare paupers for the sake  
Of Christ, and yet good meat and drink  
Will pasture on, and love the chink



Of gold, and, preaching that they wish  
 For poverty alone, still fish 11540 Religious  
 With trammel-net and wide-spread seine, preten-  
ders  
 In hope great worldly wealth to gain.  
 Religious are they not, nor good,  
 Yet have the shameless hardihood,  
 Whene'er they preach, to boldly say,  
 That wearing holy habits they  
 Must needs be holy. By my life  
 Their claim's not worth a wooden knife ;  
 That "not by robe the monk is made,"  
 None but a fool hath e'er gainsaid. 11550  
 And none to this can make reply  
 Although his head were shaven high  
 By hand of Fraud, who cuts thirteen  
 Thereto had given with razor keen.  
 But hereof dare no man discuss,  
 To speak one word is perilous,  
 For truth they turn the nether way.  
 And therefore in their nests I lay  
 My eggs, as often may be seen  
 By those who closely look therein. 11560  
 Know ye that wheresoe'er I go,  
 And whatso sort of face I show,  
 I purpose some ill deed, and that,  
 Even as Master Tybert cat  
 Of nought else dreams but rats and  
 mice,  
 So do I find my paradise  
 In lying, robbery, and wrong.  
 And though but few among the throng  
 Of men detect me through my dress,  
 Nor pierce beneath my gentleness 11570

Where dwells religion?  
 Of speech, they by my works may see  
 My heart, unless they blinded be.  
 For those who do not as they say  
 Deceive you howsoever they  
 Array them, or whatever state  
 Of life they keep, or small or great,  
 Cleric or layman, squire or dame,  
 Lady or quean, 'tis aye the same.

*The Author.*

When thus far had Fair-Seeming spoken  
 His pattering by the God was broken, 11580  
 Who cried aloud: (to stay his speech,  
 Which seemed but vice and fraud to teach)

*The God of Love.*

Who art thou, shameless imp of hell?  
 How dar'st thou of such miscreants tell?  
 Deem'st thou religion we may find  
 Where vows no monks nor friars bind?

*False-Seeming.*

Most surely, sire! it needeth not  
 A man with sin his life should blot,  
 And lose his soul in hell-fire's flare  
 Because he mundane clothes doth wear; 11590  
 That were a sentence hard indeed.  
 Well may, beneath gay-tinted weed,  
 Holy religion thrive. We've seen  
 A troop of holy saints, I ween,

Women and men alike, who ne'er  
 Aught else but worldly garments ware,  
 Yet none the less were canonized ;  
 Nay, 'twere the other way devised,  
 For many a saint to whom we pray,  
 Within the church or by the way, 11600  
 Fair virgins chaste, or matrons mild,  
 Mothers of many an angel child,  
 Through life in worldly clothes did hide  
 Their bodies and within them died,  
 Yet saints were they, and aye shall be.  
 Was not that blessed company  
 Of virgins who now tapers hold  
 Before the throne of God (all told  
 Eleven thousand) habited  
 In lay folks' robes? yet honoured 11610  
 Are they in every church no less  
 Because they lacked of convent dress.  
 In holy heart wakes holy thought,  
 Through vesture 'tis nor marred nor  
     wrought,  
 And worthy thought gives birth to deed  
 Of worth, for 'tis thereof the seed.

Thus of religion have I given  
 The pith, as 'tis ordained by heaven.

If in the fleece of Bellin ram  
 Sir Isegrym had made a sham 11620  
 To clothe him, and had gone to feed  
 Among the sheep in that false weed,  
 Suppose you he would therefore keep  
 From greedy ravin of the sheep?

Saints  
 among  
 lay folk

The Church in peril I trow not, but beneath the skin  
 He wore he'd suck their life-blood in  
 By no means with less appetite  
 Or less enjoyment and delight  
 That he'd deceived them, and that they  
 Still followed where he chose to stray. 11630  
 Believe me, wolves no meagre few  
 There are 'mong these apostles new :  
 Ah! holy Church, thou wilt be sacked  
 If thus thy city be attacked  
 By soldiers of thine own domain.  
 Alas! thy power is on the wane,  
 For those but seek to spoil thee who  
 Thou hast thy safety trusted to.  
 Who is there that will guarantee  
 Thee 'gainst them? Thou wilt taken be, 11640  
 Although no stroke of trepetet  
 Or mangonel thou feel'st, nor yet  
 Set'st banner to the wind. If thou  
 No help afford, O then, I trow,  
 Nought else there is but let them be.  
 Though now they subject stand to thee,  
 Ere long must thou before them bend  
 As tributary, and descend  
 To make thy peace in such a way  
 As they demand, who straight will lay 11650  
 Great burdens on thee, if forsooth  
 The traitors, all devoid of ruth,  
 Master thee not. With craft will they  
 Lull thee to sleep, and while by day  
 They haste to man thy walls, by night  
 Deep mines their treacherous hands will  
 dight.

Bethink thee otherwhere to root  
The grafts to which thou look'st for  
fruit.

Fraud all-  
powerful

Delay thou not, but act amain—  
I've said—my mouth will I refrain 11660  
From further speech thereon, lest some  
My words with weariness o'ercome.

My promise readily I give  
From henceforth with your friends to live  
In peaceful wise, if they agree  
Thereto, or else I warrant me  
They'll meet grim death.

They must receive  
My leman too would they achieve  
Their end. I am with justice named  
A traitor, and have been proclaimed 11670  
By Love as common thief. Forsworn  
Am I, but till mine end is worn  
No man perceives it. Oft my blow  
Is dealt, yet nought thereof men know;  
And should one be of it aware,  
Unless he too seeks death, will spare  
Resentment. Treachery is so strong,  
That all the world condones its wrong.  
Proteus himself, who changed his shape  
Whene'er he pleased, for guile or jape, 11680  
Was less adept at fraud than I.  
So great is my dexterity,  
That though within some town I've been  
A thousand times, but little ween  
The folk who meet me unaware  
That oft before I've entered there.

## LXIII

Learn how False-Seeming, traitor vile,  
 Men's hearts doth readily beguile,  
 When grey and black he clothes him in,  
 With saintly visage pale and thin. 11690

False-  
 Seem-  
 ing's dis-  
 guises

**D**ISGUISES well I know to don,  
 Now this one off, now that one on,  
 Now knight am I, and now a monk,  
 A prelate, then to canon shrunk  
 Or simple clerk, or priest at mass,  
 And next as master do I pass,  
 Disciple, captain, forester,  
 In short, whatever I prefer;  
 Sometimes a prince, sometimes a page,  
 And every language I engage 11700  
 To patter; sometimes old and grey,  
 At others sprightly, young and gay,  
 And now *Robert* and now *Robin*,  
 Now friar, now a jacobin.

I show me, company to keep  
 With her from whom I joyance reap,  
 (She hight *Constrained-Abstinence*)  
 'Neath many a guilement and pretence,  
 Her fickle fancies to fulfil,  
 And work her every wish and will. 11710  
 Sometimes a woman's robe I wear,  
 As matron staid or damsel fair,  
 And oft assume religious dress,  
 As anchorite or prioress,

An abbes who with life hath done,  
 Or novice who would fain be nun.  
 As through the world I walk about,  
 I turn each credence inside out ;  
 And whatsoe'er may be their law,  
 I take the grain and leave the straw ;  
 For I but live to cozen folk,  
 And laugh at all beneath my cloak.  
 What more to tell ? In suchlike way  
 As serves me best I play my play.  
 My mode I change unendingly ;  
 And ne'er my words and deeds agree,  
 But through my privileges snare  
 Full many a man all unaware.  
 Good shrift I give when I confess  
 (Laughing at prelates' helplessness) 11730  
 All sinners whom I hap to meet ;  
 No prelate dare my work defeat,  
 Saving our lord the Pope alone,  
 From whom this privilege was won  
 For our most holy brotherhood.  
 Whatever prelate hath withstood  
 Or dared to speak against my men,  
 I soon have closed his mouth again.  
 But out, alas ! the people now  
 Too well my ways and manners trow, 11740  
 And nought am I received so well,  
 Since ugly tales of me men tell.  
 But what care I ? I'm none the worse,  
 With silver have I stored my purse  
 And goods have heaped ; so well I've  
 striven,  
 That foolish folk have freely given

Friars  
 free of  
 bishops

Privileged confessors Abundance, and I lead my life  
 In ease, all undisturbed by strife,  
 Thanks to the easy prelates who  
 Fear to say aught whate'er I do. 11750  
 Not one of them dares make essay  
 Against me, or he'd roundly pay.  
 And thus I live as pleaseth me  
 By fraud, deceit, and trickery.

Though all should once a year at least  
 Confession make before a priest,  
 As Scripture saith, that they may have  
 A houseling good their souls to save,  
 (For this our lord the Pope decrees)  
 We shelve the statute as we please. 11760  
 To penitents we give advice,  
 But claim exemptions which suffice,  
 For many a privilege have we,  
 Which cause our burdens light to be.  
 On this point we nought silent are,  
 But vaunt our dispensations far  
 Beyond the Pope's decree; so may  
 Unto his priest each sinner say:

Father, I lately have confessed  
 To such an one, and he my breast 11770  
 Hath clean absolved from every sin  
 That might the wrath of heaven win,  
 My conscience suffers no such pain  
 As pricks me to confess again.  
 Herein, I pray you, make me quit,  
 Nor further hold discourse of it,



No matter what you say thereof, Independence of  
 And you may spare to scold and scoff; friars  
 For though a thousand oaths you swore,  
 Prelate or curate now no more 11780  
 I fear; my will would you constrain,  
 There's one to whom I can complain  
 Forthwith, you cannot make me twin  
 Confession, for new shrift of sin,  
 The first doth well enough for me,  
 A second would but wasted be.  
 For one whose powers are full and  
     wide  
 Hath all my bonds of sin untied:  
 And so I warn you once again,  
 That if you would my will constrain, 11790  
 I know of one will right my cause,  
 Holding me free of kings and laws  
 And provosts, for among them all,  
 Though royal or imperial,  
 Not one dare 'gainst me judgment give,  
 Exempted from their rule I live.  
 To my new father should I go,  
 (No cubling he who hight Louveteau,  
 But friar Wolf, who doth devour  
 Whate'er he will, nor can his power 11800  
 By aught be stayed or hindered, but  
 If I complain, your mouth he'll shut.  
 If he should catch you in his net,  
 Thereout not lightly will you get  
 Without disgrace and shame, unless  
 He shows unwonted gentleness.  
 He's not so foolish, weak or dull,  
 But he can get from Rome a bull

Power of If so he will, and forthwith cite  
 friars You 'fore the court in dread despite, 11810  
 And ruin you in two short days.  
 And he possesseth briefs, he says,  
 Much stricter and more strong by far  
 Than any common parchments are,  
 Which have no power at all to touch  
 More than eight persons, while his, much  
 More wide and full in their intent,  
 May pass when law itself is spent:  
 And for your rights nought careth he,  
 From law he hath immunity. 11820  
 Thus all his power he'll put in force,  
 Nor deign to stay or change his course  
 For prayers or tears, nor any kind  
 Of gift, his coffers well are lined.  
 For seneschal, Sir Schemer he  
 Hath got, who gathers wondrously,  
 And Sir Solicitor, his brother,  
 These two will outvie many another  
 In piling wealth, and 'twixt the pair  
 Their hoard might buy St. Peter's chair. 11830  
 Now help me God and good St. James,  
 If you deny my lawful claims  
 (When spring toward Easter-tide hath trod)  
 To have the holy body of God,  
 I shall not grieve thereat, but go  
 To that good man who well I know  
 Will give it me, and vainly spent  
 On me were threats of punishment.

Thuswise may every carl confess  
 Whereso it suits his wilfulness; 11840

And if the priest refuse his rights,  
 My hand his stubbornness requites,  
 And soon he finds him in the lurch,  
 With loss of honour, goods, and church.  
 Whither do such confessions tend?  
 And who shall know the bitter end?  
 In suchlike case no priest can e'er  
 Know aught of his parishioner,  
 Whose soul should be his constant cure.  
 At nought such practice sets the pure 11850  
 And holy Scripture, which doth teach  
 Pastors to know the voice of each  
 Sheep of their flock. But willingly  
 I leave both priests and prelates free  
 Poor men and women to confess,  
 Who for most part are penniless;  
 But little guerdon thence were got.

Friars  
 love  
 wealth

*The God of Love.*

Why so?

*False-Seeming.*

Because they have it not;  
 Poor needy, caitiff creatures they.  
 The good fat sheep I bear away, 11860  
 And to the pastors leave the poor  
 Lean hungry ones, who growl therefor.  
 And if the prelates dare to scold,  
 Who in their hearts dire anger hold,  
 For loss of many a good fat beast  
 Whereon they hoped long time to feast,  
 I'll give them such a mortal bruise  
 That cross and mitre both they'll lose.

Hypoc- Full many I make peccavi cry,  
 risy ram- Such mighty privilege have I. 11870  
 pant

*The Author.*

False-Seeming here some rest would take,  
 But Love desires him not to break  
 His tale, the which he feigns to heed  
 With pleasure, and asks further rede.

*The God of Love.*

I pray thee that thou tell to me,  
 All shame aside, explicitly,  
 The varied games that thou hast played,  
 What tricks hast done, what mischief made.  
 Thy robe declares an anchorite.

*False-Seeming.*

That's true, but I'm a hypocrite. 11880

*The God of Love.*

Thou preachest holy abstinence.

*False-Seeming.*

Past doubt; but though I make pretence,  
 Good dishes love I, and bright wine,  
 As well as any grave divine.

*Love.*

Thou preachest poverty also.

*False-Seeming.*

Yes, but my bags with coin o'erflow ;  
 And though I poverty pretend,  
 I make of no poor man a friend.  
 A hundred thousand times should I  
 Prefer our good king's company. 11890  
 Yea, by our Lady ! though it happed  
 The poor man was with virtue capped  
 In fairest wise, for when I see  
 These beggars shiver wretchedly  
 On dunghills, hungry, cold, and bare,  
 What then ?—'tis none of my affair.  
 Or if unto the Hotel-Dieu  
 They're carried, what ! should I pursue  
 Them thither ? ne'er with one poor groat  
 They've fed my parched and hungry throat. 11900  
 What can be got from one who licks  
 His knife, and sounds eats, dry as sticks ?  
 That man an idiot may be said  
 Who fat seeks in a black dog's bed.

—Wealth  
 before  
 poverty

To visit I should much prefer  
 Some sick but wealthy usurer :  
 With patience would I comfort him,  
 In hope some deniers to benimme,  
 And when pale death steals o'er his face,  
 Transport him to the burial-place. 11910  
 Should some reproach me that I take  
 Heed to rich men and poor forsake,  
 How think you that I make reply ?  
 I let a tear bedim mine eye,  
 And say : Alas ! I greatly fear  
 From sin the rich are far less clear

The Than are the poor, and so much more  
 praise of Their souls have need of watching o'er.  
 suffi- Yet true it is dire poverty  
 ciency Draws men to sin as much, pardee, 11920  
 As too great wealth; they both man's  
 soul  
 Distain, and hinder from its goal.  
 For Poverty and Riches are  
 The two extremes, and better far  
 Is plain sufficiency; between  
 The two is most of virtue seen.  
 And hath not wise King Solomon  
 This matter well discoursed upon  
 Within his book of Proverbs? it  
 We find in chapter thirty writ: 11930  
 God in thy mercy give to me  
 Nor riches nor yet poverty!  
 For whensoever a man doth wrap  
 His soul in wealth, 'twill surely sap  
 His virtue, till at last the debt  
 He owes his Maker he'll forget.  
 And who with Poverty doth fight,  
 How shall he keep his soul aright?  
 Alas! perforce he comes to be  
 Befouled with theft and perjury, 11940  
 Or God doth lie, for he hath said,  
 By Solomon, they both are wed  
 To Poverty. And dare I swear,  
 Free of reproach, that no man e'er  
 Hath found in any sacred book  
 (At least 'twere vain in ours to look)  
 That Christ and his apostles dear  
 The while on earth they wandered here,

Went begging bread from door to door ;  
 Nor they alone this thing forbore,  
 But straight forbade it, (thus 'twas taught  
 By those of Paris, doctors fraught  
 With learning in divinity)  
 Though well might they excused be  
 Of begging, even though they should  
 Ask alms for daily livelihood,  
 Seeing that they true shepherds were  
 To many a soul beneath their care.  
 And when their Lord was crucified,  
 Again industriously they tried  
 To win their needs by labour true  
 Of each man's hands ; and after due  
 And needful sustenance they'd ta'en,  
 Unto the poor they gave amain  
 Of their abundance. Mansions they  
 Reared not, but dwelt in cots of clay.

All men  
 should  
 work

It well behoves each able man  
 That he with work quotidian  
 By might of arm should gain his bread  
 (Unless he be by wealth bestead,)  
 Though of religion he be fain,  
 For God accounts no good work vain.  
 This rule it is which binds men all,  
 Save in some cases I recall,  
 The which will I relate when'er  
 Time serves, and you have will to hear.  
 Yet more, a man should sell his good,  
 And labour for a livelihood  
 If he, forsooth, would perfect be ;  
 This hath the Scripture taught to me.

Mendi-  
cancy un-  
lawful

But one who idly haunts the board  
Of other men will God reward.  
Censured should be such men as dare  
Labour forego on plea of prayer.  
Justly a man may put aside  
God's worship, striving to provide  
By honest work for daily need,  
For of a truth all men must feed  
And clothe themselves, and while they keep  
Vigil of labour, prayer may sleep.  
And thus 'tis lawful that we shirk  
The hours of prayer, the while we work,  
And this with Scripture doth agree,  
Which teacheth nought but verity.

And likewise great Justinian did  
Within his ancient code forbid  
That one of able body should  
Seek alms by way of livelihood,  
Since his strong arm his bread should gain.  
'Twere well stout rogues to treat amain  
With flogging, or to swing them high,  
Rather than aid their knavery.  
That man neglects his duty who  
Seeketh to gain subsistence through  
Men's alms, unless he can allege  
Some special grant or privilege;  
But doubt I much if legally  
A man thus privileged could be,  
Unless some cozenage he bring  
To help him, and deceive the king  
All unawares. Yet no design  
Have I against the right divine



Of kings, nor dare to rashly say  
 That they may not extend their sway  
 Whereso they will; but in the law  
 Methinks 'twould be a grievous flaw  
 Should it permit that doles and alms,  
 Which should but reach the trembling  
     palms  
 Of those who cannot earn their bread  
 Through sickness, age, or drearihead, 12020  
 Were snatched away from them by might  
 And power of those who trample right;  
 Surely for them were hell made hot,  
 If Adam's Maker lieth not.  
 But God's commandment, mind ye well,  
 It is a righteous man should sell  
 His goods, and therewith help the poor,  
 But this command oped not the door  
 To mendicancy, that was not  
 His meaning, as right well we wot, 12030  
 But that each man his hand should trim  
 To work while meekly following him.  
 To his disciples gave Saint Paul  
 Injunction strict that one and all  
 Should labour with their hands, nor be  
 Disgraced by base mendicity,  
 Saying: To labour set ye then,  
 Nor ask an alms of other men;  
 And greatly feared he lest some sold  
 The gospel through the lust of gold. 12040  
 And if a man to give doth choose  
 Because he dareth not refuse  
 Another's asking, pricked with shame,  
 Or fearing lest he get the name

Saint  
 Paul's in-  
 junction

Saint Paul  
laboured

Of niggard, or forsooth, doth give,  
Only that he in peace may live ;  
Although his worldly goods he lose,  
No profit from such alms ensues.  
When worthy men to hear St. Paul  
Flocked round, they offered him their all 12050  
For love of God ; but he straightway  
Refused, nor deigned his hands to stay  
From useful work, whereby he gained  
So much as all his need sustained.

*Love.*

But say then, in what way can live  
A strong man who desires to give  
Himself to God when he hath sold  
His goods, as in the gospel told,  
And made all over to the poor,  
Yet, bound to prayer, would work no more : 12000  
May he do so ?

*False-Seeming.*

Yea.

*Love.*

Tell me how.

*False-Seeming.*

This doth Saint Austin clearly show.  
If men to God their lives have wed  
Within an abbey garnishèd  
With lands, where white and black monks are,  
Or worthy canons regular,

Knights of the Temple or St. John,  
 (Further examples need I none)  
 Serving their Lord in praise and prayer,  
 No mendicancy finds he there. 12070  
 Some monks do daily labour, but  
 Are nowise from God's service shut  
 Therefor.

What  
 men may  
 beg<sup>83</sup>

The mendicants' estate  
 Gave rise to long and sharp debate  
 In days that I remember well.  
 If so it please you, will I tell  
 How that a man may beg at need  
 When he no otherwise can feed  
 Or pasture him, this, bit by bit,  
 I'll show, and none can gainsay it, 12080  
 Unless some sophist strove to tangle  
 The truth with false and tiresome jangle.  
 By none the case were better cleared  
 Than me, who all the field have eared.

## LXIII

False-Seeming doth the case relate  
 Of mendicants and their estate.

I'LL next set forth each special case  
 Of all the mendicantine race:  
 And first of those poor cattle who  
 Too dull of wit are born to do 12090  
 Aught for a living, they may go  
 And beg where'er they will, I trow,  
 Until some useful craft they learn  
 Whereby they meat and drink may earn

Lawful  
mendi-  
cancy

Without reproach of loselry,  
 How mean soe'er that craft may be.  
 Then some through sickness or old age,  
 Or tender years, may not engage  
 In labour, they no touch of shame  
 Need feel if alms or doles they claim. 12100  
 And then again some men we see,  
 Who in their time too jollily  
 Have lived, and now beside the way  
 Must seek poor pittance day by day;  
 Such men are suffered graciously  
 To beg lest they of hunger die.  
 Or if a man should go about  
 To search some craft or science out,  
 But all his industry and skill  
 The work eludes, do what he will, 12110  
 And no man doth employment give  
 Whereby he earns the means to live,  
 Then by mendicity may he  
 Contend with dire necessity.  
 Or some poor peasant carle, who drives  
 The plough, and bowed by labour strives,  
 His brow bedewed with sweat, to gain  
 Sufficiency, but all in vain,  
 Should not be blamed although he went  
 Begging around to supplement 12120  
 His scanty wage.  
 Or those who spend  
 Their lives and fortunes to defend  
 The faith by force of arms, in heat  
 Or cold, or in the justice seat,  
 And then in old age find them poor,  
 'Tis well they be allowed to cure

Their misery dire by alms, till they  
 By handicraft their needs may stay.  
 But doing so they must not shirk  
 Hard labour, and seek ghostly work ; 12130  
 But I, by this, no figure mean,  
 But true hand work.

William  
 St.  
 Amour

And thus I ween  
 In these examples that I give,  
 With reason, men may beg to live,  
 But in rare other case, I wot,  
 If good Saint-Amour lieth not,  
 Who of the matter held dispute  
 With men, deep read, of wit acute,  
 At Paris, most profound divines ;  
 God starve me of good meats and wines 12140  
 Unless his book in accord be  
 With Paris University ;  
 Yea, and with all the world beside,  
 Which hailed his preaching far and wide,  
 And ne'er shall any who refuse  
 His doctrine find with God excuse.  
 Let those who scoff at him scoff still,  
 And grumblers grumble as they will,  
 For my part, I shall ever hold  
 His name in honour, and with bold 12150  
 Stout words support him, though thereby  
 I lose my life, or cruelly  
 Be cast in gaol like holy Paul,  
 Or else be banished far from all  
 My friends like William Saint-Amour,  
 Who was, not many years before  
 I write, by Dame Hypocrisy,  
 My dam, exiled, all envious she.

Labour  
hateful to  
some

My mother drove him forth, forsooth,  
Most foully, for that he the truth 12160  
Upheld, and showed, all bald and bare,  
Hypocrisy, with subtle care  
Within his latest book, and said,  
'Twere well that I no longer sped  
My life by begging, but should set  
My hands to labour, would I get  
My livelihood.

He surely had  
Deemed me for either drunk or mad,  
For labour pleases me no whit,  
Nor have I any need for it. 12170  
I find a more congenial way  
Of life, to patter beads and pray,  
And all my ribaldry to hide  
Beneath my mother's mantle wide.

*The God of Love.*

Thou devil! dar'st thou then display  
Thy vileness thus in light of day?

*False-Seeming.*

What mean you?

*Love.*

Scoundrel, hast thou got  
No fear of God?

*False-Seeming.*

Most surely not.  
No man to greatness can attain  
In these days if he count not vain 12180

God's holy fear. Mis-creants thrive  
 If men eschew  
 All evil and uprightly do,  
 Nought will they win of worldly good,  
 But must eftsoons for livelihood  
 Beg alms of others and drink deep  
 Of sorrow their poor lives to keep :  
 Such lot do I in horror hold.  
 But see what goodly heaps of gold,  
 Have usurers in their treasures  
 And other folk akin to these ; 12190  
 Base-coining knaves, and limitours,  
 Provosts, catchpoles, and gold-chained mayors,  
 Who fat on fraud and rapine grow,  
 While the poor people bend alow  
 Before them. They, like wolves, devour  
 And rob all folk beneath their power ;  
 For each and all of these in turn  
 Despoil the poor of that they earn,  
 And most ingeniously contrive  
 To pluck their victims while alive. 12200  
 The stronger rob the weaker ever,  
 And, 'neath my simple cloak, so clever  
 Am I, that cozeners by the dozen  
 Who cozen others do I cozen  
 Lightly, and robbers and robbed alike  
 I rob, yet none know when I strike.  
 By my chicanery I rake  
 Together treasure none can take  
 From out my hands, grand palaces,  
 I build that I my fantasies 12210  
 May please, and gather friends around  
 My tables, where rich meats abound.

Privi-  
leges of  
friars

With jollity my heart grows warm  
When gold and silver thickly swarm  
Within my coffers, which ne'er fail;  
Count ye my schemes of no avail?  
To heap is ever my intent,  
And much my gain exceeds my rent.  
And though I beaten were or slain,  
Fear not I'd soon look in again. 12220

*Love.*

You seem a saintly one!

*False-Seeming.*

Quite true,  
For dowered am I with orders due:  
Curate to all the world am I,  
And all men hail me joyfully,  
For all their souls have I in cure,  
And none without my aid endure.  
Full oft I preach and counsel give,  
Yet by no handicraft I live;  
But from the Pope a bull I've got,  
For he, good man, suspects me not. 12230  
With restless diligence I press,  
And seek out chances to confess  
An emperor, baron, count, or king,  
But nought I love the houseling  
Of needy folk; not my affair  
Are they but on occasion rare.  
Nought care I for their mean distresses:  
But emperors and great princesses,



The wives of noble palatines,  
 Rich abbesses and sleek beguines, 12240  
 Fat bailies' spouses, knight-wed dames,  
 Spruce burgesses, whom nothing shames,  
 And nuns and highborn damsels fair,  
 Richly attired or mother-bare,  
 To me it matters not one pin,  
 Gladly I shrive their souls of sin.

Profitable  
 penitents

Then diligently I inquire  
 Of lord and lady, maid and squire,  
 What goods they have, what lives they  
 lead,

And, shriving them, I take good heed 12250

To point out that their parish priest  
 Is dull and doltish as a beast  
 Compared with me and my confreres,  
 (A jovial crew that nothing scares),  
 To whom the secrets I reveal  
 Of all these geese, nor aught conceal,  
 And they likewise disclose to me  
 Whate'er they've learned, right merrily.  
 And that you may these rascals know,  
 Who go about deceiving so 12260

The people, I may duly quote  
 The gospel holy Matthew wrote.  
 In chapter twenty-three we read:  
 In Moses' chair now sit indeed  
 (The chair is by the glossing seen  
 The Ancient Testament to mean).  
 Blind scribes and stiff-necked Pharisees  
 (Cursed hypocrites our Lord called these)  
 Who say: Do that we preach to you,  
 But practise not the things we do. 12270

Friars Right ready are the knaves with speech,  
 like to But slow to follow that they teach ;  
 Pharisees Burdens on poor men's backs will they  
 With cheery heart and lightsome lay,  
 But scorn to help them e'en so much  
 As might they with a finger's touch.

*Love.*

Why not ?

*False-Seeming.*

Will lacks, and so they don't.  
 They know that wretched folk are wont,  
 O'erburdened, oft to sink beneath  
 The load, and trouble shun like death ; 12280  
 And if some worthy work they do,  
 Be sure 'tis well within the view  
 Of others. Their phylacteries  
 And hems they broaden to men's eyes,  
 And at the tables highest seats  
 They choose, anigh the choicest meats,  
 While in the synagogues with pride  
 They thrust poor humble men aside,  
 And dearly love in open street  
 Salutes to win from all they meet, 12290  
 Nor are they anywise ashamed  
 To hear themselves as 'Master' named.  
 Yet these things Scripture hath forbid,  
 And suchlike ways and customs chid.

Behold another potent plan  
 We use against all those who ban

Our order, and contemn our laws :  
 Against them make we common cause ;  
 He whom one hates, with hate profound  
 We all detest, together bound 12300  
 By equal ties, and if we see  
 The way by which successfully  
 Our foe hopes land or rent to gain,  
 And honourable state maintain,  
 We strive to know the means and mode  
 By which he travelleth the road  
 Thereto, and straightway set about  
 Scandals, which cause his friends to doubt  
 His honour and good faith, and thus  
 The steps whereby he climbs, by us 12310  
 Are cut away, and he adrift  
 Is cast, as best he may to shift,  
 Alone and destitute of friends,  
 And thus do we attain our ends,  
 Yet nought our foe perceives by whom  
 It is that on him falls his doom.  
 For if he knew to whom he owed  
 His downfall, surely would it goad  
 Him on to his revenge and he  
 Would turn on us ferociously. 12320

Friars  
 hang to-  
 gether

If one of us have done some good  
 We amplify its magnitude,  
 Although, pardee, 'tis oft but feigned ;  
 Or if that one of us hath deigned  
 To vaunt some good he ne'er hath done  
 To this or that, as we were one  
 With him we cry aloud that we  
 Helped such good work right royally,

Friars are In hope the love and confidence  
 meddle- To gain of wealthy men. Pretence 12330  
 some We make and thereby parchments get  
 Wherein our virtues forth are set  
 In suchwise that the world will bless  
 And praise our names for holiness.  
 The direst poverty we feign,  
 But howsoever we complain,  
 We yet are those who, having nought,  
 Have more, forsooth, than poor men  
 ought.

Then am I great at agencies,  
 Old feuds arrange, and mariages, 12340  
 Executorships I take on me,  
 And further deeds of warrantry,  
 Inquests as pursuivant I make,  
 Whereat some honest men might quake.  
 'Tis pleasure, wherewith nought compares  
 To mix in other men's affairs.  
 And lastly should you be concerned  
 In things to which my hand I've turned,  
 Speak forth—no sooner said than done,  
 With your commands my will shall run. 12350  
 But who my chastisement should try,  
 Would find he'd done but foolishly ;  
 For little I love the man who'd show  
 To me the path I'm bound to go,  
 And though to others I may give  
 Correction, none will I receive.

For forests have I little taste,  
 Or hermit's huts, or deserts waste,

I leave Saint John, the Baptist hight,  
 His couches green, and sandhills white, <sup>12360</sup>  
 His dwelling was too far away,  
 In towns and burgs I liefer stay,  
 And build fair palaces and halls  
 And safely dwell behind strong walls.  
 I oft declare that I renounce  
 The world, yet would not lose an ounce  
 Thereof; good Lord! the world to me  
 Is, as to fish, the brimming sea.

Servant  
 of Anti-  
 christ

Servant of Antichrist am I,  
 Of whom saith Scripture truthfully, <sup>12370</sup>  
 That, while of holiness he wears  
 The cloak, within his heart he bears  
 Iniquity. Like lambkins we  
 Appear outside, but inwardly  
 Are ravening wolves; we overrun  
 The earth, and under every sun  
 Bring strife, and fain would hold command  
 O'er lives of men in every land.  
 And if within a city wall  
 I find some wretch unnatural <sup>12380</sup>  
 (And 'tis reported that Milan  
 At one time lay beneath this ban),  
 Or one who as a usurer sits,  
 And sells long terms and post obits,  
 Fulfilled of all rapacity;  
 Or steeped in luxury one be,  
 Or prelate living jovial life,  
 Or priest who leman hath as wife;  
 Provost or officer in chief,  
 Who is but a disloyal thief, <sup>12390</sup>

What Or some vile wretch who keeps a stew,  
 friars love Or procuress, to hell-fire due,  
 Or ribald wretch, who, worn and spent  
 With vice, but waits due chastisement :  
 Though all the saints he should invoke,  
 He nowise can forefend my stroke ;  
 Except by some delicious dish,  
 Eel, salmon, pike, or other fish,  
 Tarts, custards, delicate cream cheese  
 (Which pleasantly our gullets grease),<sup>12400</sup>  
 Sweet apple, and soft melting pear,  
 Fat goose and sucking-pig's rich fare ;  
 Or other delicacies tasty  
 As highly savoured roebuck pasty,  
 Or capon fat, sweet dainty bit,  
 To please me, round his neck I'll fit  
 A cord and drag him to the stake  
 E'en though his howls the city shake,  
 Or in deep cell will have him cast  
 To languish till his life be past.<sup>12410</sup>  
 Unless he deigns to feed us well,  
 We'll make his life a very hell,  
 For if one earn our hate, his crimes  
 He overpays a hundred times.

But if he hath the wit on high  
 To build a castle speedily,  
 (No matter of what sort of stone,  
 Or if with square and compass done,  
 Or whether it be of turf or wood,  
 So that the walls are stout and good),<sup>12420</sup>  
 And plentifully garnish it  
 With wares that jolly life besit,

And on the battlement contrive  
 An engine formed to cast and drive  
 As well behind, as eke before,  
 Such precious stones from out his store  
 As thou heard at full related,  
 And pleasantly enumerated,  
 Good wines in barrels, casks and tuns,  
 And heavy bags, not scanty ones, 12430  
 Stuffed well with bezants, crowns, and marks,  
 Then nought he need to heed our barks  
 Or fear our bites. But doth he not  
 Possess such stores 'twere well I wot  
 Their worth he gave us, nor with lies,  
 Excuses vain, or fallacies,  
 Attempt our cozening, or we'll bring  
 Against him such a grievous string  
 Of crimes that if not burned alive,  
 He will but wretchedly survive, 12440  
 Beneath a penance of a kind  
 That heavier tax than doles he'll find.

Doles and  
 bribery

It is not by external show  
 Of weed you may these traitors know,  
 But whoso from their toils would be  
 Preserved, must mark their jugglery;  
 For Christ's most holy faith were marred  
 But for the careful watch and ward  
 Of Paris University,  
 E'en as I now relate to ye. 12450  
 Twelve hundred years and fifty-five  
 Had fled since Christ stood forth alive  
 On earth for men, when first was seen  
 (None will naysay my words, I ween)

The new    The prime exemplar of a book  
 gospel      So vile that by the devil's crook  
               It well were written, and about  
               'Twas set for clerks to copy out  
               And circulate when duly dight;  
               The everlasting Gospel hight 12460  
               This trash and friars avouched its merit,  
               As writ by God's most Holy Spirit.  
               Right worthy was it to be burned,  
               But many a crown the scholars earned  
               Before the Church of Notre Dame,  
               For men and women oiled the palm,  
               Of those who set themselves to write  
               Out fair, that vile misleading light.  
               Therein one finds all clearly done  
               This blasphemous comparison : 12470  
               " E'en as before the sun doth fail  
               The moon, and show but faint and pale,  
               And as she nowise can compete  
               With him in brilliancy or heat,  
               And as a kernel to its shell  
               (Nay do not smile at what I tell,  
               For this have I seen writ, I swear)  
               So doth this wondrous book compare  
               With Christ's Four Gospels, and surpass  
               Their value utterly."—Alas! 12480  
               I wish me dead, if even than these  
               You find not bolder similes.

The University till then  
 Had been asleep, but roused it when  
 This blasphemy assailed its ears,  
 Wakened at once by wrath and fears.



Straightway, its arms and armour dight,  
 It sallied forth with will to fight  
 This hydra, and deliver o'er  
 The book to judgment; but before  
 It could with the dread monster close,  
 The knaves, from out whose brain it rose,  
 Secured and hid it suddenly,  
 For well they knew that ne'er could be  
 Sustained, the lies and follies writ  
 Therein. What since became of it  
 None know, for those of whom 'twas born,  
 Have hid it until time be worn,  
 Hoping perchance, some future day,  
 Its blasphemies to gloze away. 12500

Anti-  
 christ  
 looked  
 for

And now we Antichrist abide,  
 With will to range us on his side  
 Whene'er he comes, who do not so  
 Small chance of life will have I trow.  
 For soon shall we an army raise  
 Against them, by our devious ways,  
 And none who in their folly strive  
 To curb us shall be left alive,  
 Whether they by the sword are slain,  
 Or meet their death through worsen pain. 12510  
 And whither deem ye then must lead  
 These words which in this book we read?  
 "The while that Peter towers on high  
 It needs that John alow must lie."  
 But this perceive ye is the husk,  
 Within, the sense lies, all a-dusk,  
 And thence will I the marrow draw  
 To show these men's unholy law.

Peter and John  
 Peter, our holy Father is,  
 The Pope, and secular clerks, ywis, 12520  
 Defenders of the law of Christ.  
 And John, the Friars, and those enticed  
 Within their toils, who boldly say,  
 The 'Eternal Gospel' is the way  
 By which men may ascend to heaven,  
 And by the Holy Ghost 'tis given.  
 The power of John these recreants teach  
 To be the gospel that they preach  
 To call back sinners gone astray  
 From out the path of God's highway. 12530  
 And many a wicked devilry  
 Straightly commanded may one see  
 Within this book of froth and foam,  
 Against the holy law of Rome ;  
 For Antichrist doth dwell within  
 The covers of this book of sin.  
 Men are exhorted there to slay  
 All those who Peter's rule obey ;  
 But howsoever they assail  
 His law, hell gates shall not prevail 12540  
 Against it, but it still shall stand,  
 A beacon unto every land,  
 And those who hold it fast shall be  
 God's people everlastingly ;  
 While their law, miscalled John's, shall  
 fall  
 Deserted and accurst of all.  
 But of this matter will I stay  
 My words—too much there is to say.  
 But if that book had taken root,  
 Most marvellously well 'twould suit 12550

My practice, for in any case  
 With hosts of people find I grace.

The  
 father  
 of lies

My father, who as emperor  
 Rules all the world, is barrator  
 And prince of lies ; the empress is  
 My mother ; and through them, ywis,  
 Whate'er the Holy Ghost may do,  
 Our lineage all the earth doth strew.  
 And that is only as should be,  
 For ever at our will do we 12560  
 So throughly cozen men that none  
 Perceive the way our tricks are done,  
 Or, e'en perceiving, dare not speak,  
 Lest we on them our vengeance wreak.  
 But those men God comes not anear  
 Who hold my brethren in more fear  
 Than Him ; the Faith's weak champions they  
 Who dare not such vile crimes naysay,  
 But, coward-like, the risks refuse,  
 When they foul treason might accuse. 12570  
 God will not list their cry for grace,  
 But from them turn one day His face,  
 And lay on them sharp chastisement.  
 But nothing fear we to be shent,  
 Since we of men are so esteemed,  
 And of such worth and honour deemed,  
 That howso'er censorious  
 We be, no man dare censure us.  
 To whom but us should people pay  
 Honour, who never cease to pray 12580  
 In sight of men conspicuously,  
 Whate'er our secret practice be ?

Beguins  
described

But is this greater foolishness,  
Esteem you, than that men should bless  
High chivalry, and call those great  
Who don fair weed and keep grand  
state?  
But if it prove that well agreed  
Is noble life with lordly weed,  
Should it not greatly be deplored  
That bodies fair, with virtue stored, 12590  
Belong not to the hypocrites?  
A curse such fools right well befits!  
Beloved of us, as light of bats!  
But Beguins crowned with flapping hats,  
O'er longdrawn bloodless faces blank,  
And gowns unwashed to wrap their lank  
Lean figures (to which vermin are  
No strangers, for in truth from far  
They're odorous), while foul crumpled hose  
Surmount their ugly sandalled shoes, 12600  
Which much resemble traps for quails:  
Through such as these no wise prince fails  
To govern, whether in war or peace,  
Himself and land, and good increase  
Of honour thence shall surely grow  
To him and his. Right well I know  
That neath such show they hide foul sin,  
But none the less men's reverence win.  
Therefore with them I cast my lot  
To lie, trick, swindle and what not. 12610  
Yet were it neither just nor wise  
A wretched garment to despise,  
Unless it be a cloak for pride.  
Nor should our love be turned aside

From one whose dress is spoiled by flaws.  
 But God esteemeth not two straws  
 The word of one who saith that he  
 Hath left the world, yet luxury  
 Doth wallow in. The hypocrite  
 Who cries that he the world hath quit, 12620  
 And yet indulgeth all he can  
 The flesh, like any world-wise man,  
 Nor aught of pleasure doth refuse;  
 Should we his cant and lies excuse?  
 Resembleth he the dog who fain  
 Unto his vomit turns again.  
 But unto you I dare not lie;  
 Though had I not unerringly  
 Perceived that you saw clearly through  
 My falsity, I straight should you 12630  
 Have plied with cozenage, for I ne'er,  
 Seeing a chance, a victim spare.  
 I know my rôle, and this I tell,  
 A traitor am I, guard you well.

*The Author.*

The God bestowed on this strange tale  
 A smile, nor did the barons fail  
 To laugh, and cried: A subtle youth,  
 And one in whom to trust, forsooth!

*The God of Love.*

False-Seeming, then said Love, I pray,  
 Since thou so great a part shalt play 12640  
 Within my court, for there shalt thou  
 Be king of ribalds, tell me now,  
 Wilt thou to me be loyal and true?

False-  
 Seeming  
 concludes

*False-Seeming.*  
**False-Seeming's leman** Yea, by the gods I swear to you,  
 That ne'er your ancestors nor sire  
 Had slave whose love was more entire.

*Love.*  
 Nay! That thy nature would deny.

*False-Seeming.*  
 E'en take your chance thereof and try ;  
 And if some caution you demand,  
 No surer were you though your hand 12650  
 Held warrant, written oath, or pledge.  
 With confidence I dare allege  
 That though a wolf you beat within  
 An inch of life, he still his skin  
 Retains, and therefrom issueth not.  
 And 'tis the same with me I wot :  
 Though 'neath a simple vestment I  
 Am hid, I practise treachery.  
 Suppose you I for virtue care  
 Because the outward guise looks fair 12660  
 Neath which I do the devil's work ?  
 No crime, by God, I blink or shirk ;  
 And if I coy and simple seem,  
 Have I then changed my life d'ye deem ?  
 Nay, thereto make I no pretence.  
 My dear, Constrainèd-Abstinence,  
 Hath need of all my carefulness ;  
 She had been long since dead, I guess,  
 Had I not been at hand to stay  
 Her weary steps on life's hard way ; 12670  
 Suffer us twain to work our will,

*Love.*

So be it, thy desire fulfil.

The host  
makes  
ready

*The Author.*

And so the rascal held his place.

He had a very traitor's face,

Without, pure white, within, black hell :

Before Love on his knees he fell

And worshipped him with plenteous thanks.

Cried Love then, looking round his

ranks :

Forward at once ! let every man

Arm him forthwith as best he can. 12680

Then made him ready for the fight

Each one, with arms and armour dight,

And forth they sallied one and all,

Loud shouting, towards the castle wall,

Right manfully resolved that they

Would dearly sell their lives that day,

Or from the battlements would cry

In token of glad victory.

Then in four battles they divide,

Of which each marcheth towards the

side 12690

To it assigned, and thus the gates

Assail they, though before each waits

A stalwart guard prepared to fight

Nor yield to aught save death's dark night ;

Not weakly, sick, or slothful they,

But strong, and eager for the fray.

## LXIV

False-Seeming as a pilgrim goes,  
 Disguised, to Evil-Tongue; and shows  
 Constrained-Abstinence likewise  
 Herself to him in saintly guise.

12700

Envoys  
 to Evil-  
 Tongue

**B**EHOLD you now neath what pretence  
 False-Seeming came with Abstinence  
 'Gainst Evil-Tongue. The wily twain  
 Held counsel how they best might gain  
 Their ends—in open guise to go,  
 Or hid beneath some cozening show;  
 And after much debate agreed,  
 That better 'twould their errand speed  
 If they began the war to wage  
 Disguised as folk on pilgrimage, 12710  
 With air of holy innocence.  
 Forthwith Constrained-Abstinence  
 Appeared as a demure Beguine,  
 Attired in robe of cameline,  
 With fair white kerchief round her head,  
 The while with saintly look she read  
 Her psalter. At her waist was hung  
 A paternoster, thereto strung  
 By girdle-cord of purest white.  
 She had not bought it, but was dight 12720  
 Therewith most kindly by a friar,  
 Her spiritual guide and sire,  
 And she from him gat more behoof  
 Than any neath the convent's roof,  
 While he too loved to visit her  
 As holy guide and sermoner.



E'en though False-Seeming might be near,  
 Still would he her confession hear,  
 And such attention gave thereto  
 That oft one hat would hide the two. 12730

Con-  
 strained-  
 Absti-  
 nence pic-  
 tured

A personable dame, pardee,  
 Though somewhat pale of visage she,  
 Resembling (bitch that lust-heat grips,)  
 Death's horse in the Apocalypse,  
 Which symbolises well the race  
 Of hypocrites with gruesome face ;  
 For aye this horse hath painted been  
 Of pale and deadly hue I ween,  
 And as of jaundice well-nigh dead  
 Was Abstinence encoloured. 12740

She looked as though ashamed she were  
 Of those vile attributes she bare.  
 The pilgrim-staff she leaned upon  
 Which she from Fraud as gift had won,  
 With dreariness was tinted o'er,  
 And stuffed the wallet was she bore  
 With care and trouble.

In attire

False-Seeming dressed him of a friar.  
 And e'en as though for her he yearned  
 Towards Abstinence his face was turned. 12750  
 Humble he looked and meek of cheer,  
 And nought of pride he let appear,  
 But aped a novice, mild and young,  
 While round his neck a bible hung.  
 All squireless goes he, but doth clutch,  
 As 'twere through weakness, treason's crutch,  
 And in his sleeve-fold doth conceal  
 A razor keen of finest steel ;

Evil-Tongue's dwelling  
 A villainous and cruel blade  
 That had in Cut-throat's forge been made. 12760  
 So hand in hand they limp along,  
 And thus approach foul Evil-Tongue,  
 Who stood his castle gate beside,  
 And all who fared thereby espied.  
 The pilgrims notes he come anigh,  
 Bearing themselves most holily.

## LXV

False-Seeming, linked with Abstinence,  
 To aid the Lover, makes pretence  
 Of guesing with foul Evil-Tongue,  
 Whose lash hath many a good man stung. 12770

**T**HEN Abstinence saluteth first,  
 With humble gest, this man accurst  
 And next False-Seeming bends him low,  
 With courteous reverential bow,  
 And he saluteth them again ;  
 For, all unruffled, he amain  
 Seemed Abstinence beneath her feint  
 To know, yet saw not her constraint,  
 But innocently deemed that she  
 Was even that she seemed to be ; 12780  
 And took the garb which tricked her out  
 All in good faith, unchecked by doubt,  
 But 'tis forsooth her customary way  
 Ever such juggling tricks to play ;  
 And if she e'er sincere hath been,  
 Her virtue was short-lived, I ween.

False-Seeming eyed he o'er right well,  
 Yet nought could he his falseness tell,  
 For wondrously was he disguised,  
 Nor lightly might be recognised ; 12790  
 And whosoe'er the knave had known  
 Before this garb were o'er him thrown,  
 Had sworn by God the Father he  
 The same one were who formerly  
 Bold Robin, in the dance, had been,  
 And now as Jacobin is seen.  
 But then, deny it whoso can,  
 Each Jacobin's an honest man.  
 That holy order great disgrace  
 Would suffer, if therein found place 12800  
 A charlatan. And Carmelites,  
 And Cordeliers and holy wights  
 Of other orders, whether they be  
 Big-bellied churls or lean, pardee,  
 As wolves, not one, where'er he wone,  
 But for a saint by dress is known,  
 But ne'er we seeming should permit  
 To o'erride sense or govern it.  
 If you such subtlety possess  
 As lightly shatters sophistries, 12810  
 Whate'er the argument appear  
 Upon the face of it, look near  
 And closely for some fallacy  
 Lest you thereby deceived be.

Dis-  
guised  
pilgrims

When now the pilgrims twain were come  
 Where Evil-Tongue had made his home,  
 Their harness fain were they to flit  
 From off them and beside him sit.

*Evil-Tongue.*

Enter-  
tainment  
sought

Quoth he: "Say sirs, whence hail ye then,  
And what news stir the world of men, 12830  
And by what happy circumstance  
Ye hither come, as 'twere by chance."

*Constrained-Abstinence.*

Constrained-Abstinence replied:  
Fair sir, we seek this countryside,  
As pilgrims, loyal of heart and true,  
Who fain their penitence would do:  
Afoot we've gone the livelong day  
Along the weary dust-strewn way.  
Hither are we together sent,  
By God, to folk impenitent, 12830  
And hope our exhortations may  
Restore some sinners gone astray;  
No other fish we strive to catch,  
And in God's name, by whose dispatch  
We sallied forth, we beg to be  
Here harboured, and most willingly,  
An't please you, will make good our score  
By fitting tale of ghostly lore,  
If you such coin are fain to take.

*The Author.*

Then Evil-Tongue in answer spake: 12840

*Evil-Tongue.*

My house, quoth he, e'en such as 'tis,  
Is yours, no further seek than this,  
And preach whatso ye will, cast fear  
Aside, I give a ready ear.

*False-Seeming.*

Sweet thanks, fair sir.

Con-  
strained-  
Absti-  
nence  
holds  
forth

*The Author.*

Forthwith to spin

Her tale doth Abstinence begin.

LXVI

This tells how Abstinence reproves

The sin that Evil-Tongue most loves.

FAIR sir, the first and best among  
The Christian virtues is, one's tongue 12850  
To curb from falseness, and refrain  
From speech injurious, rude, and vain.  
No other thing I trow on earth  
So proves a man of wit and worth.  
A hundred times 'tis better far  
To practise silence than to mar  
One's mouth with evil words and those  
Who listen to them, but disclose  
Their baseness. 'Tis, fair sir, too true  
That this vile crime disgraceth you 12860  
Sadly. You lately told a lie  
Which did most grievous injury  
Unto a loving youth who came  
Hither some days past, laying blame  
On him because you said that he  
Desired and purposed wrongfully  
Fair-Welcome to seduce: this I  
Denounce in God's name as a lie,

The crime of slander  
For now no more doth he come here,  
And yet Fair-Welcome, racked with  
fear,

12870

Must lie in prison, who, natheless,  
Had in him nought but willingness  
To please you daily, nor e'er sought  
To injure you by word or thought,  
But dareth now no more amuse  
Himself as gentle gallants use.  
Of solace is he quite bereft  
Since that, through fear of you, hath  
left

The youth whom joyance hither drew.

What was it then that prompted you  
To wrong him thus except your lewd  
Despite which many a lie hath brewed?

12880

Accursèd be your venomous tongue,  
Which to no other chime is rung  
But scolding, wrath, and spiteful rage,  
And no desire doth e'er engage  
But noble men to vilify  
By secret stab or barefaced lie,  
Affirming rumours scarce begun  
As crimes accomplished, past, and  
done.

12890

But I maintain, the tongue aloof  
Should hold from all but clearest proof,  
And count it worst of crimes to say  
That which may rob or filch away  
A man's good name; all this right  
well  
You know, O shameless child of hell.

The Lover lightly setteth by  
 Your japes, and careth not one fly  
 If lies you speak or otherwise,  
 In no degree it moves or tries <sup>12900</sup>  
 His spirit, he but comes and goes,  
 Indifferent as the wind that blows,  
 Hither resorting now and then  
 By chance, the same as other men.

Evil-  
 Tongue  
 lectured

But to speak frankly, great surprise  
 It is to me to note your eyes  
 Ever awatch beside the gate,  
 From early morn till night grows  
 late,  
 Your lance in rest, as you'd defy  
 Each man who fared afoot hereby. <sup>12910</sup>  
 Unceasing vigil do you keep,  
 Neglecting rest and needful sleep,  
 Yet ne'er will Jealousy plenish you  
 What to your restless care is due ;  
 But sad Fair-Welcome 'tis to see  
 Prisoned for no delinquency  
 Or crime : he in confinement wears  
 His life away 'mid sighs and tears.  
 Would God you in the world had done,  
 Naught worse than this unhappy one ! <sup>12920</sup>  
 'Twould be, an't please you, naught but  
 just,  
 If you from out your post were thrust,  
 And thrown in prison bound with  
 chains,  
 For well will you deserve hell's pains  
 If you repent not ere you die.

*Evil-Tongue.*

Evil-  
Tongue  
indignant

Certes, he cried, you basely lie,  
 Cursed be the hour that saw you win  
 This spot ; did I then take you in  
 That you should dare insult me so ?  
 But your ill fortune 'twas I trow 12930  
 To deem a simpleton dwelt here.  
 Be off ! find lodgment otherwhere.  
 Ye hither come to call me liar !  
 Two sorcerers ! who would work me  
 dire  
 And cruel wrong, pour on me shame,  
 And all my ways and doings blame,  
 Is this the sermoning ye make ?  
 My soul may all the devils take,  
 And God's curse be upon me spilt  
 If, but ten days ere yet were built 12940  
 These walls, the varlet came not here,  
 With seeming mild and simple cheer,  
 And stole a kiss from off the Rose,  
 Though if he further went, God knows !  
 Why was it given to my good care  
 Save that this crime notorious were ?  
 Pardee, I'll sound it far and wide,  
 And none shall dare aver I've lied.  
 A trumpet blast so loud I'll blow  
 That every carl and quean shall know 12950  
 How he once dared my hedge to break.

*The Author.*

False-Seeming then stood forth and spake :



## LXVII

False-Seeming lightly giveth mate

To Evil-Tongue, with well-filled prate.

FAIR sir, not always gospel clear  
 And pure folks whisper in one's ear  
 About the streets—pray list you while  
 I prove these tales but lies most vile.  
 It scarcely needs that I remind  
 One so astute, that nought inclined 12960  
 Are folk to love their neighbours who  
 Find fault with all they say or do,  
 If they should chance to hear of it,  
 However dull or small of wit.  
 I've read it as a well-known thing  
 That men are fond of visiting  
 The spots where those they love abide.  
 Now this man loveth you beside  
 All others, as his dearest friend,  
 For whom both goods and life he'd spend, 12970  
 Nor fails he to, whene'er ye meet,  
 Salute you in the public street,  
 And show you most profound respect,  
 Yet trow I that no ill effect  
 His friendship brings you, nor doth he  
 Enweary you as oft may be  
 The way with others. If the Rose  
 His heart so pants for, I suppose  
 He constantly would here be seen  
 And by him it had stolen been; 12980  
 Though risk he ran alive to burn  
 Towards the loved object still he'd turn.

The  
 Lover  
 excused

Evil-  
Tongue's  
deserts

But reached his passion that degree?  
Nay! nay! Then clear it seems that he,  
Nor yet Fair-Welcome (whom you've wrought  
Most cruelly against) e'er sought  
To snatch the Rose; but had they tried  
Lightly the twain had you defied.

And wot you well that if this youth  
(Who smarts beneath your slanderous tooth) 12990  
Within his heart desire did feel  
The Rosebud which you guard to steal,  
He scarce had vaunted you his friend,  
But rather would his labour spend  
Your stronghold to reduce to dust;  
For were your accusation just,  
And he thereof the news had learned,  
His indignation had you earned.  
Nor thereof could there be much doubt,  
Seeing that foretimes in and out 13000  
He went, where now by stern and hard  
Denial is his ingress barred.  
O man of cruel speech, right well  
Do you deserve the fires of hell,  
Since thus your spite doth one pursue  
Who ne'er wrought harm or ill to you.

*The Author.*

False-Seeming thus vile Evil-Tongue  
Reproved, who owned him in the wrong;  
So straight the case against him went  
That soon he vowed him penitent,  
And said: 13010

*Evil-Tongue.*

'Fore God, perhaps 'tis true,  
 False-Seeming, slave am I to you  
 And Abstinence, I own for wise;  
 As seem ye of one mind, advise  
 Me straightly; what to do were best?

Evil-  
 Tongue  
 penitent

*False-Seeming.*

First shall you be by me confessed  
 Of crimes wherein you have misspent  
 Your life, as humble penitent;  
 I of the Order am full priest,  
 And of confessors mightiest 13020  
 Throughout the whole vast universe,  
 Wielding God's power to bless and curse.  
 No paltry curate am I, bound  
 By oaths to tread the churches round,  
 But, by our Lady, far more care  
 Have I how souls beneath me fare  
 Than those poor caitiff parish priests  
 Who spend their days 'twixt fasts and  
 feasts;  
 Their powers are nought compared to mine.  
 No priest or prelate, I opine, 13030  
 Is half so learnèd or well read  
 As I, poor sinners to bestead.  
 A doctorate of divinity  
 Long years since was conferred on me.  
 By great and small am I allowed  
 Worthy 'fore all to hold the proud  
 Distinction to be counted first  
 Among confessors. If you thirst

Evil-Tongue murdered  
 For absolution, just confess  
 Your sins, and I with readiness 13040  
 Will shrive you, and when once you've got  
 My shrift—thank God, your sins are not.

## LXVIII

How by a razor—not a sword—  
 Met Evil-Tongue his just reward,  
 Therewith False-Seeming cut his tongue  
 From out his mouth—his knell was rung.

THEN Evil-Tongue with humbleness  
 Would on his bended knees confess  
 His crime, and shrive him of his fault;  
 False-Seeming made no weakling halt, 13050  
 But seized his throat, and forthwith stayed  
 His cackle, once for all, with blade  
 Of razor, and his tongue cut out,  
 From whence fell many a bloody gout.  
 And next the pair make haste to pitch  
 His body in the castle ditch,  
 And then the unguarded door they break,  
 And o'er the threshold passage make,  
 And find the Norman soldiers sunk  
 In senseless slumber deadly drunk. 13060  
 The wine they down their throats had  
 cast,  
 Cast them upon the floor at last,  
 And as they lay, the wretches all,  
 Ere they had time for help to call,  
 Were strangled in their drunken sleep,  
 Henceforth strict fast from lies they'll keep.

## LXIX

False-Seeming, who to lovers shows  
 Sweet comfort, with his leman goes  
 Across the threshold, with him he  
 Doth Largess lead and Courtesy. 13070

**L**ARGESS and Courtesy their way  
 Make through the gate, without delay,  
 And silently together stand,  
 Awhile, this strong quadruple band.  
 The harridan, who watches o'er  
 Fair-Welcome, is by all the four  
 Seen to descend and move about  
 The court-yard, void of fear or doubt;  
 Bearing upon her head a simple  
 All-covering hood above her wimple. 13080  
 Upon her set they all in haste,  
 And she, perceiving 'twere but waste  
 Of pains to strive against the four,  
 Exclaimed aloud.

The door  
 opened

*The Duenna.*

Upon what score  
 Do ye, of look so debonair,  
 Within this castle's precincts fare?  
 I'm not your prisoner, say then why  
 Ye hither come thus suddenly.

*The Four answer.*

Our prisoner! nay then, dearest dame,  
 'Twas not to seize you that we came, 13090

The Duenna  
 flattered

But solely for the pure delight  
 Of seeing you, if so we might,  
 And offering on our bended knees  
 Our bounden service; an't you please  
 Take all we own and you shall be  
 Secure, through us, from treachery;  
 And, if it fain you, lady sweet,  
 To whom both deeds and words unmeet  
 Are strangers, we desire to ask  
 A boon that can but lightly task 13100  
 Your kindness, 'tis that you allow  
 Fair-Welcome, who doth languish now  
 In durance, hither to descend  
 A pleasant hour with us to spend.  
 Or at the least, we pray you, deign  
 That he the Lover's heart may fain  
 With some few words, for each one's  
 voice  
 The other's spirit would rejoice  
 Past measure, and 'twould cost you nought.  
 Nay, by this grace, you will have bought 13110  
 Fair-Welcome's homage, and may do  
 With him whate'er seems good to you,  
 Torture, ill-treat him, hang or sell,  
 Or gain a friend who loves you well.  
 Behold his jewels at command,  
 A morse, and rings to deck your hand,  
 And if you're kind to him, be sure,  
 Ere long he'll give you a parure  
 Of diamonds; frank, free, and true  
 Of heart he'll show himself to you, 13120  
 Nor need you fear he e'er will chide,  
 For in his inmost heart doth hide

The deepest love, yet most discreet  
 And secret is he. Lady sweet,  
 Give entry to this best of men,  
 And he through you shall live again.  
 And now we pray that you this fair  
 Fresh chaplet wrought of flowerets rare  
 Will to Fair-Welcome give, dear dame,  
 As offering in the Lover's name, 13130  
 'Twill comfort him a thousand fold  
 More than a hundred marks of gold.

The  
 Duenna's  
 fears

*The Duenna.*

God help me! I would gladly aid  
 Your purpose, cried she, but afraid  
 Am I lest Jealousy should know  
 Thereof, and thence would ruin grow  
 To me and mine, and much I fear  
 Lest Evil-Tongue should waken her.  
 He ever is engaged to spy  
 Whate'er we do, by Jealousy; 13140  
 Unlet or hindered doth he shout  
 And chaunt each thing he knows about.  
 And when his knowledge he hath spent,  
 No scruple feels he to invent  
 Lies by the hundred, 'twere among  
 My chiefest joys to see him hung.  
 But if to Jealousy he told  
 This thing, she'd do worse things than  
 scold.

*The Four make answer.*

No more of Evil-Tongue have dread,  
 Cried out the four, he lies stark dead, 13150

The  
Duenna  
gives  
way

And never more will see or hear.  
Within the ditch, a fitting bier,  
With gaping throat he's thrown.

Unless

Some sorcerer or sorceress  
Revive him he'll missay no more,  
For nothing short of devil's lore,  
Or miracles, through venoms dire,  
Again can light in him the fire  
Of life : his spite and rage are spent.

*The Duenna replies.*

In that case gladly I'll consent 13160  
To do the thing for which you pray.  
But let the swain make no delay,  
And if I grant to him access  
He must behave with gentleness.  
Let him obey my summons then,  
The moment I inform him when  
The time is come. But nothing he  
Must do that would unseemly be  
If life and goods he values, nor  
Be seen in passing through the door. 13170  
Let him command, I'll do his will.

*The Four reply.*

All that you say will he fulfil,  
They cried.

*The Author.*

Thanks had she from each one,  
And thus their work was so far done.



But howsoever this might be,  
 False-Seeming, restless as the sea,  
 Spake to himself in muttering voice :

False-  
 Seeming  
 sums up  
 the case

*False-Seeming.*

Since he repenteth not his choice,  
 If he for whom we undertook  
 This business, unto me would look, 13180  
 For guidance, 'twould have taxed your art,  
 Good dame, to keep the friends apart  
 If I know aught of suchlike things,  
 And understand manœuvrings.  
 With fitting place, and time to match,  
 No matter how the fold they watch,  
 The wolf knows well his aim to cloak,  
 And in the night-watch gives his stroke.  
 Some day you'll to the minster pay  
 A visit, e'en as yesterday ; 13190  
 And Jealousy his chance will crown,  
 Taking her ways beyond the town ;  
 Then will the time be ripe that he  
 Should issue forth all furtively.  
 Proceeding, silent and alone,  
 By secret ways, to few men known,  
 Unless, perchance, some kindly friend  
 As sentinel his aid should lend,  
 To guide him through the shades of night,  
 Foregoing torch or lantern light, 13200  
 And such times as the moon rules high,  
 For many a lover wofully  
 Therethrough hath failed. And as the spot  
 To him familiar is, I wot,

The He through a window space may make  
 Lover's His entry, failing not to take  
 hopes A rope whereby he may descend  
 rise Into the garden and attend  
 Fair-Welcome's coming, who should flee  
 From forth his prison hastily 13210  
 To meet the Lover, who hath been  
 Estranged from him through hate and spleen.  
 And then, when once you're locked in sleep,  
 Fair-Welcome towards the door should creep,  
 Half open it, and so his friend  
 Will in a moment gain his end ;  
 Plucking the Rose, if only he  
 The other guards cheats equally.

*The Lover.*

But as for me, who stood hard by,  
 I deemed the matter certainly 13220  
 Accomplished if the dame gave aid,  
 And felt thereof nowise afraid.  
 Or if I could not compass this,  
 I then might use some artifice  
 Such as False-Seeming should devise ;  
 For him I hold as wondrous wise.

*The Author.*

The harridan makes little stay,  
 But to Fair-Welcome takes her way,  
 Who in the prison, 'gainst his gree,  
 Abideth most impatiently. 13230  
 Straight goes she till she stands before  
 The tower, and quickly hastens o'er

The threshold, and with joy ascends  
 The stairs, and then her way she wends,  
 With trembling limbs, from room to room,  
 But vainly seeketh in their gloom  
 Fair-Welcome, who, all worn and spent,  
 Was leaning 'gainst the battlement.  
 She noted how his hope grew dim,  
 And trimmed her speech to comfort him. 13240

Fair-  
 Welcome  
 mystified

*The Duenna.*

How now, fair son, quoth she, much pain  
 Is mine to see your spirit wane ;  
 Say then what grief doth trouble you,  
 And I an end will put thereto  
 If so I may. Confide in me.

*The Author.*

Fair-Welcome wondered what might be  
 The gist of this, but did not dare  
 Believe her, though she spoke him fair ;  
 And as he strove to think about  
 This thing, fulfilled was he of doubt ; 13250  
 He did not dare to show offence,  
 Yet felt in her no confidence,  
 And though his spirit was atremble,  
 He deemed it wiser to dissemble  
 His mind, however much might he  
 Doubt the old cat's sincerity ;  
 Yet feels at heart suspicion dire,  
 Lest treason doth her speech inspire.  
 Misease within him lurks e'en while  
 His visage bears a merry smile, 13260  
 And cheerful air of unconcern.

*Fair-Welcome.*  
 Dear dame, quoth he, for your return  
 I've watched with fond and loving heart,  
 For whensoever you depart,  
 Howe'er you deem of it, my soul  
 Within me sinks oppressed with dole.  
 O tenderly, beloved one, say  
 Why have you stayed so long away?

*The Duenna.*  
 Wherefore? pardee, I'll quickly dight,  
 The reason to your great delight, 13270

## LXX

The crone, desirous to console  
 Fair-Welcome's grief and bitter dole,  
 The Lover's story doth relate,  
 Who is for him disconsolate.

IF only you are brave and wise;  
 For through my hands, by great surprise,  
 The noblest gallant known on earth,  
 Of fairest wit and greatest worth,  
 And who with grace saluteth you;  
 Each time I see him passing through 13280  
 The street, doth this fair chaplet send,  
 As token from a loving friend,  
 Most gladly, saith he, would he see  
 Your face, and die right willingly,  
 Nor care to know another day  
 Of health, if only he might pay

His court to you, and do your will,  
 All other good he counts but ill,  
 He swears by God and good saint Foy,  
 That unto him the greatest joy  
 On earth would be to gain one smile  
 Or word from you, therefor exile  
 He'd count as nought though he should be  
 To Pavia sent all nakedly.  
 Reckless is he of all beside,  
 If only he may near you bide.

Whence  
 comes it?

*The Author.*

Fair-Welcome straight desires to know  
 What kindly hand would fain bestow  
 On him the chaplet, for no will  
 Hath he to take the gift, until  
 He knows the quarter whither sent  
 Hath been this graceful compliment.  
 Forthwith the harridan reveals  
 The tale at full, nor aught conceals.

*The Duenna.*

'Tis from that youth, you know right well,  
 Of whom you oft have heard me tell,  
 And surely 'twas for his dear sake  
 That Evil-Tongue foul war did make  
 Against you—ah! vile child of vice!  
 He's gone—but not to paradise.  
 Full many a man hath he defamed,  
 But now the fiends his soul have claimed.  
 His death from fear of slander frees  
 All men, none care for him two peas.

The  
 Lover's  
 merits

And e'en should he again revive,  
 And reappear on earth alive,  
 He could not injure you one whit,  
 For I know more than he of it.  
 Believe me then, this chaplet take,  
 And wear it for the Lover's sake. 13320  
 He loves you well, oh doubt it not,  
 With love that hath nor stain nor blot.  
 And if he had an afterthought  
 Thereon, he dared to tell me nought.  
 Would he some thoughtless folly try,  
 That may you easily deny;  
 He who doth wrong must drink the  
     brew,  
 But trust in him, I counsel you.  
 No fool is he, but staid and wise,  
 And would nought wrong or base devise, 13330  
 Therefore he hath my earnest love.  
 Fear not that he so vile will prove,  
 As dare to make to you a prayer  
 But what the fiercest light will bear.  
 Most loyal of all men is he,  
 As all who keep his company  
 Would gladly witness and confess.  
 The very flower of gentleness  
 Is he, nay, woman never bare  
 A child of soul more passing fair, 13340  
 And no man living ever heard  
 Against him harsh or cruel word  
 But from the lips of Evil-Tongue;  
 But what he said and what he sung  
 Are now by all true men forgot,  
 While he himself is left to rot.

More than the half of what he said  
 Have I forgotten, by my head,  
 And do but know 'twas false and bad,  
 It seemed as he an anvil had 13350  
 For forging lies.

The  
 Lover's  
 gener-  
 osity

Had it but been  
 Known to the Lover, well I ween  
 That he had slain him, for none can  
 Compare with this most noble man  
 For knighthood. In his bounteous deeds  
 Of largess he by far exceeds  
 King Arthur, nay, his gifts are grander  
 Than those of far-famed Alexander.  
 Did he but own unbounded store  
 Of gold, like those famed men of yore, 13360  
 His bounties far would overgo  
 Their gifts a hundred times I trow.  
 Yea, did he wealth of goods possess  
 To keep pace with his generousness,  
 Most bounteous were he of all men.  
 I pray you take this chaplet then,  
 Its flowers are sweet as dittany.

*The Author.*

I fear 'twould bring ill hap to me,  
 Fair-Welcome cried, whose very frame  
 Trembled with fear, while went and came 13370  
 The colour to his cheeks.

She thrust

The gift on him, as needs he must  
 Accept it, though his hand away  
 He turned, and said : Forgive me, pray,

The If I so fair a gift refuse,  
 chaplet And my ungracious act excuse.  
 refused

Yet fain would he the garland take,  
 Whate'er might follow for its sake.

*Fair-Welcome.*

Right fair the chaplet is, quoth he,  
 But rather I, by far would see, 13380  
 The clothes in which I stand afire  
 Than take that which misfortune dire  
 Most surely must bring down on me;  
 What shall we say to Jealousy?  
 I doubt me nowise that she'll tear  
 The flowers in fragments off my hair,  
 And then, foul traitress, will outright  
 Destroy me, or in cruel spite,  
 Knowing from whom the prize I got,  
 Thrust me in closer gaol to rot, 13390  
 With suffering more severe than e'er  
 Before hath been my lot to bear.  
 And if I flee her cruel face,  
 Where can I find safe hiding-place?  
 Alas! my foe would soon contrive  
 To take, and bury me alive,  
 For many a one with hue and cry  
 Would follow me persistently—  
 I'll not receive it!

*The Duenna.*

Yes, you will,  
 Yet suffer thence nor blame nor ill. 13400



*Fair-Welcome.*

But if she asks whence comes the prize?

The  
chaplet  
accepted

*The Duenna.*

Oh! I can forge you twenty lies.

*Fair-Welcome.*

But if she question me amain,

How shall I answer her again?

If in her rage she cruelly

Rebuke me, how shall I reply?

I can but put her off, forsooth,

With some fair plausible untruth.

And I, if she thereof should know,

Pain worse than death must undergo.

13410

*The Duenna.*

What shall you say? If you have not

A better tale, 'twere well I wot

To say you had it straight from me,

That would above suspicion be,

And nought of blame would you receive

For taking that I chose to give.

## LXXI

Induced by what the hag hath said,

Fair-Welcome setteth on his head

The garland, and doth take therein

A pledge to sell his very skin.

13420

*The Author.*

**F**AIR-WELCOME saith no more, but sets

The chaplet of sweet flowerets

The  
 Duenna's  
 tale

Above his flowing golden hair,  
 And hears his keeper laughing swear  
 By body and soul, and skin and bones,  
 That no man fairer chaplet owns.  
 And often doth Fair-Welcome place  
 Himself before the mirror's face,  
 In heart rejoiced and gratified.  
 The dame then, seeing none beside 13430  
 Themselves are there, *en tête à tête*  
 Anear him seats her, all elate,  
 And thus begins to sermon him :

*The Duenna.*

Fair-Welcome, dear, no cherubim  
 Is fair, and sweet, and good as you.  
 My joyous days are all worn through,  
 While yours are barely yet begun,  
 Your woof of life as yet unspun.  
 Alas! my strength is on the wane,  
 And needs must I my limbs sustain 13440  
 Ere long on helpful crutch or staff,  
 While you with joy-brimmed heart may laugh  
 Careless of what your fate may be.  
 Yet must you pass, assuredly,  
 Sooner or later, through the fire,  
 Which all men feel of love's desire,  
 And in that wave must plunge you, which  
 Queen Venus dights for poor and rich.  
 Prepare you, then, belovèd one,  
 Ere over you love's waters run, 13450  
 By these wise counsellings I give;  
 For he doth perilously live

Who breasts love's waves, yet knows them not, **Love's**  
 But if my creed you once have got **heyday**  
 By heart, you shall arrive at last  
 Safely in port, all dangers past.

Believe me, if, when young as you,  
 I'd known love's art as now I do,  
 And of its ways had been aware  
 (For I, in youth, was passing fair), 13460  
 You would not hear me groan and sigh  
 As I consider mournfully  
 My outworn visage, and repine  
 At every pucker, seam and line,  
 When of my beauty lost I think,  
 Whereof gay lovers fain would drink  
 Long draughts to quench their love-sick heat:  
 (Good Lord! it makes my pulses beat!)  
 For then was I of high renown,  
 Alike in countryside and town, 13470  
 For fairness, and of gallants proud  
 And rich there never lacked a crowd  
 Around my dwelling. Many a score  
 Of blows came rattling 'gainst my door,  
 When I disdained with answering word  
 To let them know their calls were heard,  
 Because it happed forsooth that I  
 Already had good company.  
 Hereout grew oft a wild uproar,  
 And monstrous wroth was I therefor. 13480  
 The porch, 'neath stout and sturdy stroke,  
 Would yield sometimes, and then awoke  
 A fierce mellee, and lives and limbs  
 Were lost to please my wayward whims,

Lovers' For sharply raged fierce contests then.  
 contests If learnèd Algus, of all men  
 The wisest in his reckoning,  
 Should his ten wondrous figures bring  
 To bear thereon, I doubt if well  
 By multiplying he could tell 13490  
 The number of the deadly fights  
 Wherein my gallants strove o' nights.  
 Right fair of face was I, and sound  
 Of body, and of sterlings round  
 Had many a thousand, glistening white,  
 But like a dunce my business dight.  
 I was, in truth, a fair young fool,  
 Of no experience in love's school.  
 Nought of love's theory I knew,  
 But learnèd in its practice grew, 13500  
 And all throughout my life have I  
 Its battles fought unflinchingly.  
 And now to you may I impart  
 The mysteries of that sweet art,  
 For blame were mine should I forego  
 To teach young folk the lore I  
 know.  
 'Tis no great marvel if love's pleasure  
 You neither know to mete or measure,  
 Since you are but a nestling still,  
 With callow wings and yellow bill; 13510  
 While I so wrought have in the field  
 Of love that unto none I yield  
 In knowledge, but might lightly dare  
 To fill a grave professor's chair.  
 'Tis but a fool who would despise  
 And mock old age, by time grown wise,

For wit and practice there are found,  
 And many who have trod the round  
 Of life have proved, beyond a doubt,  
 Those good, when all is else worn out 13520  
 On which they have their substance spent;  
 Save for that twain their lives were shent.  
 When I had wit through practice won,  
 A thing with no small labour done,  
 Full many a noble man did I  
 Trick and beguile most skilfully;  
 But also, often was deceived  
 Ere yet full wit had I achieved.  
 Unhappy wretch! 'twas all too late,  
 Youth failed and left me desolate. 13530

Times are  
 changed

And now beheld I that my door,  
 Which on its hinges heretofore  
 Swung day and night, stood idly to,  
 From hour to hour none passed therethrough,  
 Until I thought: 'Alas! poor soul,  
 Thy life is changed to grief and dole!'   
 When thus I saw my dwelling left  
 Deserted, nigh in twain was cleft  
 My heart, and I betook me thence,  
 Shamed and abashed my every sense. 13540  
 Such misery scarce could I endure,  
 What balsam my deep wounds could cure,  
 When gay-clad gallants in the street,  
 Who lately fawned before my feet,  
 And spent their breath to sing my praise,  
 Now passed me in the public ways  
 Unheedingly, with heads tossed high,  
 As I were struck with leprosy?

Bitter-  
sweet  
remem-  
brance

They'd pass me by with hop and skip  
As one not worth an apple pip : 13550  
And some, to whom I'd favour shown,  
Now voted me a wrinkled crone.  
It seemed as each would put on me  
Some new refined indignity.

Upon the other hand no man,  
How fine soe'er of feeling, can,  
Dear friend, believe the woes I felt,  
Or how mine eyes in tears would melt,  
When rose the picture in my mind  
Of old good days when kisses kind 13560  
Were showered upon me 'mid delights  
Of joyous days and passioned nights—  
Sweet words to sweeter actions wed.  
Alas ! for ever all are fled,  
Past over to return no more.  
Far better had a prison door  
Closed on me than that I were born  
So soon. Ah God ! what scathing scorn  
Have fair gifts lost brought down on me,  
And consciousness they ne'er can be 13570  
Reclaimed hath sent a poisoned dart  
Of anguish through my wasted heart.  
I ask again, why was I born  
So soon ? unhappy wretch forlorn !  
Is there, but you, one single one  
To whom I can complain, dear son ?  
In nowise could my vengeance reach  
My foes so well as if I teach  
To you my doctrine for this end ;  
Thereon my breath I well may spend, 13580

With well-proved precepts how to be,  
 A scourge to those who scourged me;  
 And you right apt will be thereto  
 Recalling all I say to you,  
 Since you by happy chance have got  
 So young a mind as faileth not  
 To keep in memory the wit  
 That old experience plants in it.  
 For Plato said, long years ago,  
 That, things which men in youth had known  
 Stay fixed within the memory fast, 13591  
 Though many a year be overpast.

A  
 woman's  
 revenge

Ah, dearest son, belovèd youth,  
 If strong and young as you forsooth  
 I were, the laws by Draco made  
 My fierce revenge should cast in shade:  
 Such vengeance on my foes I'd take,  
 Before I could mine anger slake,  
 As never yet was known ere now.  
 In all the world's great age I trow. 13600  
 Those ribalds who have passed me by  
 With mocks and jeers, insultingly,  
 And have disdain'd my glance to meet,  
 With open scorn in public street,  
 Good Lord! but they should dearly pay  
 Whene'er arriv'd the reckoning day,  
 For that contemptuous, scathing pride  
 Wherewith they have my spirit tried.  
 For, using the experience I  
 Have learned through God's good clemency.  
 Know you the fashion they should fare? 13611  
 In my turn would I pluck them bare;

**Regrets** And then, as grapes within a press  
**are vain** Are trod, I'd tread them ; penniless  
 Should they be left, and foul worms feed  
 Upon them in their direful need,  
 Whilst on a dunghill should they lie  
 Naked, in filth and misery.  
 And those who, in my prosperous days,  
 Were foremost in my love and praise,  
 Would I most cruelly entreat,  
 And spurn like dogs beneath my feet,  
 Aye, grind them to the very earth,  
 And pill them till they were not worth  
 A clove of garlick—it would fain  
 My heart to see their need and pain,  
 And bring them to such dire distress  
 That they should on my footsteps press  
 Stamping with rage.

Regrets are vain ;  
 Time flown can ne'er return again,  
 Nor could I, of all those who bowed  
 Before me ere my face was ploughed  
 With wrinkles, keep on one my hold,  
 My menace was a tale that's told,  
 But, by the ribalds, I thereof  
 Was warned erewhile with many a scoff,  
 Believe you, much I wept therefor,  
 Aye, and shall weep for evermore,  
 Yet, when thereon I musing think,  
 Long draughts of joy supreme I drink  
 From memory's well. Oh, dear delights !  
 Whereof the very thought excites  
 A thrill through every limb, as though  
 The merry life of long ago



I lived once more. My body seems  
 Rejuvenate, as in sweet dreams  
 Sometimes appears. Now, by the rood,  
 I swear it does me untold good  
 To muse on youth's sweet joys, though I  
 By men was cozened cruelly :  
 No idle life a damsel leads  
 Who makes her pleasures serve her needs.

Joys  
 remem-  
 bered

13650

Then to this country-side I came,  
 And service took beneath the dame  
 Who holds you here, and gives me  
 charge

That hence you wander not at large.  
 The Lord, who guards us all from ill,  
 Grant that my duty I fulfil,  
 And doubt I not this well may be,  
 If you will walk but prudently.

13660

The charge, forsooth, were one of rare  
 And special peril, seen how fair  
 Nature hath made you, if your wit  
 Did not your body's beauty fit :  
 But you have prowess, sense, and grace ;  
 And since that now both time and  
 place

Serve us so well, nor need we fear  
 To suffer from intruders here,  
 'Tis well that you should list from me  
 Good counsel, but you need not be  
 Surprised to find my words but few.  
 No will have I to press on you  
 The theme of love and thereon preach,  
 But since that goal you'll someday reach,

13670

The Duenna's  
tale Suffer that I point out the way  
And paths thereof, where many a day  
I wandered ere my beauty went  
And left me wearied, worn and spent.

*The Lover.*

Then ceased the dame and gave a sigh,  
In case Fair-Welcome made reply. 13680  
But little rest of tongue she took,  
Noting his fixed attentive look,  
Prepared to listen and say nought;  
And so within herself she thought:  
A proverb 'tis: Who saith not nay,  
May well be credited with yea;  
Thus far he's listened, and no doubt,  
If I proceed, will hear me out.

Then once more did the crone begin  
Her wearisome foul tale to spin, 13690  
Deeming that she by wordy trick  
Might cozen me to try and lick  
Honey from thorns, and hoping he  
Might his mere friend consider me,  
Without true love, but he amain  
Told me the tale he heard again;  
And had he ta'en her word for truth  
I needs had been betrayed forsooth,  
But whatso'er the hag might do  
Or say, Fair-Welcome proved him true; 13700  
I had his solemn oath and word  
And that my heart had reassured.

*The Duenna.*

O dear sweet son, towards whom I yearn,  
 'Tis my desire that you should learn  
 Love's wiles, to save you from deceit.  
 When you upon life's journey meet  
 With Cupid, let my counsels guide  
 Your steps, for no man ever tried  
 That path untaught, but hath perforce  
 Been stripped of all, till last his horse  
 He needs must sell; I charge you hear  
 My counsel which your way will clear,  
 If you but heed the lore I tell,  
 Who know love's art and mystery well.

Value of  
 experi-  
 ence

13710

LXXII

Herein the harridan prepares  
 Fair-Welcome's mind for love affairs,  
 And shows how evil women may,  
 In love, both go and lead astray.

**F**AIR son, whoso of love is fain,  
 That bitter-sweet, that pleasant pain,  
 Must Cupid's ten commandments know,  
 Yet keep him at arm's length I trow.  
 All these to you would I declare,  
 Perceived I not how great a share  
 Of each has nature deigned to bless  
 You with, in her sweet kindliness,  
 Yea to the hilt that you can need.  
 Ten are there, but fools only, heed  
 The latter two, wise men dispense  
 Therewith, not valuing them two pence.

13720

13730

Cupid's  
 com-  
 mand-  
 ments

The former eight attend you well,  
 But he were under folly's spell  
 Who wasted on the other two  
 His time—'tis what a dolt would do.  
 Too great a burden 'tis to lay  
 Upon a lover when you say,  
 Though his large heart would all em-  
 brace,  
 With one alone must it enlace.  
 The son of Venus counsels this,  
 But sorely will he do amiss 13740  
 Who follows his advice, and dear  
 Shall pay, as will at last appear.  
 In love, fair son, remain you free,  
 Fix not on one especially :  
 Suffer your heart at will to roam,  
 Nor lend nor give it to one home,  
 But let it be your constant boast  
 That, his it is who pays the most,  
 Yet see the buyer doth not get  
 A bargain though his gold you sweat. 13750  
 Above all, give it not away,  
 Better, burn, hang, or drown one may.  
 Remember, when you give, to twist  
 Your fingers fast with folded fist,  
 But taking, open wide your hand,  
 Fools only give, pray understand,  
 Except it be by way of lure,  
 Some fourfold profit to ensure,  
 Or in return fair gift to get  
 Whereby good guerdon one may net ; 13760  
 Such gifts as these will I allow,  
 For good it is to give, I trow,

When one can make the gifts bear fruit ;  
 Then largess doth with profit suit.  
 Such giving no man need repent,  
 Thereto I freely give consent.

Cupid's  
 bow

As to that bow of rarest price  
 And shafts of subtle artifice,  
 You know their use and management  
 Better than Love himself who spent  
 His life thereon, no greater craft  
 Hath he the bow to bend, and shaft  
 To speed, than you ; though oft you know  
 Nothing of where those shafts may go.  
 For when a shaft at random speeds,  
 Some one of whom the archer heeds  
 No jot, may by mere chance be hit,  
 But you are known to be so fit  
 And skilful when the bow you draw,  
 That scarce you need to list my saw. 13770  
 You may, God helping, chance to wound  
 Some one whose conquest may be found  
 Much to your profit. Need is none  
 That I should lecture you upon  
 The different deckings and attire  
 Which often help a heart to fire,  
 Nor what therein your choice should be.  
 I should discourse but uselessly  
 If you recall that song of old  
 That from my lips hath often rolled, 13790  
 As we together sat alone,  
 Of passionate Pygmalion.  
 You thence of dress much more may learn  
 Than plough-beasts know of sods they turn.

Rich men      Instruction in the art of dress,  
exploited      Is not, with you, my business.

And if all this doth not suffice  
You presently shall hear advice,  
If so you will, where you may find  
Example of the clearest kind. 13800  
But would you in the meantime make,  
Choice of a friend for friendship's sake,  
Bestow your love, my dearest son,  
On him who for yourself alone  
Doth love you, but not recklessly ;  
Towards others let affection be  
With purpose savoured, I will find  
You many a one with purse well  
lined.

'Tis well to make some rich man friend,  
Who feareth not his wealth to spend, 13810  
For him who knows to spoil and pill.  
Fair-Welcome well might work his will  
With such an one ; he need but make  
Believe that he for friend would take  
None other for a heap of gold,  
And swear that would he but have  
sold

The chance to some one else to kiss  
The Rose, that treasury of bliss,  
In gold and jewels might he swim,  
But so his heart is true to him, 13820  
That none but he shall come anear  
To share the prize he holds so dear.  
Thousands may hear the same tale spun :  
' Fair sir, you are the favoured one,

May God's curse fall on me if I  
 Permit another to come nigh  
 The Rose.' Lovers'  
oaths

All reckless may he be  
 Of broken oaths and perjury;  
 Lovers' false oaths the Gods amuse,  
 Who all such crimes with smiles excuse. 13830  
 Great Jove and all the Gods loud laughed  
 At lovers' lies the while they quaffed  
 Their nectar, nor did they disdain  
 False oaths their wished-for ends to gain.  
 When Jupiter would reassure  
 Queen Juno, and her doubtings cure,  
 By the dark stream of Styx he swore,  
 Yet proved him perjured then and there.  
 Lovers the same course may pursue,  
 Nor feel one touch of shame thereto, 13840  
 But swear by altar, saints, and fane—  
 The Gods example gave amain.  
 The Lord forgive me, but none e'er  
 Should credit oaths that lovers swear;  
 For young folks' hearts are vain and  
 light,

Changing as oft as day and night,  
 And old men's too, for that, pardee!  
 Will swear false oaths right royally.

A proverb 'tis, known far and wide,  
 That, who doth o'er the fair preside 13850  
 Should first his own advantage mind;  
 And if one miller will not grind  
 Your corn, forthwith you go elsewhere.  
 The mouse who must perforce repair

One  
lover not  
enough

To one hole only, needs must be  
In peril when 'tis his to flee.  
And so a damsel fair, ywis,  
When mistress of the field she is,  
And may at will her suitors fain,  
Good right hath she their gold to gain, 13860  
Nay, she would be a fool indeed  
Who failed her interest to speed  
Through giving all her love to one.  
I swear by Saint Lifard of Meun  
The fool doth all her 'vantage lose  
Who one from out the crowd doth choose.  
A captive she consents to be  
And falleth most deservedly  
To grief and misery a prey,  
For that on one she cast away 13870  
Her heart. If he abandon her,  
Where shall she find a comforter?  
For if a woman holdeth fast  
To one, his love will soon be past,  
And in the end, poor wretch, she's left  
Of friends, of goods, of hope, bereft.

## LXXIII

This tells how Dido, mighty Queen  
Of Carthage, racked with sorrow keen  
For that great love she suffered through  
Æneas, with a sword-thrust slew 13880  
Herself, and how fair Phillis won  
A cruel death through Demophon.

**D**IDO, great queen of Carthage, strove  
Vainly to keep Æneas' love,



Who owed to her whate'er he had,  
 For she received him when the sad  
 City of Troy in flames he fled,  
 And reached her shores to misery wed.  
 His comrades dealt she no small share  
 Of honour, for the love she bare 18890  
 To him, and bade his ships refit,  
 With many a storm, bulged, torn, and split;  
 And in her passion vowed that he  
 Lord of her realm and self should be;  
 In turn, great oaths Æneas swore  
 His heart was hers for evermore,  
 And soul and body would he give  
 To her, and in her love would live.

Alas! small joy her kindness sped;  
 Ere long, the faithless lover fled 18900  
 O'er the bright sea without one word  
 To her, who died whenso she heard  
 His treachery, for she straight withdrew  
 Into her chamber, and pierced through  
 Her loving heart with selfsame sword  
 He erst had borne, her love and lord.

Unhappy Dido, who in mind  
 Still kept her traitorous love unkind,  
 Seized the bright blade, and as she stood  
 Naked, the point with hardihood 18910  
 Thrust 'neath her breasts, twin hills of  
 snow,  
 And fell thereon to end her woe.  
 O grievous sight, O sad to see!  
 Full hard of heart that man must be,

Legend Who could behold, with heart unmoved,  
 of fair How thus her constancy was proved  
 women Towards the treacherous man through whom  
 Her joyous life met death's grim doom.

And Phillis fair, who did await  
 Her Demophon, disconsolate, 13920  
 And, for he came not, with a cord  
 Sought death, since false she proved his word.

Of Paris and CEnone hear—  
 She, body and soul, forgetting fear,  
 Gave up to him ; with what return ?  
 Alas ! her love he did but spurn.  
 Small letters on the trees he cut  
 To tell her of his flitting ; but  
 Her love reflected not his heart ;  
 He less esteemed it than a tart. 13930  
 These letters were right skilfully  
 Engraven on a poplar tree,  
 And said, till Xanthus sought again  
 His source, he faithful would remain ;  
 Alas ! though that did ne'er occur,  
 For Helen he deserted her.

Was not Medea, beauteous maid,  
 By Jason treacherously betrayed,  
 Who perjured him, though she, to save  
 His life, both home and honour gave, 13940  
 When the fierce bulls with breath of fire  
 Would work on him destruction dire ?  
 She braved the flames with subtle charms,  
 Subdued the beasts and saved from harms

Her lover ; then the dragon dread  
 Her song soothed till he slumberèd,  
 Nor from that sleep awaked he more  
 Till Jason gained the golden store.  
 And when earth's warriors, wild and fierce,  
 Would fain his heart with swordpoint pierce,  
 Her sorcery and magic skill 13951  
 Did so that host with madness fill  
 That, when amid them Jason threw  
 A stone, no man his fellow knew  
 But all in desperate combat fought  
 Till each from each his death-blow bought,  
 And so the Golden Fleece she wan  
 For that well-loved, but false-heart man.  
 That comfort he might have, forsooth,  
 His father Æson unto youth 13960  
 Restored she, and the sole reward  
 She asked him was, that he would toward  
 Her love return his love again.  
 Alas ! fond hope ! misplaced and vain.  
 His false heart soon forgot the good  
 She wrought, in loving hardihood,  
 And in the ending set above  
 Her head a new and younger love.  
 Hearing hereof she could not brook  
 Her wretchedness, but madly took 13970  
 Her children, (in her sore distress  
 Blind to a mother's tenderness,)  
 And strangled them, more ruthless she  
 Than stepdames oft have proved to be.

A thousand more such tales could I  
 Relate, but time too swift doth fly.

woman's arts **A** These ribalds all play double parts,  
 And to a thousand give their hearts.  
 And wherefore should not women do  
 The same, and love as freely too? 13980  
 She's but a fool, who fixes on  
 One man, and clings to him alone.  
 A woman should have hosts of friends,  
 And play them all, to serve her ends,  
 'Gainst one another. If no grace  
 She hath, 'tis well she set her face  
 To gain it, and should be most high  
 And haughty unto those who try  
 To please her best, and towards those be  
 Most kind, who treat her distantly. 13990

Fair sports and songs 'tis hers to know,  
 And strife and reprimands forego.  
 If she be plain, by dainty dress,  
 Should she repair ill-favouredness;  
 And should it hap, to her dismay,  
 Her thick blond tresses fall away,  
 Or even though they have not dropped  
 By nature, they have needs been cropped  
 By reason of some malady,  
 And thus her beauty wasted be; 14000  
 Or if some ribald, anger led,  
 Hath torn the hair from off her head,  
 With rage so cruel as to leave  
 No locks she can in braidings weave;  
 Then, with a view to clothe her pate,  
 Hair must she get of one who late  
 Hath died, or yellow silk must tie  
 Beneath neat fillets skilfully.

Above her ears she'll bear such horns  
 As neither stags or unicorns Beauty's  
devices  
 Could boast if they should dare to plight  
 Themselves with her in deadly fight.  
 Or if she have the need to dye  
 Her hair, she should most carefully  
 Choose the right plants; leaves, bark, and root,  
 Will each the varied purpose suit.

And lest her bloom of cheek grow pale,  
 Whereat her spirit well might fail,  
 She should within her chamber keep  
 Sweet unguents, that she thence may reap 14020  
 A secret freshness; yet have care  
 They are not known by sight or flair  
 To lovers, or 'twould breed despite.  
 If she hath neck and bosom white,  
 Then let her cut her bodice low,  
 Her fair and dazzling skin to show,  
 Two palms behind and eke before,  
 There's no device attracts men more.  
 If she hath shoulders set too high  
 Judges of form to satisfy 14030  
 At balls and routs, fine lawn I guess  
 Would lessen their unseemliness.  
 If hands she hath nor fine nor fair,  
 But corned and blistered here and there,  
 'Twere well, that with a bodkin she  
 Should dress and tend them carefully,  
 Or better still, with gloves should hide  
 Defects—no man need pry inside.  
 And if her breasts too ample grow,  
 A swathe-cloth should she bind below 14040

**To hide defects** To bear them up, and hold them tight  
 Against her chest. When thus she's dight  
 She'll find that she can move with ease,  
 And lightly dance, if so she please.

And, if a dainty, well-bred quean,  
 Her Venus chamber keeps she clean ;  
 No spider webs will there be found,  
 And things unseemly from the ground  
 She'll sweep, dust, burn, and clear away,  
 E'en as a thrifty housewife may. 14050  
 Is her leg ugly ? ne'er 'tis bare.  
 Too large her foot ? 'tis shod with care.  
 More wily she than e'er neglect  
 To hide with skill the least defect.  
 If she be cursed with noisome breath,  
 It doth not worry her to death,  
 But heed she taketh not to speak  
 To any till her fast she break,  
 And careful is her mouth ne'er goes  
 Too closely towards her lover's nose. 14060  
 When laughter doth provoke her, so  
 She laughs that two sweet dimples show  
 About her mouth, on either side,  
 The which she never opes right wide  
 In laughing, but conceals beneath  
 A well-set smile, her doubtful teeth.  
 A woman if she laugh or smile  
 Should keep her mouth close shut the while,  
 For if too wide she open it  
 It looks as though her cheeks were slit ; 14070  
 And if her teeth are nothing grand,  
 But crossed and out of order stand,

'Tis just as well that they remain  
 Fast hid, would she not win disdain.  
 Women should learn to cry with grace,  
 But they so oft find time and place  
 For tears, I need not teach them how  
 To weep, that soon enough they trow,  
 For every woman in her eye  
 Stores tears, and one and all can cry  
 At will. A man should not disturb  
 Himself thereat, but check and curb  
 His pity, even though he sees  
 The tears fall fast as rain from trees.  
 When women cry at will, 'tis not  
 That they some cruel grief have got,  
 But mere vexation and chagrin  
 That some vile trick they're baffled in.  
 A woman's tears are but a trap,  
 Oft-times they flow for no ill hap,  
 But with desire that she may nought  
 By word or deed betray her thought.

Of  
 women's  
 tears

She should behave her when at table  
 In manner fit and convenable;  
 But should, ere yet she takes her place,  
 'Fore all the household show her face,  
 To let those present understand  
 That she much business hath in hand.  
 Hither and thither should she flit  
 And be the last of all to sit,  
 Making the company await  
 While scanneth she each dish and plate;  
 And when at last down sitteth she,  
 On each and all her eye should be.

**Manners** Before the guests should she divide  
**at table** The bread and see each one supplied.  
 Then let her know the heart to win  
 Of some one guest by putting in  
 His platter dainty morsels, or  
 A wing or leg of fowl before  
 Him sets she, or with choicest slice  
 Of pork or beef will she entice  
 His appetite, or savoury fish,  
 If of the day that be the dish.  
 No stint she makes, if he permits,  
 To ply his taste with choicest bits.

'Tis well she take especial care  
 That in the sauce her fingers ne'er  
 She dip beyond the joint, nor soil  
 Her lips with garlick, sops, or oil,  
 Nor heap up gobbets and then charge  
 Her mouth with pieces overlarge,  
 And only with the finger point  
 Should touch the bit she'd fain anoint  
 With sauce, white, yellow, brown, or  
 green,  
 And lift it towards her mouth between  
 Finger and thumb with care and skill,  
 That she no sauce or morsel spill  
 About her breast-cloth.

Then her cup  
 She should so gracefully lift up  
 Towards her mouth that not a gout  
 By any chance doth fall about  
 Her vesture, or for glutton rude,  
 By such unseemly habitude,

*Divine  
 table manners?*



Might she be deemed.

Drink  
moder-  
ately

Nor should she set  
Lips to her cup while food is yet  
Within her mouth.

And first should she  
Her upper lip wipe delicately,  
Lest, having drunk, a grease-formed groat  
Were seen upon the wine to float. 14140

She should not take one long-breathed  
draught,

Whether from cup or hanap quaffed,  
But gently taste with sipping soft  
Now and again, but not too oft,

Though thirst impels, at large should drink,  
Lest those around perchance should think

Or say, if she the cup should clutch  
With eager haste: She drinks too much;

Therefore should she the tempting tide  
Resist, nor grip the goblet's side 14150

Like some of that fat matron crew,  
So gluttonous and boorish, who

Pour wine adown their cavernous throats  
Enough to fill a horseman's boots,

Till lastly are their gullets full,  
And all their senses drowned and dull.

She should avoid all such excess  
As leadeth on to drunkenness,

For drunken folk no secrets keep,  
And if a woman drinketh deep 14160

She leaves herself without defence,  
And jangles much with little sense.

To any man she falls a prey  
When thus her wits she casts away.

Time        She should not at the table close  
 goes        Her eyes in sleep, nor even doze,  
 quickly    For many a strange untoward thing  
              Hath happed to dames thus slumbering ;  
              Such places are not made for sleep,  
              'Tis wiser far good watch to keep,        14170  
              For often folk mishaps have known  
              Thus sleeping : many have tumbled down  
              Supine, or prone, or on the side,  
              And grievous hurt sustained, or died :  
              She should, who feels disposed to wink,  
              Of Palinurus' ending think,  
              Who governed well Æneas' helm  
              Until he fell within the realm  
              Of Morpheus, then straight toppled he  
              From off the ship, and in the sea        14180  
              Was drowned before his comrades' eyes,  
              Who mourned his watery obsequies.

             Woman should gather roses ere  
              Time's ceaseless foot o'ertaketh her,  
              For if too long she make delay,  
              Her chance of love may pass away,  
              And well it is she seek it while  
              Health, strength, and youth around her  
              smile.

             To pluck the fruits of love in youth  
              Is each wise woman's rule forsooth,        14190  
              For when age creepeth o'er us, hence  
              Go also the sweet joys of sense,  
              And ill doth she her days employ  
              Who lets life pass without love's joy.  
              And if my counsel she despise,  
              Not knowing how 'tis just and wise,

Too late, alas! will she repent  
 When age is come, and beauty spent.  
 But wifful women will believe  
 My words, and thankfully receive 14200  
 My counsels and my rules will foster  
 With care, and many a paternoster  
 Say for my soul's health when I die  
 For teaching them so worthily.  
 Well know I that these golden rules  
 Shall long be taught in noblest schools.

Make  
 known  
 love's  
 precepts

Fair son, if long you see earth's light,  
 Most clearly I perceive you'll write  
 My laws and precepts in a book,  
 And many a time therein will look, 14210  
 Please God, when hence from me you're gone  
 And, duly pondering thereupon,  
 In knowledge shall outrival me,  
 And, e'en as I, a teacher be,  
 Despite the highest chancellors,  
 In halls, in chambers and boudoirs,  
 In copse, and garden-close and field  
 Or nooks by friendly curtains sealed.  
 And let your scholars learn my lore,  
 In wardrobe-room and threshing-floor, 14220  
 In stables or out-offices,  
 Failing of better spots than these,  
 And there my precepts should be read,  
 When you their force have mastered.  
 Abroad a woman oft should go,  
 For all the less that she doth show  
 Herself, the fewer men will press  
 Around to seek her loveliness,

Woman's And sooner she'll be left in lurch.  
 attire 'Twere well she haunt the minster church, 14230  
 And visitations oft attend,  
 And marriages, and duly wend  
 In high processions; fêtes and plays  
 Should she frequent on holidays,  
 For in such places, rathe and late,  
 Venus and Cupid celebrate  
 High mass. But erst should she in  
 glass,  
 Upon her tiring, judgment pass,  
 And when she deems it quite the thing  
 Should sally forth philandering, 14240  
 With dignified and high regard,  
 Not over meek, nor yet too hard,  
 Pleasant of look, with modest eye,  
 Nor over-forward, nor too shy.  
 Her shoulders and her hips should move  
 So gracefully that all approve  
 Her progress as of beauty's queen.  
 Upon her well-shaped feet I ween,  
 Most carefully-made boots she'll set,  
 Whereof the joints so well are met, 14250  
 That, not a plait or crease will show,  
 But on her legs they'd seem to grow;  
 And if her costly garment trail  
 Along the road, she will not fail  
 Both fore and aft with studied care  
 To raise it, as she'd catch the air,  
 Or, as she knows right well to do,  
 She just uplifts her gown a few  
 Short inches, quicker pace to suit,  
 Disclosing thus her winsome foot, 14260

With hope that all the passers by  
 Its mignon form and turn may spy. Woman's  
attire

In case she doth a mantle wear,  
 She should upon her shoulders bear  
 It so, that it but little hides  
 The contour of her shapely sides.  
 And also that she better may  
 Her body's shape, and clothes, display,  
 (Which neither thick nor thin should be,  
 But pearled, and broidered gallantly 14270  
 With silver, and an alms-purse tied,  
 In view of all, against her side,)  
 Her mantle upwards towards her head  
 Should she with straightened arms outspread,  
 Whether the way be foul or clean,  
 After the fashion she has seen  
 A peacock spread his tail; she may  
 So sport the mantle, whether grey  
 Or green it chance to be, that thus  
 She shows her figure amorous 14280  
 To all the gallants that she meets  
 As sails she through the crowded streets.

Should Nature have forgot to trace  
 The line of beauty in her face,  
 Her golden locks she will, if wise,  
 Display to dazzle suitors' eyes  
 In comely plaits about her neck.  
 Nothing doth women better deck  
 And crown, than glory of the hair.

Women should imitate with care 14290

**woman's policy** A The tactics of the wolf; when she  
 A sheep would seize with certainty,  
 That she of one may make her sure  
 A hundred must her fangs endure.  
 A woman, likewise, should her net  
 So spread as many a man to get  
 Within her toils; but seen she nought  
 Can tell which 'tis that may be caught,  
 With view at very least to fix  
 One man, on all should play her tricks. 14300  
 It scarce can happen otherwise,  
 But that among the fools she tries  
 By thousands, she must find some one  
 To do all that she would have done.  
 Nay, many, for 'tis truly said  
 Art lends to nature potent aid.

And if she several hooketh in,  
 Who equally her grace would win,  
 Most carefully should she arrange  
 The meeting hours to interchange, 14310  
 For if two happed to come together,  
 Good chance there were of stormy weather,  
 And danger is, they seeing through  
 Her scheme, she fail of both the two,  
 Shamed and abased, and what e'en worse  
 She'd count, lose hold on each one's purse,  
 But not to any should she give  
 The chance to keep enough to live,  
 But unto such condition bring  
 Her lovers, that of everything 14320  
 Stripped bare, they'd have no choice but die  
 In hunger, debt, and misery.

Of every penny let her reive them,  
 For 'tis her loss if aught she leave them.  
 From poor and needy men should she  
 Have special care to keep her free ;  
 Ovid or Homer void of cash  
 Would not be worth a cat's eyelash.

Beware  
 of tra-  
 vellers

A traveller should she never give  
 Her heart to, for as he doth live  
 Now here, now there, e'en so will he  
 Affection shift as easily  
 As he his body doth. If wise  
 My counsel will she so far prize  
 As let no guest her fancy take,  
 But if, while sojourning, he make  
 Of jewels, gold, or gems fair offer,  
 Let her secure them, locked in coffer,  
 And then may she fulfil his pleasure,  
 Whether in haste or at her leisure.  
 Above all else should she beware  
 She set her love on that man ne'er  
 Who in his beauty taketh pride ;  
 Such imbeciles the Gods deride  
 And scorn, for thus saith Ptolemy,  
 A master of all science he :  
 " Such man hath nought of love in him,  
 With selfish pride his heart's abrim,  
 The love that he to one declares,  
 In turn he to another swears,  
 And many a woman treateth ill,  
 For all he meets he'll spoil and pill : "  
 And many a damsel have I heard  
 Cry shame on such an one's false word.

Should some loud promiser appear,  
 Whether a trickster or sincere,  
 And seek to gain her love with great  
 And solemn vows his life and fate  
 To link with hers,—so be it; but  
 Let her be wary not to put  
 Herself within his power, unless  
 He doth a well-filled purse possess.  
 And if love-letters one indite,  
 Let her weigh closely if he write  
 With false intention, or his mood  
 Of heart be honest, pure, and good;  
 Then let her forward a reply—  
 After a pause—coy, short, and shy;  
 Delay but brings a lover on,  
 Yet that were lightly overdone,  
 And when a lover's suit is pressed,  
 'Tis wise that she awhile protest  
 Reluctance, not the whole refuse,  
 But coyly smirk and half excuse,  
 Now hold him off, now draw him near,  
 In balance kept 'twixt hope and fear.

As he more vehement doth grow,  
 More hesitation should she show,  
 Seeing that she his heart doth hold  
 Tightly as in a serpent's fold,  
 Resisting by all means she can,  
 Assured reluctance doth but fan  
 His flame, then by degrees her fear  
 Subsides, and she should soothe and cheer  
 His heart with many a tender word,  
 And so they come to sweet accord.



And then will she his heart beguile,  
 By God and all the saints the while  
 Swearing that only he at last  
 Hath all her scruples overpast, 14390  
 And cries: "Fulfilled is now your hope,  
 But, by the faith I owe the Pope,  
 I yield to you for love alone,  
 Through presents had you never won  
 My virgin heart; the man lives not  
 Who e'er through gifts my love had got,  
 You only have full favour found  
 Of all the host that fluttered round.  
 Ah! wicked one, who knew to pitch  
 The note that might my soul bewitch." 14400  
 And then, the dotard to deceive,  
 Sweet clips and kisses should she give.  
 But, if she follows my advice,  
 She boldly will demand her price,  
 And is a fool unless she win  
 All that he hath outside his skin,  
 For she the best beloved will be  
 Who strips a man most ruthlessly.  
 The more that women make men pay,  
 The more, far more, beloved are they; 14410  
 For that which lightly is obtained,  
 Is never looked upon when gained  
 Above the value of a straw,  
 A thing of nought, a mere gewgaw.  
 But if a worthless thing cost much,  
 That a man holds with hardfist clutch,  
 To fleece a gull may many aid:  
 Her valets, and her chambermaid,

Lightly  
 won  
 lightly  
 held

Assistant Her sister, nurse, and many another,  
 harpies And e'en with equal zest her mother 14420  
 Will need anointing in the palms  
 To quiet conscientious qualms ;  
 Robes, mantles, gloves, and such delights,  
 They'll pounce upon like ravening kites.  
 When once the victim's in their grip,  
 With utter ruthlessness they'll strip  
 Their prey, till scarce doth he possess  
 A rag to hide his nakedness.  
 Jewels and gold he'll give as though  
 Nuts were they off a hazel bough. 14430  
 Soon comes the banquet to an end,  
 When many mouths assistance lend,  
 And then they cry aloud : " Good sir,  
 'Twere well you should your purse-strings  
                   stir  
 To give our lady something new  
 Of vesture ; doth it trouble you  
 So little ? By St. Giles, I know  
 One who for her would quickly show  
 His bounty, she through him, I ween,  
 Might drive her carriage like a queen ! " 14440  
 And to the damsel would they say :  
 " Wherefore then make you such delay  
 To ask more gifts ? Why not more bold ?  
 His love to you grows slack and cold."  
 And she, though with their words content,  
 Should bid that they such speech forewent,  
 Vowing she hath no fault to find,  
 Unless 'tis that he's overkind.  
 But if she note that he's aware  
 That ruin in his face doth stare, 14450

And soon must he to beggary fall  
 Since in her lap he's cast his all,  
 She judges she may spare the task  
 More costly gifts from him to ask ;  
 Yet should implore him as her friend  
 That to relieve her needs he'll lend  
 His credit, and on given day  
 Swear that the whole will she repay.  
 But all return would be by me  
 Forbidden most unflinchingly. 14460

She  
 pleads  
 poverty

Then if among her friends she find  
 A second suited to her mind  
 (For though she many a friend hath got  
 She keeps herself heart-whole I wot),  
 To him should she declare amain  
 That she her best gown hath been fain  
 To leave in pawn, alas, for her !  
 While daily to the usurer  
 Must she resort, whereat is she  
 Distressed and troubled grievously, 14470  
 And nought need he expect increase  
 Of favour, but if he release  
 Her pledges. If 'neath folly's curse  
 He lies, and bears a brimming purse,  
 He'll dip his hand therein, or take  
 Some means to borrow for her sake  
 The sum she needs, which is in truth  
 No sum whate'er, since she forsooth  
 Hath got her best robes locked away  
 Secure from dust and light of day, 14480  
 Yet impudently bids him look  
 On every perch, and search each nook

The  
victim  
plucked  
bare

If he to trust her word disdain,  
And so she gets the gold amain.  
For a last squeezing she demands  
A silver girdle at his hands,  
Or wimple fair, to deck her head,  
And gold her follies to bestead.  
If he, unable to supply  
Such things, yet seeks to satisfy 14490  
Her cravings, by expressing sorrow  
And bezants vows to bring to-morrow,  
To all his promises should she  
Her ears shut fast inexorably.

All men are naturally liars—  
In dear days past vile flatterers  
More oaths towards me have used to leaven  
Their lies, than are there saints in heaven.  
If no gold pieces he can spin,  
At least can he some wine send in, 14500  
On credit, or if not, he may  
Take himself off, elsewhere to play.

Unless a woman's void of sense,  
Of shrinking fear she'll make pretence,  
Affect to tremble, shake and shiver,  
And 'neath quick apprehensions quiver  
When she receiveth furtively  
Her friend, and let him plainly see  
The dangers she for him doth dare,  
Saying, were spouse and friends aware 14510  
Of that she doth, most surely they,  
Surprising them, would make her pay  
With life the fond affection she  
Bears towards him, while alas! that he

If found there would beyond all doubt  
 Still living see her heart torn out :  
 And then he surely will remain  
 When once within her toils he's ta'en.

Pre-  
 tended  
 jealousy

'Tis well she should remember when  
 Her friend she may expect again ;  
 And if there's no one on the watch  
 Let her undo the window latch  
 (Although the door serves better far),  
 Swearing the while that lost they are,  
 And may account themselves as dead  
 Should they be thus discoverèd,  
 For neither buckler, club, nor glaive  
 For one short hour their lives could  
     save,  
 Nor secret chambers guarantee  
 But what they should dismembered be. 14530

And then should she assume an air  
 Of anger mingled with despair.  
 And fall on him with great disdain,  
 Demanding why doth he remain  
 So long away—she doubteth not  
 The reason is that he hath got  
 Some other he prefers to her ;  
 Younger perchance, and merrier,  
 To whom, forsooth, his time he gives,  
 While she, alas ! neglected lives :  
 Ah ! well may she with anguish burn  
 Who loves, but wins not love's return.  
 And when he hears her thus complain,  
 'Twill work like fire within his brain,

14540

Venus and Vulcan  
 And forthwith will he deem that she  
 Loves him with mad intensity,  
 And is of him as jealous as  
 In olden days God Vulcan was  
 Of Venus, whom he found at play  
 With Mars, when Phœbus brought the day, 14550  
 [Trapped in the brazen net he'd wrought.  
 On his own head contempt he brought  
 When thus he proved himself betrayed,  
 And openwise a cuckold made.

## LXXIV

How Vulcan once espied his wife  
 Engaged with Mars in amorous strife,  
 When cunningly he threw a snare  
 Around the fond but guilty pair,

WHENE'ER Dan Vulcan, dunderhead,  
 Had spied the amorous twain in bed, 14560  
 Around the couch a net he threw  
 (Which was an foolish thing to do ;  
 For little wotteth he of life  
 Who thinks he only hath his wife),  
 And then the gods did he convoke,  
 Who crowded round with gibe and joke,  
 Beholding how the pair were ta'en,  
 But many 'mong the host, with pain,  
 Beheld dame Venus' sore distress,  
 While marvelling at her loveliness ; 14570  
 Nor heard unmoved her bitter cries  
 At suffering such indignities

Before her peers in open day,  
 Yet 'twas no marvel, one would say,  
 That Venus unto Mars should give  
 Herself—for could she care to live  
 With Vulcan, black from head to foot,  
 Hands, face, and throat begrimed with soot?  
 Such things in Venus' breast must rouse  
 Disgust, though Vulcan were her spouse.  
 Nay, even though she had been paired  
 With Absalom the golden-haired,  
 Or lovely Paris, Priam's son,  
 She scarce had been content with one,  
 For ever would that beauteous queen  
 Do what all women love I ween.

Women  
 free as  
 men

Women as free as men are born ;  
 It is the law alone hath torn  
 Their charter, and that freedom riven  
 From out their hands by Nature given.  
 For Nature is not such a fool  
 As order, by unbending rule,  
 Margot to keep to Robichon,  
 Nor yet for him the only one  
 To be Marie or fair Perrette,  
 Jane, Agnes, or sweet Mariette,  
 But as, dear son, I scarce need teach,  
 Made each for all and all for each,  
 And every one for all alike,  
 E'en as the taste and fancy strike.  
 So that (although by marriage law  
 They are assigned like things of straw),  
 To satisfy Dame Nature's call,  
 To which they hearken one and all,

**What** And strifes and murders to avoid,  
**Horace** Whereto they well might be decoyed,  
**saith** Ever have women, foul or fair,  
 Whether the name of maid they bear,  
 Or wife, done all within their power;  
 To win back freedom as their dower; 14610  
 Though at great hazards they maintain  
 Their rights, and evils thick as rain  
 Have happed both now and formerly.  
 Ten, nay, a hundred easily,  
 Could I of instances set forth;  
 But let them pass as nowise worth  
 My pains to tell or yours to hear,  
 You'd weary ere the end came near.

If any man beheld a dame,  
 In primal days, who lit a flame 14620  
 Within his heart, he thought no  
 wrong  
 To seize her, until one more strong  
 Should rob him of her, or he changed  
 His mind and somewhat further ranged.  
 But hence arose contention great,  
 And homes were oft left desolate;  
 And so by wise men were laid down  
 The laws as those of marriage known.

If you possess both will and wit 14630  
 To heark what Roman Horace writ,  
 Give me your ear while I set forth  
 The wisdom of that man of worth;  
 A woman, free of shame, may quote  
 Whate'er so great an author wrote:



Foretime, in Helen's days, broke out  
 Full many a hard-fought battle rout  
 For woman's love, and many died  
 Who in that strife their valiance tried;  
 And who shall say how many more  
 Than those set down in ancient lore?  
 Not first was Helen, nor will she  
 Be last of those, unhappily,  
 Through whom have risen and will rise  
 Wars among men, whose hearts and eyes  
 Women have blinded, till away  
 They throw their lives; the latest day  
 Of earth shall see this selfsame thing,  
 That hath been since first broke the spring.  
 Regard dame Nature, and then hear  
 Her strength and wondrous power made clear  
 Through many examples which shall be  
 Clearly expounded presently.

## LXXXV

Herein examples may you see  
 Of Nature's power and subtlety.

**T**HE bird which from the wood is lured,  
 Captured, and in gay cage immured,  
 Tended with gentle love and care,  
 And fed with choice and dainty fare,  
 With pleasant song our ear enchants,  
 But yet one thing doth lack, it pants  
 Once more to flit among the boughs  
 And branches which so well it knows  
 And where 'twould once more gladly be  
 In vain you nurse it tenderly,

The cap-  
 tive bird

Women Ever it pineth to regain  
 love That liberty whereof 'tis fain :  
 liberty Its food it treads beneath its feet,  
 And 'gainst the bars its wings doth beat,  
 And up and down its prison goes  
 From daylight's dawn till twilight's  
 close, 14670  
 Seeking its passage to make good  
 Through door or window to the wood.  
 And every woman doth possess  
 Within her that same restlessness,  
 Whatever her condition be,  
 Matron or maid ; unceasingly  
 One only thought hath she in mind,  
 Which is, how she may some way find  
 Her ancient liberty to get,  
 Thereon, 'fore all, her heart is set. 14680

And so it is with every wight  
 Who hath him in a cloister pight,  
 For so he feels repentance' pang  
 That almost he for rage would hang  
 Himself, he hath but one desire,  
 Which burneth up his heart like fire ;  
 He pants once more for liberty,  
 And vain the struggle findeth he  
 With change of frock to change his bent  
 For worldly pleasure ;—sacrament 14690  
 And holy vows are nought to him.

E'en so a foolish fish doth swim  
 Within a net, whose mouth is wide  
 For entry, but when once inside,

Shuts on him, and for evermore  
 A prisoner stays he, till ashore  
 He's cast to die; but those without  
 Crowd round untroubled by a doubt  
 But what he hath great plenitude  
 Therein of leisure, peace, and food, 14700  
 When they perceive him wheel and turn  
 As if content, and fain would learn  
 How they may likewise live at ease  
 With nought to do except appease  
 Their hunger, and the livelong day  
 They pass in seeking out some way  
 By which they too may enter in  
 And equal life of joyance win:  
 They vex and worry them to get  
 An entry to that envied net, 14710  
 But once within, they must remain,  
 Escape past hope, repentance vain,  
 And they therein their lives must spend  
 Till friendly death brings welcome end.

The  
 netted  
 fish

So each bright youth to servitude  
 Doth go who takes the monkish hood,  
 For neither cowl, nor broad-brimmed hat,  
 Nor cloister gown, can smother that  
 Which Nature in his heart did plant,  
 And, unfulfilled, still leaves a want. 14720  
 He's worse than dead, for all his life  
 Is racked and torn by mental strife,  
 Or else with broken spirit he  
 Plays virtue 'gainst necessity.  
 Dame Nature lieth not, but still  
 His mind with bitter thoughts doth fill

Example  
of the cat

Of freedom lost : Horace this thing  
Saith well, 'tis worth remembering:  
" Though any man should seize a fork,  
To drive dame Nature from her work,  
Beat her, and chase her out of doors,  
She'll quick return to pay old scores."  
What matters it? Do what you will,  
Each living creature must fulfil  
Its nature, and although you drive  
It far, it will return and thrive ;  
Nature despiseth violence,  
And hath of man-made law small sense :  
And thus finds Venus fair excuse  
When she from trammels breaketh loose ;  
And so it is with dames, I trow,  
Who chafe beneath the marriage-vow.  
Nature it is who draws them still  
Towards freedom, or for good or ill,  
And she so strong is that in vain  
Men seek her power to curb and rein.

If one should take, dear son, a cat  
That ne'er had known of mouse or rat,  
And feed him up most tenderly  
With choicest meats, nor let him see  
By any chance or rat or mouse,  
Yet if should run across the house  
Or one or other in his view,  
Like bolt from bow he'll 'scape from you  
And snap it up, for Nature 'tis  
Impelleth him thereto ywis ;  
He'll rather hunt a mouse than sate  
His maw with morsels delicate,

For 'twixt the twain can never be  
Treaty of peace and amity. 14760

Example  
of the  
horse

Or if a new-foaled colt you rear,  
So that he ne'er beholds a mare  
Till he becomes a full-grown steed  
For bit and saddle good at need ;  
A jennet comes within his sight,  
At once he neighs with proud delight,  
And speedeth madly o'er the field,  
Unless he needs to rein must yield.  
Not only black steed seeks a black,  
But brown, or grey as soon will back, 14770  
Or roan, or any other strain,  
Unless he's held by bridle-rein.  
He troubles not to spy around,  
But gaily takes them as they're found,  
And in succession serves them all,  
If but the chance to him befall.  
So with a little chestnut mare,  
Unless she be restrained with care,  
She'll seek brown, grey, and black in turns  
E'en as desire within her burns ; 14780  
The first one that her fancy takes,  
Husband of him she straightway makes.  
And what of horse and mare, I say,  
Whether black, brown, or roan, or grey,  
Is likewise true of bull and cow,  
And eke of ram and ewe, I trow,  
For rest assured that each of these  
Of either sex make free to please  
And suit themselves, as e'en they may,  
With spouse at will from day to day. 14790

Bold So is it, by my soul, I swear,  
 avowal Fair son, with every human pair,  
 horse Although the law doth claim of right  
 To check somewhat the appetite.  
 Somewhat! methinks, a deal too much,  
 For when folk fall within the clutch  
 Of law, it bids that each shall cling  
 To each in every mortal thing,  
 And husband seek his wife alone,  
 And she be his both flesh and bone, 14800  
 And both shall each to other give  
 Themselves, unchanging while they live;  
 Yet each, forsooth, doth long to be  
 From all restraint and bondage free.  
 And those who view this thing with clear  
 Impartial eye will know 'tis fear  
 And shame alone that hold folk back,  
 Who else would tread in Nature's track,  
 And, like the cattle, follow sense:  
 Thereof I've had experience 14810  
 Myself, for I would give away  
 My love to any day by day.  
 And had I not been cowed by shame,  
 Which curbs the will of many a dame,  
 When through the town I marching went  
 (Which none could hinder or prevent),  
 So decked and dizeded, all might know  
 The part I played, from outward show,  
 And saw well-liking varlets cast  
 Soft looks upon me as I passed 14820  
 (Good Lord! what tremors through me  
 ran  
 Exchanging glances with a man),

All men  
faithless

Not one, but all would I embrace,  
 Could I but find fit time and place;  
 Giving to each in turn his due  
 Had I been equal thereunto;  
 And each had will, as I believe,  
 In turn my favours to receive:  
 Prelate or monk except I not,  
 Nor knight, nor canon, sage or sot, 14830  
 Burgess or friar, within my fold  
 All would I take, if not too old.  
 Religion they'd have cast aside,  
 Except they feared to be denied  
 When they should court me. If that they  
 Had only understood my way  
 Of thinking, as of women all,  
 Such fear they ne'er had let befall  
 Their hearts. Each one, had they  
 dared, 14840  
 I trow, had readily declared  
 Their wedlock void, that they to me  
 Might give themselves all utterly,  
 Religion spurning, and despite  
 Of oath or honour, faith or right,  
 Except perchance, 'twere some poor fool,  
 Who ne'er had let his love grow cool  
 For her whose heart he'd gained in youth.  
 Such one would courteously, forsooth,  
 Decline my love and turn to her  
 His well-beloved sweet comforter. 14850  
 But lovers of that sort are rare.  
 By God and Saint Amand I swear,  
 If only opportunity  
 Of time and place were given to me

Mars and Venus To talk with such an one on love,  
 If lies or truth his tongue should move  
 And whether he lay or churchman were,  
 Or regular or secular,  
 Cinctured with girdle grey or red,  
 Or hood or hat bedecked his head, 14860  
 He should right soon declare his flame,  
 Whether in me he saw the same  
 To burn, or only deemed a whim  
 I had myself to yield to him.  
 Nature for ever busies her,  
 Desire in all men's hearts to stir,  
 Therefore, dear son, should we be slow  
 Venus and Mars to blame, I trow.  
 And though the Gods in mockery laughed  
 To see the pair by Vulcan's craft 14870  
 Ensnared, yet many a one full fain  
 Had been, could he the place have ta'en  
 Of Mars, in Venus' fond embrace,  
 While Vulcan, mad with his disgrace,  
 Two thousand marks had rather given  
 Than cuckold stand before high heaven.  
 The pair he thus exposed to shame,  
 Reckless of scorn henceforth became,  
 And boldly practised that which they  
 Strove erst to hide from light of day, 14880  
 Shame and decorum cast aside.  
 And then the Gods told far and wide  
 The tale, till all through heaven 'twas  
 known,  
 From mouth to mouth mid laughter thrown.  
 And Vulcan stormed with rage to think  
 The draught he brewed he needs must drink,



Since for his folly nought could he  
 Find balsam, salve, or remedy.  
 Rather than trap the twain, indeed,  
 'Twere wiser to have given no heed, 14890  
 But silently resolve in mind  
 To be to Venus' failings blind,  
 So long as she towards him behaved  
 With kindness, granting all he craved.

Folly of  
 Jealousy

From this, let no man e'er forget  
 That grievous folly 'tis to set  
 A trap whereby a wife may be  
 Convicted of inconstancy;  
 For if she find her thus exposed,  
 The door of virtue feels she closed, 14900  
 Behind her, and the unhappy wretch,  
 Whom evil-eyed suspicions stretch  
 Upon the rack, when he hath caught  
 His wife, shall ne'er again know aught  
 Of peace or happiness, but die  
 The prey of cruel Jealousy.]

(Continued  
 from l.  
 14550)

But she, forsooth, doth merely make  
 Pretence of jealousy to wake  
 His anger, and yet cause that he  
 With love may burn more ardently. 14910

And if he parry not the stroke,  
 But saith, her anger to provoke,  
 'Tis true he hath another friend;  
 Then she, with view to gain her end,  
 Should cry: No button doth she care,  
 What is his other love to her?

**A** For knows she all the while that he  
**woman's** Thereto extends not seriously.  
**sense** Then in her turn will she, with mind  
 More closely round his heart to wind 14920  
 Her toils, pretend some other is  
 More suited to her taste, ywis,  
 And fain of him would she be quit,  
 Exclaiming: 'Tis but right and fit,  
 Since I am cuckolded by you,  
 That our old love were broken through.  
 Is it surprising if I wish  
 We both should eat from out one dish?  
 And then shall he be vexed above  
 All measure, if so be he love 14930  
 Her fondly, reft his chief delight;  
 For no man feels love's flame burn bright  
 Within his breast, but's racked with dread,  
 Lest horns, perchance, adorn his head.

Then, as if some wild beast gave chase,  
 The chambermaid, with fear-struck face,  
 Runs in, and cries: Alas! we're lost,  
 The master hath this moment crossed  
 The fore-court! When the damsel hears  
 This cry, her face wild terror wears, 14940  
 While she her gallant thrusteth in  
 To some dark cupboard, chest, or bin,  
 Whence, when the proper time arrive,  
 She lets him out, more dead than 'live.  
 And he, who anxiously doth wait  
 Until she comes to liberate  
 Him once again, by dire despair  
 And fear is torn while crouching there.

Then, if it prove some new-lit flame,  
 To whom, incautiously, the dame,  
 Hath given untimely rendezvous,  
 She'll quick determine what to do;  
 And while she keeps the one close  
 hid,  
 The later comer will she bid  
 Welcome in some small chamber near,  
 And grant the grace he seeks of her,  
 But let him know he must away  
 Forthwith, howe'er he beg to stay,  
 And though with rage and grief he cry,  
 Boldly to him will she reply: 14960  
 Hence! hence! delay behoveth not,  
 For I within the house have got  
 My husband and my cousin kin,  
 And were you found by them herein,  
 I swear, by God and Saint Germain,  
 I ne'er should see your face again;  
 Another time I'll gladly make  
 You welcome till the morning break,  
 But stay not now, nor hesitate,  
 My presence all those folk await. 14970  
 The house of him she needs must clear,  
 For till he goes she's racked with fear.  
 And then must she return in haste  
 To where the other one doth waste  
 His hour in terror, lest that he  
 Be dragged forth ignominiously;  
 And freeing him from where he's hid,  
 For consolation doth she bid  
 Him welcome to her loving arms,  
 As solace for his past alarms; 14980

A lover  
tricked

Danger  
heightens  
pleasure

But, ere permitting all he will,  
Into his mind doth she instil  
A sense of what great risks she's run,  
And fearsome dangers undergone,  
While she of madness doth accuse  
Herself, who thus by artful ruse  
Deceives her husband, e'en while she  
Doth wrong herself exceedingly.

And, by her father's soul she swears  
That this adventure which she dares  
To pleasure him doth cost too dear,  
Although, God wot, they've less to fear  
Within her room than those who go  
To sport in fields 'neath vines arow,  
But pleasure all the more 'tis spiced  
With danger is more highly prized.  
And whensoe'er they come to lie  
Together in their secresy,  
'Tis well that she exclude the light  
From every casement, lest he might  
Upon her body spy some spot  
Or blemish, when right well I wot  
Forth from her chamber would he go  
As bolt or arrow shot from bow.  
[Pass eighteen lines, they nought avail  
To make, but rather mar the tale.]  
And should they twixt themselves agree  
That, opportune 'twould sometimes be  
For her in turn to make repair  
To where he dwells, she'll take good care  
So to arrange that somewhat late  
She comes, for if she makes him wait

False  
fears

Awhile, she doth but fan the fire  
 Of anxious unfulfilled desire.  
 The game of love, I scarce need say,  
 But winneth zest by short delay,  
 And little joy the heart doth reap  
 From pleasure it may win good cheap.  
 But when she comes within the house  
 And finds reception amorous, 15020  
 She then should vow, with signs of fear,  
 How that her jealous spouse anear  
 Hath watched her, and she dreads to think  
 What bitter draught she needs must drink,  
 So soon as she again doth come  
 Beneath his tyrant hand at home.  
 But howsoe'er she plain and sigh,  
 Whether she speak the truth or lie,  
 A parlous fear should she dissemble,  
 And, dreading nought, seem all atremble, 15030  
 For this will much the joy enhance  
 Betwixt them of soft dalliance.

But if to him she cannot fare  
 Nor bid him to her home doth dare,  
 So close a watch her jealous spouse  
 Maintains both in and out the house,  
 To free her she must cause to wink  
 His wakeful eyes 'neath well-spiced drink,  
 And if he fail to nod 'neath wine,  
 Herbs should she with his drink combine, 15040  
 Or mix with food (but in such wise  
 That nought of danger thence arise),  
 And then shall he so soundly sleep  
 As neither watch nor ward to keep,

The And she at leisure may fulfil,  
 bagnio Unlet or hindered, all her will.  
 If lackeys hath she, let her heed  
 That this and that one forth she speed  
 While coin, if wisely on them spent,  
 Will greatly help her fond intent. 15050  
 Or if she fears lest they should know  
 Her secret, make them drunk also.  
 Or to her husband may she say:  
 "I feel quite out of health to-day,  
 Some fever, gout, or inward grief,  
 Affecteth me past all belief;  
 Our baths are useless, I must hie  
 Me towards the bagnio presently;  
 A vapour bath alone can give  
 Me ease, if you would have me live." 15060  
 Though for a while the wretch delay  
 Consent, at last she gets her way;  
 For when he hath with sorry face  
 Pondered thereon, with wry grimace  
 He yields though of his shame afraid.  
 Then goes she with her chambermaid,  
 Or else some friendly neighbour, who  
 Knows well what 'tis her will to do,  
 Or some companion hath perchance  
 With whom she carries on love's dance. 15070  
 Then to the bagnio will she speed,  
 Though to the baths she gives small  
 heed,  
 Or else perhaps the bathhouse shuns  
 And to her swain's embraces runs.  
 Unless indeed between them 'twere  
 Agreed that they a bath should share,

For should he knowledge gain that she  
Comes there, there also will he be.

Love-  
potions  
useless

No man a woman can protect  
Who for herself hath no respect. 15080  
Yea, e'en was Argus overmatched  
Though with his hundred eyes he watched,  
Whereof one moiety he kept  
Wide open while the other slept,  
For therefore Mercury was sped  
By Jove to shear off Argus' head,  
Fair Io to revenge I trow,  
Whom he transformed had to a cow.  
Futile his watch—a heavy yoke  
Bears he who meddles with such folk. 15090

But let a woman note this well :  
Whatever clerks or laymen tell  
Let her no idle tales believe  
(Which none but fools as truth receive)  
Of sorcerers and enchanters dire,  
Or witches dancing round the fire,  
E'en though they might surpass the fancy  
Of Helenus in necromancy  
And second-sight, nor let her think  
That she by potions and charmed drink 15100  
Can draw some lover to her side  
Who from his faith hath wandered wide.

Ne'er could Medea win again  
False Jason, he of Glauce fain ;  
Nor could wise Circe's magic art  
Control Ulysses' wandering heart.

**A** Most careful should a woman be,  
**woman's** Though she a man loves tenderly,  
**gifts** Gifts to forbear of value great :  
 A pillow soft and delicate, 15110  
 A purse, a handkerchief, or hood,  
 Not costly, though fair made and good,  
 A silken lace, a belt to clasp  
 His waist with inexpensive hasp.  
 Or pretty pocket-knife of steel,  
 Or scarf fine wove, and soft to feel,  
 Such as are made by cloistered nuns.  
 But give not to those holy ones  
 Your love, for women secular  
 In such affairs are safer far. 15120  
 More free are they to do whate'er  
 They fancy, and on hand they bear  
 Their friends or spouses as they please,  
 But costly both are those and these ;  
 Yet deem I, should I judge the twain,  
 That nuns cost most with no more gain.  
 But women's gifts will men of sense  
 Receive with doubt and diffidence,  
 For all too often are they nought  
 But traps whereby fond fools are caught ; 15130  
 And 'gainst their nature women sin,  
 Who seek by gifts men's love to win.

Largess is better left to men ;  
 Women but compass mischief when  
 They give great gifts ; I've noticed oft  
 The devil made our hearts too soft.  
 But nought it matters—few are they  
 Of women who give much away.



The gifts that I have named to you,  
 Fair son, are such as well will do 15140  
 The fools to cozen, cheat, and gull,  
 Of which, good Lord, the world's brimfull.  
 All that is given to you, hold fast,  
 Remembering youth will soon be past,  
 For on us creepeth, day by day,  
 Old age which none can let or stay.  
 Take care to garnish well your purse,  
 For thus may you avoid the curse  
 That surely falls on all folk left  
 In age's cave, of goods bereft. 15150  
 Get wealth, for men of starveling need  
 Are valued not one mustard seed.  
 Alas! poor fool! that I did not  
 Practise what now I preach, God wot!

Forget  
not old  
age

All the fair gifts that came to me  
 From those who loved me follily,  
 As readily I gave again  
 To men of whom my heart was fain,  
 And gifts have brought me in old age  
 To eat the bread of vassalage; 15160  
 The flight of time ne'er troubled me,  
 And hence, alas! my misery.  
 Of poverty had I no dread,  
 But as time came e'en so it sped,  
 All that I gat I freely spent,  
 'Twas lightly won and lightly went;  
 Yea, by my soul I might have been,  
 If prudent, wealthy as a queen,  
 For many a rich man at my feet  
 Had I, when gentle, young, and sweet, 15170

Infatua- And held them fast within my snare,  
 tion By God and St. Thibaud I swear  
 That all I had amassed I gave  
 Unto a false and traitorous knave,  
 Who pleased me above all, though he  
 Put me to shame most cruelly :  
 My love, I many another called,  
 But he 'fore all my heart enthralled ;  
 Alas ! though tender, true, and keen  
 My love, he prized me not a bean. 15180  
 Ah ! then to what disgrace I fell !  
 The villain made my life a hell,  
 Entreated me with foul disgrace,  
 And called me strumpet 'fore my  
     face.  
 A woman am I and no more,  
 And woman's judgment-wit is poor.  
 The man who loved me, loved I not,  
 But him who did my features blot  
 With blows, and beat me with his fist,  
 Adored I, and that foul hand kissed. 15190  
 The more he beat me, all the more  
 My heart felt to its very core  
 Fond love of him. So well his peace  
 He made, that soon another lease  
 Of love I gave him, though my back  
 And bosom beat he blue and black  
 With ugly bruises, and no trace  
 Of beauty left he on my face,  
 Till I to him for mercy cried,  
 And then when he repentant sighed 15200  
 (Of loving favours once more fain),  
 The wretch, who held my life amain

Within his power, so deftly spake,  
 That I permitted him to make  
 His peace within my arms, for he  
 The game of love knew perfectly.  
 Ah! villain, traitor, perjured thief,  
 How fond my love! how keen my  
 grief!

I cared to live for him alone,  
 And at his beck had freely gone 15210  
 Across the seas; yea had he sped  
 To London, I had followèd.

So loved I him, so loved he me,  
 That each shamed each right recklessly,  
 And he in riotous display  
 All that I gave him cast away,  
 In taverns lording it at dice,

Deep sunk in every wildest vice,  
 And scorning any craft to learn  
 Whereby he might fair living earn, 15220

Nor saw why he thereof should heed  
 While I supplied his wasteful need,  
 And well I knew the means whereby  
 To feed his lawless luxury.

For all the world my tenants were,  
 And what I gained with many a care  
 And deep disgrace, I showered on him,  
 While he indulged each caitiff whim.

No thought had he to pass the time  
 In aught but riot, vice, and crime, 15230  
 And was of mouth so tender, it

Loved not to feel the needful bit.  
 But a drear season dawned at last,  
 The day of light-won gifts was past,

Walk We begged our bread devoid of home,  
warily Our goods not worth a hackle-comb.  
No husband had I ever wed,  
But hither came as I have said,  
Torn, worn, and scratched with many a  
briar.

Most earnestly do I desire, 15240  
Fair son, that you should learn of me  
Wisely to walk and warily,  
And thus my sad experience  
May to your youth be shield and fence.  
For when your Rose is withered quite,  
And raven locks exchanged for white,  
Then will you lack the gifts that snow  
On every side around you now.

*The Author.*

Thus the Duenna preached and prosed,  
To which Fair-Welcome nought opposed, 15250  
But gladly gave the sermon ear,  
Feeling of her less dread and fear  
Than he had done in time gone by ;  
For now it seemed, assuredly,  
That but for Jealousy's ill-will  
And those three porters who fulfil  
Her hestings (three at least alive  
Who still with mad endeavour strive  
To hold the fort), but light it were  
To take the stronghold unaware, 15260  
But yet he doubts that scarce can be,  
While it is watched so studiously.

The death of Evil-Tongue doth not  
 Cause unto them much grief, I wot:  
 For he within the place had made  
 Few friends, but each in turn betrayed  
 And slandered to foul Jealousy,  
 Past master of all falsehood, he.  
 Not one among the whole of them  
 Had given a wretched garlick stem 15270  
 To save his life, except that dame  
 Perchance, whom I of late did name.  
 Upon her ear more sweetly fell  
 His slanders than a chapel bell,  
 And, her foul wretchedness, delight  
 Found, when his shalm piped hate and  
 spite.

Evil-  
 Tongue  
 unre-  
 gretted

From her he hid no evil thing,  
 That he could through long memory bring  
 To light, if it might mischief do  
 And foul misfortune thence ensue. 15280  
 But counted 'mong his worst of crimes  
 It was, that he would oftentimes  
 Declare for truth tales false and vile,  
 The which he would invent the while;  
 Or add to simple stories true  
 A fringe, which mean and base he knew,  
 And thus, confounding wrong with right,  
 Please Jealousy's foul appetite,  
 For of a truth he all his life  
 Pastured on envy, hate, and strife. 15290  
 For him no mass was said or sung,  
 When in the moat his corse was flung,  
 Nor did his friends his loss deplore,  
 For when their strength they reckoned o'er,

Fair-  
Wel-  
come's  
reply

They judged they might the place defend,  
Although five thousand men should spend  
Their force thereon courageously.

*The Three Porters.*

Certes, cried they, but weak were we  
If we should fail the fort to hold  
Without this thief, this lying scold, 15300  
This traitor false, this felon dire,  
God grant the master of hell fire  
May harass and torment his soul!  
On all men wrought he grief and dole.

*The Author.*

Though these proud words the porters sped,  
Truth was it, whatsoe'er they said,  
Great loss to them was Evil-Tongue.

When the Duenna had outsung  
Her tale, Fair-Welcome took the word,  
And spake as one who having heard 15310  
Discourse, knows how to gloss thereon.

*Fair-Welcome.*

Madam, great honour have you done  
To me in teaching me your art,  
And therefor thank you from my heart,  
But when you spake to me of love,  
That bitter-sweet disease, above  
My power it was to understand  
Your meaning, but at second-hand,

Admit  
Fair-  
Welcome

Nor long I more thereof to learn.  
 When you describe how I might earn <sup>15320</sup>  
 Great wealth, thereto I can but say  
 I have enough, and fain the way  
 Would keep of gentle courtesy,  
 Which sweet and grateful is to me.  
 But devilish arts to magic due  
 Despise I, whether false or true.  
 As to the youth on whom such high  
 Praises you deign to multiply,  
 And in whose manners, ways, and  
 face,  
 The fairest virtues find a place, <sup>15330</sup>  
 God grant that still in him they thrive.  
 Nor him, nor any man alive  
 I envy, nor indeed hath he  
 Hold on my love to high degree,  
 For though the chaplet that he sent  
 I took, thereby no more I meant  
 Of love than men mean when we hear  
 Them say: "God save you," or "Good  
 cheer;"  
 Or e'en as neighbours passing by:  
 "God bless you, friend," politely cry. <sup>15340</sup>  
 Honour I give to him above  
 Most men, but no exceeding love;  
 Yet since he sent this chaplet fair,  
 And I accepted it, I swear  
 Nought else had pleased me half as  
 much.  
 And since that his desire is such  
 To see me, let him come e'en now  
 And great will be my joy, I vow,

Jealousy  
outwitted

To see his face ; but time must he  
Choose when his foe, Dame Jealousy, 15350  
Goes hence, for greatly should I fear  
Mishap if she should find him here,  
And sorely dread that she may lack  
Some thing or other, and turn back,  
Though forth she pass, for ofttimes she  
Returns all unexpectedly ;  
Then straight, with temper more than warm,  
About my head she'd raise a storm.  
Such hatred in her breast doth burn  
Against me, that should she return 15360  
By chance, and find the lover here,  
Though of all blame I might be clear,  
My blood, past doubt by her, were shed,  
And I alive dismemberèd.

*The Author.*

Then the Duenna readily :

*The Duenna.*

Nay, leave the care thereof to me ;  
Although that he were in the house,  
With Jealousy the despitous,  
So help me God and St. Remy,  
More easily an ant's egg she 15370  
Should find within a truss of hay,  
Than one I hide from light of day  
Herein, for every nook I know  
Where I may fugitives bestow.



*Fair-Welcome.*

To see him enter were I fain,  
 Quoth he, but trust he may refrain  
 From outrage or unseemliness.

The  
 Duenna  
 consents

*The Duenna.*

By body of God! thou dost express  
 Thyself, fair son, in wondrous wise:  
 A jewel art thou in mine eyes.

15380

*The Lover.*

They ceased—no more was left to say,  
 And each one sped a different way,  
 Fair-Welcome to his chamber hied,  
 While the duenna must provide  
 For matters of the house. But when  
 Time, place, and season suited, then  
 The hag, with will the work to do  
 For which she gave her promise to  
 Fair-Welcome, down the stair of stone  
 Ran quickly, seeing him alone,  
 From out the tower, nor weary felt  
 Until she came to where I dwelt,  
 Hasting to tell me how I might  
 Get of Fair-Welcome speech and sight.  
 Then spake she as one wearied out.

15390

*The Duenna.*

If I should bring to you, past doubt,  
 News that your heart to joyance lifts,  
 May I then claim of you fair gifts?

*The Lover.*

**The** Fair gifts! aye, verily, good store,  
**entry** Rich robe and mantle fitted for 15400  
**granted** A queen, and hood with fur bedight,  
 And dainty boots, and hosen white,  
 If you but aid my cause;—then said  
 The hag that, well it were I sped  
 Me towards the tower, where I should see  
 Fair-Welcome, who awaited me;  
 But ere she flitted did explain  
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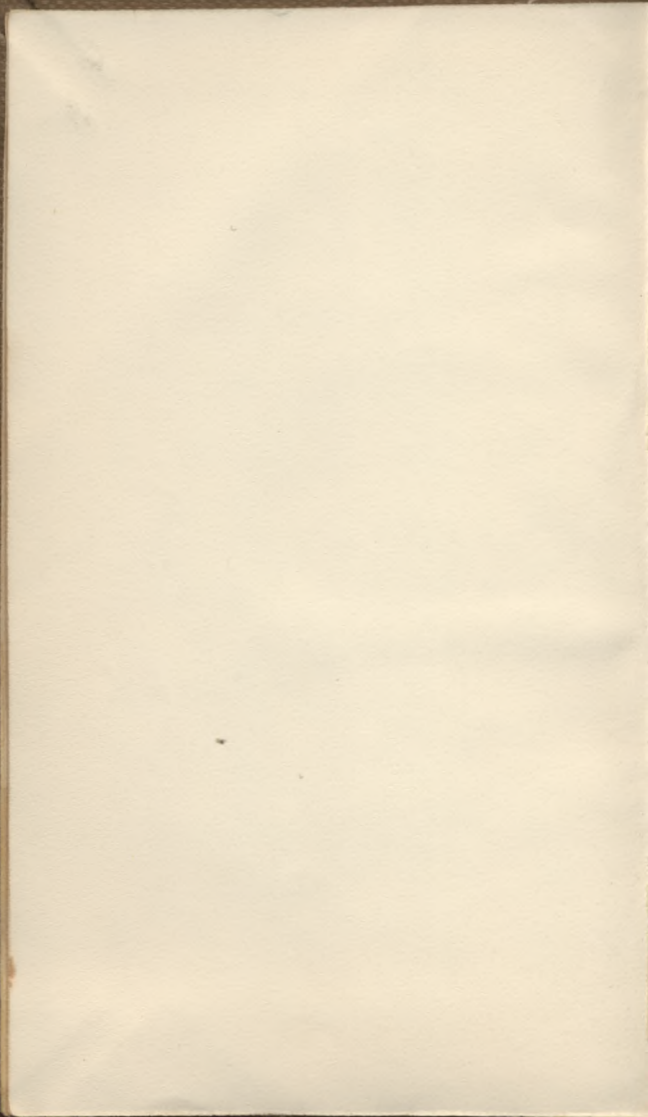
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CHAPTER I

The first part of the history of the world is the history of the creation of the world and the life of the first man.

CHAPTER II

The second part of the history of the world is the history of the fall of man and the life of the first woman.

CHAPTER III

The third part of the history of the world is the history of the flood and the life of the first woman.

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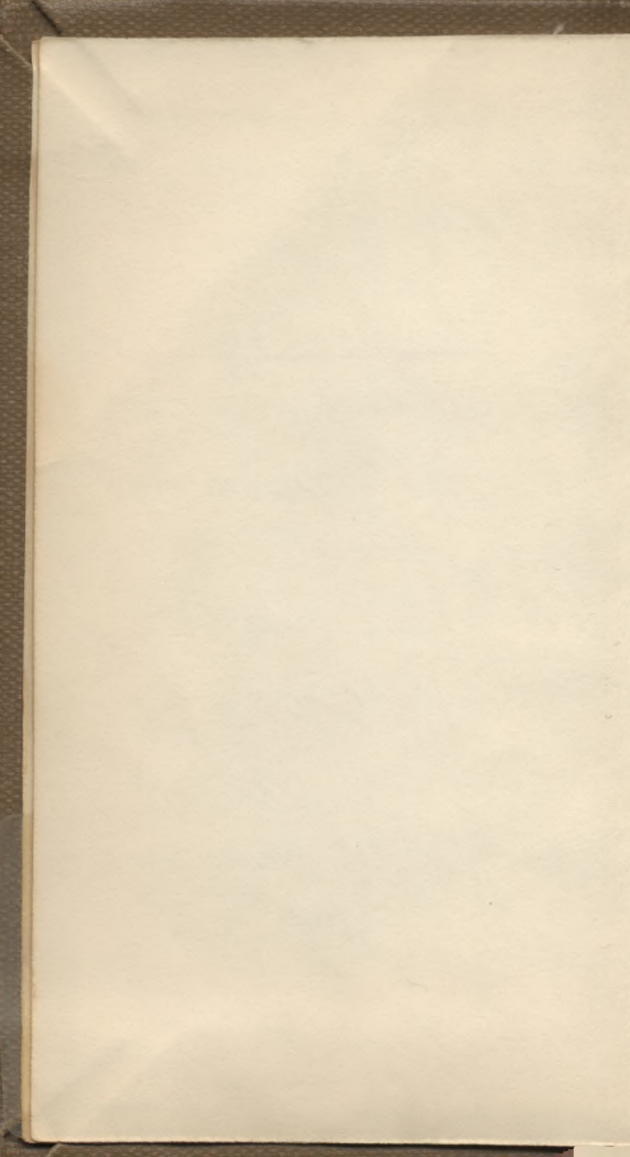
The fifth part of the history of the world is the history of the life of the first woman.

CHAPTER VI

The sixth part of the history of the world is the history of the life of the first woman.

CHAPTER VII

The seventh part of the history of the world is the history of the life of the first woman.



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